

The MORO READER

History and Contemporary Struggles
of the Bangsamoro People

Edited by Bobby M. Tuazon
With Preface by Prof. Oscar Evangelista



CenPEG

Policy Study Publication and Advocacy (PSPA)
Center for People Empowerment in Governance (CenPEG)

August 2008

CenPEG Publications
2008

The
MORO READER
History and Contemporary Struggles
of the Bangsamoro People

Edited by Bobby M. Tuazon

With Preface by Prof. Oscar Evangelista

CenPEG Board of Editors

Evi-ta Jimenez
Bienvenido Lumbera
Elmer Ordonez
Temario C. Rivera
Luis V. Teodoro
Bobby M. Tuazon

Policy Study Publication and Advocacy (PSPA)
Center for People Empowerment in Governance (CenPEG)

The
MORO READER
History and Contemporary Struggles
of the Bangsamoro People

ISBN 978-971-93651-6-7
Printed in the Philippines

Published by
CenPEG Books
Policy Study Publication and Advocacy (PSPA)
Center for People Empowerment in Governance (CenPEG)
3/F CSWCD Bldg. University of the Philippines,
Diliman, Quezon City
Telefax: +632-9299526
Email address: cenpeg@cenpeg.org; cenpeg.info@gmail.com

Cover design by Fidel dela Torre

Philippine Copyright©2008 by CenPEG
www.cenpeg.org

All rights reserved. Contributions in this book have been printed with the permission of the authors. This book, or parts thereof, may not be reproduced in any form without informing the authors and/or publisher; exceptions are made for brief excerpts used in published reviews.

For information, email at cenpeg.info@gmail.com; cenpeg2k4@yahoo.com

Contents

Acknowledgment	7
Preface By Oscar Evangelista	8
Introduction By Bobby Tuazon	10
Colonialism and Resistance: A Historical Perspective By Lualhati M. Abreu	17
Multiple Colonialism in Moroland By Julkipli Wadi	28
The Struggle of the Muslim People in the Southern Philippines: Independence or Autonomy? By Temario C. Rivera	38
Ancestral Domain - the Core Issue By Lualhati M. Abreu	56
Ruminations on the Bangsamoro Struggle and Neoliberal Globalization By Kenneth E. Bauzon	68
The Economic and Security Intricacies of the Bangsamoro Struggle By Bobby Tuazon	81
Understanding the Bangsamoro Right to Self-Determination By Abhoud Syed M. Lingga	95
Searching for Peace in the Southern Philippines: A Conversation with Nur Misuari Abridged, Edited and Annotated by Kenneth E. Bauzon	113
40 Years of Revolutionary Struggles By Lualhati M. Abreu With additional notes by Bobby Tuazon	132
Moro Political Dynasty By Julkipli Wadi	148

Veiled Political Realities: The Case of Muslim Women in Palawan By Maria Carinnes P. Alejandria	159
Songs of Resistance, Tales of Pride in Moroland By Alexander Martin Remollino	175
Appendices	180
Appendix A Qudarat-Lopez Peace Treaty	181
Appendix B Treaty between the Sultan of Sulu and the United States	184
Appendix C Petition to the President of the United States of America from the People of the Sulu Archipelago	185
Appendix D The Tripoli Agreement	190
Appendix E Jeddah Accord	196
Appendix F Program of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines	200
Appendix G The final agreement on the implementation of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) with the participation of the Organization of Islamic Conference Ministerial Committee of Six and the Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Conference	203
Appendix H Agreement by the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)	236
Appendix I Moro Jihad: Interview with Salamat Hashim	238

Appendix J	
General Framework of Agreement of Intent between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)	248
Appendix K	
NDF –MILF Alliance	
Unity and Cooperation against the reactionary enemy	250
Appendix L	
Implementing Guidelines on the Aspect of the GRP-MILF Tripoli Agreement of Peace of 2001	253
Appendix M	
Letter from Chairman Salamat Hashim to President George W. Bush	263
Appendix N	
Memorandum of Agreement on the Ancestral Domain Aspect of the GRP-MILF Tripoli Agreement on Peace of 2001	265
About the authors	277

Acknowledgment

The Board of Directors, Board of Editors, and Fellows of CenPEG wish to acknowledge the following individuals for sharing their time and expertise for the completion of this book:

Contributing writers and scholars Kenneth E. Bauzon, PhD, presently an associate professor at the St. Joseph's College in New York City who also contributed valuable insights on how to organize the book; Prof. Julkipli Wadi, also for the briefings about the Bangsamoro struggle; Prof. Abhoud Syed M. Lingga, executive director of the Institute of Bangsamoro Studies based in Cotabato City; Maria Carinnes P. Alejandria; and journalist-poet Alexander Martin Remollino;

Prof. Oscar Evangelista, former UP history professor and now Palawan-based, for consenting to write the Preface of this book;

Special acknowledgment to Alex Umali, artist-curator and CenPEG Fellow, for his advice with regard to the acquisition of historical photos; and

Carlos H. Conde, investigative journalist and former secretary general of the National Union of Journalists in the Philippines (NUJP), for his provocative and critical thoughts on the handling of the Bangsamoro issues by the press.

Preface



By Oscar Evangelista

Philippine History has not been very kind in telling the story of the Filipino Muslims. For too long, stereotyped impressions have been preserved: Muslims have been treated as pirates, barbarians, juramentados who kill Christians, etc. Glossed over is the fact that Islam built the first higher type of civilization in what would become the Philippines. Islam brought with it a whole range of politico-socio religious practices, generally put into place without erasing preexisting ethnic cultures and beliefs.

The arrival of the Spaniards and the introduction of the Catholic religion sharply divided what was once a people united in pre-colonial beliefs and practices. Thus were born the animosities between Christian and Muslim Filipinos, exacerbated by the writings of the Spaniards who considered the Muslims enemies. The stereotyped impressions of the Muslims were perpetuated by early textbooks which followed the Hispanic colonial perspective. A case in point was the so called “Moro Wars” pointing to Moro attacks on Christian territories pillaging and kidnapping “slaves” with nary an explanation of the war from the Moro side, from whence it must have looked much like a war against colonial aggression.

The cry for a better presentation of Filipino Muslims and their plight as a minority group did get a response from nationalist historians.

To bring Moro history into mainstream Philippine History, the role of the Muslims in the Filipino struggles against colonialism has been emphasized by pointing to the Muslims' continued fight against the

Spaniards. The exploits of Sultan Kudarat as a freedom fighter have long placed him on the roll of Filipino heroes. The charge that Muslims were not part of the revolutionary struggle of the Christians was refuted by Cesar Majul, noted scholar on the Muslims in the Philippines, who theorized that while the Muslims did not directly contribute to the rise of Philippine nationalism, theirs was a parallel movement stressing the anti-colonial aspect of Philippine nationalism. Historian Samuel Tan, whose scholarly research and writing has focused on the struggles of the Muslims, has more recently followed this perspective in his book, *The Filipino-American War, 1899-1913*, contrary to mainstream history that the Filipino-American War ended with the establishment of civil government in 1901.

While there were occasional Muslim revolts against the Americans and later against the Philippine Republic, generally for legitimate causes, the sense of separateness of the Muslims was strengthened with the birth of Bangsa Moro in the 1960's.

This new CenPEG book, *Rethinking the Bangsamoro Crucible: A Reader* thus serves as a valuable resource documenting the struggles of the Moro people from their early beginnings (Abreu's article) to contemporary developments: the negotiations of the MNLF and the MILF with the Philippine Government; the economic issues and neo-globalism, etc. With a progressive viewpoint, the scholarly articles of Kenneth Bauzon, Julkipli Wadi, and Temario Rivera, among others, present the Moro perspective and their desire for self-determination. The issues of American presence in Mindanao and its connection to the anti-terrorist campaigns, and "development programs" are highlighted for what they really are.

There are, likewise, socio-cultural articles like the study of the Muslim women of Palawan (Maria Carinnes P. Alejandria) and that of Muslim songs of resistance (Alexander Martin Remollino).

Rethinking the Bangsamoro Crucible: A Reader is a welcome resource for all who are interested in understanding the Moro view of their own history and culture.

OSCAR L. EVANGELISTA
 Professor of History (Retired)
 University of the Philippines
 Diliman, Quezon City;
 Consultant, Palawan State University

Introduction



By Bobby M. Tuazon

The idea of coming out with a Moro reader took off during some informal talks among Fellows and staff of CenPEG sometime June 2007 about the conduct of the May elections in the Muslim provinces. CenPEG had been in the thick of the election monitoring through its involvement with the non-government Task Force Poll Watch (TFPW), the mobilization of its student volunteers from the Volunteers Integration Program (VIP), and networking with lawyers groups and other poll watchers. Naturally, interest also centered on the elections in the ARMM with reports reaching the CenPEG office that dramatized widespread voters disenfranchisement, cheating, and the involvement of corrupt election officials in fraud.

Disturbing in those discussions and poll watching was the graphic and brutal truth of a region in prolonged disquiet - a whole society unhealed from its generational wounds of violence, grinding poverty, and election manipulation. ARMM and other Muslim provinces constitute the most depressed region in the Philippines - the outcome of land grabbing by landlords and transnational corporations, and of being left out from so-called development paradigms that all the more fueled armed conflicts with deep historical roots.

At that time also, the peace talks between the GRP-MILF ground to a halt over the issue of the Bangsamoro ancestral domain. There was also news of more joint war exercises between U.S. and Filipino troops in Sulu and other provinces in pursuit of what was turning out to be a permanent war against the Abu Sayyaf. The whole situation spoke of a region torn by

critical conditions in the socio-economic and political spheres while the search for stable governance remained fruitless. There were opposing views on how to approach the peace process. But some of the modalities of crisis resolution being pushed either tended to obfuscate the fundamental issues or were driven by goals that made peace even less promising.

These impressions gave birth to a plan for CenPEG to come up with a publication in the form of a Moro reader. A major reason for the plan is to publish the reader as CenPEG's contribution toward rekindling public awareness on the issue of the Bangsamoro struggle for secession or self-determination. Another is to offer the book as a reference material for current and future discussions on critical Moro issues particularly among people's organizations, non-state institutions, human rights groups, poll watchers, academic community, democratic governance institutes, media, and Moro-oriented research agencies. The last is to revive interest among CenPEG's network of partners, online subscribers and publication readers, roundtable/forum participants, and other sectors for the amplification and resolution of Moro issues particularly on self-determination, policy legislations, and other aspects of governance. In the course of editorial work, the Moro reader eventually evolved its title *Rethinking the Bangsamoro Crucible: A Reader*.

Views and options

The contributors to this book – many of them scholars and educators in their myriad fields of academic and non-academic expertise in the Philippines and other countries – represent varied perspectives on looking at the thematic issue, the Bangsamoro struggle for self-determination. The views and, in some respects, policy recommendations of the authors are based on their own assessment of the complex issue. But this should not dilute the fact that their studies are a product of a shared interest, as defined in the preceding paragraph, as well as a shared belief that the Moro people have the rights to life, freedom, land, and progress.

CenPEG's policy study program includes conducting research and analysis of the Philippines' political and governance system. The Center's multi-disciplinary approaches developed by its roster of Fellows and researchers dissect politics and governance in the context of the country's socio-economic and political structures and dynamics. As in the rest of

the national society, one particular perspective looks at the Moro situation and the difficulties of crisis resolution in the context of power relationships as defined by the control of resources and, hence, by power hegemony. The Moro reader is CenPEG's first step at assessing the interplay of forces and other actors in the Bangsamoro, including the role of feudal-based political dynasties, traditional warlords, transnational corporations, foreign intervention, and state bureaucrats that continue to pin the Moroland to its institutional injustices and, hence, recurrent armed conflicts.

Historical backdrop

Nearly all the research studies in this book provide some historical backdrop to the thematic issue. Giving specific focus on the historical overview are the studies of Lualhati M. Abreu, "Colonialism and Resistance: A Historical Perspective," and Julkipli Wadi's "Multiple Colonialism in Moroland." Abreau's study reiterates the roots of the nation-states among the Islamized indigenous groups in Mindanao-Sulu-Palawan with influence extending to parts of Visayas and Luzon even before the European incursions and Spanish colonial annexation of the archipelago in the early 16th century. The resistance of the Moro peoples against these trepidations in order to guard their nation-states and ethnicity was waged through the long period of colonialism, chiefly by Spain and the United States, followed by the founding of the Third Republic in 1946 that began the arbitrary assertion for the territorial co-optation of the Moro provinces, resulting in the ethnocidal attacks by the Philippine armed forces and government-backed private armies during the 1950s-1960s triggering the wars of secession and self-determination of the 1970s until today.

Wadi's "Multiple Colonialism in Moroland" takes cognizance of the Philippines as being burdened by a neo-colonial status under the United States. In his study, however, Wadi clarifies the four major strands of control over Moroland: U.S. colonialism, Philippine colonialism ("direct, relative to the Moros"), multilateral colonialism which includes corporate globalization, and the current U.S. colonial invasion particularly in southern Philippines under the global "war on terror." The author's formulation illustrates the nuances of colonialism in Moroland even as he reminds us about the "short-sightedness, factionalism, and disunity" seriously plaguing the Moro struggle while

Muslim *trapos* (traditional politicians) end up benefiting from the peace dividend and presumed economic development in Mindanao.

Independence or autonomy

In his “The Struggle of the Muslim People in the Southern Philippines: Independence or Autonomy?” Temario C. Rivera notes that the Moro movement to establish an independent state has gone through cycles of armed struggle, international diplomacy, mediation, and peace negotiations without reaching any satisfactory closure. The current demographic and political realities in southern Philippines, he says, dramatize the difficulty of pursuing an independent Moro homeland but the continued marginalization of the Muslim-dominated provinces remains a potent force for resistance. He warns that the renewed presence of U.S. forces in Mindanao could derail efforts for a lasting political solution since American intervention largely subsumes the local armed conflicts to U.S. strategic interests in its current war on terrorism. With the Moro struggle reaching a critical stage, it is time to look for feasible alternatives and one of these, Rivera avers, is to expand or deepen autonomy whether in the framework of federalism or by radically amending the organic act that created the ARMM. He also points out the many intractable issues related to legitimizing the creation of the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity (BJE) as proposed by the MILF.

Indeed, in the ongoing peace process between the GRP and MILF that is brokered by the Malaysian government, the major contentious issue is the ancestral domain. Abreu's second study, “Ancestral Domain Claim – the Core Issue,” seeks to provide clarity to this controversy stressing, in particular, that this territorial claim is at the core of the Bangsamoro's fight for self-determination. Historically, Abreu writes, the ancestral domains claim is based on the Moro people's customary laws that date back to pre-Spanish colonization and has been the rallying call for armed resistance to retake their homeland. The MILF leadership, in the current talks with the GRP, categorically identifies its claim over predominantly Moro communities. Even if they appear to be flexible, this precisely remains thorny not only because there are non-Moro indigenous peoples and other settlers in these communities but also because, as reported, while the MILF is asking for 1,000 barangays the GRP is willing to allow only 600.

Neoliberal globalization

Kenneth E. Bauzon's "Ruminations on the Bangsamoro Struggle and Neoliberal Globalization," brings a new dimension to the analysis of the Moro struggle. His ruminations center on "the role of overarching economic policies and principles" being pushed by the Philippine government at the behest of the global institutions of foreign governments packaged under "neoliberal globalization" which, he laments, even Nur Misuari, leader of the MNLF, failed to recognize or anticipate. A concrete illustration, Bauzon writes, is the neoliberal formula behind the 1996 final peace agreement between the GRP and MNLF that brought to an end the Moro rebels' two decades of rebellion. The United States, Japan, Australia and other countries, Bauzon notes, have staked their interests in Mindanao - dangling economic aid while pursuing other programs that are essentially counter-insurgency instruments as they set their eyes at deeper geo-political and economic objectives.

The paper, "The Economic and Security Intricacies of the Bangsamoro Struggle" seeks to substantiate Bauzon's neoliberal globalization underlying the peace agenda and other forms of foreign intervention in Mindanao. But this paper of Bobby M. Tuazon also underscores the interplay of renewed U.S. economic objectives and the infusion of economic assistance in Mindanao, on the one hand, and the pursuit of geo-military or security objectives in Southeast Asia through its basing operations in the southern Philippines, on the other. Tuazon notes that the U.S.' peace overtures to the MILF and its support for the peace process with a pledge of financial grants contingent on a final peace accord are apparently designed to soften Muslim guerilla intransigence as it deepens its basing facilities and operations in the region. Interestingly, there are clues that the MILF is open to negotiations on the U.S. military bases and, apparently, Moro leaders do not take the U.S. presence with a modicum of concern.

Abhoud Syed M. Lingga's paper, "Understanding the Bangsamoro Right to Self-Determination," is strong on using the framework of international treaties and conventions to assert the Moro people's right to self-determination, as articulated in the MILF's position in the current peace talks with the GRP. Bangsamoro leaders, Lingga states, had under U.S. colonialism asserted their right as a nation-state. Such assertion was followed by strong resistance against attempts to be integrated into the

imminent Philippine republic and in renewed moves for an independent state during the 1960s until the war of secession raged through the 1970s-1990s led by the MNLF and later the MILF. The paper also cites the GRP's apparent concurrence on the Bangsamoro people's right to self-determination in peace talks with the MILF. A referendum, he suggests, should be held to determine the Bangsamoro people's decision on self-determination or independence. Whatever the case, he echoes an openness to the establishment of three independent states – for the Bangsamoro, the indigenous peoples, and the Christian settlements.

Conversations with Nur

The tribulations of the Moro people particularly as regards their yet unresolved ancestral domain claim and onslaught of neoliberal globalization will persist because the Philippine government is an “untrustworthy and an unreliable negotiating partner.” That is why, Bauzon writes in his second paper, “Searching for Peace in the Southern Philippines: A Conversation with Nur Misuari,” it is “important for the struggle for Bangsamoro dignity and identity to carry on.” The paper is an annotated interview with former MNLF chair and ARMM Gov. Nur Misuari held on August 11, 1999. Despite its belated publication, Bauzon explains that the historical document opens insights into Misuari's definitive thinking at that time and offers some clarity into the events that transpired later including major flaws of the ARMM.

“40 Years of Revolutionary Struggles” traverses the various armed movements in Mindanao led by the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). The study, written by Abreu and Tuazon, explains the ties forged between the Leftist armed movement and the Bangsamoro rebel groups in the course of fighting a common enemy that made it more imperative over and above their ideological diversity. What is important is that the armed mass struggles share some common roots and grounds particularly, albeit in varying degrees, the Moro people's right to self-determination.

Political dynasties in the Bangsamoro may have similarities with those in the rest of the country but their unique characteristics borne out of the old social and economic structures make them different in many ways. Ruling oligarchs in the Bangsamoro, Professor Wadi contends in his second study, “Moro Political Dynasty,” have arisen from the

uninterrupted periods of colonialism, warlordism, intervention, and economic marginalization in the Moro society. For the Moro people to attain self-rule, the disposition of the structural roots of political dynasty should be part of their struggle and only then will a genuine Bangsamoro state will arise, Wadi also says.

Muslim women of Palawan

A unique contribution to the Moro reader is Maria Carinnes P. Alejandria's "Veiled Political Realities: The Case of Muslim Women in Palawan." There have been no women mujahideen in the current Moro wars of independence except to perform auxiliary role and this is explained by the strong feudal relations in the traditional Moro society as well as, says Alejandria, the "cultural impediments to the active participation of women in political and economic affairs." But her study of Muslim women in Palawan – which had its share of the Moro resistance since the 16th century – unearths an increasing level of radical albeit un-articulated dissident politics among them. Still harboring a deep distrust in government, many of the Muslim women the author interviewed were inclined to support the Moro armed movement if "constitutional and conventional means of political participation" do not work.

But certainly there are other ways of fighting in a Muslim jihad. Alexander Martin Remollino, poet and feature writer, writes of the legacy of the Moro people's artistic expressions of their struggle in his "Songs of Resistance, Tales of Pride in Moroland." The Bangsamoro's struggles have inspired artistic expressions mostly through traditional narrative ballads or folk songs. Songs and tales are thus alive and, in 2007, these resonated in radio stations in Sulu and other provinces recounting Moro warriors' battles against U.S. troops at the turn of the 20th century. The narrative songs were broadcast as organized Muslim communities took to the streets to oppose the presence of U.S. troops in southern Philippines.

Colonialism and Resistance: A Historical Perspective



By Lualhati M. Abreu

For beginners getting acquainted with the issues and concerns related to the Bangsamoro struggle for self-determination, here is a glimpse of its history spanning more than four centuries since the Spanish colonization of the Philippines. The Bangsamoro had also been trampled upon by American colonialism through what its revolutionary leaders termed as the illegal and immoral annexation of their homeland to the Philippines under the Treaty of Paris between Spain and the United States in 1898.

With this view, the Moro War rekindled since the 1970s had initially fought for a separate nation-state of Minsupala which refers to Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan. But practical considerations prevailed in the peace negotiations between the GRP and, separately, with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The MNLF bowed to the creation of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) while the MILF is still negotiating for a Bangsamoro Juridical Entity (BJE).

Pre-colonial period

Separate nation-states among the Islamized indigenous groups in Mindanao-Sulu-Palawan with influence extending to some parts of Visayas and Luzon, had been in existence before the onset of Spanish colonialism in the Philippines in the 16th century. Territorial extension and influence of the sultanate of Sulu is shown in the map found in the

archives of London Library and Museum. Its political influence extended to what is known today as Brunei, as well as the provinces of Cebu, Panay, Mindoro and Ilocos. That of the sultanate of Borneo reached Bicol and Manila. The Spanish colonialists met the fiercest resistance in the first years of colonization in these Muslim-dominated areas.

The sultanate of Sulu was founded with the coming of Raja Baginda in the southernmost archipelago of Sulu in the latter half of the 15th century, more than a hundred years before Spanish colonization. Claimed to be a descendant of Prophet Muhammad, he became the king of Sulu after marrying into the local ruling clan among the Tausugs. His son-in-law, Sharif ul-Hashim Abubakar, built and became the first sultan of the said sultanate in 1450.

Sharif Kabunsuan, meanwhile, completed the Islamization process in Central Mindanao around 1515. By marrying into the local ruling classes among the autochthonous (aboriginal or indigenous) Manobo groups with settlements along Pulangi river and that of the Iranun in Malabang along the Illana Bay, Sharif Kabunsuan sowed the seeds of the sultanates of Maguindanao and Buayan. Intermarriages played an important role in the expansion of both sultanates.

In 1616 or in the early reign of Sultan Kudarat, the sultanate - expanding from its roots in Malabang - made the Islamized Manobo settlement along the Danao tributary of the Pulangi river system as its center of power. Henceforth, the sultanate-ruled area upriver (saraya) of Pulangi, its people and their lingua franca came to be known as Maguindanao. Downriver (sa-ilud), the sultanate of Buayan reigned supreme before and after the reign of Sultan Kudarat. In between the two realms, the sultanate of Kabuntalan was born out of the intermarriage of siblings from the two sultanates.

Tens of principalities among the Maranaos or the people living along Lake Lanao, likewise, had been in existence in the 16th century. But unlike those among the Tausug and Maguindanao groups, no central structure was formed along the lake. Among these principalities, four emerged as the most important - the upat-ka-pangampong, namely, Masiu, Unayan, Bayabao, and Baloi.

The Tausug, Maguindanao, and Maranao are considered the major tribes among the 13 ethno-linguistic groups comprising the Moro people, both in terms of population and level of political development that evolved before the coming of the Spanish colonizers. Ten others - the

Iranun, Yakan, Sama, Sama Laut (Badyao), Kalibugan, Sangil, Kalagan, Palawani; Molbog and Jama Mapun, at one time or another were under the orbits of rule and influence of the sultanates of Sulu and Maguindanao.

The Tausug traditionally ruled over the Kalagan, Sama, Sama Laut, Yakan, Palawani, Molbog and Jama Mapun. The Maguindanao reigned supreme over Sangil and Kalibugan. From the onset, the Iranun - from which half of the lineage of the Maguindanao group is traced - accepted the sovereignty of the said sultanate.

Economically, the sultanates of Sulu, Maguindanao, and Buayan were all active in the East Asian maritime trade in what is now known as the Sulu Zone. The Sulu Zone extended from Sulu archipelago (comprising the provinces of Sulu, Basilan, and Tawitawi) and Cotabato, to the neighboring islands of Ternate, Moluccas, Borneo, and Brunei. Sulu Zone is in the crossroads of regional and international trades from China in the north, and Europe and other Southeast Asian countries through Singapore in the south. From the second half of the 18th century to the mid-19th century, Jolo was a major entry port for regional and international trades dealing with spices, forest, and exotic marine products which abounded in Mindanao and Sulu. Opium, military arsenal, and slave trading also flourished in the zone before the advent of U.S. imperialism in the Philippines in the late 19th century.

On separate occasions, the sultanates of Sulu and Maguindanao entered into treaties for peace and friendship with internationally-recognized nation-states.

The political structures under the leadership of the three major groups existed independently with one another. There were times, however, when they united against their common enemy. For example, immediately before and during Spanish colonialism the reign of Sultan Kudarat joined forces with the sultanates of Maguindanao, Sulu, Buayan and, even Ternate and Moluccas in present-day Indonesia to thwart the European invaders. They launched coordinated and joint military offensives against the Spanish forces and Spanish-controlled areas in Luzon and the Visayas.

Moro resistance against colonialism

Meanwhile, colonial and Filipino elite historiography divides the colonization process of Mindanao-Sulu into three periods. The first

period, according to Teopisto Guingona, the commissioner of Mindanao and Sulu during the Commonwealth period under U.S. colonialism (1935-1946), covers more than 300 years of Moro-Spanish War. The second period encompasses the American military pacification campaigns in Moroland, from 1901 to 1913. Onward from 1914 until the Japanese invasion of early 1940s is the period of assimilation and political, economic, and socio-cultural development in the Moroland.

On the other hand, according to Salamat Hashim, founder of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), divides Moro historiography into three periods of jihad. The first jihad was against Spanish colonialism in its more than 300 years of rule in the Philippines. The localized and sporadic uprisings against American colonial incursions and up to the 1950s against the Philippine government comprised the second period of Moro jihad. The third jihad against oppression and exploitation is the continuing resurgent revolutionary Moro struggles since the 1970s.

Indeed, for one, the Moro-Spanish War lasted for three centuries encompassing the last quarter of the 16th century to the late 19th century. The war is a series of military offensives and counter-offensives of one side against the other. Cesar A. Majul, the late Dean of the University of the Philippines' Asian Center, divided the war into six stages.

From the onset, according to Majul, Muslim-controlled areas in Manila, Visayas and Mindoro outrightly resisted Spanish colonization. Spanish colonial forces, in a bid to consolidate their early gains in Luzon and the Visayas, as well as to lay down the ground work in subjugating Mindanao and Sulu, launched a series of military campaigns against Muslim encampments and settlements in Borneo and Brunei - areas which could militarily support the Moro sultanates. The first stage started as early as 1565 when Miguel Lopez de Legazpi seized a Bornean trading vessel near Bohol.

From 1576 under the reign of Governor General Francisco Sande, Spanish colonial forces tried to reduce the sultanates into vassalage but failed. In retaliation, the sultanates of Sulu, Maguindanao, and Buayan with their allies in East Asia, jointly or independently launched military offensives. They succeeded not only in thwarting colonial designs to subjugate them but also in limiting the Christianization process in northeastern and western Mindanao. However, the sultanates failed to recover areas in Luzon and the Visayas that used to be under their control and influence.

The longest stage of hostilities was during the reign of Sultan Kudarat, from 1619 to 1671. The sultan led in the launching of two waves of military campaigns against the Spanish forces. In both stages of attacks, the Spanish colonial government opted for peace. In the first instance, Spanish troops in Mindanao were recalled because of the Dutch victories in the Moluccas. Facing a threat of invasion by Koxinga, a Chinese merchant and pirate, Spain was forced to consolidate its forces in Manila as Sultan Kudarat mounted a second jihad against Spanish colonialism.

The fifth stage, signaled by the return of the Spaniards to Zamboanga in 1718 and lasting for more than five decades, was the bloodiest, according to Majul. During this stage, the colonizers used the Privateer System decreed in 1751. Under this royal decree, private individuals were permitted to organize military expeditions against the Moros. Recruiting mostly criminal elements, organizers were granted unconditional pardon, tax exemptions, and 4/5 of the war booty. The decree aimed for the extermination of the Moros. In retaliation, the Moros launched one of their fiercest attacks against Spanish-held communities in Luzon and the Visayas, razing them to the ground and taking captives for the slave trade in the East Asia maritime zone.

Compromises with and concessions granted to the Spanish colonial government, internal strife over succession to the throne within the sultanates of Sulu and Maguindanao, and the decline of the outmoded colonial trading in the East maritime economic zone with increasing imperialist incursions into the Philippines – all these contributed to the decline of the Moro sultanates. Equipped with steamboats and modern heavy artillery, the Spanish forces were able to launch sustained military offensives against the Moros in Sulu, Cotabato and Lanao. By the second half of the 19th century, Spanish forces had fortified their positions in Sulu, Basilan, Cotabato, and along Lake Lanao.

Despite all these, Spanish colonialism was unable to gain total victory in subjugating the Moro people. At most, the colonial forces only had nominal rule over the Moro people. In Jolo, for instance, Spanish troops could not roam around freely outside their fortifications. At night, the fort would be stoned by Moros residing around it. An alternate port of entry for regional trading was opened to shy away from Spanish trade control set up in Jolo that remained under Moro siege.

The Philippine Revolution launched in 1896 by the Katipunan became a major pull for the Spanish colonial forces to concentrate in Luzon. Then with the invasion of the Americans in 1898, the sultanates of Sulu and Maguindanao had no alternative later but to compromise with the new colonizers. The new invading forces only had to hoodwink the sultanates into treaty of amity and relations to give them time to contain the still raging revolutionary struggle in the north. As Dr. Najeeb Saleeby said, “There is insurrection in the north and all troops are needed there.”

Meanwhile, the Moro people, led by their datus, launched sporadic and local resistance against U.S. imperialism particularly the policies it imposed on the population such as forced education and payment of local tax through the cedula. The Moro people saw through the U.S.-mandated public education system as a means of de-Islamizing them. (See Table 1 for a list of Moro uprising against U.S. imperialism.)

Table 1: List of Moro uprisings against U.S. imperialism

Year	Where/Leader
1903	Lanao, led by Ampuan Aguas, lasted up to 1906
1903	Cotabato, Datu Ali, lasted up to 1905
1903	Sulu, started by Panglima Hassan, lasted up to 1905
1904	Sulu, led by Datu Usap and Datu Pala, lasted up to 1905
1906	Sulu, resulted in the massacre in Bud Dajo; Sulu, led by Jikiri and spread to Basilan; Maciu in Lanao
1911	Balabak, Palawan
1911	Bud Dajo, Jolo, led by Jailani
1911	Cotabato, separate and widespread offensives led by Datu Alamada and Datu Ampatuan, lasted up to 1913
1913	Talipao I. in Sulu, led by Datu Sabtai
1913	Sulu, armed encounters in Taglibi and Bud Bagsak in Sulu
1916	Bayang Lanao, widespread uprisings led by Datu Lumamba and Imam Tawakir
1917	Cotabato, led by Datu Ambang
1919	Jolo Sulu, led by Aukusa and Panglima Asjali
1920	Pata Is., Sulu, led by Maharajah Untong and Hatib Sinaban
1923	Cotabato, led by Datu Santiago; Tugaya and Ganassi in Lanao del Norte
1924	Lanao, led by Datu Pandak
1926	Cotabato, Moro Maguindanao participated in the Langkat Uprising of the Manobo Lumad led by Datu Mampurok
1934	Lanao, led by Dimakaling
1936	Lanao, led by Abdulhamid, lasted up to 1941; Sulu, led by Imam Saccam
1937	Talipao Is. in Sulu

Source: Samuel Tan, 1977 at Jubair, 1999

Laws pertaining to land ownership, control and use, and the resettlement projects for migrants from Luzon and the Visayas displaced most extremely the Moro communities. The U.S.-imposed land laws in Moro communities where communal and semi-communal systems of land ownership and use were still in practice precipitated a number of *rido*¹ cases some of which have extended until today. (*Refer to Table 2 below*)

Table 2: Land laws imposed by U.S. imperialism

Year	Laws
1903	Public Land Act #718, nullification of land grants given through the sultan and datu, or leader of non-Christian indigenous groups without government authority
1903	Public Land Act # 926, all lands unregistered under Act #496 were declared public and open for homestead, sale and leasehold
1905	Mining Law, all public lands were open to exploitation. Occupation and sale even to Americans
1907	Cadastral Act, mandated cadastral survey for land titling purposes
1912	Resettlement Program Christians in Mindanao under General Pershing allegedly to solve landlessness in Luzon and the Visayas and increase rice production in Mindanao
1913	Philippine Commission Act #2254 and #2280, creation of agricultural colonies in Mindanao and Sulu 16 hectares to Christians and 8 hectares to Moros
1919	Public Land Act # 2874, granted 24 hectares to Christians often already titled in Manila, while 10 hectares to Moros who had to have them titled by themselves
1935	Legislative Act #4177, land settlement program with full government support
1936	Commonwealth Act #141, all ancestral lands were declared public domain
1939	Creation of National Land Settlement Administration (NLSA) which granted lands in Mindanao, especially among those who finished military trainings

Source: Annual Report of the Governor, Moro Province, 1905 – 1914; Guingona, 1943.

As a result of these laws and policies combined with military pacification campaigns against the then fragmented Moro forces (1903–1914), untitled ancestral lands were virtually landgrabbed by U.S.-based transnational corporations from the indigenous peoples of Mindanao – Moro and non-Moro. The firms included BF Goodrich in 1919, Del Monte in 1925, and Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. in 1929. Full-scale migrations of the landless and land speculators from Luzon and the Visayas followed thus further depriving the indigenous peoples of their lands. (Jubair, 1999)

U.S. imperialist policy of molding Moro leaders through education, on the other hand, yielded opposite effects on the first and second generations who benefited from its implementation.

The first generation of Moro leaders - the likes of Datu Piang and Datu Balabaran Sinsuat - justified the policy of molding the "Muslim Filipino" identity. (McKenna 1998) They recognized as legitimate the annexation of Moro territories into the territorial jurisdiction of the U.S.-controlled colony. They supported the American solution through education to solve the problem of "undevelopment". From this generation came the Moro leaders appointed and elected to government positions during the colonial period.

On the other hand, the case of Prinsesa Tarhata Kiram exemplified the effect of American education policy on the younger generation. After "Americanizing" her through education as a scholar in the United States, she filed her teeth² upon returning to Sulu, married a much older datu and in 1927, led a minor uprising against American rule.

Following an interlude during the Japanese occupation of early 1940s when Moros actively engaged in anti-Japanese resistance movement, the third republic continued the integration policies by the colonial masters.

Leaders of the new republic believed that the Moro problem in Mindanao can be solved by integrating the Moro population into the Philippine political structure. For the first republic in Asia, the solution is as simple as making the Moro people understand that the government is theirs and that they are a part of it.

With this in mind, the Filipino elite leaders went into coopting Moro leaders, especially those close to former colonial government officials. A big chunk of the Japanese reparation payments went into the pockets of these Moro leaders.

The Philippine republic continued the policy of integration which to the eyes of Moro intellectuals, however, is no different from assimilation of the Moro people into the mainstream Philippine society. Alongside this was the policy to stop the cultural concessions granted by the Commonwealth government including the right to Islamic practices in marriage and divorce.

Again, the Moro people rose in resistance in the 1950s. Foremost among the Moro uprisings in the 1950s was that led by Datu Kamlon in Sulu which lasted for eight years. In Lanao, local Moro leaders Abdulmajid Panondiongan and Tawantawan caused some headache to

the government. There were also sporadic encounters between government troops and what it labeled as “bandits” in Cotabato. Government propagandists portrayed Disumimba Rashid as the “terror” of the upland areas of Dinaig and Datu Piang in Cotabato.

In 1957, a special committee was formed by the Philippine Congress to look into the conflict situations in Moro areas. Ironically, the report of the Special Commission reflected the American view that Moros were suffering from poverty because of ignorance and fanaticism. Based on the report, Congress then passed Republic Act 1888 calling for the creation of the Commission on National Integration (CNI). The commission was tasked with completing the integration process in economic, social, moral, and political aspects of the Moro people.

It should be noted, however, that as measures for the integration of the Moro people into Philippine mainstream were being implemented, there were renewed intrusions by transnational corporations (TNCs) into the ancestral lands of the indigenous peoples, Moro and non-Moro, in Mindanao. Among these TNCs were Firestone Tire and Rubber Company with leasehold of 1,000 hectares of land in Makilala, Cotabato in 1957; Dole Philippines in Tupi and Polomolok, South Cotabato in 1963; Weyerheuser Corporation, with a logging concession of 72,000 hectares of virgin forest in Cotabato; and Boise-Cascade, with a logging concession of 42,000 hectares of forest lands in Basilan. (Jubair, 1999)

Particularly in the Cotabato and Lanao provinces, the intrusions were followed by a series of massacres against the Moros perpetrated by Ilaga, a cult movement organized by local politicians. This was confirmed in the 1960s by then President Diosdado Macapagal who, at one point, said “The Ilaga is supported and armed by the authorities.” An Associated Press (AP) report said that the Ilaga was created by seven politicians of Cotabato known infamously as the “Magnificent 7,” with military backing of Col. Carlos Cajelo who later became the governor of Cotabato province.

The massacres in Manili, Carmen, North Cotabato and Tacub, Magsaysay, Lanao del Sur galvanized the seething emotions among the Moros in the second half of 1971. In Manili, local Christian leaders called for a peace dialogue with the Moros in the mosque. While the dialogue was ongoing, a grenade was lobbed at the crowd by armed men dressed in Philippine Constabulary (PC) uniform. Others who opted not to join the dialogue gathered at the local school but were also summarily executed. The massacre left 70 dead but the number rose to more than a hundred days later.

Table 3: Partial list of massacres perpetrated by Ilaga-military elements against Moros

Town/Province	Date	Killed
1. Upi, Cotabato	March 22, 1970	6
2. Upi, Cotabato	September 10, 1970	6
3. Polomolok, South Cotabato	August 10, 1970	8
4. Alamada, Cotabato	December 3, 1970	13
5. Midsayap, Cotabato	December 16, 1970	18
6. Ahan, Datu Piang Cotabato	December, 1970	7
7. Bagumbayan, Cotabato	January 1, 1971	12
8. Alamada, Cotabato	January 17, 1971	73
9. Carmen, Cotabato	April 6, 1971	18
10. Manili, Carmen, Cotabato	June 19, 1971	More than 100
11. Wao, Lanao del Sur	July 4, 1971	No record
12. Buldon, Cotabato	August 5, 1971	14
13. Wao, Lanao del Sur	August 5, 1971	36
14. Kauran, Ampatuan, Cotabato	August 9, 1971	4
15. Buldon, Cotabato	August 9, 1971	60
16. Kisulon, Bukidnon	October 23, 1971	67
17. Magsaysay, Lanao del Norte	October 24, 1971	66
18. Tacub, Kauswagan, Lanao del Norte	November 22, 1971	40
19. Siay, Zamboanga del Sur	November 1971	No record
20. Ipil, Zamboanga del Sur	December 1971	No record
21. Palembang, Cotabato	January 21, 1972	No record

Source: Jubair, 1999

In a special election-related incident on November 22, 1971 in Tacub, a truckload of Moro voters who decided not to go to the poll precinct was waylaid and ambushed by an armed group.

The massacre incidents led many Moro leaders to join hands regardless of their political leanings for a common struggle. The resurgence of the Moro independence movement reached its peak following the Jabitah massacre on March 18, 1968 leading to the establishment of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

END NOTES:

¹Rido - clan wars among the Moro groups that may last for several generations. One of the main problems resulting in rido cases is land disputes among warring clans or groups.

²Filing of one's teeth and at times blackening them among the Tausug is an indigenous pre-Islamic practice. Kiram might have done this to manifest her continued ethnic identity with her people.

REFERENCES:

Annual Report to the Governor, The Philippine Commission, 1905 to 1915.

Abreu, Lualhati M., *The Bangsamoro Ancestral Domain: The Bangsamoro Continuing Past Anchored on Customary Adat and Islamic Thinking*, *The Mindanao Conflict*, Kamarulzaman Askandar and Ayesah Abubakar, eds., SEACSN Publications, Malaysia, 2005.

_____, *The Economic Dimension of the War*, Bantaaw, Alternate Forum for Research in Mindanao (AFRIM), Vol 13, #5-6, 2000.

_____, *The MILF and its Vision of an Islamic State*, *Mindanao Focus*, #2 Series of 2000.

_____, *Ang mga Mamamayan at Pakikibakang Moro*, *Political Economy Journal*, Ibon Foundation, Inc., 1996.

Guingona, Teopisto J., *Historical Survey of Politics Pursued by Spain and the United States Toward the Moros in the Philippines*, *Dansalan Quarterly*, Peter G. Gowing ed., Vol. II #3, April 1981.

Jubair, Salah, *Bangsamoro: A Nation Under Endless Tyranny*, 3rd edition, Kuala Lumpur Malaysia, 1999.

Majul, Cesar A., *The Contemporary Muslim Movements in the Philippines*, Mirzan Press, Berkeley, 1985.

_____, *Muslims in the Philippines*, UP Press, Quezon City, 1973.

McKenna, Thomas M., *Muslim Rulers and Rebels (Everyday Politics and Armed Separatism in Southern Philippines)*, Anvil Publishing Inc., Manila Philippines, 1998.

Saleeby, Najeeb M., *The Moro Problem*, Manila Philippines, 1913.
Reprinted *Dansalan Quarterly*, Vol 5 #1, April 1983.

Multiple Colonialism in Moroland



By Julkipli Wadi

"Reeling and Writhing, of course, to begin with," the Mock Turtle replied: "and then the different branches of Arithmetic -- Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision." I never heard of "Uglification," Alice ventured to say. "What is it?" Lewis Carroll, "Alice in Wonderland"

I. Constructing Colonialism

Colonialism may be an old concept to some people - something that is already out of fashion. Filipino historians and nationalists have already made a lot of discussions about it before; thus, concern is raised whether there is still something new worth discussing about the subject of colonialism these days.

As a response, it may be said that if problems in society are often resolved at more fundamental levels and that people's condition changed and developed as fast as any popular concepts (e.g., peace, development) nowadays, we can probably dispense with old, seemingly recycled concepts like colonialism even as our critical discourse and other discussion have to adapt to what is popular. But reality is far from that. Today, social problems and people's conditions have rarely changed fundamentally despite exponential increase of new concepts and their seeming sophistication. It shows that concepts -- whether old, new or popular -- do not really matter so long as they are used to explain with fresh insights on persistent issues like the plight of Moros in southern Philippines and the unique form of colonialism that shackled them for centuries.

Colonialism is traditionally understood as a policy by which a nation maintains or extends its control over foreign dependencies."¹ While the difference between the concept of colonialism and imperialism

is minimal, to say the least, the former “usually involved the transfer of population to a new territory, where the new arrivals lived as permanent settlers while maintaining political allegiance to their country of origin.” The latter “meaning to command [sic] draws attention to the way that one country exercises power over another, whether through settlement, sovereignty, or indirect mechanisms of control.”² Imperialism, it seems, is the most appropriate term to describe a command, a rule or any form of influence exertion and power arrangement that comes from afar. But in the world of globalization, communication and information revolution, rule by distance and power exertion from other nations and countries are rendered insignificant.

As pointed out by Edward Said “modern history is largely intelligible as the result of colonialism, and whose present travail cannot be detached from the operations of imperialism.”³ “A powerful country like the United States,” declared Senator J. William Fulbright in the 1960s, “ought to have an empire.”⁴ Like past imperial powers, the United States pursues global projects such as: (1) to keep the existing capitalist world capitalist; (2) to find ways to invest surplus capital abroad where the largest profits could be made; (3) to find markets overseas for American goods; (4) to secure control over the sources of raw materials; and, (5) the establishment of a global network of unchangeable military power.⁵ During the Cold War the United States was generally referred to as a “superpower;” and in the post-Cold War a “hyperpower.”⁶

It may be said that aptness of concepts whether colonialism or imperialism or any euphemism for that matter hardly matters as long as the basic element of control and domination is present -- be it in the form of policy, exertion of political and military might, economic dominance, and other modes of cultural invasion.

II. Multiple Colonialism

There is a prevailing view particularly among Filipino historians and nationalists that the Philippines' “neocolonial status” under the United States explains the country's woes and other social, political and economic ills. “The country's neocolonial status,” writes Filipino nationalist historian Renato Constantino, “is one basic national problem.”⁷ In capsule, such status is responsible in making the Philippines stagnated, if not retrogressive, for the past several years. Whatever is the veracity of this statement, what is of interest is the

question if the same “neocolonial status” exists or has the same application in Mindanao particularly for the Bangsamoro people.

While many people agree with the view of the Philippines having a neocolonial status under the United States, this essay contends that such a status is only applicable for certain parts of the Philippines and the Filipinos but not for the Moroland and the Bangsamoro. Neocolonialism is so weak a term, as if an oxymoron, to describe the colonial status of the Moros. Apart from having a separate history of their own, the Moros have distinct experience of Spanish, American and Philippine colonization including the emergence of a totally new form of colonialism that has imbued Moros beyond neocolonial status; it is a status, for lack of a better term, that is “multiple colonial” in character.

The main difference is that while Filipinos were recipients of Independence in 1946 as they relished their “freedom” thereafter, the Moros remained perpetual victims of colonialism without closure, a colonialism that has become increasingly intensified, compounded and multi-headed with multiple strings operating in many pulley centers around the world, which the category of old and new (neo) colonialism or post-colonialism does not make any sense. Finally, the issue is not the absence of response from Moros to decolonize their Homeland: It is short-sightedness, revisionism and complicity among Muslim traditional leaders and Moro movements that defined the rather short life cycle of their struggle; hence, making them party in the deepening of “multiple colonialism” in their area.

As wave of successive foreign powers (the Philippines included) tried to subjugate and dominate the Moros, what developed in the Moroland is a sort of un-deconstructed, incremental and multi-headed colonialism that operates through manifold strings of control that is intimately and strategically attached to, and maneuvered by, hierarchy of interest and power (e.g, domestic, foreign). The strings of control, and if you may imperial, geo-political and economic design, flow through, and implemented by, various network of governmental, multilateral and proxy agencies and institutions including comprador groups, dynastic, traditional and new families including personalities. They create thus an extensive hegemonic system that operates in an ever-changing yet constant cycle of top-bottom and bottom-top processes that practically dwarfs even the most extensive ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Vatican or the underworld of the Mafia.

It can be said thus that there are, at least, four major strings of control that operate in the Moroland; namely: (1) U.S. colonialism (historical, unclosed); (2) Philippine colonialism (direct; relative to Moros); (3) multilateral colonialism (geopolitical, strategic and economic interest; corporate globalization); and (4) current U.S. colonialism (war on international terrorism; “second coming”). Due to lack of space, this essay only provides a general sketch of the major strings by highlighting their historical antecedents and present features. Flesh and bones of each string may be substantiated in other author's future works. What can be generally stated this time is that when the Philippine Republic took over in 1946, the status of Moros became not simply “neocolonial” with respect to the Philippines but “doubly colonial” in relation to both the Philippines and the United States. It is because when the United States absolved Moros' sovereignty and transferred it arbitrarily to Filipinos in 1946 and even earlier, the Philippine Independence did not necessarily close American colonialism in Mindanao and Sulu. What happened is that the mode of U.S. control was simply transferred to Filipinos and thence become indirect and continued to operate by proxy.

After having become a neocolonial stooge by the U.S., the new Philippine Republic became colonial by herself as she established control and sovereignty over the Moroland. As the strings of control pass through pulley centers in other countries, foreign agencies, international financial institutions among others, the notion of “multilateral colonialism” becomes even more entrenched. Unlike the Philippines-U.S.' “double colonialism” that operates in more holistic form through political, military and economic means, the Philippines' “multilateral colonialism” with other countries focuses more on economic and cultural dimensions. Finally, as the United States returned to Mindanao and Sulu recently in the pretext of waging an over-bloated, media war against international terrorism, the U.S. project turned full circle complementing, if not continuing, the previously unclosed America's imperial enterprise in the Moroland.⁸

III. Consequence of Multiple Colonialism

At no time in recent history where the Philippines in tandem with the United States and other countries, government institutions, multilateral agencies and international financial institutions operate an extensive, well-coordinated and well-oiled strings of political, military,

economic, and cultural control that course through a number of pulleys in Manila, Makati, Mindanao, and Washington and others. Although the strings of control and domination had tied the Moroland much earlier, they became more pronounced after World War II when the Philippines was integrated into the imperial orbit of what Samir Amin referred to as “the bourgeoisies of the Triad” under the command of the United States, Western Europe and Japan⁹ whose primary interest is to extract control on, and to court loyalty from, many governments in the Third World.

Moreover, as control and domination are euphemistically peddled as economic assistance, military exercise, peace and development, these are, as mentioned, aggravated with the “second coming” of United States to southern Philippines. As the Philippines and other foreign countries monopolize the charting of political, social and economic development of Mindanao particularly the Moroland while extracting her resources with impunity or in complicity with comprador interest in the area, Moros are perturbed as to where do they configure in such hegemonic project which comes in euphemism as “development;” what strings, if any, they hold in the visioning and implementing of a project concocted by foreigners; whether such project is intended for their salvation or for their continuing slavery and beggary before the Filipino government and international community in both short and long term.

While pontificating their avowed aim to address poverty and bring about peace and development in Moro areas as if it has become their responsibility to “nanny” a people with “candies” instead of giving them freedom, justice and independence so that they will grow by themselves, it is undeniable that through systematic and multilateral operation of control (read: “development”), the more the Moros have been turned into the abyss even as they remain colonial subject in perpetuity. Because of this, it can be said that the primary aim of such project is to render the target community (e.g., Moros) not only as a minority but as hapless victims whose remaining means of survival is sustained through complete dependence, subservience and mendicancy to a central government, not to mention foreign countries including international donor agencies.

What is at issue is not merely because Moros become subject people by other nations near or far: what is more fundamentally at stake is how they are systematically dehumanized as persons and de-valored as historic and proud people, while rendering their self-dignity and self-worth (*martabbat*) shattered; and that widespread yet false impression is

created that they have to be perpetually “assisted” by other people and other countries and hypocritically pretend they love the Moros and other people of Mindanao, when in reality they are only after for their own geopolitical, strategic, and economic interests.

The significance of clarifying the nuances of colonialism in Moroland as distinct from traditional perspective of Philippine colonialism is to show that there are different levels of colonialism in the country, which are directly related to the degree of freedom and development of the Moros, an axiomatic truth that has been consistently proven by studies and statistics these past several decades. This means whatever intervention and euphemism (e.g., political autonomy, economic development, financial assistance) the Philippines and other countries pour in Muslim Mindanao -- short of extending the Moros their freedom and independence -- will all be for naught. They only perpetuate the “multiple colonialism” there. The reason is basic: of the four strings of control mentioned above, the Moros do not hold even a single string.

What the Moros have is simply a silhouette of power duly calibrated by Filipino government and other countries while they are made to scramble perpetually on economic crumbs thrown to them. The much vaunted “development” financed and established by foreign countries and multi-donor agencies cannot be considered development in the real sense. Apart from being short of the Moros' aspiration of freedom and independence, such “development” is simply put in place in the name of expediency whose beneficiaries are primarily foreign fund providers in pursuit of their interests. “No country uses its aid to greater profit itself than the United States,” writes Constantino, “so that we may safely say that the term 'U.S. aid' is a misnomer unless it is taken to mean aid to the United States.”¹⁰ The same must be true of “assistance” by other countries and so-called donor institutions and financial agencies.

IV. Antecedents of Multiple Colonialism in Moroland

Flashing back, it can be said that the making of “multiple colonialism” in Moroland is a carry over and a by product of U.S. geopolitical and economic maneuvers in Mindanao and Sulu notwithstanding political opportunism by early Filipino nationalists since the early 20th century. And such form of colonialism is anchored on a false claim by the United States of her sovereignty over Mindanao and

Sulu through the Treaty of Paris in 1898 and the Kiram-Bates Treaty in 1899. As underscored by Onofre Corpus, it was only northern and central Philippines that Spain controlled; hence, the "buying" of \$20,000,000 of the Philippines by the United States from Spain did not include Mindanao and Sulu. But America arbitrarily pushed through with her policy of benevolence, assimilation, pacification and Filipinization on Moros with complete obedience and complicity from early Filipino nationalists like Emilio Aguinaldo, Manuel Quezon, and the like.

It is not therefore accidental for Filipinos to inherit an imposed, unfinished colonial war by the United States in Mindanao and Sulu. It was exceedingly beneficial for Filipino nationalists when America maneuvered the transfer of Moro sovereignty to the Philippines without any "plebiscitary consent" from the Moros. Despite the protests of Moro datus contained in historic Moro documents like the "Sulu Petition," "Zamboanga Petition," "Dansalan Declaration," the "Maguindanao Memorandum" that practically begged the non-inclusion of Mindanao and Sulu in the Philippine Republic before 1946, the United States willfully disregarded them.

The United States did not only violate the rights of the then sovereign Moro people but as well trampled the democratic and egalitarian principles that she supposedly espoused. Even the formula of U.S. Congressman Robert Bacon in the so-called "Bacon Bill" of 1926, which proposed the granting of two governments in the Philippines (one in Luzon and Vizayas and the other in Mindanao and Sulu) was nonchalantly disregarded. While eyeing for rubber plantation in Mindanao, Congressman Bacon showed his foresight that proved prophetic a few years later. He said: "The Moros are essentially a different race from Filipinos, that for hundred years there has existed bitter racial and religious hatreds between the two and that complete union of the Filipinos under one government is distasteful to the Moros."¹¹

V.Philippine Independence and Multiple Colonialism

The granting of independence to the Philippines by the United States in 1946 is made as the yardstick of effacing the Philippines' status of colonialism, making the birth of the Philippine Republic the very antidote of American colonization. However, the granting of independence did not necessarily make the Philippines immune from

U.S. influence, a fact that is largely irrefutable; hence, making it the reason why the status of the Philippines is generally viewed as neo-colonial. The establishment of U.S. military bases in the country and the forging of various pro-U.S. economic and military agreements by a rosary of Philippine administrations are a testament of the Philippines as having followed more assiduously her colonial master through the years.

If there is a price that 1946 bequeaths the Filipinos it is this indisputable fact: it sealed the Philippines' claim of sovereignty over the Moroland, a price given in silver platter whose capital was mere complicity and blind obeisance to foreign master. The underside of that price, however, is that the Philippines particularly in the southern part of the island has never known "peace" even as the country remained perpetually bugged by a chain of Moro rebellions for more than half a century. With an eye of hindsight, question is raised whether the integration of the Moroland into the Philippine Republic is a purse or curse. In this regard, it is worth contemplating the thought of an eminent writer of Moro struggle:

One might have thought, nay wished, that after four decades of efforts to Filipinise the Bangsamoro people, the wall of distinction between the Filipinos and the Moros would have disappeared. But the hard truth is that, as prophesied by the Lanao datus in Dansalan, annexation has instead put them on the shredding machine of political conflict and violence in which one manifestly pursues an attempt to dominate and – possibly – extinguish the other, while this other stubbornly digs in his heels in a last ditch effort to preserve a historic heritage and survival itself. Philippine independence was merely a historical threshold which has transformed the relations between the two peoples from one tragic episode to another.¹²

When Abdurasad Asani wrote the now classic "Moros - Not Filipinos" forty years ago, it was beyond the canvass of his premonition to speak about the "tragedy" after the 1970s. But three or four decades after and even more, Asani's thought resonates as the same Moroland akin to a "shredding machine of political conflict and violence." Numerous wars have been waged and countless lives and properties have been wasted while the same social condition has remained. No doubt the Moros have been persistent in pursuit of their right to self-

determination in succeeding years. As Muslims, it is their belief that Divine Providence, or at least, history must have already given them a sacred and lofty recognition.

Yet, it is undeniable that short-sightedness, factionalism, and disunity have seriously plagued the Moro struggle as it contends with feudal conditions in Moroland. The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) strive for power and justice so that the Moros would be freed from the grip of Philippine colonialism, oligarchy and traditional politics; however, due to entrenched feudal structure worsened by democratic and electoral deficit in Moro areas, it is Muslim *trapos* (traditional politicians), their families and their clans that end up as the primary beneficiary of peace dividend and other forms of “economic development” in Mindanao.

With their connection to equally rapacious *trapos* in the central government, many Moro traditional leaders are able to win in questionable elections, and boldly claim that they are the “representatives” of the Moro people while in reality they only represent themselves, their families and their interests. Despite their limited qualification and capability, they are able to run with impunity political and economic institutions in the Autonomous Region and other local government units as they, without any sense of propriety, scuttle the reform initiated by Moro movements for self-determination. And as they jostle for power (e.g., autonomy, election) among themselves and scramble for economic crumbs (e.g., development; foreign assistance) thrown to them, the condition of Moro masses remains unchanged and even worsens through the years. While they do not control any major pulley centers, Moro *trapos* facilitate the pulling of critical strings of “multiple colonialism” in Moroland.

END NOTES:

¹ <http://education.yahoo.com/reference/dictionary/entry/colonialism/>

² <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/colonialism/>

³ Gauri Viswanathan ed. *Power, Politics and Culture: Interviews with Edward W. Said* New York: Pantheon Books, 2001, p. 16.

⁴Tom Hanahoe *America Rules: US Foreign Policy, Globalization and Corporate USA* Ireland: Brandon, 2003, p. 44.

⁵Felix Greene *The Enemy: Notes on Imperialism and Revolution* London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1970, p. 106.

⁶*Op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁷Renato Constantino *The Nationalist Alternative Revised Edition* Quezon City: Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1987, p. 1.

⁸For extensive analysis of the U.S. War on Terror in many parts of the world including the Philippines, see, Bobby Tuazon et al *Unmasking the War on Terror U.S. Imperialist Hegemony and Crisis* Quezon City: Center for Anti-Imperialist Studies (CAIS), 2002. For brief discussion of Muslim world's perception on the war on terror, see, Julkipli Wadi "Ambivalence, Ferment and Trade-off since 9/11," in Benjamin Tolosa (ed.), *Before and After 9/11: An Asian Perspective* Quezon City: Ateneo Center for Asian Studies, 2004.

⁹Samir Amin *Obsolescent Capitalism* London: Zed Books, 2003, p. 7.

¹⁰Renato Constantino *The Nationalist Alternative Revised Edition* Quezon City: Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1987, p. 72.

¹¹Bernardita Reyes Churhill *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States 1919-1934* Manila: National Historical Institute, 1983, p. 135.

¹²Abdurasad Asani Moros – Not Filipinos, NPP, NY, p. 22.

The Struggle of the Muslim People in the Southern Philippines: Independence or Autonomy? *



By Temario C. Rivera

Since the 1960s, two major armed Muslim movements have sought to establish an independent state in Mindanao, the traditional homeland of the Muslims in the southern Philippines.¹ In pursuit of this goal, the protracted armed conflict in Mindanao has exacted an enormous toll in lives lost and wounded and families displaced, not to mention the loss of property. For instance, just for the seven-year period from 1969 to 1976, one estimate puts the death toll at 60,000, the wounded at 54,000 and the displaced at 350,000.² From 1975 to 2002, estimates of economic losses in Mindanao due to the conflict range from P5 billion to P10 billion pesos annually.³ The conflict has gone through cycles of armed struggle, international diplomacy, mediation and peace negotiations but no definitive closure has been reached to date.

In this paper, I will first provide a brief background of the roots of the armed conflict and the persistence of the Muslim separatist project. I will next examine the viability of the program and demands of the three major armed Muslim movements and the responses by the government, taking into account the internationalization of the conflict. I will then conclude by analyzing some policy alternatives for addressing the armed conflict.

* This is a revised version of an article originally published in *Asian Cultural Studies* 15 (2006), pp. 101-109.

The Muslims in the Philippines: the Quest for the *Bangsamoro* Homeland⁴

The Muslims comprise about 5 percent of the country's total population and constitute the majority in five out of the 23 provinces in the southern Philippines (Mindanao) where they are mostly concentrated.⁵ Islam took root in Mindanao much earlier before the coming of Christianity with the Spanish colonial conquest in the 16th century.⁶ In pre-Hispanic Philippines, Islamic culture and religion radiated from two centers of political power: the Sultanate in Sulu (1450 A.D.) and the Sultanate in Maguindanao, central Mindanao (1511 A.D.). Many of the key coastal trading centers in central and northern Philippines, including Manila, already had Muslim rulers and the Islamization of the country would have proceeded as a matter of course without the Spanish conquest.

Through "divide and rule" tactics pursued through military attacks, cooptation, and devious diplomacy, Spanish and later American colonial rule succeeded in putting an end to the political power of the two Islamic sultanates. Moreover, the Americans introduced a system of electoral democracy which produced a new generation of elected Muslim politicians from elite families. However, in the national scheme of politics the Muslim politicians played subordinate roles reflecting their far smaller political constituencies and bases of power.

A confluence of the following factors provided the conditions for the emergence of the armed separatist movements after the second world war: 1) the loss of traditional Muslim homelands to waves of local and foreign corporate incursions and government-supported Christian internal migrations to Mindanao; 2) economic backwardness of the Muslim-dominated provinces in relation to the rest of the country; 3) difficult access of Muslims to government positions especially in the higher bureaucracies and career services; 4) the leadership provided by a new generation of university-educated Muslim intellectuals and professionals in organizing the separatist movements; and 5) a vastly expanded network of international linkages that have supported in varying ways the Muslim struggle for autonomy or independence. All of these would revive and strengthen the consciousness of a cultural and religious identity increasingly seen as distinct from the majority Christian population.

The Armed Separatist Movements: New Conditions, New Leaders

The decade of the sixties and seventies saw the emergence of the two major Muslim armed movements, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) founded in 1969 and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in 1977. These decades marked the resurgence of militant nationalism in the Philippines led by university students and intellectuals, including many of the Muslim leaders who would figure prominently in the founding of both the MNLF and the MILF. Among the Muslim student and youth activists, three events in particular served as the defining moments for the hastening of their radicalization. First there was the “Jabidah Massacre” in 1968 in which 180 persons, mostly Muslims, who were being secretly trained by the Marcos administration to invade and occupy Sabah were all killed when they refused to follow the order to attack.⁷ Second, in response to this massacre of the mostly Muslim trainees, then governor of Cotabato province, Datu Udtog Matalam, founded the Muslim Independence Movement (MIM) which sought the creation of an independent state in Mindanao.⁸ The third major event saw the mass killings of many Muslims in central Mindanao between 1970-1971 provoked by escalating economic, political and ethnic tensions between Christian and Muslim communities. Most of these attacks were perpetrated by paramilitary gangs oftentimes organized by Christian local officials with the support of factions of the military and police.

The armed separatist Muslim movements that emerged during the sixties and the seventies showed distinctive features. The leaders were university educated or professional Muslims in contrast with the older generation of Muslim leaders who were usually elected politicians. The two key leaders of this new generation were Nur Misuari and Salamat Hashim. Misuari was educated at the University of the Philippines and served as an instructor of political science in the same university while Salamat studied at Al-Azhar University in Cairo. Both Misuari and Salamat co-founded the MNLF but Salamat would later break away from the MNLF and led the founding of the MILF. As such this new generation of leaders took a different career path from the traditional Muslim politicians but also had the appropriate social connections and skills to cultivate necessary linkages with the older leaders and politicians. For instance, the training of the first generation of MNLF fighters, referred to as the “Top 90” which took place in Pulau Pangkor, Perak, Malaysia was

facilitated by the traditional Muslim politicians such as then Congressman Rashid Lucman, ex-senator Salipada Pendatun and then Governor Datu Udtog Matalam.⁹

Secondly, reflecting the internationalization of the armed struggle, these new leaders were able to develop enduring political and organizational bonds with various Muslim leaders and governments in the world. The founding of the MNLF and the MILF coincided with the resurgence of militant Islamic leaders and movements in the Muslim world who were prepared to provide both political and military support to Islamic struggles for independence in various parts of the world. For instance, the MNLF was granted special observer status as the official representative of the Moro people in the Philippines by the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), the world's largest organization of Muslim states. Among the OIC member states, Libya was a strong supporter of the MNLF and together with Syria, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Pakistan, provided training grounds and weapons.

Salamat Hashim, the founder of the MILF, was able to establish excellent international connections with various radical Muslim leaders while based in Egypt and in the Middle East for several years. Salamat was also based in Pakistan between 1982 and 1987 and was responsible for sending as many as 500 Muslims for religious and military training to the Afghan-Pakistan border.¹⁰ Many guerrillas from the MNLF and MILF fought in the Afghanistan war against the Soviet occupation and in the process, forged lifetime solidarity linkages with various Islamic leaders and militants from different parts of the Muslim world.

Further reflecting the internationalization of the Muslim struggle, the third armed Muslim group, the Abu Sayyaf, (Bearer or Father of the Sword in Arabic) was founded in 1991 by Ustadz Abdurajak Janjalani. He was a 1989-1990 alumnus of Abdul Rasul Sayyaf's Afghan military academy and the name adopted by Janjalani's group was in honor of the Afghan institution's founder.¹¹ In one founding document, Janjalani claims that the Abu Sayyaf was established to "serve as a bridge and balance between the MILF and the MNLF" to counter charges that the group was another unwelcome faction in the Muslim struggle.¹² He also asserts that the group's ultimate goal is the "establishment of a purely Islamic government" and that the "... true and real objective of humanity is the establishment of justice and righteousness for all under the law of the noble Qur'an and purified sunnah". However, after the death of

Abdurajak Janjalani in 1998, the Abu Sayyaf has become better known for its terrorist activities as it has engaged in a number of spectacular cases of international kidnappings for ransom, ruthless beheading of prisoners, indiscriminate bombings of public places and civilian targets, and operational linkages with Jemaah Islamiyah.

The Political Project of the Armed Groups: Vision and Reality

The difficulty of pursuing the political project of an independent Muslim homeland is dramatized by current demographic and political realities in the southern Philippines today. One hundred years ago, the Muslim population constituted about 76 percent of Mindanao's total population. Today, it is down to only about 20 percent of the current population as a result of policies of internal Christian migration, corporate expansion, land grabbing and seizures, and family displacements from the armed conflict. Moreover, the Muslims are now in the majority in only 5 of the 23 provinces in the southern Philippines: Sulu, 98 percent; Lanao del Sur, 93 percent; Tawi-Tawi, 92 percent; Basilan, 80 percent; and Maguindanao, 64 percent.¹³ In addition, these Muslim-dominated provinces do not constitute a single contiguous area and also represent various class, ethno-linguistic groupings within the Muslim community with their own histories of differences and violent clan rivalries. For instance, part of the differences between the MNLF under Misuari and the Salamat-led MILF has to do with the different ethno-linguistic political bases of each movement. Thus, the Misuari-MNLF forces are strongest among the Tausug-Sama communities of Sulu and Tawi-Tawi while the MILF draws its support mainly from the Maguindanaons and Maranaos.

A potent basis for the region's long history of resistance and resentment against the central government has been the economic marginalization of the Muslim-dominated provinces. As a region, the ARMM is the poorest in the country and its five constituent provinces are also the poorest both in Mindanao and in the whole country. In 2000, the incidence of poverty in ARMM was almost twice that for the country as a whole, with about 63 percent of the population in the region considered to be poor compared with 34 percent for the country as a whole.¹⁴ In terms of human development indicators which combine measures for income, health and education, the ARMM provinces also have the lowest rankings among all provinces in the country (see Table 1).

In pursuing its project of an independent *Bangsamoro*, the MNLF under Misuari stressed the geographic boundaries of the pre-colonial, traditional Moro homelands as the territorial base of this proposed entity which, however, now comprises mostly Christian-dominated provinces. In recognition of this reality, Misuari therefore uses the concept of *Bangsamoro* to include the Muslims, Christians, and the indigenous highlanders in this area. To show that this political project is not only for Muslims, the MNLF has also sought the support of non-Muslim personalities and groups, particularly those who resent the political and economic marginalization of Mindanao by the Manila-based central government. In contrast, the MILF has officially sought a more Islamic identity for its movement with Islam as its official ideology. Thus, one of the main charges of Salamat against Misuari when he led his supporters to break away from the MNLF was that the leadership was being “manipulated away [by Misuari] from Islamic bases, methodologies and objectives, and was fast evolving towards a Marxist-Maoist orientation”.¹⁵

It is true that Misuari comes from a more secular educational background with his studies at the country's premier state university and his active involvement in Marxist-oriented nationalist groups in the 1960s. However, it appears that the problems that eventually led to the breakaway of Salamat's group had more to do with charges about Misuari's personalistic and authoritarian style of leadership. It is also true that the MILF under Salamat is more self-consciously Islamic in its orientation but in practice it has also proven to be pragmatic in its politics. For instance, there are reports that the MILF had tactical working arrangements with the communist guerrillas in some Mindanao battle fronts. At the same time, the MILF, or at least some of its local commands, and the Abu Sayyaf have also linked up with various fighters of the Jemaah Islamiyah, the regional network of militant Muslim activists associated with Al-Qaeda.¹⁶

Table 1: Poverty Incidence and Human Development Indicators for ARMM provinces compared with Metro-Manila and National Data.

	Poverty Incidence (%) Year 2003	Life Expectancy at birth (years) 2003	Primary & high school enrollment rate (%) 2002	Per capita income, pesos (2003)	Human Development Index, Rank by Province, 2003
Philippines	25.7	69.8	90.6	27,442	
Metro Manila	4.3	70.0	92.8	39,639	
Sulu	88.8	52.8	83.8	8,430	77
Tawi-Tawi	69.9	51.2	91.4	10,780	75
Basilan	65.6	60.6	83.9	13,265	74
Lanao del Sur	38.8	57.9	81.1	20,016	68
Maguindanao	55.8	52.0	81.2	14,198	76

* HDI Rankings for the country's total of 77 provinces. Sulu ranks last followed by Maguindanao, Tawi-Tawi, and Basilan.
Source: *Philippine Human Development Report 2005*.

Political Negotiations between the Government and the Muslim Movements

The original negotiating document for the peace process in the Southern Philippines goes back to the Tripoli agreement signed on December 23, 1976 between the government and the MNLF with the participation of the OIC and with Libyan leader Muammar Qadaffi playing the critical role. The most significant provision of the agreement sought the establishment of autonomy in the Southern Philippines comprising 13 provinces. This agreement represented a major departure from the MNLF's original goal of an independent Bangsamoro to one of autonomy within Philippine sovereignty and territorial integrity. However, Marcos unilaterally implemented the agreement by creating two regional autonomous provinces comprising only three provinces out of the originally mandated 13 provinces. Both the MNLF and the OIC strongly protested this move and in fact resulted in the OIC's recognition of the MNLF as the "legitimate representative of the Muslim movement" in Southern Philippines and also granted it observer status. No further formal negotiations between the government and the MNLF took place till the ouster of Marcos in 1986 by a military mutiny and civilian uprising.

The Aquino administration that assumed power after the ouster of Marcos sought to address the Muslim struggle in Mindanao by creating an Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) through an organic act passed by Congress. In August 1989, the Organic Act for the ARMM, Republic Act 6734, was passed but in the plebiscite that followed only four (Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao) out of the 13 provinces voted to join the ARMM. In a later plebiscite in 2001, under the amended Organic Act one other province (Basilan) and one city (Marawi City) joined the ARMM. The MNLF boycotted all electoral exercises associated with the ARMM until 1996, arguing that the Tripoli Agreement mandating the creation of an autonomous region with 13 provinces be implemented.

Twenty years after the 1976 Tripoli Agreement, the government and the MNLF finally succeeded in negotiating a peace accord in 1996 through the mediation of the OIC with Libya and Indonesia playing the major roles. Under strong pressure from the OIC and Indonesia, Misuari and the MNLF agreed to accept the autonomy framework under the ARMM. Supported by the Ramos administration, Misuari subsequently was elected as ARMM governor in 1996. However, Misuari's record as ARMM governor proved to be unimpressive. Facing severe budgetary constraints, lack of management skills, and corruption, Misuari failed to provide a credible leadership. He is now under detention in Manila facing charges of treason and rebellion when he led an abortive uprising against the government in 2001.¹⁷ Since 2001, the MNLF has also broken up into at least two factions: a pro-government group led by the so-called Council of 15 that took power in the ARMM in the elections after the abortive uprising by Misuari, and the loyalists of Misuari rooted mainly in the island provinces of Sulu and Tawi-Tawi. The Misuari loyalists figured in fierce armed clashes with government forces in the Sulu islands in February 2005, provoked by the killing of an unarmed Muslim family by government military units operating against the Abu Sayyaf in the same area.

Meanwhile, the MILF refused to recognize the ARMM and participate in its electoral exercises, focusing instead on building up its political and military strength. As claimed by one leading MILF cadre, the ARMM is a "total failure because it does not provide genuine autonomy and led to the disintegration of the MNLF".¹⁸ Not as beholden to the OIC as the MNLF, the MILF has been able to exercise a greater degree of independence and flexibility from this body while welcoming

the OIC's concern with the situation in Mindanao. In 2000, the Estrada administration ordered an all-out war against the various military camps of the MILF, displacing in the process close to a million people. Through the good offices of then Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir, the new administration of President Arroyo succeeded in restarting negotiations with the MILF with the signing of an agreement on March 21, 2001 to resume peace talks. After a ceasefire was agreed upon, Libya and later Malaysia facilitated a new round of peace talks between the government and the MILF. A monitoring force composed of personnel from Malaysia, Brunei and Libya was sent to the Philippines to oversee the ceasefire and formal peace talks hosted by Malaysia resumed in April 2005.¹⁹ The talks focus on three main substantive agenda: 1) security aspects relating to the cessation of hostilities and its implementing guidelines; 2) relief and rehabilitation of the conflict areas by accessing both local and international resources; and 3) ancestral domain claims. The ancestral domain claims is an extremely contentious issue since it would require reconciling conflicting traditions and practices on land ownership among Muslims, Christians, and the *lumads* (indigenous tribes living in various Mindanao provinces) and the historic claims to the Bangsamoro homeland.

The participation of Malaysia in a facilitator-mediator role is a major political opportunity in the negotiations because like the OIC in the GRP-MNLF talks, Malaysia has also strongly counseled the MILF to drop its secessionist project and work within the purview of Philippine law and government.²⁰ Malaysia has material and political resources to influence the outcome of the talks. Moreover, Malaysia presents a model of an economically successful Islamic dominated society with significant appeal to leading MILF leaders.²¹ However, the MILF is also wary about too much reliance on OIC mediation in light of what it considers to be the failed outcome of the GRP-MNLF final peace agreement in 1996. In the process of preparing for the substantive peace negotiations in Malaysia, the MILF convened a three-day consultation assembly in June 2005 with tens of thousands of its mass supporters from all over Mindanao, an extraordinary event participated in by diplomats from the OIC, World Bank officials, and Philippine government representatives. This was an astute political move by the MILF to legitimize openly before its mass supporters its agenda of negotiations with the government as well as signal its readiness to activate international support from both Islamic and non-Islamic sources.

American Intervention

In the aftermath of 9/11, American intervention in the heartland of Muslim Mindanao has introduced a new dimension to the armed conflict and peace process. The MILF and the Abu Sayyaf have been charged of coddling Islamic terrorists supposedly linked to Osama bin Laden's *Al Qaida* network through the *Jemaah Islamiyah*. While admitting that all kinds of Islamic visitors had access to its various camps in the past, the MILF denies any formal operational linkages with terrorists. In pursuit of its campaign against Islamic radical groups, the U.S. has provided counter-terrorist training and intelligence and increased substantially its military financial assistance to the Philippine military. In 2005, US foreign military financing for the Philippines almost doubled from US\$30 million to US\$55 million. The U.S. has also provided official development assistance to Mindanao and specifically allocated US\$30 million to the MILF conflict-ridden areas. However, the United States reallocated this development fund in mid-year 2004 to other areas, charging the government and the MILF of not making enough progress in their peace negotiations.²²

While increased American financial military assistance and training can help upgrade the Philippine military's poor resources and capabilities, this also risks undermining and derailing the country's protracted search for a political solution to the armed conflict with both the Muslim movements and the Communist guerrillas.²³ There are at least three pitfalls to American intervention in the internal armed conflict. First, it inflates the Philippine military's sense of power and confidence that the armed conflict could be defeated mainly by military means. Secondly, it polarizes public responses since American intervention has always served as a flashpoint for militant nationalist mobilizations. And finally, American intervention subsumes the local armed conflicts to the greater strategic interests of current U.S. policy in its war against terrorism, glossing over in the process the nuances and particularities of local movements long rooted in legitimate grievances. In the ongoing peace talks between the government and the MILF as facilitated by Malaysia, all the parties have so far avoided any direct participation by the United States even while the MILF has welcomed development assistance for the conflict-ridden areas from all quarters.

Towards a Political Resolution of the Conflict

The Muslim struggle in the country has long reached a critical stage where a viable and acceptable alternative to outright independence and separatism will have to be decisively fleshed out. Given the unsatisfactory outcome of negotiations between the government and the MNLF and the many limitations of the current ARMM framework, what is the alternative? One way out is not to abandon the concept and practice of regional or specialized autonomy but to expand and deepen it whether in the framework of a shift to a formal federal system or a radical amendment of the existing organic act that created the ARMM.

A new concept and substantial practice of autonomy for the Muslims in the country will have to address at least three key concerns: First, an innovative political leadership that is able to bridge and transcend the competing legitimacy claims of traditional Islamic leaders, revolutionary leaders nurtured by the armed struggle, and politicians with electoral mandates. Secondly, an autonomy that is clearly accountable to its own people in some transparent and predictable manner, especially since the geographic political entity sought to be established necessarily includes ethno-linguistic, religious minorities, as well as Muslims who will always have differences even among themselves. Thirdly, a concept and practice of autonomy invested with full financial and budgetary autonomy.

As shown by the experience of past elected ARMM governors- - particularly that of Misuari and Hussin, both leading MNLF cadres- - the regional government continues to be hobbled by budgetary allocations, lack of competent staff personnel, and endemic corruption. Moreover, there is oftentimes little synergy between the ARMM regional officials and many of the locally elected officials especially those from traditional political clans who have their own independent bases of political and economic power. For instance, the Local Government Code of 1991 provides local government units with significantly increased shares of the national internal revenue allocations and enhanced taxation powers vesting them with greater financial autonomy compared with the ARMM government whose finances are largely controlled by the national government.

A World Bank-funded assessment of governance problems in the ARMM stresses this lack of financial autonomy thus:

“ . . . although autonomous in name and in legal status, the ARMM regional government has almost no independent source of income and has little flexibility in budget management. It depends hugely on the National Government for financing of significant devolved responsibilities, including human development. In contrast, LGUs (local government units) in the region enjoy fiscal autonomy in management of their IRAs (Internal Revenue Allocations) . . . , but have few mandated responsibilities for the human development sectors.”²⁴

In turn, the ARMM's dearth of financial and human resources has also severely deterred its ability to realize the mandates provided by the current organic act for the significant practice of Islamic laws and values as shown in the creation of Islamic (*shari'a*) courts at different levels and the full recognition and creation of *madaris* (Islamic religious schools). Many of the shari'a courts as mandated by law cannot be established and those actually existing courts lack judges.²⁵ On the other hand, the overwhelming majority of the traditional Islamic religious schools (*madaris*) remain as poor institutions with little resources and competence for combining the teaching of Islamic religious values and the secular subjects and skills required to succeed in the broader society.

The MILF Alternative

The MILF's proposal to create a Bangsamoro Juridical Entity (BJE) assumes a trajectory of self-rule for the Bangsamoro territory or a radically substantial autonomy very different from the limited autonomy mandated for the ARMM. While the MILF had consistently refused to participate in the ARMM given this entity's institutional and structural infirmities, in the end the MILF must also address the same contentious issues of political legitimacy and control over resources and ancestral domains. For instance, assuming that the government and the MILF can agree mutually on which communities/barangays will be included in the BJE, how will its political legitimacy be established: by constitutional amendment or through a “Comprehensive Compact” between the government and the MILF and later to be validated by a referendum?²⁶ Even assuming that these targeted communities for

inclusion in the BJE are predominantly Muslim, how will the political wishes of the minority populations of *lumads* and Christians be factored in?²⁷

Some supporters of the MILF vision argue that the project of creating a Bangsamoro homeland or a BJE is naturally anchored and legitimized by the principle of self-determination.²⁸ Unfortunately, however, this laudable principle is one of the most legally and politically contentious propositions. Assuming that the separatist-independence project does not come to reality through the force of arms, the principle of self-determination can only work when the major parties to the conflict agree mutually to abide by it and be bound by its results as for instance through a credibly conducted referendum. There could be merit in trying out some form of phased-referenda that is not immediately threatening to either the GRP or even the MILF for even the latter can not be absolutely sure about real wishes of its own constituency. In line with this proposal it might be worthwhile to conduct a non-binding referendum in the formative stages of fleshing out the alternative juridical entity.²⁹ Later, after some transition period, a definitive, binding referendum can then be worked out.

The Aborted GRP-MILF Peace Agreement on August 5, 2008

By any measure, the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD) between the government and the MILF which was slated to be signed on August 5, 2008 in Malaysia represents a radically substantial recognition of Bangsamoro historic claims on their ancestral domain and complemented by the creation of a new Bangsamoro Juridical Entity (BJE)³⁰ with equally radical powers and authority. Because of its highly contentious substantive claims considered to be unconstitutional by its many critics, the scheduled signing of the MOA-AD in Malaysia was stopped by the Supreme Court which granted a temporary restraining order in response to petitions filed by those opposed to the agreement.

The MOA-AD resulted in recognizing a new set of principles and concepts for addressing the centuries-old conflict in the southern Philippines by using an overall framework which departed from a strict, legalistic reading of the constitution. Thus, under the MOA-AD, the relationship between the central government and the BJE is now framed as “associative characterized by shared authority and responsibility”

with the BJE enjoying its own structure of governance institutions with defined powers and functions. To this end, the BJE is granted, among others, the following substantial powers and authority: 1) jurisdiction and control over all its natural resources, potential sources of energy, and its internal waters; 2) joint jurisdiction, authority and management with the GRP over its territorial waters; 3) developing and maintaining its own institutions including its police and internal security force; and 4) authority to enter into economic cooperation and trade relations with foreign countries, including participation in international meetings and events such as those of the ASEAN and the specialized agencies of the United Nations.

One extremely contentious procedural issue was whether the MOA-AD was just not a “mere listing of consensus points” but an immediately binding agreement upon signing and with consequent favorable effects on the international standing of the BJE as a legal entity but to the detriment of Philippine state sovereignty. A related point raised by the critics of the MOA-AD is the charge that President Arroyo has no authority to commit to the MILF that Congress and the Filipino people will amend the 1987 Constitution to conform to the principles and provisions of the MOA-AD.³¹

The publication of the MOA-AD provoked an enormous political backlash especially when two MILF commanders, in the immediate aftermath of the aborted MOA signing, attacked a number of communities resulting in several deaths and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of families. The massive counter-attack by government military and police forces has unleashed a new round of violence which threatens to put back the peace process to square one.

Unfortunately, the MILF was also negotiating with the Arroyo administration which has very little political capital and credibility since the rigged presidential elections in 2004 and the series of corruption scandals involving the highest government officials. Given the constitutional changes required of a full implementation of the provisions of the MOA-AD, Arroyo has been charged of taking advantage of the process to engineer a constitutional change that would allow her to remain in power beyond 2010. Thus, by its own machinations and sins of commission, the Arroyo administration proved itself a fatal liability to the peace process, lacking the credibility and will to build and nurture the wide political constituency of support required

for any semblance of success for such an innovative but unsettling peace agreement.

For the long term legitimacy and viability of whatever alternative is now being worked out to address the aspirations of our Muslim people, it is important that the legitimate concerns and criticisms aired by various stakeholders be seriously considered. More particularly, the marginalized ones such as the *lumad* communities and the poorer Muslims and Christians should be given opportunities to participate in fleshing out their own preferred futures in any new peace process.

Current legitimate proposals for a shift to a federal system can also explore the need for special arrangements such as an asymmetric federalism for regions like that of Muslim Mindanao.³² There is even one proposal to create two substantively autonomous regions among the Muslim majority provinces following the ethno-linguistic and territorial alignments of the two historic sultanates in Sulu and Maguindanao.³³ This could take into full account the impact of territorial contiguities and the particularities of ethno-linguistic ties.

The MOA-AD has been overtaken by unfortunate events but it has unleashed a rethinking “out of the box” that will hopefully prove to be valuable for any alternative process for lasting peace and justice in the country.

The author is Professor of International Relations and Comparative Politics at the International Christian University of Tokyo. He was formerly chair of the Department of Political Science of the University of the Philippines-Diliman. He also serves as vice-chair of the CenPEG Board of Directors.

¹ This paper focuses its discussion on the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

² Estimates by Dr. Inamullah Khan, secretary general of the World Muslim Congress. See *Philippine Human Development Report 2005*, p.72.

³ *Philippine Human Development Report 2005*, p. viii.

⁴ The concept and vision of a *Bangsamoro* was popularized by Nur Misuari, the founding chair of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). The term “Moro” was originally used by the Spaniards to refer to the local Muslim population in the Philippines. In its colonial and post-colonial usage, it was a term of derision but the MNLF appropriated and elevated it as a badge of honor and identity marker for the local Muslims. The MNLF refers to the Bangsamoro people as comprising the Muslims, the Christians and the Highlanders (*lumads*) living in Mindanao, Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and Palawan.

⁵ *Philippine Yearbook 2002* (Manila: National Statistics Office), p. 243.

⁶ In this paper, Mindanao and southern Philippines as geographic references are used interchangeably. Both refer to Mindanao island proper, together with the smaller island provinces of Palawan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, and Basilan.

⁷ Only one of the trainees, Jibin Arola, a Muslim, survived the mass killing on Corregidor Island, the secret training ground of the abortive operation.

⁸ The MIM did not last long as an organization since Marcos was able to pacify and co-opt Matalam in 1971.

⁹ Salah Jubair, *Bangsamoro: A Nation Under Endless Tyranny*, 3rd edition (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: IQ Marin SDN BHD), p.151.

¹⁰ International Crisis Group, Asia Report No. 80 “Southern Philippines Background: Terrorism and the Peace Process,” Singapore/Brussels, 13 July 2004. p.4. See also Zachary Abuza, *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: Crucible of Terror* (Boulder/London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003), pp. 89-119.

¹¹ International Crisis Group Asia Report No. 80 “Southern Philippines Background: Terrorism and the Peace Process,” p.22.

¹² Samuel K. Tan, *Internationalization of the Bangsamoro Struggle*, revised edition (Diliman, Quezon City: Center for Integrative and Development Studies, University of the Philippines, 2003), p. 96.

¹³ 1990 Census of Population and Housing as reproduced in Miriam Coronel Ferrer, ed. *Peace Matters: A Philippine Peace Compendium* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies, 1997).

¹⁴ “Human Development for Peace and Prosperity in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.” The World Bank (November 2003), p. 17.

¹⁵ Salah Jubair, *Bangsamoro: A Nation Under Endless Tyranny*, 3rd edition, p. 155

¹⁶ For an analysis of these linkages, see International Crisis Group, Asia Report No. 80 "Southern Philippines Backgrounder: Terrorism and the Peace Process"; and Zachary Abuza, *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: Crucible of Terror* (2003).

¹⁷ Misuari was ordered out of jail by a court upon posting bail on April 25, 2008. His release was recommended by President Arroyo's Cabinet cluster on security matters.

¹⁸ Interview with Mr. Mohagher Iqbal, chair of the MILF peace panel, Cotabato City, Maguindanao, 18 July 2004.

¹⁹ In 2006, a development technical personnel from Japan under the auspices of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) joined the International Monitoring Force.

²⁰ For an analysis of Malaysia's role in the GRP-MILF peace talks, see Soliman M. Santos, Jr., "Malaysia's Role in the Peace Negotiations between the Philippine Government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front," (Penang, Malaysia: Southeast Asian Conflict Studies Network, Peace and Conflict Research Report, No. 2, 2003).

²¹ For instance, see Salah Jubair, *The Long Road to Peace: Inside the GRP-MILF Peace Process* (Cotabato City: Institute of Bangsamoro Studies, 2007), p. 161.

²² "US getting impatient over slow peace process," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 7 July 2004, A2.

²³ For an analysis of the peace negotiations between the Philippine government and the communist movement, see Temario C. Rivera, "In Search of Peace: Political Negotiations between the Government and Armed Movements in the Philippines," in *Evolving Concepts of Peace-Building: From Asian Experiences*, edited by Kazuo Takahashi (Tokyo: International Christian University, 2005), pp. 83-108.

²⁴ "Human Development for Peace and Prosperity in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao." The World Bank (November 2003), p. 36.

²⁵ For an assessment of the problems of the *shari'a* courts in the Philippines, see Isabelita Solamo-Antonio, *The Shari'a Courts in the Philippines: Women, Men and Muslim Personal Laws* (Davao City: Pilipina Legal Resources Center, Inc., 2003).

²⁶ While the MILF has not officially confirmed it, there is supposed to be a set of nine consensus points on governance agreed upon between the government and the MILF signed in September 2005 at Kuala Lumpur. Among the consensus points listed in this supposed agreement are: 1) establishment of a system of governance suitable and acceptable to the Bangsamoro people; 2) respect for the freedom of choice of the indigenous peoples; 3) popular consultations leading to a referendum as the modality to determine the future political status of the Bangsamoro people; 4) a transition period of five years for institution-building; 5) the grant of appropriate executive, legislative and judicial powers to the Bangsamoro juridical entity (BJE) including revenue generation, budgeting and allocation of funds; 6) the establishment of a constitutional commission to write the organic charter of the BJE. However, these are broad and general guidelines and the details are expected to be part of the final Comprehensive Compact between the government and the MILF. See Salah Jubair, *The Long Road to Peace: Inside the GRP-MILF Peace Process*, pp. 140-141.

²⁷ For instance, as articulated by some *Lumad* coalitions such as the “United Indigenous Nations of Mindanao” there is evidence of strong opposition by *Lumads* about the inclusion of their ancestral lands to the proposed Bangsamoro homeland of the MILF. See Patricio N. Abinales, “Sancho Panza in Buliok Complex: The Paradox of Muslim Separatism,” in *Whither the Philippines in the 21st Century?* edited by Rodolfo C. Severino and Lorraine Carlos Salazar (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2007), pp. 284-285.

²⁸ For instance, see Abhoud Syed M. Lingga, “Understanding Bangsamoro Right to Self-Determination,” in this book.

²⁹ This is one variation on the proposed “popular consultations leading to a referendum” mode in the Nine Consensus Points of Governance between the GRP and the MILF. See Salah Jubair (2007), pp. 140-141.

³⁰ Under the MOA-AD, the core of the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity comprises the present area of the ARMM, including 6 municipalities (Baloi, Munai, Nunungan, Pantar, Tagoloan and Tangkai) in the province of Lanao del Norte which voted for inclusion in the ARMM during the 2001 plebiscite. Moreover, within 12 months after the signing of the MOA-AD, the GRP commits to conduct and deliver a plebiscite to finalize the inclusion of 735 other barangays in various provinces and cities sought to be included in the BJE.

³¹ These objections are best articulated by former Senate president Franklin M. Drilon who bought a paid advertisement in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* issues of 22 and 23 August 2008 to reach out to the general public.

³² The most systematic work on constitutional rethinking and innovation to accommodate an Islamic system in the Philippines is provided by Soliman M. Santos, Jr., *The Moro Islamic Challenge: Constitutional Rethinking for the Mindanao Peace Process* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2001).

³³ For this proposal, see Samuel K. Tan, *Internationalization of the Bangsamoro Struggle*, 3rd edition (Diliman, Quezon City: University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies, 2003).

Ancestral Domain – the Core Issue



By Lualhati M. Abreu

On June 22, 2001, a year after the all-out war launched by deposed President Joseph E. Estrada against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP), under President Gloria M. Arroyo, and the Islamist group signed the Agreement on Peace in Tripoli, Libya. The agreement delineated the major aspects to be discussed in the formal peace negotiations between the GRP and MILF, namely, security, humanitarian, rehabilitation and development; and ancestral domain.

Following the agreement's signing was a Joint Communique and the Guidelines for the Implementation of the Security Aspect of the Agreement on Peace which was forged on August 7, 2001. This was followed by the signing of the Implementing Guidelines on the second aspect on Humanitarian, Rehabilitation, and Development of the Agreement on Peace on May 7, 2002. As of this writing, only one issue remains unresolved – the Bangsamoro ancestral domain which has evolved into the issue of Bangsamoro Juridical Entity (JEC). The peace negotiation got stalled on this issue last December 2007.

Barely a year after the signing of the Agreement on Peace, there was a series of violations of the existing ceasefire agreement reportedly by the GRP on the pretext of pursuing criminal elements – kidnap-for-ransom groups – allegedly seeking sanctuary in MILF strongholds. On February 11, 2003, these government ceasefire violations were followed by an all-out offensive against the MILF camp in Buliok Complex in the boundary of the provinces of Maguindanao and North Cotabato. The government

offensive provoked a series of retaliatory actions by the MILF and heavy armed confrontations ensued thereafter until the suspension of military offensives was declared first by the MILF, and as a response, likewise by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). Active interventions from the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) and the Bishop-Ulama League of the Philippines (BULP) brought the two parties again to the negotiating table on March 23-27, 2003 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Formal negotiations on the issue got stalled twice once more, always on the on-and-off government allegations of MILF's coddling of members of the *Jemayaah Islamiyah* (JI), supposedly the regional arm of Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda network. Up to this point, the GRP was taking its time for the resumption of the talks with the MILF thus bringing the negotiations on ancestral domain to a standstill.

This study discusses the issue of ancestral domain as claimed by the Bangsamoro people. It aims to provide a working knowledge on the issue, a must for all players actively engaged in the quest for peace in Mindanao and Sulu in relation to the Bangsamoro struggles. No less than Archbishop Orlando Quevedo of the CBCP said that the roots of the Bangsamoro armed conflict should be addressed¹, otherwise, the lasting and comprehensive solution to the conflict will remain elusive. Evidently, various studies have shown that the Bangsamoro claim for "their rights to their ancestral lands had become the core of the expression of their right to self-determination"² which the Bangsamoro people have been fighting for.

Roots of the Bangsamoro struggle

Since time immemorial, indigenous groups in Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan had been proven by various studies to occupy the areas they are concentrated in up till the end of the 19th century. Until the end of the Spanish colonial rule in the country in 1898, there was no significant large-scale displacement of the indigenous peoples in Mindanao – both Moro and non-Moro - from their ancestral lands.³ The following table shows the traditional territories where Bangsamoro groups lived wholly by themselves; mixed with non-Christianized Lumad groups; and with Christianized and non-Christianized Lumad groups.

Table 1: Traditional Bangsamoro territories, 1576 – 1898*

Wholly Moro	With non-Christianized Lumad*	With Christianized and Non-Christianized Lumad ***
Basilan	North Cotabato	Davao del Norte
Sulu	South Cotabato	Compostela Valley
Tawitawi	Sultan Kudarat	Davao del Sur
Lanao del Norte	Pagadian City	Davao City
Lanao del Sur		Panabo City
Marawi City		Maguindanao****
Cotabato City		Bukidnon
		Iligan City
		Zamboanga del Norte
		Zamboanga del Sur
		Zamboanga Sibugay
		Zamboanga City

Source: Rodil, 1994

*Places predominantly uninhabited by Lumad groups, non-Christianized and Christianized mentioned below are not included in the table.

**In all provinces and cities included herein, there are predominantly Moro communities even until today.

***Maguindanao was divided into Maguindanao and Sharip Kabunsuan provinces. And though living with Christianized and non-Christianized Lumad groups, Maguindanao and Iranun Moro groups are still dominant in the area.

Lanao del Norte, which was predominantly Moro until 1898, is now a predominantly Christian province. With the exception of Lanao del Norte and Cotabato City, and the inclusion of Maguindanao (with the newly-created Sharip Kabunsuan), the provinces in wholly-Moro provinces from 1596 to 1898 now comprise the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). In the first half of the 17th century, Spanish colonial forces, though unsuccessful in subjugating Mindanao and Sulu, were able to establish footholds in the eastern, western and northern parts of Mindanao. Thus, the provinces of Surigao, Agusan and Misamis and the cities therein, and the cities of Oroquita, Tangub, Dapitan and Dipolog in Zamboanga Peninsula became traditional territories of Christianized and non-Christianized Lumad groups in Mindanao.

Also at this historical juncture, reigning sultans – Kudarat of Maguindanao and Bongsu of Sulu - signed separate treaties with the Spanish colonial government delineating their respective jurisdictions. These treaties, among a host of others with other countries as well, are again enough proof of international recognition of Bangsamoro states. Thus, Bangsamoro ancestral domains have the added feature of being state territory for that matter. These particular treaties also proved that

the Bangsamoro peoples fought the invaders to defend their homeland, their ancestral domains on which their social life had all along been anchored.

Real displacement of the indigenous groups in Mindanao started during the American colonial period at the onset of the 20th century. The American colonial government imposed laws and initiated resettlement programs that wrought havoc to the ancestral domains of the indigenous peoples in Mindanao – both Moro and non-Moro. These back-to-back measures essentially meant the grabbing and conversion of the indigenous peoples' ancestral domains into small-scale homesteads for individual settler-cultivators, large-scale plantations, ranches, government infrastructures, and industrial enclaves for foreign investors.

Since then, the number of predominantly Moro areas narrowed down. As mentioned earlier, Lanao del Norte is now a predominantly Christian province given that there are still communities in the province which are wholly- or partly predominantly-Moro. In other provinces, the number of towns predominantly Moro also decreased. A case in point is the old province of Cotabato which used to be under Moro sultanates – those of Maguindanao and Buayan among others (now subdivided into the provinces of North Cotabato, South Cotabato, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao, Sarangani and Sharip Kabunsuan, and the cities of Cotabato, Kidapawan, Koronadal, Tacurong and General Santos). Another case in point is that in 1918, the Moros comprised the majority in 20 towns of the old Cotabato; by the 1970s Moro predominance remained in only ten towns.

The pattern of integration of the Moros to the Philippine body politic begun by the American colonial government was continued by the Commonwealth transitory government in the 1930s and was intensified by the present republic from the 1950s onward. The second wave of landgrabbing schemes took place in the 1960s when transnational agricultural corporations again encroached into the vast agricultural lands of Mindanao. Invariably as a result, the indigenous peoples of Mindanao were again dispossessed of their ancestral domains along with the small-scale settler-cultivators of their homestead lands. This triggered a resurgence of Moro resistance. What began as separate clashes triggered by military-backed landgrabbing schemes of zealous anti-Moro migrant settlers developed into a full-blown war - the Moro War of the 1970s.

In 1980, Hatimil Hassan, a ranking leader of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), emphasized: "The peripherized economic conditions of the Moro minority resulting from their wholesale ouster from their lands determine the economic basis of their status as a minoritized people." He added that it had become a root grievance underlying the present-day Moro insurrection.⁴

Background to the Bangsamoro ancestral domain issue

The Bangsamoro claim on their ancestral domain is based on their customary laws or the *adapt*, and the Islamic *Shari'ah* laws and *fiqh* in relation to *waqaf*.⁵ Although for a long time unwritten, the *adapt* is passed on orally from generation to another of the kin groups claiming the domain as theirs. The *Shari'ah* laws, based on the *Quran*, the Islamic book of revelations from Allah (swt) to the Prophet, and the *Sunna*, the record of the Prophet's life and tradition, are the guiding light for the Muslims in their daily life. The *fiqh* is the different Islamic schools of jurisprudence the most accepted of which are the Hanbali, Maliki, Safi'I, and Hanafi. The Bangsamoro regard their ancestral domain as *waqaf* or trust property.⁶

Before the embracing of Islam since the 12th century, indigenous laws called *adapt* were the legal basis of land ownership, control and use among the ethnolinguistic groups, both Moro and non-Moro in Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan. The Islamized groups are now acceptably called Moros or collectively as Bangsamoro in present-day Philippines. Not totally subjugated by the Spanish colonial forces, most of Mindanao-Sulu were not converted into *encomiendas*, as imposed by the conquistadores, or haciendas and friar lands, both of which became the basis of ownership of vast tracts of lands in Luzon and the Visayas. Although, as asserted by Moro forces, their territories were illegally and immorally annexed to the present-day internationally-recognized Philippine territory as provided for in the Treaty of Paris of 1898, the indigenous modes of land ownership, control, and use persisted through the American period. The social existence of the Moro peoples revolved around their ancestral lands. They chose to preserve their traditional ways rather than be assimilated into the mainstream Philippine society.

Among the Moro groups, the lands are held as *pusaka* (heirloom or ancestral property). It is inherited and held in usufruct (right to use) with even the datu having no right to dispose of. Lands can be encumbered

but not alienated from the use of the community. Right to use can also be given as gift or part of the bride price as decided by the *agama* or local Moro community. No one owns the land, even the datu who simply has the responsibility to allocate its use within his jurisdiction.

Among the Tausugs of Sulu, the sultan and the datu are regarded as the *tagmustahak* (titular administrator) of all communal lands and their produce. Each local chieftain has *mustahak* (possession) of these used by the kin group he heads. The Maguindanao group in Cotabato also held the same concept. The Tausug *sukuh* (share) refers to the right to usufruct without the right of disposal as applied to the forests, virgin uncultivated areas, rivers, falls, and streams. Similar to this is the Maranao concept of *gapa* or *mianggagapa* which is a land subdivided and inherited among kin groups with the right of descent from the one who originally occupied, cleared, and transformed it into habitable and agriculturally-productive area. *Gapa* is different from the *kakola*, a communal land that belongs to the whole *agama* (local community), *inged* (equivalent to town), or *pangampong* (principality), not to be owned but used in common. This includes the forests, rivers, seas, swamps, and areas unclaimed by any other kin group.

Even with Islamic inroads in the Bangsamoro society, the new ideological framework did not displace the laws governing land ownership, control and use traditionally held among the Islamized ethnolinguistic groups in Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan. They persist even with the promulgation of colonial laws from the early years of the 20th century. Some scholars aptly put the situation among the Bangsamoro with regard to land ownership, use and control as their continuing past.

The Bangsamoro also has the tradition of *maratabat*, or the safeguarding of one's *maratabat*. *Maratabat* refers to "a praiseworthy reputation conferred to a person or group who has demonstrated the capability in overcoming challenges and attacks to their social roles in society".⁷ A Moro feeling aggrieved or abused can go as far as starting a *rido*⁸ with his clan against the clan of the one believed to have smeared his *maratabat*, that is, if he is already closed to the option of amicable settlement.

Land in Islamic *Shari'ah* and *Fiqh*

Waqaf, an Arabic word used in Islam, means the holding of a certain property the benefit from which can be extracted without its actual consumption, for the benefit of someone or a group designated by the founder, usually his/her heir/heirs. *Waqaf* is widely related to immovable property like lands and buildings. But in recent times, movable property can be dedicated likewise as *waqaf*, including books, agricultural machinery, cattle, shares, stocks, and cash money. The first *waqaf* is the Ka'aba in Makkah as designated by the Prophet himself.

A number of *Fiqh* scholars believe that the right of ownership of a *waqaf* belongs to Allah (*swt*). They contend that lands and other things in nature based on the *Shari'ah* are *amanah* or trust loaned to humankind for its survival. Others believe that *waqaf* belongs to the beneficiaries although ownership is not complete since they cannot dispose of the property or use it in ways different from what was envisioned by the founder.

Other *Fiqh* scholars believe that once a property is dedicated as *waqaf* it remains to be so in perpetuity. But there are others who accept the temporal nature of *waqaf*. To Bangsamoro leaders, the first view seems to be more acceptable. Based on this view, the elimination of the *waqaf* character of a property requires a difficult and lengthy process. On the other hand, perpetuity requires that *waqaf* property should not decrease. This implies that *waqaf* property cannot be made public by any entity, including the government. *Waqaf* administration in some Islamic countries like Turkey, Egypt and Syria rests on the courts. In Egypt as early as the 15th and 16th centuries, the courts maintained a special office for registration and control of *waqaf* property. The office is under the jurisdiction of the supreme judge who used to be called the “judge of all judges.”

Bangsamoro leaders view ancestral domains as *waqaf* properties founded by their ancestors in Bangsamoro homelands. The founders dedicated these ancestral domains for the survival of their kin groups. Thus, there is not much difference between the *adapt* and the Islamic thinking on ancestral domains. Both view ancestral domains as communal properties to be used in perpetuity for the good of the kin groups which started using it. Thus far, no earth-shaking changes happened with Islamic penetrations into the indigenous groups who chose to be converted to Islam.

Issues and problem areas in the Bangsamoro claim to ancestral domains

In summary, the MILF claim is made clear in its draft proposal on the ancestral domain aspect of the Agreement on Peace of 2001 based on the following:

- a. Historical development of the Bangsamoro society;
- b. Customary laws or *adapt* of the Islamized ethnolinguistic groups;
- c. The *Waqaf* concept on Islamic *Shari'ah* and *Fiqh*; and
- d. Various international legal instrumentalities.

The various international legal instrumentalities which the MILF apparently adheres to as cited in its own handout on the draft proposal include the following:

- a. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966;
- b. The United Nations (UN) Decolonization Act of 1960 for the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples;
- c. The International Labor Organizations (ILO) Convention No. 169 Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries of 1989;
- d. The UN Draft on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and
- e. Other UN resolutions pertaining to the rights of oppressed peoples for freedom and self-determination.

The Philippines has adopted all these legal instruments and is bound to implement them. The Philippine government had also made public its proposed Final Peace Agreement with a chapter on the Bangsamoro claim on their ancestral lands. Chapter VI of the draft makes it clear that it upholds the Bangsamoro and non-Moro indigenous peoples' rights over their ancestral domains. It agrees to "recognize, protect, promote and develop the ancestral domains and ancestral lands of the Bangsamoro and non-Moro indigenous communities in accordance with the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) and other pertinent national and customary law".⁹

On the other hand, Ghazzali Jaafar, MILF vice-chair for political affairs, said that the IPRA is vague and limited in scope and the MILF should not be held responsible for its implementation as it (MILF) is not a

party to its legislation".¹⁰ A Moro Shari'ah lawyer, Datucolut L. Dagloc, states that "IPRA is a betrayal and a great departure from the inherent sovereign right of the Bangsamoro people to their ancestral domain". He added that their concept of ancestral domain "has withstood the test of conquest and colonization".¹¹ As Jaafar said, the ancestral domain aspect of the Agreement on Peace is expected to be "a very contentious issue" for both panels. For him, the identification of the Bangsamoro ancestral domain should be discussed "only in the negotiation process".¹²

Based on the long-running reactions of the different sectors in Mindanao, the following issues related to the Bangsamoro claim to their ancestral lands are bound to crop up if and when the claim would be enforced:

- a. Bangsamoro ancestral lands now occupied, whether titled or not, by Mindanao populace of migrant-settler origin;
- b. Bangsamoro ancestral lands bordering with non-Moro indigenous peoples' ancestral lands;
- c. Bangsamoro ancestral lands now under the control of transnational corporations;
- d. Bangsamoro ancestral lands occupied by Philippine government infrastructure facilities; and
- e. Bangsamoro ancestral lands claimed by more than one Moro group.

The MILF has made public its proposal to the non-Moro citizens for a Bangsamoro State in one of the handouts given during the MILF consultations with the Mindanao NGO community held on December 8, 2003 at Simuay, Sultan Kudarat, Sharip Kabunsuan. The MILF categorically states in the proposal that the areas to be included in the establishment of a Bangsamoro state are the predominantly Moro communities. If the MILF will be true to the letter and spirit of their proposal, then a big portion of Mindanao population of settler origin has nothing to be wary of the implications of the Bangsamoro claim to their ancestral domains.

With the resumption of the peace negotiations in 2005 before being stalled prior to the May 2007 elections, the talks between the GRP and MILF panels focused on the areas to be included in the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity (BJE). This is the sum total of the ancestral lands being claimed by the Bangsamoro people, the Bangsamoro homeland.

As of this writing, the issue of Bangsamoro ancestral domain remains contentious. As stated earlier, the issue has evolved into the negotiation for BJE in which the MILF is saying its agreements with the government will be implemented. National and Mindanao newspapers have been reporting that the government is willing to give 600 barangays (barrio communities) while the MILF is asking for a thousand.

There are various concerns yet to be resolved on the question of BJE. One would be its constitutionality since it would entail carving out of a bigger area for the ARMM. If the MILF claim is to be pursued, the government panel has said, a charter change should be held. Conversely, the MILF says that it would not lend itself to be used by the Arroyo administration for holding a charter change. Also, the MILF panel reiterated a previous agreement that the government would not evoke the issue of constitutionality while the rebel group will not touch on the issue of separatism in the peace negotiations. Second, a lot of leg work has to be done for traditional political leaders, both Moro and non-Moro, especially the latter, to agree with any territorial change in their political turfs. Among the provinces that will be affected are North Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Lanao del Norte and possibly Bukidnon, not to mention others farther away from the contiguous Bangsamoro area in Central Mindanao.

Meanwhile, there were also reports about National Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Norberto Gonzales, a hardliner bent on a military solution to the conflict, saying that it does not matter if a final peace accord will be signed with the MILF under the Arroyo administration.

END NOTES

¹ Address Root Cause of Conflict Bishop Urged, Mindanews, May 9, 2003.

² Myrthena Fianza, "Indigenous Patterns of Land Ownership and Use and the Effect of Public Policy among the Moro People in Southern Philippines", Mindanao Focus, Alternate Forum for Research in Mindanao (AFRIM), 1994.

³ B. R. Rodil, The Minoritization of the Indigenous Communities of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago, Philippine Edition, Alternate Forum for Research in Mindanao (AFRIM), 1994.

⁴ Hatimil Hasan, "The Moro National Liberation Front and the Present Resistance: Philippine Repression and Resistance", Utrecht, Holland, Komite ng Sambayanang Pilipino, 1980.

⁵ WAQAF, http://Islamic-worldnet/waqaf/waqaf_mainpage.html

⁶ MILF Draft Proposal, Implementing Guidelines on the Ancestral Domain Aspect of the GRP-MILF Agreement on Peace of 2001.

⁷ Esmail Disoma, The Concept of Maratabat in Meranao Society: A Sociological Reinterpretation, 1982, as used by Intuas Abdullah, Land Ownership Dispute and its Settlement Among Maranaos (Moro Kurier, Jan-June 1989).

⁸ Rido, clan war, traditional way of exacting justice on perceived oppression and smearing of one's maratabat (individual or group). Rido can last for generations until all warring sides are at par with one another, with the conflict having been amicably settled - or one side had gained dominance over the other/s.

⁹ "Moro Rebels Expect Government to grant Them Self-Rule", Mindanews, Internet edition, Nov. 6, 2003.

¹⁰ Luwaran, "MILF Ready with Proposal on Ancestral Domain", [www@luwaran.news.com](http://www.luwaran.news.com), Oct, 16, 2003.

¹¹ ibid

¹² Mindanews, op cit.

REFERENCES

Books

Majul, Cesar A., Islam and Development (A Collection of Essays), Philippine Islamic series, Centennial edition, 1980.

Rodil, B.R., The Minoritization of the Indigenous Communities of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago, Philippine edition, Alternate Forum for Research in Mindanao (AFRIM), 1994.

Journals and Periodicals

Abdullah Intuas, Land Ownership Dispute and its Settlement among Maranao", Moro Kurier, Moro People Resource Center (MPRC), January-June 1989.

Abreu, Lualhati, "Update: GRP-MILF Peace Talks, January-June 2003", BANTAAW, Alternate Forum for Research in Mindanao (AFRIM), 2003.

Fianza, Myrthena L., "Indigenous Pattern of Land Ownership and Use and the Effects of Public Policy among Moro People in Southern Philippines", *Mindanao Focus, Alternate Forum for Research in Mindanao (AFRIM)*, 1994.

Hasan, Hatimil, "The Moro National Liberation Front and the Present Resistance: Philippines: Repression and Resistance", *Utrecht, Holland, Komite ng Sambayanang Pilipino*, 1980.

MILF Draft Proposal, "Implementing Guidelines on the Ancestral Domain Aspect of the GRP-MILF Agreement on Peace of 2001," MILF Consultation with Non-Muslim NGO Leaders, Crossing Simuay, Sultan Kudarat, Sharif Kabunsuan, December 8, 2003.

WAQAF, <http://islamic-world.net/waqaf/mainpage.html>.

Newspaper Reports

"Moro rebels expect government to grant them self-rule", *Mindanews*, Internet edition, Nov. 6, 2003.

"MILF ready with proposal on ancestral domain", [www@luwaran.news.com](http://www.luwaran.news.com), Oct. 16, 2003.

"Address root cause of conflict, Bishop urges", *Mindanews*, May 9, 2003.

Ruminations on the Bangsamoro Struggle and Neoliberal Globalization



By Kenneth E. Bauzon

Saint Joseph's College

Brooklyn, New York 11205

Introduction

Much has been written about the rebellion led by the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) against the Philippine Government during the regime of the former dictator Ferdinand E. Marcos from the early 1970s to the mid-1980s. Much has also been written about the resurgence of Bangsamoro resistance led by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) from the mid-1980s to the present. While much of the published analyses focus on the dynamics of the conflict, the personalities of the principal leaders, and failure of parties to adhere to any agreed terms, not much attention has been devoted to the role of overarching economic policies and principles pursued by the Philippine government at the behest of external institutions or agencies of foreign governments which may collectively be referred to as rules of neoliberal globalization. This brief essay seeks to fill the gap by examining critically the policies that were put in place since the fall of the Marcos dictatorship up to the present, the role played by international lending institutions, by donor countries and their so-called “development assistance,” and by civil society organizations as they strive to participate in what they perceive as an act of altruism toward the most economically-depressed and conflict-driven regions of the southern Philippines. An assessment would finally be offered on the implications of these neoliberal policies on the Bangsamoro struggle and how these may be resisted and overcome.

Swirling Forces of Neoliberal Globalization

When Nur Misuari agreed to sign the 1996 Peace Agreement between his organization – the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) – and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP), he was optimistic but unrealistic about the prospect for peace in the southern Philippines. For a while, he enjoyed the trappings of official power in his capacity as Governor of the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), but this make-believe status was short-lived. Not only were many of his followers restless about the slow pace of economic progress and political empowerment, they soon realized that there were forces more powerful than they had ever realized or anticipated which would in essence predetermine the ultimate disposition of political, economic, and social issues confronting the entire southern Philippine region.

More specifically, swirling around Misuari was the ever-increasing velocity of the forces of globalization of the neoliberal type which, perhaps, Misuari never personally recognized or anticipated. By the mid-1990s, the Philippines had been more deeply inserted into the global capitalist network through, among others, the policies pursued by the Aquino and Ramos administrations. Aquino's refusal to repudiate the odious debts incurred by her predecessor allowed international public and private lending institutions to tighten their stranglehold over, and to, in effect, predetermine domestic economic and financial policies. With the creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1996 as the principal enforcement mechanism for the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the policies of the Ramos administration became more in tune with the WTO's founding principles of privatization, deregulation, and trade liberalization under the guise of "harmonization", an approach imposed on member-countries to abandon domestic laws and regulations, e.g., environmental, health and safety, labor, education, human rights standards, among others, which did not conform with this organization's new strictures on trade in goods and services. Never mind that these laws and regulations were nonetheless a product of the domestic democratic bargaining processes reflecting the consensus about the nation's needs and priorities.

This is not to say that all laws and regulations enacted by the country's legislature are a result of pressures from grassroots constituencies seeking to defend and promote their well-being. For there are -- as there have been -- even stronger, better-financed, and better-

connected special interest groups who do not necessarily have the best interest of ordinary citizens at heart. Their accumulated efforts over the years have yielded a series of laws and policies that satisfy – directly or indirectly – the requirements of the new global neoliberal economic regime. The promulgation by Aquino of Executive Order No. 226, otherwise known as the Omnibus Investment Code of 1987, was perhaps the most significant, if not most fateful, decision of an economic nature in the early years of the post-Marcos era. This code, implementation of which was assigned to the Board of Investments (BOI), has provided since 1987 a comprehensive set of guidelines for local and foreign investors alike in areas considered by the government as “high priority”. Thus, on an annual basis, a succession of administrations has issued “investment priorities plans”. For the year 2007, for example, Macapagal-Arroyo expressed optimism that the activities she has listed “shall open opportunities for the country to attract more investments in industries and services that will... propel our nation to **1st World Country Status in 20 years.**”¹ (Emphasis hers, not mine)

Meanwhile, the Aquino government received a boost when a group of donor countries led by the U.S. and Japan approved, in June 1988 at a summit of the so-called Group of Seven (G-7) in Toronto, Canada, what has come to be known as the Multilateral Assistance Initiative (MAI). By 1990, the pledge of support from G-7 members and such multilateral lending institutions as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) has reached \$3.5 billion. Whether Aquino realized it or not, this promised fund has been seen by critics (including this writer) as a reward for her refusal to repudiate the odious debts incurred by her predecessor which would have otherwise displeased the same donors.²

Aquino's Executive Order No. 226 was followed by the enactment by Congress of Republic Act (RA) No. 7042, otherwise known as the Foreign Investments Act of 1991. This act pried open laws that have up to this point protected domestic industries from foreign competition; it also ended much of the subsidies for local entrepreneurs. While eliminating protectionist laws that benefited domestic entrepreneurs, the same law did foreign investors a big favor by, among others: a) allowing for 100 percent ownership of export enterprises; and, b) eliminating restrictions on ownership of domestic enterprises (except those listed in the Foreign Investments Negative List (FINL). And, in 1995, Congress enacted RA No. 7916, known as the Special Economic Zones Act. This provided for

the designation of certain specified areas or regions of the country targeted for so-called development going by the official label as the Special Zones of Peace and Development (SZOPAD). One of these zones falls within the jurisdiction of the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), for which region alone the WB and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had jointly planned to invest the amount of \$178 million between 2002 and 2007.³

As to why Mindanao was especially identified as one of the zones, one may understand better in the context of SZOPAD's definition as "geographical areas in which the local community builds peace through initiatives that benefit the local population. These zones also engage in the development of alternative forms of conflict resolution, using methods based on local culture."⁴ An example of these locally-based development programs is the USAID's "Global Climate Change" initiative in promoting so-called renewable energy purportedly in support of the Philippine government's policies that "encourage more investment in the energy sector while at the same time protecting consumers." Under this initiative, the USAID has participated in the setting-up of a "renewable energy electrification program... in the conflict-affected and poverty-stricken areas" of the ARMM, made possible through the partnership between government and the private sector (Mirant Philippines) under the so-called Alliance for Mindanao Off-Grid Renewable Energy Project (AMORE). The USAID reports that within only a year's operation, "AMORE facilitated social preparations and strengthened community associations in more than 60 communities; installed electrical renewable energy systems in more than 35 former rebel soldier communities in Tawi-tawi and Basilan; reduced participating households' monthly lighting costs by 70 percent. Renewable sources of energy, as demonstrated through the AMORE project, will be utilized to electrify more remote rural communities in ARMM areas." This is all well and good as far as it goes, however. It does not deny the fact that the U.S. has no comprehensive policy in accord with the international community's efforts in dealing with the global warming phenomenon, and that the U.S. energy policy today remains in the stranglehold of the powerful fossil fuel industry.⁵ One is led to wonder, therefore, why the U.S. is trying to ingratiate itself to local communities throughout the country. Explanation has got to be found elsewhere.

Development as Counter-insurgency

That a strong counter-insurgency component is contained in investments, development, and donor rehabilitation programs and projects is undeniable. For instance, throughout the horrific years of the Marcos dictatorship, U.S. economic and military assistance continued to flow unabated that the U.S. Congressional Budget Office (CBO), in its 1997 study of the role of foreign aid to the Philippines and South Korea played in development, admitted in a classic understatement that “U.S. assistance was motivated partly by the strategic considerations. The United States did not want to see the Philippines succumb to a communist-backed insurgency.”⁶

For the southern Philippines, the counter-insurgency function of SZOPAD as described and defined above was not lost to Jim Cragin and Peter Chalk, policy analysts for the RAND Corporation, a right-wing Think Tank based in California, USA, who, in their article, “The Role of Social and Economic Development,” recognized that the social and economic development policies enacted thus far by the Philippine government would “inhibit a resurgence of terrorism....These efforts... demonstrate the potential benefits and shortcomings of using social and economic development as a counterterrorism tool.”⁷

It is no surprise that industrial countries like the U.S., Japan, and Australia, among others, have staked their interests in the development of Mindanao. These donor countries and organizations have all bought into what has been euphemistically described as the “peace and development” paradigm. In her study, Sreeram Chaulia describes this concept as sitting on “the economic rights bandwagon and argues that Mindanao's poverty and underdevelopment vis-à-vis the rest of the Philippines are the root causes of the conflict. Since human development indices in the ARMM are the lowest in the country, the panacea for a;; ills facing Central and Western Mindanao is believed to be bringing the masses out of the rut of economic misery and enabling them to earn decent standards of living.”⁸ As the foremost advocate of this paradigm, the U.S. has made its intentions and desires clear, for instance, in its Delegation Statement to the 2006 Philippine Development Forum Consultative Group and Other Stakeholders Meeting for the Philippines, held in Tagaytay City, on March 30-31, 2006. In this statement, the U.S. government patted the Philippine government on the back for continuing with its “economic reform agenda” but warned: “Major

challenges nonetheless remain, including: rectifying systemic fiscal weaknesses; further strengthening institutions of governance and anti-corruption; improving the investment climate; ensuring better law enforcement action, especially regarding intellectual property rights (IPR) and trafficking in persons; addressing critical infrastructure gaps, improving the delivery of health and education services; and supporting peace and security initiatives, particularly in Mindanao.”⁹ Thus, the U.S. government has made clear what it wants the Philippine government to do if it wants to be in good graces.

Meanwhile, representatives from the private sector have hailed the country's openness to foreign investments. For instance, the U.S.-ASEAN Business Council informs visitors to its website about constitutional guarantees for investments in the Philippines, namely: “a. Freedom from expropriation without just compensation”; b. “Right to remit profits, capital gains, and dividends within the guidelines of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP)”, the country's central bank; c. “Right to remit the proceeds of the liquidation of investments; and d. “Right to obtain foreign exchange to meet principal and interest payments on foreign obligations.”¹⁰

On the other hand, the American Chamber of Commerce, while eager to encourage U.S. corporations to do business in the Philippines, has warned of significant domestic problems, e.g., kidnappings, and criminal and political violence, including obstacles to foreign investor participation posed by the FINL under two categories, namely: List A, which bans foreign investments in certain sectors due to constitutional restrictions; and List B, which restricts ownership by foreigners of up to 40% of businesses that deal with “national security, defense, public health, safety, and morals.”¹¹

Investment Incentives: Grease for the Engines of Neoliberalism

It is undeniable, however, that the Philippine government is intent on attracting foreign investments through a number and different types of incentives contained in various pieces of legislation and executive orders. The Omnibus Investment Code of 1987, for instance, awards incentives to investors who fulfill the following criteria: 1. participation in “the production of goods” that are not yet on a “commercial scale”; 2. use of a “design, formula, scheme, method or process, or system of production that is new and untried...”; 3. participation in activities that

are “feasible and highly essential to the attainment of the national goal, in relation to a declared specific national food and agricultural program for self-sufficiency and other social benefits of the project; and 4. participation in the production of “nonconventional fuels” or in the manufacture of “equipment that utilizes nonconventional fuels or sources of energy in its production operations.”

Incentives come in two broad categories, namely: Fiscal incentives, e.g., income tax holiday, deduction for labor expenses, credit for taxes and duties on raw materials used, exemption from taxes and duties on imported supplies and spare parts, among others; and Nonfiscal incentives, e.g., simplification of customs procedures, unrestricted use of consigned equipment; and the ability to employ foreign nationals at the supervisory, technical or advisory positions but especially at the positions of president, general manager, and treasurer or their respective equivalents.¹²

The Special Economic Zone Act of 1995 offers its own set of incentives. For instance, enterprises located in Export and Free Trade Zones are offered: tax- and duty-free importation of capital equipment, raw materials, genetic materials, among others; special tax rate of 5 percent of gross income; tax credit for import substitution; and grant of permanent resident status for investors and immediate family. And, in another instance, for enterprises considered to be ecozone developers and operators or are regarded to be facilities, utilities, and tourism enterprises, the Special Economic Zone Act offers the following incentives, namely: 1. a special tax rate of 5 percent of the gross income; 2. deduction for labor and training expenses; and 3. permanent resident status for foreign investors and immediate family.¹³

The Privatization Frenzy

One broad principle of neoliberal globalization in the context of which the aforementioned incentives may be understood better is privatization. Simply, this is the process by which public assets and services are privatized, i.e., turned over to the private, profit-seeking sector in one form or another in order to manage, operate, and profit from. In order to promote an “orderly, efficient privatization of remaining government corporations, assets activities and idle properties,” the Privatization Management Office (PMO), under the direction of the Department of Finance, was established in December

2002. At the same time, Executive Order No. 323 was issued creating the Privatization Council (PrC). While the PMO serves essentially as the government's "marketing/disposition program for government corporations, assets and idle properties," the PrC, on the other, was given the authority over private assets and the power to approve or deny transactions regarding privatization.

One fine example of privatization in motion is the selling off of the transmission assets belonging to a government corporation, i.e., the National Power Corporation (NPC). In January 2003, Macapagal-Arroyo signed off on a plan to sell these assets to the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management (PSALM) Corporation. This sale was made possible by an act of Congress in June 2001, called the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA), which provided the statutory basis for the liquidation (i.e., privatization) of up to 70 percent of NPC's generating assets within three years. This bill was enacted by Congress and signed into law by Macapagal-Arroyo despite opposition from progressive and environmental sectors of society. Indeed, after Macapagal-Arroyo signed this bill into law, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce immediately commended it as "proof of the president's commitment to reform and liberalization...."¹⁴ What is notable about this law, as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce advocacy paper ("The Roadmap to More Foreign Investment," March 2003) was precise in noting, was that "There are no separate regulations that discriminate against foreign buyers under the government's privatization programs."¹⁵

The attempted consignment of all government internet broadband connection to a private company – a foreign-owned company at that – provides another perfect example of privatization at work highlighting President Macapagal-Arroyo's pivotal personal role in the drive toward the conversion of public services into private hands. That she would succumb to the apparently irrational decision of choosing the Chinese-owned Zhong Xing Telecommunication Equipment (ZTE) Corporation for a \$329.5 million contract over the much lower bids of the Philippine-owned Amsterdam Holdings, Inc. (for \$242 million) and the United States-based Arescom, Inc. (for \$135 million) for the establishment of an internet broadband connection linking all government units and agencies nationwide, is on the surface beyond comprehension and good business sense. Beneath the surface, however, this is wholly understandable in the context of the greed factor on the part of Mrs. Arroyo's small number of co-conspirators realizing that the higher the

cost (funded by a loan from China's Export-Import Bank (Eximbank) but the payment of which would have been borne ultimately over the next twenty years by the Filipino people themselves through their taxes), the greater the commissions or finder's fees on the part of those that put the package together. It should also be noted at this juncture that China's Eximbank is a copy of the original U.S. Eximbank intended to encourage domestic corporations to do business abroad with low-interest loans. The intention is to facilitate the spread of these corporations worldwide like missionaries preaching the gospel of capitalism. For the originating countries, these subsidized corporations also serve as Trojan Horses deployed to export capital and essentially use it to dominate the economies of the host countries, thankfully with the collaboration of local elites like Arroyo and her cronies who are just too willing and eager to betray public trust. The attempted deployment of the ZTE Corporation, which would have been subsidized by the loan from the Chinese Eximbank, is China's own attempt to emulate what the U.S., Japanese, and Europeans have been very good at doing for a long time in the Philippines and elsewhere, and the Arroyo Administration has become its gullible fool and willing tool!¹⁶

Complementing the government's determined efforts to privatize in a way that promotes monopolization by default is the government's inability if not unwillingness to enforce existing laws dealing with competition. Such laws include RA No. 3815 (1930), otherwise known as the Revised Penal Code; RA No. 3247 (1961), known as Act to Prohibit Monopolies and Combinations in Restraint of Trade; the Corporation Code (1980); and RA No. 7394 (1932), also known as Consumer Act. As the U.S. Chamber of Commerce study observes: "These laws are rarely enforced, due to a lack of interest and/or competence on the part of enforcement agencies to challenge well-entrenched economic and political interests."¹⁷

The Emergence of the Neoliberal State

Whether the government is determined to fully implement the rules of neoliberalism as in the case of privatization, or is unwilling or unable to enforce existing laws that appear to stand in the way of monopolistic tendencies as in the above-cited laws, the ultimate outcome of either scenario is the emergence of the Philippine state as the final arbiter in behalf of the forces of neoliberal globalization, enacting and enforcing

laws that facilitate their penetration into the domestic economy, and easing their control and domination over the country's valued resources. The transformation of the Philippine state into its current role indeed exemplifies the success of the persistent efforts by the promoters of the fundamentalist gospel of neoliberalism at the WB, the IMF, and the WTO, which are the principal corporate-driven institutions to which the Philippine state has become answerable to, no longer its own people. It is well to note that the track record of these institutions is that while they are publicly funded, i.e., they derive funding for their operations from contributions from member states which are, in turn derived from taxes, they nonetheless recognize no form of accountability – democratic or otherwise -- to the public that funds them. It is under this set of conditions that makes the Philippine state a distinctly neoliberal state through its active share in the promotion of the market economy on a global scale quite distinct from the prevalent conception of the state over a hundred years ago governed by the principle of *laissez faire* and seemed quite disinterested in the economic affairs of society or seemed all too happy to get out of the way of business.

Implications on the Bangsamoro Struggle

The above-discussion on the dynamics, structures, and policies promoting neoliberal globalization in the Philippines particularly during the post-Marcos dictatorship has been belabored to drive home an important point: the 1996 peace agreement between the GRP and the MNLF is essentially a neoliberal formula designed to bring to an end the MNLF's more than two decades of insurgency. At the same time, the agreement provided legal cover for the entry of capital – both domestic and foreign, and both commercial and philanthropic – to facilitate the integration of an otherwise untapped region, the ARMM, into the global neoliberal world economic order. Misuari may have been blindsided by the fact that he was dealing at the other end of the negotiating table with one of the chief architects and promoters of the neoliberal agenda in the Philippines – Ramos. With Misuari having lost the stamina to carry on his struggle in the battlefield, the agreement was essentially Ramos's to impose and to win. The GRP held most of the winning cards and gave little by way of concessions. What could be better proof of this than Misuari's current state of captivity!

Further implications may be discerned concerning the future of the Bangsamoro struggle as represented currently by the MILF. With its history of uttering rhetoric for independence spliced with religious verses, on one hand, and accommodation and negotiations, on the other, it seems that we are bound to experience a similar scenario in which the GRP, with its greater resources, would simply wear down the MILF both at the negotiating table and in the battlefield. Negotiations have been the government's way of dangling promises that it knows could not be kept and in pushing the adversary into a corner from which it could not escape. Thus, the dizzying series of talks, delays, further talks and further delays constitute not much more than a fancy footwork in a dance for pure entertainment but leading to nowhere.¹⁸

The MILF leadership should realize that it is battling forces beyond the government itself, and that if it is to succeed, it needs to recalibrate its rhetoric to account for and explain the dire consequences of a neoliberal onslaught on its own people and their resources, and to seek working alliances with progressive sectors battling the same monster. It is not hard for the MILF and, for that matter, anyone to see the wreckage that neoliberalism has wrought in its wake anywhere in the world: the growth in poverty, the extreme inequalities in income, the exploitation of child labor, the feminization of the workforce, the suppression of workers' rights, the degradation of the environment, and the repression of political dissent. All of these, and more, are undemocratic and antidemocratic yet the forces that have brought these about claim themselves to be democratic. Nothing could be more Orwellian and further from the truth!

While the Zapatista Liberation Army in Chiapas, Mexico may not be a perfect example, the MILF could learn a thing or two – in addition to what could be learned from Misuari's and the MNLF's mistakes -- about how it has fought for over a decade now against the forces of neoliberalism led by the Mexican government. This while defending the ancestral lands of the indigenous Mayan population, along with their culture and patrimony. And then maybe the MILF would prevail where the MNLF has failed.

November 19, 2007
Lima, Peru

END NOTES

¹“Message,” 2007 Investments Priorities Plan, available online at: www.philippine-embassy.de/bln/images/PTIC/2007%20investment%20priorities%20plan.pdf.

²For more critical discussion, please see Kenneth E. Bauzon, “The Multilateral Assistance Initiative and Democratization in the Philippines,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, vol. 12, no. 2 (September 1990): 120-133.

³Please see Agencia Espanola de Cooperacion Internacional, “Background to the Conflict,” in www.pangea.org/unescopan/img/programas/desarme/mapa/filipinas.pdf.

⁴“Background to Conflict,” Ibid.

⁵Please see “Global Climate Change,” in www.usaid.gov/our_work/environment/climate/country_nar/philippines.pdf.

⁶Please see Congressional Budget Office, “The Role of Foreign Aid in Development: South Korea and the Philippines,” in www.cbo.gov/ftpdoc.cfm?index=4306&type=0.

⁷Please visit www.rand.org/publications/randreview/issues/rr.08.02/role.html for the full text of their article.

⁸“International Organizations in Mindanao: To Protect or Not?,” *Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, February 1, 2007. Available online at: <http://jha.ac/2007/02/01/international-organizations-in-mindanao-to-protect-or-not/>

⁹Please visit: http://philippines.usaid.gov/documents/newscom/press/2006_007press.pdf for the full text of this statement.

¹⁰Please see “Doing Business in the Philippines,” in www.us-asean.org/Philippines/businessguide/.

¹¹Please see “Investment Climate Statement,” available online at: <http://export.gov/docs/x-9510814.pdf>.

¹²Please see “Doing Business in the Philippines,” in www.us-asean.org/Philippines/business-guide/.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Please see “Investment Climate Statement,” in <http://export.gov/docs/x-9510814.pdf>.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶The ZTE broadband bribery scandal is discussed a bit more critically in this author's brief commentary, “Corruption in the ZTE Broadband Deal Reveals the Dark Side of Privatization,” available online in: <http://manila.indymedia.org/index.php?action=newswire&parentview=146338>.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸ Much of these unacknowledged consequences of neoliberalism in the mainstream media and in mainstream scholarship are, thankfully, shed light on by Naomi Klein's new book, *The Shock Doctrine; The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt and Co., 2007). Klein, for instance, discusses the financial crisis that befell Southeast Asia in the late 1990s and the opportunism pursued by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in pushing its so-called stabilization program: "Sure enough, the crisis set off a wave of privatizations, and foreign multinationals cleaned up. Bechtel got the contract to privatize the water and sewage systems in eastern Manila, as well as one to build an oil refinery in Sulawesi, Indonesia. Motorola got full control over Korea's Appeal Telecom. The New York-based energy giant Sithe got a large stake in Thailand's public gas company, the Cogeneration... All told there were 186 major mergers and acquisitions of firms in Indonesia, Thailand, South Korea, Malaysia and the Philippines by foreign multinationals in a span of only twelve months. Watching this sale unfold, Robert Wade, an LSE economist, and Frank Veneroso, an economic consultant, predicted that the IMF program 'may even precipitate the biggest peacetime transfer of assets from domestic to foreign owners in the past fifty years anywhere in the world.'" (Ibid., p. 276) Klein concludes: "that is the untold story of the policies that the IMF calls 'stabilization programs,' as if countries were ships being tossed around on the market's high seas. They do, eventually, stabilize, but that new equilibrium is achieved by throwing millions of people overboard: public sector workers, small-business owners, subsistence farmers, trade unionists. The ugly secret of 'stabilization' is that the vast majority never climb back aboard. They end up in slums, now home to 1 billion people; they end up in brothels or in cargo ship containers. They are the disinherited, those described by the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke as 'ones to whom neither the past nor the future belongs.'" (Ibid., p. 277)

The Economic and Security Intricacies of the Bangsamoro Struggle

 By Bobby Tuazon

With deep historical roots, the Bangsamoro struggle for independence and self-determination in southern Philippines has been waged for centuries, starting with the Moro resistance against Spanish and U.S. colonialism from the 16th century to the turn of the 20th century, the armed uprisings in 1950s, to the resurgence of independence and separatist armed rebellion in the late 1960s-1980s with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). Today, the armed conflict between government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) has been eclipsed by the Philippine government-backed U.S. war against terrorism, as represented by the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). The anti-terrorism war, given sensationalized treatment no less by the international and local media and with some so-called “stakeholders” simplifying or narrowing the ground issues to such buzzwords as “Islamic fundamentalism,” “terrorism,” and “extremism,” has affected the resolution of the armed conflict and has tended to sideline the fundamental issues that must be addressed if any earnest conclusion to this armed feud is to be achieved.

One of these fundamental issues, which include the historical and colonial roots of the conflict and the thorny issue of ancestral domain, is that the war has been fueled by the scramble for the Bangsamoro provinces' land and bountiful economic resources. Aside from its traditional wealth, i.e., land and agricultural resources, southern Mindanao offers gas, oil, and other energy resources now being coveted by the United States – which has been a dominant investor for decades –

as well as by Australia, Malaysia, China, and other countries. Through the centuries, colonialism and war in Mindanao have been ignited by greed for its land, resources, and strategic location.

There is one other reason for the increasing U.S. presence in this area. Its geo-military strategy in Southeast Asia and the rest of East Asia dictates its underlying objective of establishing basing facilities using the convenient route of the war on terrorism.

It is thus unfortunate that the intensification of foreign, notably U.S., economic and military intervention in southern Mindanao combined with the Philippine government's continued refusal to accommodate the just demands of the Bangsamoro people for ancestral domain and self-determination remain obstacles to reaching a peaceful settlement of the war. They provide the fertile ground for the Bangsamoro people's determination to seek self-determination, through continuing armed struggle if need be.

Resources

As of September 2007, southern Mindanao posted the biggest increase in investments in the island, with P2.792 billion, followed by the northern region with P1.194 billion in the Phividec industrial estate.¹ The bulk of foreign investments, which however went down, came from Chinese investors venturing into mineral exploration projects particularly chromite ore. Other foreign investors, some of them going into mining ventures, came from Japan and South Korea. Overall, the chunk of investments went to power generation, with 78 percent of P2.663 billion of the total investment value, followed by mineral exploration.²

In Southeast Asia, Mindanao is among the most natural resource-rich areas, and the most well-endowed island of the Philippines with rich deposits of gold, nickel, zinc, and manganese. The island is the country's leading producer of banana, pineapple, corn, coffee, and coconut for export. Other agricultural products include rubber, palm oil and cotton. Aside from energy and mining resources, it is also abundant in timber and marine and fishing resources³ with seaweed and tuna as major exports. In addition to being more sparsely populated than other areas, due to which it earned the status of a "frontier," the island is so comparatively fertile that it's been dubbed the "Rice Bowl." For similar reasons, the island was opened for the commercialization of agriculture,

particularly fruit and sugar plantations, led by U.S. multinational firms such as Del Monte, Dole, and United Brands. For decades, the island's timber resources made the Philippines, together with Indonesia and Malaysia, as a major source of hardwood exports with all three countries supplying 66 percent of the demand. Beginning in the late 1940s, U.S. multinational corporations such as Georgia-Pacific and Findlay Millar led an exploitative logging boom concentrated in the predominantly Moro regions. This boom became a bane: between 1971 and 1991, 80 percent of the country's remaining virgin forest was lost.⁴

Over the past two decades, Mindanao has been billed as a major source of energy resources enticing the cash-strapped government to open the island for foreign exploration and exploitation. This proved to be attractive as the region, alongside major oil consumers such as the United States, Japan, and China, have been experiencing increasing energy demands but decreasing supplies. Significantly, Mindanao hosts a huge portion of the country's oil and natural gas deposits, much of these found in Moro-populated territories, most notably the Liguasan Marsh. Liguasan Marsh is the Philippines' largest swamp and marsh area. In recent years, state offensives against the MILF were reportedly partly motivated by government plans to build a dam on a major tributary of the island's largest river that will drain the Liguasan Marsh of its water thus making the area easily drillable for oil and gas exploration.⁵ The MILF leadership, on the other hand, is firm on its position that Liguasan is part of the ancestral domain of the Bangsamoro.⁶

In June 2008, Exxon Mobil, the world's largest oil and gas company, was set to explore or crude oil deposits in Sulu Sea, southern Mindanao which also hosts one of the world heritage sites, the Tubbataha Reef National Marine Park. The company's crude oil exploration would cost \$110 million. In recent years, Exxon Mobil has been involved in oil explorations in conflict-ridden countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Angola, Sudan, Kazakhstan, and Indonesia thus fueling speculations that U.S. oil interests are closely tied to U.S. military objectives.

Possibly most inviting to foreign investors, especially American, Japanese, and Saudi Arabians are reports that Mindanao holds the largest deposit of deuterium in the world. Deuterium,⁷ or "heavy water," reportedly found in the Philippine Trench – the Pacific Ocean's deepest part – off the coast of Surigao can be converted into industrial fuel as a coolant for nuclear reactors and as a substitute for petroleum and

liquefied gas. U.S., Japanese, and Saudi oil giants were reported interested in buying millions of barrels of deuterium every day, giving the Philippines \$30.7 billion of sales a year.

U.S. economic objectives

The United States' increasing economic presence in southern Philippines is interlocked with U.S. policies that mark the island as part of its bigger trade map in Southeast Asia. In particular, the U.S. links its foreign assistance program with transforming the region – through the mechanisms of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and bilateral agreements – as an open market to satisfy the objectives of U.S. economic growth.

In this regard, Glyn Davies, the U.S. State Department's principal deputy assistance for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, explained his government's new Strategic Framework for U.S. Foreign Assistance in a statement before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs' subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment on Sept. 22, 2007: “By engaging adeptly, both bilaterally and through regional organizations such as the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), we can encourage the region to open its markets further...Success with these goal(s) will increase prospects for continued U.S. growth and prosperity....We need to stay involved in the region and ensure that we use aid both to pursue bilateral policy objectives and to shape emerging regional institutions in a manner congruent with U.S. interests.”

Davies' statement also revealed that the U.S. government's foreign assistance in Mindanao, which is facilitated by the USAID, integrates anti-terrorism with making the island an open market for U.S. trade and investments. Fifty-six percent of U.S. foreign assistance in 2007 for East Asia and Pacific amounting to \$531.1 million goes to Indonesia and the Philippines where a large chunk is earmarked for Mindanao. In 2001-2005, 60 percent of USAID's \$220 million grant to the Arroyo government went to Mindanao.

In the same month, the USAID released a five-year \$190 million grant that will be used to expand market-oriented and private-initiated economic opportunities in Mindanao.⁸ Development projects under the grant are to be under the joint U.S.-Philippine Mindanao Peace and Development (MPAD) assistance agreement.

Davies' statement echoes the policy framework of tying foreign assistance to trade and anti-terrorism programs stipulated by James A. Kelly, assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs in 2002. ASEAN countries, Kelly stated, "need to more forthrightly embrace the process of market oriented financial and structural reform, attracting, rather than discouraging inflows of long-term private capital."⁹

In fact, the preceding statements are just a reiteration of the U.S. government's consistent policy of preserving its economic imperatives in the region; hence, its increasingly aggressive presence in Mindanao, both economically and military, should be seen in this context. In Southeast Asia, the U.S. has overtaken Japan as the biggest foreign direct investor, with total investment amounting to \$35.7 billion, or 16.3 percent of total FDI in the region, during 1995-2003.¹⁰ Aside from this, the U.S. is ASEAN's largest trading partner with \$1.2 trillion (14.7 percent) accounting for the regional bloc's two-way trade in 1995-2004 outside the region.

U.S. aggressive military presence

It is also in this light that one begins to comprehend the U.S.' equally aggressive military stance in southern Philippines. Mindanao lies at a strategic point not only in relation to Southeast Asia but also near strategic trade routes: Malacca, Sunda, Lombok, and Makassar Straits. These are sea lanes crucial to the trading of goods including oil; they connect the Persian Gulf/Indian Ocean, where a big chunk of U.S. oil supplies comes from, with South China Sea. Commerce including energy shipments that are traded through these routes is worth some \$1.5 trillion. The control of this area also supports the U.S. military's "force projection" in the Indian Ocean to as far away as West Asia.¹¹

It should be noted that even before the Bush administration stepped up U.S. military presence in southern Philippines with the objective – at least officially – of fighting terrorism, American security forces had been deeply involved in the conflict in Mindanao. Its involvement was in the form of military aid to the Philippine government that included training and equipping the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in its fight against the communist-led New People's Army (NPA) and against the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and later, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The Sept. 11, 2001 attacks in the U.S. changed American perceptions of the conflict in Mindanao.¹² The U.S.

government linked Al Qaeda, the prime terrorist suspect in the 9/11 bombings, to terrorist cells in Mindanao, especially Abu Sayyaf, and the rest of Southeast Asia. Terrorist suspects arrested in the region, U.S. authorities said, admitted to being trained in MILF camps. The MILF, which has consistently denied the charges, was named in the U.S. government's "foreign terrorist organizations" list but was lifted afterward on condition that the Moro rebels renounced their "terrorist activities" and join the peace talks with the Philippine government. The U.S. government also dangled a \$30-million bilateral aid package to the MILF to be released upon reaching a peace accord with the GRP.

Amid a series of talks and secret negotiations with President Gloria M. Arroyo and defense officials in the U.S. and in the Philippines in the aftermath of 9/11, the Bush government sent thousands of troops to the country in the guise of "war exercises" including Special Operations Forces (SOFs) who were to train AFP troops in special operations and psychological warfare. Big contingents of U.S. forces were sent to Basilan, Sulu, and other Moro provinces where they were often reported in joint operations with AFP forces in their hunt against Abu Sayyaf forces. The Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA, 1999) and other executive agreements subsequently signed between the two governments, including the Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (2002) and the Major Non-NATO Ally (MNNA) agreement, laid the ground for a "permanent-temporary basing facility" for the U.S. forces in southern Philippines.

The U.S. military presence in southern Philippines has been subsequently condemned as a war of aggression and a pretext for building a basing facility that would boost U.S. military posture in the region and beyond. Both governments came under attack for inflating reports about the alleged links of the ASG to Al Qaeda and, later, to Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), when in fact Arroyo's own generals had reported months before 9/11 that the ASG, tagged as a kidnap-for-ransom gang that was coddled by some military and police generals, was a spent force.¹³ To use the ASG as the target of thousands of U.S. and AFP forces appears to be a hard sell that any keen observer would eventually find as indeed a mere pretext – just like the WMD myth in the case of the Iraq invasion - for building a basing facility in southern Philippines.¹⁴

Over the last six years, a special unit of the U.S., the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines (JSOTF-P), has been based at Camp Navarro in Zamboanga City. At any time, the JSOTF-P maintains about 500 U.S. forces and their area of operations spans 8,000 miles, covering

the whole of Mindanao and its surrounding islands and seas.¹⁵ The U.S. forces, under the Special Operations Command (SOCOM), help supply real-time intelligence to Philippine troops. They use unmanned spy drones and powerful radio scanners presumably to spot and pin down ASG extremists.¹⁶

A deep-water port and a modern domestic airport have also been built in Gen. Santos City, while in Basilan and Sulu, the USAID has funded the construction of roads and ports that can berth huge ships. Apparently, the logistical structures, facilities, and frequent and rotational deployment of U.S. forces in Mindanao, and elsewhere in the Philippines, constitute "Cooperative Security Locations" (CSLs) – the U.S. military's cover for a long-term military presence in host countries where permanent military bases cannot be established due to domestic opposition.¹⁷

Thus, from all indications the United States is laying the ground for the infrastructure of a military facility in southern Philippines. Ironically, it was the MILF's own spokesperson who has hinted that the U.S. was indeed interested in establishing a military base in the area. In an interview by Asia Times in October 2006, Eid Kabalu, the MILF spokesperson, confirmed that his organization had been approached several times by U.S. authorities about the possibility of establishing U.S. military bases in MILF-controlled territory as part of a final peace deal. "This is negotiable, it is possible," the Hong Kong-based newspaper quoted Kabalu.

"We are facing reality. We know that Washington has its own agenda in Mindanao, and that this has mostly to do with terrorism," said Kabalu in Cotabato City, central Mindanao. "However, if the American interest is really in pushing this peace process, then we can talk about military bases."¹⁸

Aggravating

The deepening U.S. military presence in southern Philippines and the operations conducted have been considered as an aggravating factor to the armed conflict and the security situation in the region. Anti-terrorist operations ostensibly targeting ASG extremists have often dragged MILF forces into the skirmishes resulting in violations of human rights of civilians. After years of "total war" operations against them, ASG extremists have apparently even grown in armed strength and mass sympathizers, if independent reports are to be believed. While at first,

Arroyo in the early stage of her presidency announced an “all-out-peace” policy in Mindanao this was subsequently replaced by an “all-out-war” policy in 2002 against not only the Bangsamoro rebels but also the NPA. This strengthened the hand of the military hawks advocating a “military victory” against the Abu Sayyaf and the MILF and NPA as well.¹⁹ The armed conflict in Mindanao has thus bordered on multilateral level of strategic interest because of the U.S. war on terrorism, a factor which the Philippine government cannot help but support even as it undertakes some postures of peace process with the Bangsamoro rebels today.

But as U.S. forces deepen their involvement in counter-insurgency training and combat support in Muslim Mindanao, they get entangled – intentionally or unintentionally – in AFP skirmishes with MILF guerillas or Abu Sayyaf extremists. Recent reports as of June 2008 show incidents where atrocities are committed in the presence of U.S. troops. A case in point was the reported massacre by AFP soldiers of eight civilians, including women and children, in Ipil, Sulu in the course of pursuit operations against the Abu Sayyaf on February 4, 2008. The widow of one of the victims who was in fact a soldier testified that she saw four U.S. soldiers in a Navy boat near the incident while a general in command of Philippine troops in Jolo admitted that the intelligence that led to the assault in Ipil was provided by a U.S. military spy plane.²⁰

For as long as the U.S. borderless war on terror continues, and it will be so as the Pentagon mindset defines it as “a permanent war,” the Philippines will remain its “second war front” with Mindanao as a major theater. Hence, it is inevitable that the U.S. basing strategy in the country will be indefinite, extendable, and deep.

Conclusion

Most historians and political economists agree that Mindanao, most especially the Moro areas, has remained stagnant developmentally since the 1900s or the beginning of U.S. colonialism of the Philippines. The period of U.S. colonial rule saw the massive re-structuring of land ownership to pave the way for the commercialization of agriculture thus displacing communal and subsistence farming. Large arable lands were converted to cattle farms and sugar and pineapple plantations run by U.S. corporations. As a result, Moro communities lost their traditional livelihoods with no adequate compensation or alternative sources of income within the new exploitative structures.²¹

Under a neo-colonial relationship established by the U.S. as a post-independence system, the “Mindanao frontier” was opened up to further encroachment by other corporate exploiters alongside new big-time settlers, especially ranchers, speculators, and loggers coming from other parts of the country. The marginalization of the Moro communities, especially their poor populations, was accelerated leading to further unrest that would fuel the independence and separatist movements in the 1960s and 1970s. The commencement of prolonged conflict coincided with the Marcos dictatorship's development aggression policies and projects and its assertions of state control during the 1970s-1980s. Foreign companies and elite-controlled enterprises continue to lead government-backed development projects including the opening of large plantations that exploit the island's land, fishing, mining, timber, and agriculture resources leading to the eviction of whole communities.

Land has been a major source of the armed conflict – and wars have been triggered by land conflicts. In 1985, the MILF estimated that 85 percent of the Moros owned no land.²² It is very striking that in the midst of the state-initiated foreign- and elite-controlled agro-business, infrastructure, and other development projects the Moro areas, particularly the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), show some of the most depressing sights of poverty. More than 60 percent of Mindanao's population lives in poverty – the highest incidence of poverty and hunger in the country.²³ Particularly for the ARMM, according to Amina Rasul, more than 10 years after the Final Peace Agreement between the GRP and MNLF was signed in 1996, the region remains “the poorest, the most neglected, the least productive, and the worst performing region in almost all measures...in some aspects it was worse off today than it was prior to the peace agreement.”²⁴

Poverty incidence and social inequities are further compounded by the fact that Mindanao especially the Moro provinces has been at the bottom of state service provisions that include education, health, and other welfare measures. Particularly harsh are how communities that are vulnerable to constant military operations and displacement have received no adequate assistance for reconstruction and development.

Prof. Samuel K. Tan, Convenor of the University of the Philippines' Mindanao Studies Program (UP-CIDS), offers a fitting description:

“The socio-economic conditions certainly continue to worsen as population increase naturally exerts more pressures on the capacity of

traditional sources of revenues and livelihood such as the land, rivers, lakes, and seas within reach of the inadequate local technologies and crafts. The centuries-old barter trade which has provided a good alternative source of livelihood has dwindled into a few stalls of smuggled items, and has lost its very rationale for being. It had gradually died from exploitation of the system by capitalists and politicians and smugglers of luxury goods, guns and drugs. In short, Muslim and Lumad Mindanao has lost a lot of their traditional means of survival and has inevitably been drawn to the undergrowth of the economic system that offers lucrative but dangerous and illegal sources of revenues such as smuggling of guns, drug trafficking, piracies, kidnapping for ransom, and, for those who are idealistic, the radical movements of political Islam have become the logical source of help and self-fulfillment to displaced Muslim youths."²⁵

"The political economy of Mindanao," Dr. Tan goes further, "demonstrates how the power elite, and the multinational and national entities have remarkably developed the mining and agro-industrial potentials of the region through the years and yet, have reserved to themselves the greater part of the resources and benefits of development leaving a very small portion to the indigenous people to divide among themselves."

With the Moro people marginalized and often deeply divided by more than a century of colonialism, economic aggression, and reactionary politics it became inevitable for rebellions to arise. Reminiscent of the U.S. brutal pacification campaign against the Moro people at the turn of the 20th century, the Bangsamoro people's struggle for self-determination particularly from the 1970s to the present led to thousands of lives lost and the uprootment of millions of others.²⁶ The all-out war against the MILF declared by President Joseph E. Estrada in 2000 displaced 932,000 people in central and western Mindanao and the ARMM.²⁷ Eighty-five percent of the internal refugees were Moros, 17 percent Christians, and 7 percent Lumad. The Bangsamoro people have known no peace for over a century – for that matter, since Spanish colonialism.

In this light, the operations of the U.S. armed forces in southern Philippines should be re-examined. The armed conflict in Mindanao has assumed a greater multilateral and global dimension not only because of the increasing foreign interest in the island's resources and cheap labor but also with its continuing use by powerful foreign military forces,

especially those from the U.S., to promote their security objectives in the broader region. As discussed earlier, their geo-economic interests in the region include preserving Southeast Asia and the rest of East Asia as a major trade destination, as a source of cheap raw materials and cheap labor, as well as an area for capital investments under the U.S. promoted- and WTO-prescribed free trade policy. These objectives, however, also fuel greater trade competition with other economic powers in the region including China, Japan, and other countries.

It is important for the U.S. to secure its geo-economic interests not only in the Philippines but throughout the region as well under its neo-conservative policy of increasing its global hegemony, thus the integral need to increase its military presence. But it is also important to be grounded on this reality and never be deceived by such slogans as “war against terrorism,” “Islamic fundamentalism,” “preserving freedom and democracy,” and other similar blinders conjured and promoted by the U.S. government and its think tanks and spin doctors.

The U.S. security goals, i.e., economic and military objectives, in the region continue to be promoted in an all-sided, multilateral way using the mechanisms of ASEAN, APEC, and other regional formations as well as bilateral agreements. U.S. policy in this framework is to coopt these formations and bilateral arrangements within the paradigm of free trade and other globalization policies, in line with its economic objectives, and build “anti-terrorism” defense partnerships, joint operations, and access or basing arrangements, in line with its military goals.

The U.S. government has found in the Philippine government, at present represented by the Arroyo regime, an ally, a loudspeaker, and enforcer of its security objectives in the Philippines and Southeast Asia. This is of course clear in the joint economic and defense partnerships and operations between the two governments in southern Philippines. And, that is why, even in the peace process the Philippine panel echoes the position of the U.S. in which it imposes the political blackmail that the MILF drop its “terrorist military operations” and stay in the peace talks or else be the target of an all-out war that is backed by the U.S. The U.S. government expects the MILF to stay within the framework of autonomy which the GRP panel is similarly pushing, by offering the Bangsamoro rebel group enhanced authority and to drop its demand for self-determination.

An independent Bangsamoro or a Bangsamoro acquiring genuine autonomy may render the U.S. government's geo-economic and geo-

military interests obsolete and even would leave the U.S. facing a bigger and stronger network of sovereign Muslim countries, including Malaysia, Brunei, or even Indonesia that may make it harder for its security prerogatives to be secured. It appears that the U.S. is satisfied with the way the peace talks are tying the MILF to the negotiating table and hence keeping the Bangsamoro rebels' guns generally silent because this mode provides the condition, albeit temporarily, for the phasing in of its military facilities in southern Philippines. At the same time, the anti-terrorist war against the Abu Sayyaf and other so-called terrorist groups in Mindanao and Southeast Asia provide the justification for the continued deployment of U.S. forces and military equipment.

Under these circumstances, the Bangsamoro people's struggle for self-determination, as represented by the MILF, crawls and limps even as the Moro people are increasingly marginalized economically and politically.

END NOTES

¹ "Mindanao investments surge to record high," *DavaoToday*, Sept. 4, 2007, citing a report by Medco.

² Ibid.

³ Alyson Slack, "Separatism in Mindanao, Philippines," ICE Case Studies, No. 118, May 2003.

⁴ Slack, *ibid*.

⁵ Slack, *ibid*.

⁶ Tarhata S. Mapandi, "Ligawasan Marsh: On the crossroads," *The Mindanao Conflict*, Kamarulzaman Askandar and Ayesah Abubakar (eds), The Southeast Asian Conflict Studies Network, Penang, Malaysia, 2005.

⁷ The deuterium deposit is estimated to be 1,300 kms long, 80 kms at its widest, and four kms at its deepest points. Mining deuterium from the ocean floor seven to 10 kms deep would require unimaginable billions of dollars. Jarius Bondoc, "They're talking of deuterium again," *Gotcha*, *Philippine Star*, Aug. 8, 2004.

⁸ Based on a release by the Mindanao Economic Development Council (MEDCo).

⁹ Hearing before the House subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific, Committee on International Relations, U.S. Congress, Feb. 14, 2002.

¹⁰ Sonny Africa, "ASEAN and the U.S. agenda in Asia," IBON Features, Nov. 22, 2006. U.S. FDI is followed by Japan (\$28 billion) and the UK (\$25.8 billion).

¹¹ Africa, *ibid.*

¹² Eugene Martin, "Crunchtime for the Mindanao peace process?" United States Institute for Peace (USIP), Feb. 8, 2005. Martin is the executive director of the Philippine Facilitation Project in the GRP-MILF peace talks.

¹³ Tuazon, Bobby, "Violations of the rights of the people to national self-determination and liberation," expert witness testimony for the Permanent People's Tribunal's second session on the Philippines, March 2007, Den Haag, The Netherlands.

¹⁴ But, precisely, the U.S. military command has refused to admit that its forces are in southern Philippines for a different objective. In March 2006, Admiral William J. Fallon chief of the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) echoed the oft-repeated claims that "the southern Philippines, Mindanao, and the Sulu archipelago remain a sanctuary, training, and recruiting ground for terrorist organizations." Southeast Asia, he added, remains the command's "focal point in the war on terror." Al Jacinto, "U.S. tags Mindanao as terrorists' sanctuary," Sun.Star Zamboanga/Sunnex, March 10, 2006.

¹⁵ Herbert Docena, "RP is forward operating base of U.S.," *Inquirer*, Oct. 16, 2007.

¹⁶ "Pentagon allots more funds for troops in Mindanao," Rodney J. Jaleco, *The Manila Mail*, Oct. 10, 2007.

¹⁷ Docena, *ibid.*

¹⁸ Fabio Scarpello, "U.S., Philippines weigh new military marriage," *Asia Times*, Oct. 23, 2006.

¹⁹ Soliman M. Santos, Jr., "Malaysia's role in peace negotiations between the Philippine government and the MILF," *The Mindanao Conflict*, Kamarulzaman Askandar and Ayesah Abubakar (eds), SEASN, 2005.

²⁰ See E. San Juan, Jr., "Arroyo welcomes more U.S. participation in the 'killing fields' of the Philippines in the guise of humanitarian intervention," *Monthly Review*, March 6, 2008.

²¹ Slack, *ICE Case Studies*, *op cit.*

²² Patricio P. Diaz, *Understanding Mindanao conflict* (2003) Davao City: Mindanews publication; citing *The Mindanao Cross*, July 20, 1985.

²³ "Resist the U.S. empire in Mindanao," *Initiatives for Peace in Mindanao*, Dec. 4, 2004. From 2001 to 2006, the per capita income in ARMM even dropped from P3,799 to P3,486, according to the NSCB (cited by Amina Rasul, "Contending viewpoints: Analyzing the 1996 MNLF-GRP Final Peace Agreement).

²⁴ Rasul, *ibid.* Some estimates put the poverty level particularly in conflict areas to as high as 75 percent.

²⁵ Tan, "Understanding the Mindanao conflict: Mindanao at the crossroad," paper presented at the Cotabato Peace and Development Forum, July 20, 2000.

²⁶ Reports about the military operations against the MNLF in the 1970s-1980s, for instance, mention the dislocation of about one to two million civilians. Civilian losses included massacres, hamletting, food blockades, indiscriminate bombing, forced disappearances, and so on. A paper for the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP), which is observing the GRP-MILF peace talks, notes that military and civilian casualties from 1972-1976 alone reached 120,000. More than 100,000 people fled to nearby Malaysia, while around one million inhabitants in southern Philippines were internally displaced. (Benedicto R. Bacani, "The Mindanao peace talks: Another opportunity to resolve the Moro conflict in the Philippines," USIP Special Report No. 131, February 2005)

²⁷ Sylvia Concepcion, Larry Digal, et al, "Breaking the links between economics and conflict in Mindanao," December 2003, International Alert. The report cites figures from World Bank and Oxfam.

Understanding the Bangsamoro Right to Self-Determination



By Abhoud Syed M. Lingga

Self-determination as a Right

The right to self-determination is the right of peoples everywhere to freely determine their political status and pursue their economic, social and cultural development. For this right to be fully effective, the realization of the political, economic, social and cultural sovereignty of peoples is vital.

Self-determination is a continuing process where people continue to make choices to achieve their security and to fulfill their human needs.

The right of peoples to self-determination is enshrined in many United Nations (U.N.) instruments, among which are:

- Article 55 of the United Nations charter, which provides that the world body shall create “conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples...”
- General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of December 14, 1960, which states that, “All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.”

- Article 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and repeated in Article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which makes this statement: “All peoples have the right of self-determination, including the right to determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.”

On the other hand, there are U.N. instruments that uphold the principle of territorial integrity of existing states. Whether people who claim right to self-determination and are living within the boundary of existing states are prohibited to carve an independent state of their own is not clear in the U.N. resolutions.

Article 2 (4) of the U.N. charter provides, “All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state . . .” This provision clearly applies only as between states. It prohibits member states from using force to threaten the political independence and territorial integrity of any state.

United Nations General Assembly Resolution No. 2625 (Declaration of Principles Concerning Friendly Relations among States) advised that right of self-determination shall not be construed as “authorising or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States conducting themselves in compliance with the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples ... and thus possessed of a government representing the whole people belonging to the territory without distinction as to race, creed or colour.”

However, this U.N. resolution reiterating the territorial integrity of states is made contingent on the government being representative of the whole people and non-discriminatory.

There is substantial debate as to the scope of “a government representing the whole people”. Hannun, for example, is for the “limited requirement of non-discrimination only on the grounds of race, creed or colour.” But Buchheit “sees it simply as a component of a larger theory based on the premise that oppression legitimizes secession.”¹

Other commentators, like Musgrave,² interpreted Resolution No. 2625 as implying that “international law permits secession as a legal remedy in certain circumstances”. He also contends that secession is also permissible “by virtue of the 'oppression theory' when part of a population suffers gross oppression: in these circumstances secession is permitted primarily to prevent the abuse of human rights.” In Allen Buchanan's³ remedial right theory of secession, separation would be acceptable if there are systematic violations of human rights or unjust annexation of territories.

There are attempts to resolve the conflict between demands for self-determination and the principle of the territorial integrity of states. Hannun⁴ puts forward the idea of autonomy as a “less-than-sovereign self-determination.” However, Musgrave⁵ says: “Some jurists contend that autonomy is not a principle of international law but a matter which falls within the domestic jurisdiction of a state.” He opines that “autonomy within an independent state cannot be part of self-determination for the purposes of international law.”

Essentially, right to self-determination is a right of a people to choose their political status, and decide on their economic, social and cultural development. That right includes the right of a people who hold the right to self-determination to choose, through democratic and participatory manner, to form their own separate state if that is essential to the expression of their right to self-determination. The right to secede, although not being encouraged, is not prohibited particularly in a situation where the minority suffers systematic violations of human rights and gross oppression.

Holders of the Right of Self-determination

The holders of the right to self-determination, according to the Report of the International Conference of Experts organized by UNESCO on November 21-27, 1998, are a people (a group of individual human beings) who have some or all of the following common features: (1) common historical tradition; (2) racial or ethnic identity; (3) cultural homogeneity; (4) linguistic unity; (5) religious or ideological affinity; (6) territorial connection; and (7) common economic life.⁶

Additionally, the UNESCO experts stated that “the group as a whole must have the will to be identified as a people or the consciousness of being a people.” The people, according to the experts, must be of a

certain number, which need not be large but must be more than “a mere association of individuals within a state.” The existence of “institutions or other means of expressing its common characteristics and will for identity” is also important.

Bangsamoro right to self-determination

The Bangsamoro thus qualify as people who hold the right of self-determination. They have a common historical tradition and religious affinity and share many cultural practices. The Bangsamoro occupy contiguous territory (maritime societies are connected by the sea) with rich natural resources.

Identity and homeland

The Muslims in the Philippines consist of thirteen ethno-linguistics groups: Iranun, Magindanaon, Maranao, Tao-Sug, Sama, Yakan, Jama Mapun, Ka'agan, Kalibugan, Sangil, Molbog, Palawani and Badjao. There are also Muslims among the other indigenous peoples of Mindanao like the Teduray, Manobo, Bla-an, Higaonon, Subanen, T'boli, and others. In recent years, significant number of people from Luzon and Visayas and migrant communities in Mindanao converted to Islam.

The Muslims who traditionally inhabited Mindanao, the islands of Basilan and Palawan, and the Sulu and Tawi-Tawi archipelago in the south of the Philippines identify themselves as Bangsamoro. The name Moro was given by the Spanish colonizers to the Muslims in Mindanao whom they found to have the same religion and way of life with the Muslims of North Africa who ruled the Iberian Peninsula for centuries. The Malay word *bangsa*, which means nation, was prefixed to suggest distinct nationhood. The name Bangsamoro has found place in official documents of the Organization of Islamic Conference⁷ and agreements between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).⁸

The traditional homeland of the Bangsamoro people consisted of the territories under the jurisdiction of their governments before the emergence of the Philippine state. At the height of its power, the Sulu Sultanate exercised sovereignty over the present-day provinces of Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Palawan, Basilan and the Malaysian state of Sabah (North Borneo). The territory of the Magindanaw Sultanate included Shariff Kabunsuan province, some parts of Maguindanao province, the coastal

areas of the provinces of Sultan Kudarat, South Cotabato, Sarangani, parts of Lanao provinces, Davao del Sur and Davao Oriental, and the eastern part of Zamboanga del Sur. The Datu Dakula of Sibugay, who ruled the Sibugay autonomous region under the Magindanaw Sultanate, exercised jurisdiction over Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga Sibugay, Zamboanga City, and the western part of Zamboanga del Sur. The Rajah of Buayan ruled North Cotabato, the upper valley of Maguindanao and the interior areas of Sultan Kudarat and South Cotabato and some parts of Bukidnon. The Pat a Pangampong ko Ranao (Confederation of the Four Lake-based Emirates) ruled the interior parts of Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, and parts of Bukidnon, Agusan, and eastern and western Misamis provinces. The small sultanate of Kabuntalan separated the domains of Magindanaw and Buayan.

As the result of the colonial policy of the Philippine government to reduce the Bangsamoro into a minority by encouraging Filipino settlers from the north to settle in their traditional homeland, the Bangsamoro are now confined in the provinces of Tawi-Tawi, Sulu, Basilan, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao and Shariff Kabunsuan, and some municipalities of Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga Sibugay, Zamboanga del Norte, Lanao del Norte, North Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, South Cotabato, Sarangani, Davao Oriental, Davao del Sur, Davao del Norte, Compostela Valley, and Palawan. Although their territory was significantly reduced the Bangsamoro people continuously assert their right over their homeland, which has gained implied recognition from the government.⁹

History of independence

The historical experience of the Bangsamoro people in statehood and governance started as early as the middle of the 15th century when Sultan Shariff ul-Hashim established the Sulu Sultanate. This was followed by the establishment of the Magindanaw Sultanate in the early part of the 16th century by Shariff Muhammad Kabungsuwan. The Sultanate of Buayan and the Pat a Pangampong ko Ranao (Confederation of the Four Lake-based Emirates) and later other political subdivisions were also organized.

By the time the Spanish colonialists arrived in the Philippines the Muslims of Mindanao, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi archipelago and the islands

of Basilan and Palawan had already established their own states and governments with diplomatic and trade relations with other countries including China. Administrative and political systems based on the realities of the time existed in those states. In fact, it was through these well-organized administrative and political systems that the Bangsamoro people managed to survive the military campaign against them by Western colonial powers for several centuries and preserve their identity as a political and social organization.

For centuries the Spanish colonial government attempted to conquer the Muslim states and add these territories to the Spanish colonies in the Philippine Islands but history tells us that it never succeeded. The Bangsamoro sultanates, with their organized maritime forces and armies, succeeded in defending the Bangsamoro territories, thus preserving their independence.

That is why it is being argued, based on the logic that you cannot sell something you do not possess, that the Bangsamoro territories are not part of what were ceded by Spain to the United States in the Treaty of Paris of 1898 because Spain had never exercised sovereignty over these areas.

The Bangsamoro resistance continued even when U.S. forces had occupied some areas in Mindanao and Sulu. Though the resistance was not as fierce as during the Moro-Spanish wars, group-organized guerrilla attacks against American forces and installations reinforced what remained of the sultanates' military power. Even Bangsamoro individuals showed defiance against American occupation of their homeland by attacking American forces in operations called *prang sabil* (martyrdom operation).

When the United States government promised to grant independence to the Philippine Islands, the Bangsamoro leaders registered their strong objection to be part of the Philippine republic. In a petition to the U.S. president on June 9, 1921, the people of Sulu archipelago said that they would prefer being part of the United States rather than be included in an independent Philippine nation.

In the Declaration of Rights and Purposes, the Bangsamoro leaders in a meeting in Zamboanga on February 1, 1924, proposed that the "Islands of Mindanao and Sulu, and the Island of Palawan be made an unorganized territory of the United States of America" in anticipation

that in the event the U.S. would decolorize its colonies and other non-self governing territories the Bangsamoro homeland would be granted separate independence. Had it happened, the Bangsamoro people would have regained by now their independence under the UN declaration on decolonization. Their other proposal was that if independence to be granted would include the Bangsamoro territories, a plebiscite would be held in Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan fifty years after the grant of independence to the Philippines to decide by vote whether the territory incorporated by the government of the Islands of Luzon and Visayas, would be a territory of the United States, or become independent. The fifty-year period ended in 1996, the same year the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Philippine government signed the Final Agreement on the Implementation of the Tripoli Agreement. The leaders warned that if no provision of retention under the United States would be made, they would declare an independent constitutional sultanate to be known as Moro Nation.

In Lanao, the leaders who were gathered in Dansalan (now Marawi City) on March 18, 1935 appealed to the United States government and the American people not to include Mindanao and Sulu in the grant of independence to the Filipinos.

Continuing assertion for independence

Even after their territories were made part of the Philippine republic in 1946, the Bangsamoro people have continued to assert their right to independence. They consider the annexation of their homeland as illegal and immoral since it was done without their plebiscitary consent. Their assertions manifest in many forms.

The armed resistance of Kamlon, Jikiri and Tawan-Tawan was a protest against the usurpation of their sovereign right as a people. Those who joined the Philippine government used the new political system to pursue the vision of regaining independence. Congressman Ombra Amilbansa, for example, filed House Bill No. 5682 during the fourth session of the Fourth Congress. The bill sought the granting and recognition of the independence of Sulu. As expected, the bill found its way into the archives of Congress since there were few Muslim members of Congress. Then on May 1, 1968, the then provincial governor of

Cotabato, Datu Udtog Matalam, made a dramatic move. He issued the Mindanao Independence Movement (MIM) manifesto calling for the independence of Mindanao and Sulu to be known and referred to as the Republic of Mindanao and Sulu.

When it became evident that it would not be possible to regain independence within the framework of the Philippine nation state system, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) was organized to wage an armed struggle to regain independence. When the MNLF accepted autonomy within the framework of Philippine sovereignty, a faction of the MNLF separated and formed the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to continue the armed struggle for independence. The MILF is still fighting the government forces.

The clamor for independence is not only among the liberation fronts but also among other sectors of the Bangsamoro society. The delegates to the First Bangsamoro People's Consultative Assembly (BPCA) held on December 3-5, 1996 in Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao were unanimous in calling for the reestablishment of the Bangsamoro state and government.¹⁰

The hundreds of thousands of Bangsamoro who participated in the Rally for Peace and Justice held in Cotabato City and Davao City on October 23, 1999, in Marawi City on October 24, 1999 and in Isabela, Basilan on December 7, 1999 issued a manifesto stating, "We believe that the only just, viable and lasting solution to the problem of our turbulent relationship with the Philippine government is the restoration of our freedom, liberty and independence which were illegally and immorally usurped from us, and that we be given a chance to establish a government in accordance with our political culture, religious beliefs and social norms."¹¹

Bangsamoro leaders headed by Sultan Abdul Aziz Guiwan Mastura Kudarat IV of the Sultanate of Magindanaw, meeting in Cotabato City on January 28, 2001, likewise expressed their strong desire to regain the Bangsamoro independence. The Declaration of Intent and Manifestation of Direct Political Act¹² they issued states: "As sovereign individuals, we believe that the Bangsamoro people's political life, as matters stand, call for an OIC-sponsored or UN-supervised referendum in the interest of political justice to decide once and for all," whether to remain part of the Philippines as an autonomous region, or to form a state of federated union; or to become an independent state.

The Second Bangsamoro People's Consultative Assembly held on June 1-3, 2001 at the same place, attended by delegates¹³ from all over the Bangsamoro homeland, including representatives of non-Muslim indigenous communities, unanimously declared that "the only just, meaningful, and permanent solution to the Mindanao Problem is the complete independence of the Bangsamoro people and the territories they now actually occupy from the Republic of the Philippines."

GRP recognizes Bangsamoro self-determination

Whether the Bangsamoro people are entitled to self-determination or not is no longer debatable for the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) recognizes that. This was clear in one of the provisions of the Tripoli Agreement of Peace of 2001 between the GRP and the MILF, which states that "the observance of international humanitarian law and respect for internationally recognized human rights instruments and the protection of evacuees and displaced persons in the conduct of their relations reinforce the Bangsamoro people's fundamental right to determine their own future and political status." (Underscoring supplied)

The recognition of the Bangsamoro right to self-determination was affirmed by Secretary Silvestre C. Afable, Jr., Chairman of the Government Peace Negotiating Panel in the talks with the MILF, in his letter to Mohagher Iqbal, Chairman of the MILF Peace Negotiating Panel, on November 9, 2006, which stated that the GRP would like to explore with the MILF in the next round of talks, "the grant of self-determination and self-rule to the Bangsamoro people based on an Organic Charter to be drafted by representatives of the Bangsamoro people." In Tokyo last May 2007, he again reiterated the Philippine government position: "On the negotiating table, we have offered a political settlement based on self-determination that strives to unify the Bangsamoro people rather than divide them, for them to finally live in a homeland rather than a rented territory paid for in blood and suffering. We are crossing bridges of understanding that others have never ventured to do in the past."¹⁴

Grievances

Under the Republic of the Philippines, the Bangsamoro complain that they suffer discrimination and oppression. Some of these complaints are cited below.

1. Christian majority are biased against Muslims as shown by studies.¹⁵ These prejudices lead to exclusion of the Bangsamoro from jobs, education, housing and business opportunities. These are evident in the personal experiences of Muslims on how they were shut out of jobs, housing and study opportunities recounted in the Philippine Human Development Report (PHDR 2005).

The PHDR 2005 study reveals that a considerable percentage (33 percent to 39 percent) of Filipinos is biased against Muslims. Exclusion from job opportunities is very high given that 46 percent of the Christian population would choose Christian male worker and 40 percent Christian female domestic helper. Only 4 percent will choose a Muslim male worker and 7 percent Muslim female domestic helper. Majority of the Christians cannot even accept Muslims as neighbors, as the study shows that in Metro Manila 57 percent opt for residence with higher rent but far from a Muslim community.

2. Because of government policies and programs the Bangsamoro lost big portions of their lands and became minority in their own homeland.¹⁶

The Philippine government opened the whole of Mindanao to resettlement and corporate investments. So, in 1903, the Philippine Commission declared as null and void all land grants made by traditional leaders like sultans, datus, and tribal leaders if done without government consent. And through the years the government implemented public land laws which are discriminatory to the Bangsamoro and other Indigenous Peoples of Mindanao, and favorable to Filipino settlers and corporations.¹⁷ The introduction of public land laws, which were based on the Regalian doctrine, “became an opportunity for the colonized north-Filipino elites to own or lease substantial landholdings as well as a chance for the 'legal' or systematic landgrabbing of traditional lands”¹⁸ of the Muslims.

The discrimination against Muslims and indigenous peoples in land ownership is evident in the following table that shows the number

of hectares people and corporations may own under the Philippine public land laws.¹⁹

Year	Hectares Allowed		
	For Homesteader	For Non-Christian (Moros and Wild Tribes)	For Corporation
1903	16 has.	(no provision)	1,024
1919	24 has.	10 has.	1,024
1936	16 has.	4 has.	1,024

In 1954 the National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Administration (NARRA) was established. Under this program, from 1954 through 1958 close to 23,400 Christian Filipino families were resettled in Cotabato.²⁰

The consequence of the state policies on land ownership and encouragement of Christian settlers to settle in Mindanao is the minoritization of the Bangsamoro in their traditional homeland. The lands that remain to the Bangsamoro are those located in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and small areas in other provinces.

3. Government failed to deliver basic services and needed development to Bangsamoro communities. In the ARMM, which comprises provinces where the Bangsamoro are majority, poverty incidence is the highest in the country. In 2000, poverty incidence in the ARMM was 66 percent while the national average was 33.7 percent, and it worsened compared with the 1997 poverty incidence which was 57.3 percent.²¹ Incidence of families below the per capita food/subsistence threshold was also highest in the ARMM with 33.5 percent in 2000 while the national average was 16.7 percent.²² Life expectancy for women was 59.3 years and 55.5 years among men.²³
4. Government also failed to protect the persons and properties of the Bangsamoro people. There were reported massacres of Muslims and destruction of their properties but the government failed not only to give them protection but also to give them justice. No serious investigations were conducted and no one was held responsible in many of these incidents of human rights violations. For example, the incidents cited below, which are just few of the many incidents of human rights violations against the Bangsamoro people, happened three decades ago but no investigation was done and no one was held responsible.²⁴

- On March 17, 1968, Muslim military trainees were reported missing in their training camp in Corregidor Island.
- On December 21, 1970, three Muslims were killed and 147 houses were burned in the barrios of Ahan, Limpugo and Montid, in the municipality of Datu Piang, Cotabato.
- On January 19, 1971, 73 Muslims were killed in the municipality of Alamada, Cotabato.
- On June 19, 1971, 70 Muslims were killed and 17 were wounded at a mosque in barrio Manili, Carmen, Cotabato.
- From April 6, 1971 to July 22, Muslim houses were burned:
 - 55 houses in Carmen, Cotabato
 - 18 houses in Pikit, Cotabato
 - 25 houses in Kidapawan, Cotabato
 - 22 houses in Buldon, Cotabato
 - 52 houses in Wao, Lanao del Sur
- On September 8, 1971, ten Muslims were killed in the municipality of Sapad, Lanao del Norte.
- On October 24, 1971, 66 Muslims were killed in Magsaysay, Lanao del Norte.

Determination of Bangsamoro Political Status

The core issue in the right to self-determination is the determination of a people's political status. How is the political status of a people determined? The UNESCO experts were of the opinion that a people should be able to achieve self-determination through a fully participatory and democratic process. The experts said: "Self-determination is achieved by fully participatory democratic processes among the people who are seeking the realization of self-determination, including referenda where appropriate."²⁵

To determine the wishes of the Bangsamoro people as to their political status, referendum has to be resorted to. The above cited letter of Secretary Afafe stated further that the Bangsamoro people shall decide on their political status in a referendum to be held after a certain period. To avert the worry of some that the referendum may turn into an all-out, winner-take-all contest the range of choices should include all possible political arrangements, such as independence, autonomy, free association, consociational arrangement, federal arrangement, and other power sharing arrangements.

For a referendum to be participatory and democratic, it should be preceded by lengthy political debate and dialogue within the given communities to ensure that citizens are aware of what the options are, are fully informed about their implications, and are as ready as possible to vote in a referendum. In Southern Sudan, the referendum will take place after the interim period of six years. To cite an example, the referendum on Bougainville's future political status would be held not earlier than 10 years but not later than 15 years after the signing of the agreement.

In the case of the Bangsamoro, I agree with the recommendations of the Bangsamoro People's Consultative Assembly (BPCA) and the Mindanao People's Peace Movement (MPPM) that the referendum shall be held not earlier than five years but not more than 10 years after a decision is made to give enough time for people to understand the pros and the cons of every proposition, and to provide the Philippine government time to demonstrate to the Bangsamoro people once again that they will be in better condition if they remain part of the Philippines.

Considering the bad experiences we always have in Philippine elections, the referendum will be credible if supervised by a third party from the international community. The third party can be the United Nations, European Union, Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), or joint efforts of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other multilateral groupings.

Before holding a referendum the issue of territory has to be resolved through negotiations because the area where referendum will be conducted has to be definite. Likewise, the mechanism on how to conduct the exercise to ensure that it will be democratic and participatory has to be agreed upon by the Philippine government and the representative organization of the Bangsamoro people.

Independence as expression of self-determination

If the Bangsamoro people will choose independence as expression of their right to self-determination, an independent Bangsamoro state shall be founded on the principles of freedom, democracy, equality of all men and women, respect to religious and political beliefs, and adherence to universal human rights. Among other principles, an independent Bangsamoro government has to observe the following:

1. The system of government to be adopted shall be determined by the Bangsamoro people themselves. A provisional government shall see to the drafting of a constitution and to its adoption. The constitution shall include a bill of human rights and freedom, and recognition of the right of people comprising the Bangsamoro entity to self-governance.
2. Residents of the territory at the time of independence shall be the citizens of the Bangsamoro state. They shall enjoy equal rights, privileges and obligations. They will have rights to suffrage, ownership of property, practice of their religious beliefs and participation in public affairs.

Residents who will prefer to remain citizens of the Philippines after independence can choose whether to remain as permanent resident alien or move to Philippine territory with the right to bring with them all their properties. They can sell their immovable properties to private individuals or opt for government compensation.
3. The Bangsamoro government shall assume the obligations and enjoy the rights arising out of international conventions to which the Philippines is a signatory, in accordance with the rules of international law. Multilateral and bilateral agreements signed by the Philippines that directly apply to the territories of the Bangsamoro state shall be honored.
4. Through treaties, the independent Bangsamoro state can have special relationship with the Philippines, like for example on development of shared resource, exploitation of resources to benefit from economy of scale, flow of goods and services, movements of their citizens, regional security, and other concerns.
5. Laws passed by the Congress of the Philippines that specifically apply in the territory of the Bangsamoro state at the time of independence shall remain in force until amended or repealed by the Bangsamoro legislative body.

Pensions payable to retirees shall continue to be paid by the Bangsamoro government according to the same terms and conditions. Permits, franchises and authorizations that have been issued shall remain in force until their expiry.

6. The Bangsamoro government shall conclude agreements with the Philippines on matters relating to the apportionment of properties and debts of the Philippines.

Options for Christians and Indigenous Peoples of Mindanao

Although the whole of Mindanao, Sulu – Tawi-Tawi archipelago, the islands of Basilan and Palawan are the traditional homeland of the Bangsamoro people, the demographic reality is that the greater portions of these territories are occupied by the Indigenous People and the Filipino settler communities. Being pragmatic, the Bangsamoro people are claiming only areas where they remain the majority.

The Bangsamoro respect the right of Indigenous People of free choice.²⁶ If they will choose to join the Bangsamoro state they will be welcomed, if they opt to form their separate independent state it has to be respected.

In the same vein, if the Filipino settlers in Mindanao will decide to secede from the Philippines and establish their own state, peaceful and democratic efforts to achieve that have to be recognized.

Having three independent states in Mindanao – for the Bangsamoro, the Indigenous People, and the Christian settler communities – may be better because each can address the specific and unique needs of their citizenry. Although they may be independent from each other, the three states can cooperate on areas of common concern and matters of mutual benefits, like development of shared resource, flow of goods and services, movements of their citizens, and in the fields of international relations, trade and regional security.

If the other two communities prefer to remain part of the Philippines then that decision has to be respected.

Conclusion

The Mindanao problem is rooted in the Bangsamoro's aspiration for self-determination. The implementation of this fundamental right of peoples to determine their political status through a democratic and participatory mechanism will open the opportunity to resolve the ongoing conflict between the Philippine government and the Bangsamoro people.

As signatory to United Nations instruments on right to self-determination, the Philippines has the obligation to uphold, respect and promote this right. Constitutional and institutional barriers should not be made the excuse to deny the Bangsamoro people this right. Sudan, for example, has amended its constitution to give way to a referendum in the South, and Papua New Guinea has promised "to move amendments to the National Constitution to guarantee a referendum on Bougainville's future political status" when it signed the Bougainville Peace Agreement in 2001.

END NOTES

¹Quoted by Thomas D. Musgrave, 1997. *Self-Determination and National Minorities*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 188.

²Musgrave 1997: 209

³Allen Buchanan, "Secession", *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2003. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/secession/index.html>

⁴Quoted by Musgrave, p. 208

⁵Musgrave, p. 208

⁶Michael C. Van Walt van Praag, and Onno Seroo, eds. *The Implementation of the Right to Self-determination as a Contribution to Conflict Prevention*. Report of the International Conference of Experts held in Barcelona on November 21-27, 1998, organized by the UNESCO Division of Human Rights, Democracy and Peace and the UNESCO Centre of Catalonia.

⁷Organization of Islamic Conference, "Resolution No. 58/28-P." Twenty-Eight Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, 2001.

⁸The Agreement on Peace between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, otherwise known as the Tripoli Agreement on Peace of 2001, signed on June 22, 2001 in Tripoli, Libya, unambiguously recognizes that identity. Examples are these provisions of the agreement:

"Recognizing that peace negotiations between the GRP and the MILF is for the advancement of the general interest of the Bangsamoro people..."

"On the aspect of ancestral domain, the Parties, in order to address the humanitarian and economic needs of the Bangsamoro people and preserve their social and cultural heritage and inherent right over their ancestral domain, ..."

"The observance of international humanitarian law and respect for internationally recognized human rights instruments and the protection of evacuees and displaced persons in the conduct of their relations reinforce the Bangsamoro people's fundamental right to determine their own future and political status."

⁹In the preamble of the Agreement on Peace Between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, otherwise known as the Tripoli Agreement on Peace of 2001, signed on June 22, 2001 in Tripoli, Libya, states that the GRP and the MILF are "Determined to establish a peaceful environment and normal condition of life in the Bangsamoro homeland".

¹⁰The first assembly was "said to have been attended by more than one million Bangsamoro people from all over Mindanao" See Patricio P. Diaz, *Understanding Mindanao Conflict*. Davao City: MindaNews Publications, 2003, p. 41. The assembly report stated that attendance was 1,070,697 delegates (see Summary Proceedings. Bangsamoro People's Consultative Assembly, Da'wah Center, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao, 3-5 December 1996, p. 7).

¹¹Copy of the document is available in the collections of the author.

¹²Copy of the document is available in the collections of the author.

¹³According to Diaz, the second assembly "said to have a bigger attendance". The assembly report said that attendance was 2,627,345 (see Declaration of the Second Bangsamoro People's Consultative Assembly, Simuay, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao, June 1-3, 2001.)

¹⁴Quoted by P. Abinales in his column "The Separatist", *MindaNews*, May 21, 2007. Also in *Philippine Free Press*, May 15, 2007.

¹⁵Christian prejudices against Muslims were revealing in the study conducted by Filipinas Foundation, *Philippine Majority-Minority Relations and Ethnic Attitudes*. Makati, Rizal, 1975, and in the Philippine Development Network, *Philippine Human Development Report 2005* (PHDR 2005).

¹⁶On the minoritization of the Bangsamoro people, see B. R. Rodil, *The Minoritization of the Indigenous Communities of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago*. Davao City: Alternative Forum for Research in Mindanao, Inc., 1994.

¹⁷See Rudy B. Rodil, "Philippine Government Policies on the Indigenous Peoples," paper presented during the Workshop on Multi-Ethnic Asia: Peace and Sustainable Development, Ho Chi Minh City, 16-20 April 2007.

¹⁸Myrthena L. Fianza, "Contesting Land and Identity In The Periphery: The Moro Indigenous People of Southern Philippines". Working paper prepared for the 10th Biennial Conference of the International Association for the Study of Common Property held at Oaxaca, Mexico on August 9-13, 2004, p. 5.

¹⁹Rodil, "Philippine Government Policies on the Indigenous Peoples."

²⁰Michael O. Mastura, *Muslim Filipino Experience*. (Manila: Ministry of Muslim Affairs, 1984), p. 245.

²¹<http://www.census.gov.ph/data/sectordata/2000/ie00p02f.htm>

²²<http://www.census.gov.ph/data/sectordata/2000/ie00p06f.htm>

²³World Bank, *Human Development for Peace and Prosperity in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao*. Manila: World Bank, 2003, p. 17.

²⁴See Magsaysay S. Werble, "The Mindanao Peace Process: Chronology of Events from Tripoli to Jakarta 1976-1996." Master's thesis submitted to the Institute of Islamic Studies, University of the Philippines Diliman, 1996.

²⁵Michael C. Van Walt van Praag, and Onno Seroo..

²⁶The GRP and MILF Technical Working Groups arrived at a consensus during the 7th Exploratory Talks on April 18-20, 2005 affirming "the rights of non-Islam professing indigenous tribes to free choice."

Searching for Peace in the Southern Philippines: A Conversation with Nur Misuari*



By Kenneth E. Bauzon

(What follows is an abridged version of an interview with Hon. Nur Misuari conducted at his residence along Roxas Boulevard in Pasay City, Philippines on August 11, 1999. This is dedicated to Kuya Marvin who, with the invaluable assistance of Aling Carmen, radio host, made this interview possible. To both, I am deeply grateful.)

Introduction

The odyssey of Nur Misuari from being a rebel leader in the early 1970s to being a statesman and head of an autonomous regional government during the 1990s and back again to being an alleged captive leader of a failed insurrection in the early years of the new millennium says as much about the nature of the forces and events around him as it does about him as a person. Following more than twenty years of active Muslim rebel campaign which he led to gain independence for the Bangsamoro nation, he eventually decided on a more modest goal of autonomy which he negotiated as leader of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) resulting in a draft treaty, with the intermediation of well-intentioned parties led by the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), and signed into effect in September 1996 between him, on one hand, and the then Philippine President Fidel V. Ramos, on the other.

Pragmatism over idealism

While many of Misuari's loyal followers would have preferred that he insisted on the demand for independence at the negotiating table, pragmatism prevailed with the realization that the GRP would never

allow for the dismantling of the Philippine territory, and even with the concession of autonomy, the GRP insisted that it be established with the country's constitutional framework. With Misuari having staked his reputation on the future of the peace agreement, many of his followers grudgingly went along but, as it turned out, their support was contingent on tangible and visible signs of progress within what they regarded as a reasonable amount of time.

When this interview took place, it was just a few weeks shy of the third anniversary of the signing of this agreement. He was therefore already in a position to offer his preliminary assessment of the progress of the implementation of certain key terms and provisions of the agreement over the preceding three years. In candor, he noted several problems on issues including but not limited to: a) the undue delays in the allocation and disbursement of funds from the national government intended for the autonomous government; b) the slow pace in the flow of donor funds from various international funding organizations, e.g., the World Bank (WB), and governments from around the world that have made monetary commitments presumably for the socio-economic rehabilitation and development of the autonomous region; c) the MNLF's not-so unfounded suspicion over the GRP's opportunistic insistence on a plebiscite despite the predictable outcome of diluting the area of autonomy as a consequence of demographic changes favoring the non-Muslim population; d) the various excuses offered by the GRP, and the Philippine military in particular, in the slow integration of former MNLF rebel fighters into the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) as agreed upon; and e) the continuing negative reception if not resistance to the full implementation of the Shari'ah as an integral part of Philippine jurisprudence, again, as provided for in the agreement.

The failed rebellion

No doubt these problems featured prominently in the decision of many of his followers to stage a failed rebellion in Jolo, in his home province of Sulu, and in Zamboanga in November 2001, resulting in the deaths of over a hundred persons. This incident effectively ended his term as Governor of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) for which position he was succeeded by Parouk Hussin, then MNLF's Foreign Affairs Secretary. The government of President Gloria

Macapagal-Arroyo promptly labeled Misuari as a fugitive from the law and requested the government of Malaysia, to which Misuari fled to seek political refuge, to return him to the Philippines at the soonest possible time. He was transported back to the Philippines in January 2002 after which he was charged with rebellion and placed under detention pending trial at Fort Santo Domingo, in the province of Laguna, the same facility where the disgraced former president-but-now-pardoned-convict Joseph Estrada spent time while he was on trial for corruption. Due to health reasons, Misuari has been moved to a residence closer to a medical facility - the St. Luke's Medical Center - in Quezon City, where he has been placed under house arrest since mid-2006. He continues to face rebellion charges, and the Arroyo Administration has vowed that the legal process should take its "natural" course in his case, warding off requests from both supporters and sympathetic third parties that Misuari be considered for political clemency more deservedly so than the recently convicted but pardoned former president.

A careful reading of his words in this interview and a close attention to the mood with which he expressed them would reveal, at least to this interviewer, that he neither desired to lead the failed rebellion nor for the rebellion to occur at all. He wanted the peace agreement to succeed. He placed his faith - perhaps foolishly -- on the words and intentions of government officials with whom he has dealt. He had a notion of himself as being counted among the Philippine Muslim community's respected elder statesmen with long experience from which he drew wisdom albeit afflicted with the same human frailties from which everyone suffers. Indeed, the rebellion may be more properly interpreted both as a sign of impatience and frustration on the part of his larger constituency - not just his immediate followers - and as an attempt to rescue his legitimacy which has been undermined by the ascendant Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) whose militant stance and commitment to Islam have proved more attractive to young and able fighters who have thus far succeeded in wearing down the government and its military to a virtual stalemate. No wonder many of Misuari's battle-tested fighters in the MNLF have also switched sides to join the MILF.

But even if Misuari's hopes for the peace agreement to succeed were not dashed, and assuming further that the litany of problems that he recounted in this interview did not exist, and even if, finally, his claim to legitimacy was not challenged by the emergence of the MILF and by the extremist bandit group Abu Sayyaf, Misuari was still bound for a big

disappointment if he took as evidence of success the economic development and prosperity for the Bangsamoro people, let alone their political empowerment within the framework of the peace agreement which he negotiated, for these were not coming.

The reckoning of failure amidst gathering clouds of neoliberalism

As discussed in the companion essay, "Ruminations on the Bangsamoro Struggle and Neoliberal Globalization," there have been a gradual but steady gathering of forces representing what would later be recognized as neoliberal globalization. Misuari himself may never have recognized or anticipated these forces, but this was beside the point for these forces were coming nonetheless, and in full force. Misuari would have been helpless to do anything about it even if he wanted to do something about it. As this writer has concluded in a separate piece assessing the GRP-MNLF Peace Agreement of 1996: "[W]hile the Agreement concedes little by the GRP, it traps Misuari and the MNLF apparatus into a corner where it has compromised their ability to demand greater autonomy than that spelled out in the Agreement, much less ask for independence or return to the battlefield."¹

What follows is a conversation that this writer had with Misuari in August 1999. One might ask: Why the belated publication of this interview? The easy response is that, as a historical document, it provides valuable insights not only into the thinking of Misuari at the time, but it also offers a unique perspective with which to understand much of the events that have happened since the interview. For instance, the failure of the ARMM under his governorship to implement its programs were not so much due to his lack of leadership skills but, rather, to the control exerted not only by the Office of the President of the Philippines or by the failure between the Executive and the Legislature to agree on enabling legislation regarding ARMM but also the failure or unwillingness of the international donor organizations to deliver fully and consistently on their promised assistance. Finally, by making this interview available now, other researchers on this or similar subject may find something useful or pertinent with which to help explain why the pain and suffering of the Bangsamoro people continue, why the Philippine Government is essentially - as it has been -- an untrustworthy and an unreliable negotiating partner, and why it is important for the struggle for Bangsamoro dignity and identity to carry on.

I. Significance of the Peace Accords and General Assessment.

KB: *Thank you very much for your kind hospitality, Honorable Misuari. First of all, I would like to ask you, when the peace accord was signed in 1996, how optimistic were you that the terms would be implemented at the time?*

NM: Actually, personally, I was quite optimistic because I thought that the GRP [Government of the Republic of the Philippines] had understood the significance of this peace agreement. I look at it in the sense that this peace agreement had a very important consequence, i.e., that of dissuading our forces and those of the government from continuing to engage in the kind of activity that would lead to mutual destruction in Mindanao.² At this time, the Peace Agreement could bring about peace as a prerequisite for economic and social development in Mindanao.

But it turned out that, because of the failure to fully implement the first phase of the Peace Agreement as we near the end of our three-year transitional period, we have not made headway on the problem at all.³

II. Nature and Dimensions of the Problem

A. The Issue of Funding

KB: *I thank you for your kind assessment, Honorable Misuari. But if I may ask, could you please break down the nature of the problems involved. Why is it, for instance, that the socio-economic programs that were promised in the Peace Accords have not yet been fully implemented?*

NM: I think we could sum up by saying that the pledge and the commitment of the GRP to put up with what is called the “Mini-Marshall Plan” for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the region to be funded with at least 25 billion pesos for a span of over three years -- has not taken off at all. As a matter of fact, nobody is even talking about this plan anymore. This was supposed to be the main component of the Peace Agreement. The only thing that we have done so far was achieved largely through the contribution of the World Bank (WB) involving the small amount of US\$10 million.⁴ The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has also committed funds of up to \$10 million, but up to now, it has not yet released these funds...

Also, there were some humanitarian assistance coming from countries like Australia, the United States, Belgium and Japan.⁵ They sent some equipment to a number of municipalities. And they have also sent mosquito nets and the like. But these were in the form of stop-gap solution to our problems because, the long and destructive war brought about great humanitarian, economic and social tragedy. You see, we never destroyed any of our own dwelling places. We are not crazy. Why should we destroy our own? But it was the effect of the napalm bombs, the indiscriminate shelling of and destruction of our homes many of which have not yet been restored up to now. That is why people are, until now, still, a bit demoralized. That is why, if the government will make another mistake, such as refusing to agree to a postponement of the scheduled elections in September, this year, I do not know what will happen to Mindanao.⁶ All those precious time and huge fortunes expended by mediators from Libya, Indonesia, the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), and the Ministerial Committee of the Six in order to underwrite the peace process for nearly four years would simply come to naught.⁷ And we might be thrown back to square one. Now, who will profit from this?

Right now, one can discern that there are already dangerous trends in the various parts of Mindanao. I cannot go into details, but it is evident that, in places like Jolo, in the Province of Sulu, fighting is still raging. I see the situation is regressing back into chaos in the south all because people do not understand exactly in what direction the Philippine legislature should go.

B. The Issue of Overlapping Functions

KB: *A number of observers have enumerated to one degree or another some possible causes. First, one of these suggested causes is the overlapping of functions between the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, on one hand, and some government agencies on the other, including local government units (LGUs) in the Republic of the Philippines. How do you react to that analysis?*

NM: Well, actually, this is a very inaccurate analysis because with respect to our LGUs, they continue to enjoy all the kinds of rights and duties that they used to enjoy before. The autonomy that we

now have did not come about only as a result of the 1996 Peace Agreement. It had always been there during the time of former Presidents Ferdinand Marcos and Corazon Aquino, you see. So, why only now would these observers notice any overlapping? As a matter of fact, this is supposed to be a reenforcement or an augmentation to what they have already received by law and by the Constitution.

C. The Issue of Political Will

KB: *What do you think of this? Why cannot they release the money?*

NM: Well, I cannot understand. Maybe it is just that the people in government did not have the will-power to help us get these things done. I cannot imagine why even the twenty-five percent of our mandatory reserve that was taken from our budget has not yet been restored. But this is the budget for 1998! Now, how could you explain that? I am not now sure myself if, indeed, they want us to succeed, or if they want to help us succeed, so we can maintain our credibility with the people. It seems we are the only ones now championing the cause of autonomy. Look among our MILF [Moro Islamic Liberation Front] brothers, especially brother Salamat Hashim with whom I met not too long ago.⁸ He will never compromise his demand for independence. Otherwise, if he does, it will lead to his own undoing.

III. The Persistent Appeal of Independence

IV.A. The Uneasy Balance Between Autonomy and Independence

KB: *Do you think that independence is still a realistic goal?*

NM: Well, if you do not give the people any other choice, what else can they do? But do not count me there. No need for me. You do not have to reckon with me. But I am not the only one doing the thinking for the MNLF, you see. We have plenty of very learned ulamas [religious teachers] trained in the Middle East, in the best Islamic universities in the world such as the Al Azhar University. Many of our people have gone through this and other institutions of higher learning in the Middle East. I am not the only one who has a voice.

As I have declared on numerous occasions, such as to Malacanang (i.e., Philippine equivalent of the U.S. White House), to the media, and even to the OIC at its Twenty-sixth Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conference held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, West Africa, that if I have my way, even if we no longer have this accord -- the Peace Agreement -- still it is my desire that we continue with the very precious peace that we have achieved following the signing of this agreement in 1996.

KB: *But, would you not be operating from a position of weakness if you continue to advocate that position?*

NM: Definitely, but what else we can do? I just do not like the peace to be disturbed.

KB: *You do not want to go back to the armed struggle?*

NM: Well, I do not know what will eventually be my thinking about this, but I just do not like the peace to be disturbed because once it is disturbed, it is our people by the millions who will once again be uprooted from their homes, from their sources of livelihood. Who will take responsibility for that? I do not wish to account before God and before the conscience of mankind.

IV. B. Attitude toward the Media, the MILF and Other Militant Independence Groups

KB: *But what do you think of the organization of Salamat Hashim?*

NM: Well, brother Hashim will tell me, "Oh, brother Nur, I told you so." And even Jose Maria Sison, founder of the new Communist Party of the Philippines, from his exile in the Netherlands, could now guffaw from a far away distance and say, "Nur, I told you so. Don't trust the government."

But I do not regret. I really do not. I entered into this with an open mind and an open heart. And, as a human being, I am liable to commit some mistakes. But, of course I am ready to rectify myself if I have made some mistakes. And I pray that, in the end, his Excellency Philippine President Joseph Estrada will be able to flex his muscles, so to speak, so that his influence and authority will get things done.⁹ It will be of the greatest tragedy in the history of this country if the Peace Agreement that we now have won is done away with.

KB: *How do you assess your differences with MILF and the Abu Sayyaf group?*

NM: My difference with them in terms of goal and approach is that they want independence and want to pursue it through armed struggle.¹⁰ As you can see, it is very clear. Although they appear to be flexible by accommodating the government's request for peace negotiations, so far, there has been no substantive result. We do not have any problem with the radical elements except, of course, for the fact that we do not approve of some of their tactics.

KB: *In what sense?*

NM: You know, like taking people as hostages, among others.

KB: *You mean, the Abu Sayyaf group or the MILF?*

NM: I mean the Abu Sayyaf even though the mass media tends to exaggerate its reporting as you can see. I have clippings about these so-called kidnappings but the stories are often told with such distortion that the events are made to have occurred in the moon and the stars. The media often automatically attribute it to, or assume that it is, the handiwork of the Abu Sayyaf. I do not know how sensitive the intelligence of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is, or that of the Philippine National Police (PNP).¹¹ But they are wrong to constantly attribute to the malevolent work of the Abu Sayyaf every kidnapping that takes place.¹² Please understand that we still share basic values. For one, we do not have any interpersonal differences. We are brothers, we are Muslims, and we are able to coexist and accommodate each other. That is exactly my gentlemen's agreement with brother Salamat. As you see, I was with him recently during which I affirmed that type of agreement in the presence of the Libyan Ambassador [Rajab Azzarouq] who also happened to be present.

You know, the Libyan Ambassador is a very responsible and influential member of the Ministerial Committee of the Six. It was upon my request that he be present so that people will not misunderstand us, you see.

KB: *Approximately, of what year or what month did you have that meeting?*

NM: About two months ago.¹³

KB: *I just want to establish the date.*

NM: What was the other point you were raising?

KB: *The differences between the MNLF and the MILF.*

NM: As I said, there are no differences except in the methodology and in the objective. If you recall, I was the one who earlier defined the objective of independence. But due to the pressure of the OIC, I was persuaded to put this aside but, of course, with the concurrence of my brothers in the MNLF. Thenceforth, we opted for autonomy.

KB: *How do you define full and genuine autonomy?*

NM: Well, you see, we do not have to redefine the term. It is already defined in terms of the numerous agreements that have already been made between the Government and us. More specifically, the Tripoli Agreement signed by us on December 23, 1976, complemented by the implementing agreement signed on September 2, 1996. Take these two together and implement them because it is to the best interest of this country. Otherwise, if they are not complied with, or if they are done away with, what do you think will happen? People are already hoarding thousands of arms, you see.¹⁴ What do you suppose that means?

You see, as I already said earlier, do not count me there anymore. But consider the thinking of the young people especially exposed to radical philosophies being taught in various parts of this country. You see, they are reading from the works of radical revolutionary teachers and leaders in the Middle East.

Add to these ideas the many declarations of the United Nations (UN). The UN has come up with a declaration saying, as I understand it, that with respect to the land, only the indigenous inhabitants have the right to decide on the destiny of their land.¹⁵ Now, how can you stop them from demanding what they believe is rightly theirs?

KB: *How do you respond to some environmental organizations that are opposed, for instance, to the indiscriminate cutting of trees in areas within the autonomous region?*

NM: I was the first one to declare total log ban. And I declared it in the Philippine Senate. Not inside the hall, but at the Senate corridor in the presence of several senators. But what happened was, there were some big loggers who had previously secured their franchise from Congress. I even expressed to former President Fidel Ramos my belief that the Government must put a stop to this. We tried on our own to stop loggers from cutting down the

trees. For the most part we succeeded. But there were a few we could not stop because they were owned by influential people and had their own respective private armies.

KB: *So, what specific orders have you given to your subordinates?*

NM: I have issued orders time and again in urgent attempts to stop these logging activities. As you know, if you go to Mindanao, you can see the deleterious effects that these have wrought upon our people. All crops had been destroyed. This is due largely to the overflowing of the banks of the Pulangi River and its tributaries.¹⁶

Unfortunately, the government officials in Manila as well as the owners of many of these logging companies are ignorant about the hardships in the autonomous region. I categorize their crime as a crime against humanity.

KB: *I would like to shift our conversation, if I may, Honorable Misuari, to the subject of the plebiscite. One of the proposals being talked about between politicians is to once again open up this process to all the provinces including the four that have already accepted autonomy. What do you think of that proposal?*

NM: Well, I am not too familiar with the legal and constitutional implications of this proposal. But insofar as the spirit of the Constitution is concerned, based on my information, provinces or areas that have already undergone this process should not have to go through it again.¹⁷ That is the essence. But the problem is some people in government want to cheat us and deny us the opportunity to expand the area of the autonomous region. Their calculation is that if the referendum includes the four provinces that now form the autonomous region, we might lose a province or two if not the entire autonomous region altogether due to the changing demographic situation. Ten provinces have already undergone a referendum in the past, and an autonomous region consisting of these ten provinces was offered by then President Madame Corazon Aquino to us. As you may remember, we met on September 5, 1986 in Jolo. We had a very good discussion.

Earlier, in April of that same year, we negotiated with the government, along with the intermediation of a representative from Saudi Arabia, what is now known as the Jeddah Accord.¹⁸ An essential component of this accord at that meeting, proposed by former Vice President and then

Philippine Ambassador to the U.S., Emmanuel Pelaez, was what he referred to as the “Ten Plus Three” formula. He explained that because the ten provinces had already undergone a referendum, they do not have to go through again -- unless one insists that what the previous government had done was illegal. If that is what some quarters insist, so be it. But these quarters wanted -- and still want -- to cheat us. They insist that we have to undergo referendum again. Understandably, we were disturbed by this and we had no choice but to oppose the idea of a referendum.

KB: *By “they,” what precisely do you mean?*

NM: The government, the government. The plan is to stage-manage the referendum. Do you think that it can be an honest and clean referendum? No. None of them would ever accept that, i.e., that which they have already concocted. In fact, that idea of theirs was defeated completely because we were opposed to it and we boycotted it, you see.

Anyway, as I was saying, if they are not happy with the Peace Agreement, we in the MNLF are ready to join hands with them to undo it. The only thing I ask is, even if only in the form of a gentlemen's agreement, that we should not expose our children to the scourge of another war. That is all I want. If the Government is not happy because it feels it can only implement the Agreement half-heartedly, then, as I said, I, too, am ready for its abrogation.

KB: *Because their commitments are all on paper and it is all up to them to make true of their word?*

NM: That is right, and maybe if they think that by negotiating with us or with other groups they can get better deal, why not?

KB: *Okay, the next topic I would like to talk about, Honorable Misuari, is the subject of the Shari'ah law and the integration of the Shari'ah law with the Philippine laws, in particular, the Islamic Personal Laws. How do you assess this process of integration right now?*

NM: Actually, if I may correct you a bit, it is not an integration per se because, as I understand it, integration means that there would be a communion of sorts of certain things. I prefer to use the term “coexistence” because we have two systems of jurisprudence. One applies to the country at large -- which is non-Muslim -- and the other is for the Muslims.

Now, you know, our religion is a very tolerant religion. The Holy Koran is very precise in saying, Laikra Abitin (“Let there be no compulsion in religion.”) Our religion does not involve just praying. That is just a small part of it. It involves everything, including the search for knowledge and wisdom, such as in scientific research. Because it involves and embraces everything, it suggests the totality of life. You see, do not confine religion simply to our relationship with God. We do not even allow anyone to mediate between us and God. Ours is a very direct relationship with God.

If the Government can accept that idea as it appears to have already accepted, then why not recognize a separate legal system, as embodied in the Shari'ah, for our people?¹⁹ Yes, this is already in the Peace Agreement. And, in fact, there are already Islamic courts in some parts of the Autonomous Region. The problem is some of our Muslim lawyers do not want to serve or are deterred from serving.

KB: *Why do you think they hesitate?*

NM: Because the Government imposes some requirements that, I think, which would, in effect, render them ineligible. For instance, in filling positions for the Court of Appeals that is being organized in the Autonomous Region, the Government has asked us to submit candidates to be considered. But these candidates have to be full-pledged lawyers, meaning that they shall have graduated from an accredited law school, shall have passed the Philippine Bar, and at the same time shall be knowledgeable in Islamic law.

KB: *Are there enough of these Islamic lawyers who may serve if called upon?*

NM: There is a good enough number of them.²⁰ But anyway, we are trying to comply with the Government's requirements despite these difficulties. But I do not know to what extent we will succeed.

KB: *In terms of substance, do you see any conflict between Islamic law and the secular Philippine laws?*

NM: I am not familiar with any areas of conflict between Islamic laws and Philippine laws. We still have to see how, in the long run, they would relate to each other so that if there is any conflict, the two sets of laws can be harmonized to serve society better.

KB: *On the issue of integration of the former MNLF guerillas into the Armed Forces of the Philippines, how do you assess the progress that has been made so far?*

NM: Well, right now, we have sent our young men and women for retraining.²¹ They have to go through the recruitment process as though they were new recruits. But somehow some people with vested interest were able to send their own favored candidates without our knowledge. In the end, I relented and said, "No problem. If they want to join, fine."

Anyway, the important thing is to understand that there are some problems. As you know, these young people -- these young fighters -- have been exposed to another kind of training within the MNLF. Our philosophy in training is different from that of the AFP. This is borne out by the experiences of our guerrillas who have gone through the training process with the AFP, which seems to believe that, in order to produce a quality soldier, you have to dehumanize him first. And then, turn him into a kind of a robot.

KB: *But how do you see the difference as becoming an obstacle in the full integration of the Moro fighters into the government's armed forces?*

NM: Actually, obstacles, these are man-made obstacles and they could also be, you know, undone by responsible people.

KB: *Realistically, can we expect the Armed Forces of the Philippines to change its ways of training?*

NM: Well, actually, they have been very, very useful. For instance, in Jolo we have PNP integrees there, five hundred of them. So when they launched the program to stamp out drugs, we chased the drug dealers out and we put some of them to prison. And we forced them to take oath that they would not go back to it if they go back.

KB: *One of my final questions, Honorable Misuari, is your assessment of the reasons or conditions why, first of all, peace was not attained during the Marcos administration and then why it was not attained under the Aquino administration. Could you please give us your impressions of the reasons why the Tripoli Agreement...*

NM: I would say Marcos was really serious about having peace with us. He was one man who wanted to leave this world and the political scene with his honor and his integrity intact. How could you leave a nation at war and still be able to maintain you honor? I know, he had a very genuine purpose to have this war

ended. He started the war he wanted it to end during his lifetime. But the advisers were the ones at fault. They wanted to mislead him because some of them, they wanted to get quick promotions in the battlefield, and so forth, when as a matter of fact, they were only staying in the command post and they also wanted to get money from the U.S.

KB: *What about under the Aquino administration? Why was peace not attained despite the fact that under Aquino, the Philippine Assembly passed the Organic Act of 1989 for the Autonomy of Muslim Mindanao?*

NM: Well, again to the best of my knowledge, it was the advisers around.

KB: *Again?*

NM: I credit Corazon Aquino for her enthusiasm to comply with our agreement.... But then again, it was the advisers. Because at one time, I had some people who are sympathetic to us, friendly to us, not necessarily sympathetic but friendly who told us that in one crucial cabinet meeting, Corazon was saying, "Oh, ano pa bang inintay natin?" in Tagalog. These may not be the exact words because I don't know Tagalog. "Ano pa bang ini-intay natin? Bakit hindi pa natin ibibigay kay Nur Misuari ang ini-intay niya? Ano bang masama diyan?" Somebody stood up, "But Madam, remember the problem and look for a solution to this problem. Otherwise, you have to give the problem to us and don't forget, in war there is no morality."

Ramos, I think the nation, the Filipino people must be grateful to this man. Why? Without him, do you think it would be possible to get Nur Misuari to come to the negotiating table and sign? But, you know they have sent distinguished people like General [Eduardo] Ermita...

Now, the question was, was Ramos sincere or what? I have no doubt he was a very sincere man. But then again, just like Marcos, just like Corazon, just like Ramos, it was the implementors, the people around that caused the failure.

KB: *If I may ask you one very last question. How would you summarize your greatest accomplishment as a governor of Muslim Mindanao in the past three years?*

NM: I cannot say anything about myself, it will be self-serving. As you can see, what will happen if we do fail, if we don't succeed?

This is not my failure alone. It is more of a failure of the government because my success depends upon this money, you see. But who can tell me Misuari is a failure when I have already produced such a tremendous achievement? People can go and see for themselves. People were so happy now to drive on the roads we have constructed.

KB: *What about in terms of the improvement of the health and the livelihood of the people?*

NM: Of course, meron bang epidemic ngayon? [Of course, is there any epidemic now?] Except the last time when there was La Nina [The typhoon La Nina], you see. Ang natamaan doon, mga family ko pa 'yon, sa Laminosa. [Even my family was hit, those who were in Laminosa.] I went there two times. I visit the people there. Mga relatives ko 'yon. [Those were my relatives.] We brought foodstuff, etcetera, doctors, and na-solve namin. [We bought foodstuffs, etcetera, doctors, and we were able to solve their problems.] Sa health, wala naman sa amin ano, except we are the poorest province. [In health matters, we had no problem, except that we were the poorest province.] That is why, to make up for it. I have to give them good roads. And not only that, this is good for peace and order because people once they have good roads, they will learn to drive, they will forget the guns.

KB: *I would like to conclude the interview, Honorable Misuari by thanking you for your kind hospitality, for your kind explanation. I would also like to thank Aling Carmen for introducing me to you and your entourage and, of course, my brother Marvin for introducing me to Aling Carmen, for accompanying me and for driving me in his car to your place. So if I may request, maybe we can have pictures together.*

NM: Thank you, Dr. Bauzon.

END NOTES

¹Kenneth E. Bauzon, "The Philippines: The 1996 Peace Agreement for the Southern Philippines: An Assessment," **Ethnic Studies Report**, Vol. XVII, No. 2 (July 1999). Available online at: www.ices.lk/publications/esr/articles-jul99/ESR-Philippines.pdf.

²As reported by Xinxua News Agency, the Philippine Government has acknowledged that it has spent \$2.78 billion in an attempt to suppress the Moro insurgency in the Philippine South during the twenty-six years prior to the 1996 Peace Agreement. Of the recorded 100,000 casualties, rebel casualties account for half while 30% was suffered by government soldiers, and the remaining 20% was suffered by innocent civilians. Please see "Chronology for Moros in the Philippines", a publication of the Center for International Development and Conflict Management, University of Maryland, College Park. Available in: www.www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/chronology.asp?groupID=84003. (Accessed November 11, 2007.)

³For further assessment of the 1996 GRP-MNLF Peace Agreement, please see Kenneth E. Bauzon, *The Philippines: the 1996 Peace Agreement for the Southern Philippines: An Assessment*, in *Ethnic Studies Report*, vol. xvii, no. 2 (July 1999). Available online in: www.ices.lk/publications/esr/articles_jul99/ESR-Philippines.pdf.

⁴This \$10 million allocation was intended for "small-scale livelihood and basic services projects" in Mindanao, and a small part of the \$1.13 billion package the World Bank has allocated for as many as eighteen identified projects over a three-year period.

⁵In December 1996, donor countries had pledged \$2.5 billion in loans, half of which was pledged by Japan (Reuters, December 11, 1996).

⁶These elections, which had been postponed once from March 1999 to September, the same year, due to continuing violence in the region, were for the purpose of electing new members of the Assembly for the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao.

⁷The significance of the role played by diplomats from Islamic countries and organizations is highlighted in a brief description by Soliman M. Santos and Jamail A. Kamlian in "Islamic diplomacy: consultation and consensus," in *Conciliation Resources* (CR), a London-based publication by a non-governmental organization of the same name. Please see www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/philippines-mindanao/peace-agreement.php (Accessed November 11, 2007.) The OIC Committee of Six consisted of six foreign ministers from Indonesia (as chair), Libya, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Senegal, and Somalia tasked with facilitating the search for a "just, comprehensive and durable peace in the Southern Philippines."

⁸The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) was formed in 1977 by Salamat Hashim with the support of his largely Maguindanaon constituency as a rejection of Misuari's apparent loosening of his demand for independence and conciliatory overtures toward the government.

⁹This may have been a highly misplaced confidence on the part of Misuari on President Joseph Estrada. In the estimation of al-Haj Murad Ibrahim, MILF Vice Chairman for Military Affairs, in an interview with *Asiaweek*, "...the Estrada administration has no comprehensive program for solving the Mindanao problem. Until now they've just been reacting. It seems their approaches - political, military, economic - are contradicting rather than complementing each other. There is no progress in the peace talks because confidence-building measures are always being affected by fighting.... Behind President Estrada several groups with different lines of thinking are maneuvering to gain influence. So sometimes he speaks one language and then another, depending on which group is influencing him. Our perception is that recently the military have been gaining more control. The suspicion is that President Estrada has to please the military in order to prevent a possible take-over of power by the military." Please see: www.asiaweek.com/asiaweek/magazine/2000/0526/nat.philippines.html. (Accessed November 12, 2007)

¹⁰ There is no better illustration to this difference than *Abu Sayyaf's* placing Misuari on its "hit list" for joining in the peace talks with the government, as reported by Reuters on April 10, 1995. The MILF, on the other hand, has vowed, in August 1996, that it will carry on the struggle for "genuine Muslim autonomy" at the same time that it declared its rejection of the 1996 GRP-MNLF Peace Accord (Xinxua News Agency, August 3, 1996).

¹¹ As to the apparent role of the GRP in the establishment of the Abu Sayyaf, the following quote from E. San Juan, Jr.'s latest book, **U.S. Imperialism and Revolution in the Philippines** [(New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), p. 14.] is pertinent: "It is now public knowledge that the Abu Sayyaf, like the MILF, was set up by the government to split the Moro struggle for self-determination and pressure the MNLF into capitulation. According to Senator Aquilino Pimentel, since 1991, General Alexander Aguirre, former president Estrada's National Security Adviser, acted as 'the handler' of the group, some of whose members were involved in the CIA-managed *mujahideens* recruited to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan. But since 1995 the Abu Sayyaf has turned into Frankenstein's monster, devoted to hostage-taking for ransom and terrorizing civilian communities, while at the same time serving as a 'Trojan Horse' for U.S. troops safeguarding corporate investments in Mindanao and symbolizing a U.S. regional presence in that Asian geopolitical theater of confrontation."

¹² A splinter group named *Markaz Qulbon Suja'h* (literally, Center for the Brave), has claimed that the GRP has actually been responsible for much of the atrocities that it routinely attributed either to the *Abu Sayyaf* or to the MILF. It said that by promoting an atmosphere of instability, President Ramos could claim further rationale to stay longer in power. (As reported in Deutsche Presse-Agentur, March 23, 1998.)

¹³ Misuari must have been referring to the meeting – the first that he had with Salamat since the breakaway of the MILF in 1978 – that took place on March 16, 1999 at MILF's largest camp -- Camp Abubakar -- in Cotabato. This meeting was arranged with the intermediation of the Libyan Ambassador to the Philippines Rajab Azzarouq for the purposes of mending fences and exploring common grounds although both have denied that they were forming some kind of a "united front."

¹⁴ Confirming Misuari's observation is a report by the Japanese Economic Newswire of May 10, 1997 that disgruntlement among Muslims in the southern Philippines is growing due to the slow pace of the implementation of the autonomy program envisioned in the 1996 agreement. They are particularly concerned with the lack or absence or meaningful economic development and the rehabilitation of former MNLF rebel fighters.

¹⁵ At that time, Misuari was referring to the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This Draft Declaration was finally adopted overwhelmingly by the General Assembly of the UN on September 13, 2007 with a majority of 144 voting in favor, 4 against (notably the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand), and 11 abstentions. For the full text of this Declaration, please see: www.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/declaration.htm.

¹⁶ Appearing to confirm this dire report is the following statement from the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC), released by Glenn Rabonza, Executive Officer: "National Highway linking Sultan Sabarongis to Tacurong City, Sultan Kudarat is currently not passable to motorists because of waistline-deep floodwaters. ... Portion of National Highway at Barangay Paladong connecting Sultan Sabarungis to Lambayong, Sultan Kudarat Province in Region XII is not passable. Eight (8) barangays in Sultan Sabarungis, Maguindanao, namely: Paldong, Bulod, Gadungan, Drampua, Masulot, Tugal, Papakan, Tukanakuden are waist-deep underwaters. Affected population is still undetermined and damages incurred in said municipality include 2.5 km span of road and

656 hectares of farmland which affected 594 farmers.” Unfortunately, this statement is from the NDCC Update on the effects of heavy rains in January 2007 in Visayas and Mindanao in January 2007, suggesting that the vulnerability to heavy rains of the communities compounded by unabated rampant illegal logging referred to by Misuari has hardly been addressed by appropriate authorities in the nearly ten years that have passed since the interview. Social Welfare Secretary Ruby Sahali-Tan leaves no doubt about the culpability of illegal loggers: “This illegal logging aggravated the situation in Maguindanao.” See “Maguindanao Floods Leave Thousands Homeless.” In: The Mindanao Examiner, August 17, 2006, available online at: <http://zamboangajournal.blogspot.com/2006/08/maguindanao-floods-leave-thousands.html>. This despite tough talk from President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo that illegal loggers are “enemies of the state”. Please see “Arroyo maintains illegal loggers, poachers are 'enemies of the state',” **Sun Star**, December 29, 2004. Available online at: www.sunstar.com.ph/static/man/2004/12/29/news/arroyo.maintains.illegal.loggers.poachers.are.enemies.of.the.state..html.

¹⁷Misuari has always asserted that a plebiscite should not be imposed again on the ten previous provinces that have already accepted to be part of the autonomous region fearing, correctly, that demographic changes over the years since the previous plebiscite would lead a province or two to diminish the size of the region of autonomy. The 1996 peace agreement stipulates that a plebiscite be held within three years of the agreement in fourteen provinces and nine cities to determine the residents' wishes on the issue of autonomy (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, March 17, 1999). As to why Misuari agreed to this particular provision, or why he did not insist on a clearer language at the time of the negotiations, is still unclear to this interviewer.

¹⁸In this Accord, both MNLF and GRP panels agreed, among others, to “create a Joint Commission which will discuss and draft the mechanism and details of the proposal for the grant of full autonomy to Mindanao, Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Palawan subject to democratic processes.” For full text, please see: www.usip.org/library/pa/philippines/jeddadh_01041987.html.

¹⁹The question posed by Misuari here about the status of the *Shari'ah* law vis-à-vis the secular Philippine Constitution remains unanswered in any meaningful way. Michael O. Mastura, one of the original drafters of the Code of Muslim Personal Laws, has lamented the absence of the full implementation of this Code to the refusal on the part of the majority in the country “to understand the sentiments of Muslims....” Quoted in Benedicto R. Bacani, “Shari'ah and the ARMM,” ARMM Roundtable Series No. 8 (March 5, 2004). Available in: www.kas.de/db_files/dokumente/7_dokument_dok_pdf_4338_2.pdf. Please see also Anshari P. Ali, “The Legal Impediments to the Application of Islamic Family Law in the Philippines,” **Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs**, 27, 1 (April 2007): 93-115. Available online at: www.informaworld.com. In this piece, concludes: “The Shari'ah court in the country is an integral part of the Philippine judicial system, yet deprived of the authority to enforce religious rulings or to administer Islamic religious institutions.”

²⁰There is a 45-day training for Muslim lawyers administered under the auspices of ARMM in the application of *Shari'ah* principles in *Shari'ah* courts, but this has not been adequate. As has been observed, “[T]he reason for people's low regard for the *Shari'ah* Courts is because the Courts have limited jurisdiction.” Please see Bacani, *op.cit.*

²¹A month prior to the signing of the Peace Agreement in September 1986, GRP and MNLF panels finally agreed on the integration 7500 MNLF fighters into various military and police services of the government, thus ending protracted discussions between the two panels on this issue alone (Xinxua News Agency, July 30, 1996).

40 Years of Revolutionary Struggles



By Lualhati M. Abreu

With additional notes by Bobby Tuazon

Two mainstream and contemporary revolutionary movements in Mindanao – the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Leftist armed movement led by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) – share some common beginnings. Nur Misuari, founding chair of the MNLF, came from the Kabataang Makabayaan (KM or Patriotic Youth) which was founded by Jose Maria Sison in 1964. Both were contemporary intellectuals in the University of the Philippines, where Misuari also taught political science. The resurgence of Moro separatism in the late 1960s also coincided with the radicalization of student activism where KM played a key organizing role with some of its cadres becoming members of the CPP later. Thus it was inevitable for the MNLF and the CPP's NPA guerrillas to engage in some level of mutual support as they faced a common enemy in Mindanao. The Leftist revolutionary movement in Mindanao would later maintain a delicate position with the Islamic-oriented Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) but it is perhaps to the credit of MILF's leaders that their religious faith would not hamper the need to forge a tactical alliance with the CPP, through its negotiating component, the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

Such has been the dynamics of armed struggles in Mindanao with the various revolutionary organizations gaining some victories and suffering some blows and losses over at least the last 40 years. The struggles have been fought not just militarily but more importantly on ideological and political grounds as well as on the negotiating table.

The MNLF-led Moro armed resistance since the 1970s

The infamous Jabidah Massacre on March 18, 1968, the equally heinous series of massacres perpetrated by the military-backed Ilaga, a cultic group of armed migrant-settlers and electoral fraud and terrorism all contributed to the galvanization of the rebellious unrest among Moro leaders and people. (See table for partial list of massacres perpetrated by the military-backed Ilaga in 1970-1972, at the end of this study.)

The different Moro groups with varying political and ideological beliefs had no recourse other than to form a united front against their common adversary, the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP).

For sometime, the Mindanao Independence Movement (MIM) formed by Moro elite notably ex-Senator Salipada Pendatun, Datu Udtog Matalam of Maguindanao, and Rashid Lucman of Lanao rallied their forces in armed uprisings against the then emerging Marcos dictatorship. The MIM organized the Blackshirts, its armed group among the Maguindanao Moros, while the traditional leaders in Lanao provinces formed the Barakudas. To prepare for war, the MIM sent the first batch of military trainees in Perak, Malaysia. Among this batch were Nur Misuari, a political science instructor of the University of the Philippines, and Abulkhayer Alonto, a scion of a traditional ruling clan from Lanao del Sur.

The two, along with five others, formed the first Central Committee of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) unknown to the military training organizers. For sometime, the group operated as the Unified Muslim Command. It surfaced publicly after staging the Marawi raid under the initiative of Alonto a month after the declaration of martial rule on September 21, 1972.

Since then, the MNLF waged a conventional positional warfare against government troops. It first turned Jolo and other islands in Sulu into rebel territories shortly after launching military offensives in the province. Local government units and police forces in Central Mindanao, less armed, were unable to pose any strong resistance at all against the heavily-armed Moro rebels. No less than Gen. Fortunato Abat who headed the hastily-formed Central Mindanao Command at one time admitted that if not for some miscalculations by the rebels' high command, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) could have lost the war in a matter of days.

As expected, the strategy of conventional warfare by the MNLF led to a series of strategic defeats. With the sapping of the MNLF's logistical and financial resources, government troops launched counter-offensives that led to the further decline in the fighting spirit of the Moro fighters. Moreover, the MNLF came under pressure by the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) to talk peace with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) within the framework of the latter's territorial integrity and constitution. This virtually meant a step backward from its secessionist stance at the start of Moro offensives to that of autonomy.

Conversely, in facing the MNLF the GRP had to consider its material and logistical resources, the upsurge of revolutionary struggle throughout the country of the Communist party of the Philippine-New People's Army-National Democratic Front of the Philippines (CPP-NPA-NDFP) as well as the international support of the MNLF from Islamic countries including the threat of oil embargo by Iran. A year after opening peace talks in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, the GRP and MNLF signed the Tripoli Agreement of 1976. Instead of leading to peace, however, the agreement was used as an instrument by the Philippine military to conduct intelligence work in the territories and forces of the MNLF. Months after the MNLF's show of forces through military parades in urban areas in their areas of operations, government troops launched military campaigns against the Moro forces.

The peace process between the MNLF and the GRP went to the backburner for sometime in the last years of the Marcos dictatorship. It was resumed and trudged on for some months after the EDSA Revolution of 1986. But the successor government of President Corazon C. Aquino pulled the rug under the MNLF's feet when it created the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) on August 1, 1989 without undergoing formal negotiations with the MNLF - a matter of crucial importance to the peace process.

Upon assuming the presidency in 1992, former AFP chief and Defense Secretary Fidel V. Ramos moved for the resumption of the peace negotiations with the MNLF. The talks resulted in the signing of the Final Peace Agreement (FPA) in 1996 with the MNLF. Shortly after the signing of the FPA, some MNLF armed forces and civilian supporters switched side to the Moro Islamic Liberation front (MILF), a breakaway group of the MNLF. Half a decade after the peace agreement, the GRP considered the MNLF as a "contained force."

Misuari served as governor of the ARMM in 1996 but was arrested again for rebellion in November 2001 in Sabah after which he spent years in detention in the Philippines. He would be released on bail in April 2008. Meanwhile, internal conflicts further fuelled by political intrigues and financial considerations by no less than the presidential adviser Norberto Gonzales led to the split of the MNLF into four subgroups, the largest of which is in Sulu and still under the leadership of Misuari.

Actually, internal dissent within the MNLF was already brewing before the signing of the FPA in 1996. Smaller groups were neither in agreement with Misuari's embracing the government-sponsored ARMM structure nor in approval of the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD). When Misuari proved himself ineffective in the administrative side of governance, those who had proven their mettle in traditional politics formed themselves into a council of 15 led by Farouk Hussein and Muslimin Sema of Cotabato. This council enjoyed the blessings of the Arroyo administration before the May 2004 elections. This move may have led to the election of Misuari as chair emeritus of the MNLF but, with the power grab in the SPCPD, he was left holding an empty bag. Arroyo changed side as quickly as the MNLF splintered into four factions with Gonzales's orchestrations.

Although the OIC still considers Misuari as the representative of the Moro people, his group could not throw its weight around even to further its demand for the release of their chairman emeritus while detained for rebellion charges. Just the same, the MNLF-Misuari faction is still pursuing its struggle for the genuine implementation of the FPA signed in 1996 with the GRP. In 2006, the MNLF-Misuari wing still proved that it has the capacity to launch military offensives against the Arroyo government.

The MILF-led Moro resistance

At the onset, there were already two differing ideological strands among Moro leaders who led in the formation of the MNLF. Secular leaders led by Misuari with aversion to traditional Moro elite were able to maintain their leadership of the MNLF. The traditional elite, together with a number of religious leaders, took the backstage to avert petty squabbles during the initial stage of organizing armed resistance against the Marcos dictatorship.

A year after the signing of the Tripoli Agreement of 1976, however, several members of the MNLF's Central Committee submitted the document "Instrument of Takeover" of leadership from Misuari to the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC). This was the culmination of earlier protests against Misuari's style of leadership. The takeover instrument was signed by Salamat Hashim, Al Haj Murad, Ghazzali Jaafar, Mohagher Iqbal, Abukalil Yayha, and Amelil Malaguio, all from the Maguindanao Moro group. (Misuari and other leaders came from the Tausug group.) Similar petitions were also sent to the OIC by Maranao Moro leaders including Abowidad Mimbantas, Saleh Rascal, Ansarie Mutia, and Muhammad James Bond.

In a personal letter to Amadhou Karim Kaye, then secretary general of the OIC, demanding for the removal of Misuari from the MNLF leadership, Salamat Hashim said the MNLF leadership was being manipulated from the Islamic faith, methodologies and objectives, and was fast evolving toward Marxist-Maoist orientation. Instead of showing harmonized and collective leadership, Hashim said, the Central Committee had evolved into a mysterious, exclusive, secretive and monolithic body whose policies and plans, decisions and dispositions – political, financial and/or strategic – became an exclusive domain of Misuari, vitiating all commitments previously arrived at to submit for consultations not only with MNLF members but to organizations – in the Philippines and abroad – sympathetic to the movement. This mysterious, secretive and arrogant style of leadership of the MNLF resulted in confusion, suspicions and disappointments among members and mujahedins in the field thus leading to the loss of many fighters, Hashim further said.

Misuari refused to accept the demand of abdication by Hashim's faction or heed the intercessions of both the OIC and the Muslim World League (MWL). The internal acrimony created two wings within the MNLF – the Misuari wing and the Hashim wing. Later in 1982, another subgroup emerged, the MNLF-Reformist group under Dimas Pundato, a Maranao and former chief of police of Marawi. Three years later, this group folded up while Pundato, under the new government of Aquino following the EDSA revolt in 1986, was appointed as head of the Office of Muslim Affairs (OMA). It was only in 1984 that the Hashim wing declared itself as a separate organization, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). "National" was replaced with "Islamic" apparently to

emphasize its religious orientation. The MILF's armed component came to be known as the Bangsamoro Islamic Auxiliary Force (BIAF).

Reeling from military defeats and learning from their setbacks in the 1970s when conventional warfare was the norm, the MILF in its initial stage concentrated on accumulating strength by organizing mass bases in Mindanao. In 1986, in its bid to be a participant as a co-equal of the MNLF which was then talking peace with the Aquino administration, the new Muslim organization mounted a series of military offensives with a big show of force.

From its lake river-estuary base in Central Mindanao, the MILF leadership moved to the mountainous areas in the same region in 1983. The advantages of basing in the lake river estuary had been proven in the 1970s. But the implementation of their first four-point 20-year program needed mountainous base areas.

The MILF leadership concentrated in the forested boundary of Maguindanao (now Sharip Kabunsuan), Lanao del Sur and Bukidnon to develop their central mass base. It is said that MILF leaders including Al Haj Murad, Ghazzali Jaafar, Mohagher Iqbal, Udstadz Castro, and Udstadz Ubak started cleaning the area with simple agricultural implements the same year.

The MILF's first 20-year four-point program included the following: *dawa'h* (or political and ideological strengthening through Islam), organizational building, military strengthening, and self-reliance. It also built the Abdurahman Bedis Military Academy, in the heart of what would later be called Camp Abubakar, its central base. Organization building included establishing committees from barangay to district levels for political matters and corresponding structures in judicial matters. Barangay Reconciliation Committees to District Shari'ah Courts made up the MILF structures. All these were functioning inside Camp Abubakar before the all-out-war of President Joseph Estrada erupted in 2000.

Militarily, MILF forces were divided into regulars and reserves. The reserves were formed after a series of military training. They are called back for additional training or whenever there is mass mobilization, for example, during the all-out war in 2000. In their efforts for self-reliance, the MILF also developed its ingenuity to manufacture ordnance such as the rocket-propelled grenade or RPG.

The MILF also built an Islamic school with a public grade to high school system inside Camp Abubakar. A local college in Cotabato City held extension work, offering undergraduate and graduate courses for MILF officers.

Enterprising Moros also opened a small commercial complex inside the camp with eateries, variety stores, drugstores, hardware, and even a boutique serving the staffs of the MILF leaders, trainees, students and visitors. With executive, legislative and judicial structures in place, a virtual shadow government was functioning in MILF-controlled territories with a central base in Camp Abubakar.

In the last quarter of the 1990s, the MILF launched a propaganda campaign to neutralize if not gain the support of social sectors influential in shaping public opinion: the church, mass media, academe, traditional politicians, and NGO community. Camp Abubakar was opened to visitors to see the MILF program of a micro-Islamic state. Alongside this in 1997, the Ulama-Professional League launched the three-day first Bangsamoro Peoples Consultative Assembly at Crossing Simuay Sultan Kudarat Sharip Kabunsuan. The assembly reportedly drew about a million people, both Moro and non-Moro indigenous groups, from all over Mindanao and Sulu.

Also in 1997, the Ramos administration initiated peace negotiations with the MILF. This came a year after the signing of the GRP-MNLF Final Peace Accord and years of low-intensity military offensives in MILF base areas in Central Mindanao, Basilan, Lanao and Zamboanga. Apparently, the Ramos administration was also after the overseas development funds that international agencies had promised once the MILF would sign a Final Peace Agreement just as it did with the MNLF. These initiatives led to the signing of the Agreement for General Cessation of Hostilities on June 21, 1997 followed by the Official Declaration of Intent for the holding of formal peace talks on October 27, 1998 under the Estrada administration.

For the implementation of the agreement on cessation of hostilities, the government had to recognize MILF areas of operation where the agreement would be enforced. Eight - all major ones - out of 47 declared MILF areas were recognized as "camps" by the GRP in official agreements during the Ramos administration. However, the hawkish clique within the Philippine military was naturally wary of this development, equating such recognition with the virtual granting of status of belligerency to the Islamist forces. With some prodding from

this clique, President Joseph E. Estrada, who succeeded Ramos, declared an all-out war against the MILF in the second quarter of 2000 thus ending the first round of talks with the rebel group. The Estrada government reportedly spent around Php7.5 billion for three months of bombing and ground assaults mainly targeting Camp Abubakar which the previous Ramos administration shied away from as this would mean a virtual declaration of war against the MILF. Apparently, the Estrada government was able to destroy MILF infrastructures in the area, including a satellite dish. Until today, however, the area remains an MILF base.

Following the ouster of Estrada by people power in January 2001, the new president, Gloria M. Arroyo, resumed formal negotiations with the MILF resulting in the signing of the Agreement of Peace in Tripoli, Libya in June that year. The agreement listed three areas of concern for the peace negotiations: security; humanitarian, rehabilitation and development; and ancestral domain. So far, the two panels have signed agreements and laid down the implementing guidelines for the first two talking points. The second round got stalled in the first quarter of 2003 when the Arroyo administration launched an all-out war against the MILF forces in Buliok Complex where Salamat Hashim, MILF chair, reportedly was based after the 2000 war. In March 2004, before the resumption of the formal talks, a Malaysian-led International Monitoring Team (IMT) tasked to monitor the observation of the ceasefire agreement between the two parties was put in place. In April the following year, formal talks on the ancestral domain continued only to be stalled again in the last quarter of 2006.

The MILF is now open to other options for the resolution of the Bangsamoro struggle aside from the creation of a separate and independent state. It is open to the options of being a commonwealth state, a federal set-up, and being a part of an association of free states.

In 2008, peace talks were at a snail pace following the resignation of Silvestre Afable, Jr. as head of the GRP panel with government negotiators appearing bent on pursuing the ancestral domain within so-called "constitutional processes." Foreign members in the ceasefire monitoring council, including Malaysians, have withdrawn one after the other with the Kuala Lumpur government hinting the peace process may go nowhere if the resolution of the territorial issue remained murky. The monitoring council was set to terminate its task in August 2008.

Communist Party of the Philippines

While the contemporary Moro armed movements gravitated largely in claimed Muslim territories, it is the armed revolutionary movement led by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) that has taken roots on almost the whole Mindanao island. Since the early 1970s, the CPP through its armed component, the New People's Army (NPA), has waged a protracted, guerrilla armed struggle as part of its strategy of encircling the cities from the countryside and install a people's democratic government with a socialist perspective.

Founded on Dec. 26, 1968 with its first chairman, Jose Maria Sison, the CPP applies the Marxist-Leninist-Mao Zedong theoretical line to the Philippine semi-feudal and semi-colonial society in fighting for the democratic program of agrarian reform prioritized by land distribution and for the national demand to free the country from neo-colonialist domination. The following year, on March 29, 1969, the New People's Army (NPA) was formed with less than 60 fighters and just 34 firearms, only nine of which were high-powered rifles. The CPP's re-establishment and subsequent papers clarify that it is waging a "people's democratic revolution" which, upon victory, will proceed to the "socialist revolution." The class lines of the struggle are clearly drawn: The basic oppressed classes of the working class and peasantry against the joint class dictatorship of the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class. There are also the intermediate social strata of the urban petty bourgeoisie and the middle or national bourgeoisie who can be drawn into the struggle.

The late 1960s till the historic First Quarter Storm (FQS) of 1970 saw the formation of national democratic mass organizations in Mindanao led by the Kabataang Makabayan (Patriotic Youth) and Samahang Demokratiko ng Kabataan (SDK). As cadres and activists borne out of the FQS fanned out to many regions in Luzon and Visayas, others organized the seeds of the armed movement in Mindanao particularly upon the declaration of martial law in 1972. It is essentially the economic disparities and social injustice that fueled the Marxist-oriented armed revolutionary movement in Mindanao in the 1970s and are still obtaining today.

In Mindanao during the 1960s, increasing land scarcity led to farmers' organizations and mass movements taking roots among the farming population all over the island. The early part of this decade saw

the settlers fighting for the titling of the lands they earlier cleared as homesteads with a promise of corresponding land titles by the government. But land titling was cumbersome: Not only was it processed in Manila but the farm settlers had to contend also with unscrupulous land speculators in Mindanao. Some farmers groups were duped by con men who embezzled their hard-earned contributions to their organizations or by traditional politicians who courted their votes with false promises of land titles. As a result, land release movements mushroomed all over the island with settlers organizing to collectively work for individual titles to the lands they were tilling individually.

Under these conditions,, tenancy was aggravated, particularly in areas settled during the Spanish colonial era. Under tenancy relations, landlords exacted huge land rent and had farmers perform unpaid labor for them. Doubling as merchant-usurers, the landlords forced farmers to accept low market prices for their produce.

In the same period, transnational corporations (TNCs) owned and/or controlled by foreign investors, intensified operations in the island with various production schemes – joint ventures, growers' agreements, and leasehold contracts with small and big land owners. A number of homesteaders who first opted not to have their lands planted with either banana or pineapple growers' agreement or leasehold arrangement also suffered from harassments by fruit-exporting corporations, including denial of right of way to the lands they were tilling.

Meanwhile, timber licensing agreements (TLAs) and franchises were awarded to big loggers, most of them with foreign capital, as well as livestock breeders. As a result, indigenious peoples, both Moro and non-Moro, lost possession of their ancestral lands along with their traditional hunting grounds. This led to armed uprisings against loggers and ranchers. Armed uprising incidents which took a while to quell were those of the Higaunons in northern Mindanao against the Nasipit Lumber Company and of the B'laans against a big-time cattle rancher in South Cotabato in the late 1960s. These areas would later become a mass base of the New People's Army as well as of the MNLF and MILF.

Under this situation, coupled with the rising cost of living and unemployment, the ground was fertile for protest movements to take roots. By the late 1960s, reformist organizations, notably the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) and its allied organizations in the youth and

student sector, such as the Khi Rho and the Young Christian Socialists of the Philippines (YCSP), organized chapters in the island.

At the same time, national democratic activists from Mindanao who studied in Manila and Cebu, notably KM and the SDK, organized in key urban centers of Mindanao. By mid-1972, months before the declaration of martial law, these national democratic youth and student organizations had joined hands with Khi Rho, the biggest reformist organization with direct linkages to the peasantry organized under the FFF.

Based on accounts, the first NPA guerilla zone in Mindanao was built in the interior Paquibato district of Davao City in 1972 and later in Zamboanga and Davao provinces. Following the declaration of martial law by President Ferdinand E. Marcos on September 21, 1972, groups of activists moved to the mountainous terrains of Davao del Sur, Davao Oriental, and Lanao del Norte to form guerilla units of the NPA.

In their formative years, i.e., from 1972 to 1975, NPA guerilla units in the island suffered losses in nip-in-the bud military offensives of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). However, many areas were later recovered after cadres honed their organizing methods in mobilizing the peasantry and establishing mass bases for the armed struggle.

By the late 1970s, the people's armed movement had taken roots all over the island, both in the cities and the countryside. About this time until the early 1980s, the Leftist armed revolutionary movement under conditions of martial law had widened its political influence both in the countryside and in the cities. In town centers, a series of welgang bayan (people's strikes) were mounted resulting in the paralysis of transportation, school, and other economic activities. The strikes were also accompanied by armed urban partisan warfare and the formation of battalion-sized NPA units with the adventurist objective of advancing the people's war to the premature strategic counter-offensive (SCO). As a result, accounts would reveal later, rural mass bases were left vulnerable to the attacks of the AFP. The AFP's offensives coincided with the misguided Kampanyang Ahos (ahos, Cebuano word meaning garlic which people believe can shoo away evil spirits), a campaign that was launched in 1985-1986 supposedly to purge the NPA ranks of suspected deep penetration agents (DPAs). Ahos turned out to be a gross error leading to strategic setbacks to the armed movement.

Amid the strategic losses, the intact CPP leadership repudiated the SCO and other “tactical errors” while conducting in 1992-1998 the “Second Great Rectification Movement.” By the late 1990s, sources said the leftist revolutionary movement in Mindanao had recovered from its strategic losses and was battle ready to deal with government forces once again. Thus, until today tactical offensives launched by NPA units all over Mindanao have been steadily increasing.

Arroyo's AFP has vowed to end the Leftist insurgency by 2010. But that claim has been disputed by the revolutionary movement, particularly in Mindanao. In a statement on March 29, 2008, Ka (comrade) Oris, spokesperson of NDFP-Mindanao, said that the NPA “is rooted in more than 20 provinces, in close to 200 towns and cities, and 2,000 barrios” on the island. In building its mass bases in Mindanao, Oris said, the NPA has launched campaigns to decrease land rent, usury, rents of rice mills and tools of production. The campaigns also called for the decrease of prices of goods, increase of farm labor wage and in prices of farm produce, he said.

Tactical alliances with the MNLF, MILF

Days before the declaration of martial law in September 1972, leaders of both the CPP and MNLF held a secret meeting in Manila. Misuari, head of the MNLF panel, stood strongly that Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan constituted the Bangsamoro homeland, and thus should be off-limits to any organizing by the Leftist revolutionary movement. Although nothing more substantial came out of the talks, both parties agreed to keep the communication lines open for future formal talks.

In the first half of the 1970s, despite Misuari's initial position as regards relations with the underground left, NPA units and the MNLF's Bangsamoro Army (BMA) maintained liaison in common areas of operations. In Davao Oriental, for instance, relations between communist cadres such as the late Antonio Antao, a Mandaya, Jess Maranan, a Cebuano with migrant-settler origin, and Roger Galo, head of the MNLF Davao Revolutionary Command (DRC) were built from pre-martial law membership with Khi Rho, a moderate student-youth organization. Their close ties were put into a test in 1974 when government troops launched a military operation against the MNLF forces in retaliation for a feinting offensive by the Moro mujahedins in the coastal town of Taragona, eastern Davao Oriental facing the Pacific

Ocean. Pinned down in a narrow terrain by a big military counter-offensive, the local MNLF rebels were in a bind. Quickly, NPA guerillas gave the Moro mujaheedins sanctuary in their wide base areas in the southern part of the province.

Co-existence, cooperation, and coordination between the two forces deepened in the course of unity and struggle. In 1980, representatives of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), the united front that includes the CPP and NPA, and the MNLF were together in the indictment of the Marcos dictatorship at the First Session on the Philippines of the Permanent Peoples Tribunal (PPT) in Antwerp, Belgium. The tribunal found the dictatorship guilty of human rights violations and other forms of repression.

MILF-NDFP relations

Before a tactical alliance was announced in 1998, MILF-NDFP relations underwent a tumultuous beginning. On December 26, 1977, Salamat Hashim, then a leader of the MNLF, submitted an "Instrument of Takeover" to the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) at the Muslim World League (MWL) in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Together with other MNLF leaders, Hashim called for the ouster of Misuari from the MNLF leadership. One of his accusations against Misuari was the latter's supposed Marxist leanings. Evidently, Hashim, who later headed the MILF and true to his avowed belief in Islam, differed with the Marxist ideology of the CPP.

Because of ideological differences, it took some time for the NDFP and MILF to enter into formal relations. By the time the two organizations initiated moves for forging an alliance in 1998, the MNLF had signed a Final Peace Agreement (FPA) with the government while the CPP had recovered from its losses incurred from the launching of Apos by factionalist elements in the mid-1980s and the incessant military campaigns in its guerilla fronts all over Mindanao. The CPP announced the tactical alliance between the NDFP - which is the political umbrella of the leftist revolutionary movement - and the MILF in the January-February 1998 issue of *Ang Bayan* (The People), the CPP central committee publication.

In the *Ang Bayan* article, the CPP reiterated its political position on the Moro struggle which had been laid down in 1976. The position states that the CPP recognizes the right to self-determination of the

Bangsamoro people to their homeland and in determining the system appropriate to their social, political, economic, and religious goals. It further emphasized that the right to self-determination can mean any or a combination of the following:

- Political representation in all government structures of governance wherever, from the barangay up to the national level;
- Autonomy for the Bangsamoro;
- Federal system; and
- Separation as an independent state from an oppressive state like the present government of the Philippines

On August 20, 2007, in an interview with Jose Maria Sison, the founding CPP chairman, by Enrico Piovesana of Peace Reporter, a newspaper in Milan, Italy, Sison again talked on the Moro struggle in the same vein. Sison, currently the Chief Political Consultant of the NDFP and in exile in The Netherlands, said: "The Moro people have the right to self-determination, democracy, development and peaceful use of their ancestral lands. The Moro people have the right to secede from an oppressive state. The MILF is launching a fair and revolutionary struggle which upholds, gives protection and disseminates the national and democratic rights and interests of the Moro people."

In an earlier press release on August 16, 2007, the CPP leadership also declared full support to the Moro revolutionary forces from both the MNLF and the MILF. It directed all NPA units to coordinate and give support to the Moro people in their armed resistance and in launching coordinated or unified military offensives.

A combination of two options can be ideal toward a comprehensive and long-lasting solution of the Moro struggle. In contiguous areas where they are in the majority, the Bangsamoro can exist as an autonomous state or as a separate and independent state. In areas where they are in the minority representation with respect and upholding of their right to self-determination can be a viable option.

Facing a common enemy, the Moro rebels and NPA guerrillas have developed common grounds for tactical cooperation. Such alliance has been tested in a number of combat operations, with one side providing tactical support as well as sanctuary to the other. The CPP's affirmative position on the Moro people's right to self-determination or even

secession from an oppressive state is clear to the Bangsamoro revolutionary movement – reason enough for such tactical ties to develop strategically.

Table: Partial List of Massacres Perpetrated by Military-Illaga against the Moro People

Town/Province	Date	Killed
1. Upi, Cotabato	March 22, 1970	6
2. Upi, Cotabato	September 10, 1970	6
3. Polomolok, South Cotabato	August 10, 1970	8
4. Alamada, Cotabato	December 3, 1970	13
5. Midsayap, Cotabato	December 16, 1970	18
6. Ahan, Datu Piang Cotabato	December 21, 1970	7
7. Bagumbayan, Cotabato	January 1, 1971	12
8. Alamada, Cotabato	January 17, 1971	73
9. Carmen, Cotabato	April 6, 1971	18
10. Manili, Carmen, Cotabato	June 19, 1971	
11. Wao, Lanao del Sur	July 4, 1971	No record
12. Buldon, Cotabato	August 5, 1971	14
13. Wao, Lanao del Sur	August 5, 1971	36
14. Kauran, Ampatuan, Cot	August, 1971	4
15. Buldon, Cotabato	August 9, 1971	60
16. Kisulon, Bukidnon	October 23, 1971	67
17. Magsaysay, Lanao Norte	October 24, 1971	66
18. Tacub, Kauswagan, Lanao del Norte	November 22, 1971	40
19. Siay, Zamboanga del Sur	November 1971	No record
20. Ipil, Zamboanga del Sur	December 1971	No record
21. Palembang, Cotabato	January 21, 1972	No record

References:

Abreu, Lualhati M., *The MILF and its Vision of an Islamic State, Mindanao Focus, Alternate Forum for Research in Mindanao, #2 Series of 2000.*

_____, *Ang mga Mamamayan at Pakikibakang Moro, Political Economy Journal, Ibon Foundation, Inc., 1996.*

Guingona, Teopisto J., *Historical Survey of Politics Pursued by Spain and the United States Toward the Moros in the Philippines, Dansalan Quarterly, Peter G. Gowing ed., Vol II #3, April 1981.*

Majul, Cesar A., *Muslims in the Philippines, UP Press, Quezon City, 1973.*

_____, *The Contemporary Muslim Movements in the Philippines, Mirzan Press, Berkeley, 1985.*

Jubair, Salah, *Bangsamoro: A Nation Under Endless Tyranny, Kuala Lumpur Malaysia, 1999.*

Permanent People's Tribunal Second Session on the Philippines, The Hague Netherlands, November 2007.

Piovesona, Enrico, *Interview with Jose Ma. Sison, PEACE Reporter, Milano Italy, Aug 20, 2007.*

NDF-MILF Alliance: *Unity and Cooperation Against the Reactionary Enemy, Ang Bayan (Official Publication of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines) Vol 24 #1, Jan-Feb 1999.*

UNICEF, *Uncounted Lives: Children, Women and Conflict in the Philippines. January 2008. Based on a study by IBON Foundation.*

Moro Political Dynasty

 By Julkipli Wadi

"If the old refuses to die, the new could not be born."

Salman Rushdie, "The Satanic Verses"

I. Political Dynasty in the making

In the May 2007 election, the media feasted on Governor Wahab Akbar when he ran as congressman with his three wives, relatives and supporters distributed in various gubernatorial, mayoral, and other positions. The Philippine media, apart from highlighting the cultural stereotype of his being flamboyantly polygamous, projected the Akbar families as a budding political dynasty borne in war-torn Basilan in so short a time. And it was an impression that Akbar gladly accepted. When asked by a journalist that an Akbar dynasty is practically in the offing, then Governor Wahab Akbar responded unequivocally: "Political dynasty is better than divided leadership and fractured society." Tucked in Akbar's sleeves are his previous exploits with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), his iron-fist policy against the Abu Sayyaf even if he was alleged to be its co-founder, and his being an Ustadh (religious leader) after his stint as a student in Libya in the 1980s.

Sensing futility in the Moro revolutionary struggle and fundamentalist radicalism in the 1990s, Akbar shifted gear, betrayed his comrades in the Abu Sayyaf, and worked with the military and eventually embraced secular politics, a domain of engagements that he once dreaded; but which he immediately mastered with such ease when he decided to play with it. His success was no mean feat. He became a governor for three consecutive terms. He forged alliance with local politicians and with political dynasties in mainland Mindanao, including the Ampatuans. And he successfully built his economic base poisoning him as the fastest rising landed elite in Basilan.

To be untouchable, Akbar traded off intelligence with iron-clad hand against the enemy of the State in his province while he put many Abu Sayyaf members in jail, with some of them reportedly ending up tortured and killed. In return, he received economic, civic and infrastructure assistance mainly from the United States as he strongly supported the holding of Philippine-U.S. military exercises dubbed “Balikatan” in the province of Basilan. As U.S. development assistance was poured into Basilan, Akbar allegedly diverted the resources of the local government to other areas of concerns – something that gave him more advantages over his opponents.

The rise of Akbar to power was unstoppable. With his rags to riches adventure, Akbar was left with no option but to eye for the highest post any Muslim politician could reach – the Congress. But simply becoming a congressman is not enough; it still would leave some power vacuum that would favor his rivals. Thus, to ensure the complete control of Basilan, he, his three wives, relatives and allies ran in the May 2007 election. And true enough, except for one of his wives, all the Akbar candidates and many of their allies won, at least, according to the “counting” by the Commission on Elections (Comelec).

Undeniably, political dynasties are present in many parts of the country. While they share many commonalities, on closer look, political dynasties vary from one another. The likes of Wahab Akbar are more common in the Moro society where political dynasties have consistently risen especially during turbulent periods in Mindanao. The exploits of Akbar speak how a political dynasty arises in the midst of Moro rebellion, warlordism, terrorism, corruption, traditional system, kinship, and patronage politics.

All these make the context of Muslim political dynasties different from the rest of the Philippines. While political dynasties in other parts of the country are mostly engendered due to the Philippines being a weak State, political dynasties in Moro areas are spawned partly by the same conditions and partly by a highly-entrenched feudal structure that has undergone no substantial structural change and political reform for decades, if not centuries. Hence, Moro society suffers from the “double weights” of political dynasty.

II. Concept and consequence

Political dynasty has been a subject of debates these past few years. Some people consider it a fact of life as it exists not only in the Third World but in industrialized countries as well.¹ Others view political dynasty with contempt because it undermines democracy, cripples the opportunity of those who are more qualified to serve the country, and serves as impediment to genuine political reform and economic

development. Political dynasty is often understood as the rule of certain families for a relatively long period by using strategies such as: “1) the establishment and maintenance of a kinship network; 2) the organization of political machines; 3) the mobilization of wealth and property; 4) access to state resources; 5) the use of violence and coercion; and 6) the cultivation of issues, image, and popularity.”²

The Philippines, a known haven of political dynasties, is undeniably ruled by traditional politicians and dynastic families. Since 2001, for instance, half of the members of Congress belonged to established political clans, while many of them are landed elites.³ In 2007, “almost 100% of major cities and 75% of provinces are under dynasty families' control.”⁴ Accordingly, there are 250 political dynasties (families) that dominate Philippine politics at the national and local levels. They have monopolized political power for the past 30 years and more.⁵ They control practically all major tiers of government from national to local government units and dominate the country's political institutions which they have often used to advance their narrow interests.

Based on a recent Newsbreak survey, “a big majority of current provincial governors are scions of political families, representing little diversion from the political profiles of past batches of governors.” It is shown that “of the 58 respondent governors, 37 came from political families, constituting 63.79 percent; while only [sic] 18 do not belong to political clans.” The survey considers “a governor as part of a political family if he or she is related by blood or by marriage to persons who held or are currently holding an elective position.” It is also revealed that most of the governors were previously congressmen and mayors, showing their sway of power and influence on local politics as they could easily run during election often transferring from one position to another in an incremental, at times, even rotational or cyclical manner.⁶ If governors are not available to run for election due to term limit or by other circumstances, they run in other elective post or field their wives, sons and daughters or other immediate family members. When they are simply not available or not allowed by law for re-election, some of them are usually appointed by higher-ups to some political at times lucrative positions in government. Many governors in Muslim areas reflect this unsightly national portrait.

At the core, political dynasty causes undue harm to the notion of representative democracy. Instead of representing the people, entrenched political families take their own interest as their primary consideration; while the welfare of the people, if at all, simply comes second. They hijack the electoral process to ensure their reign using the power of their purse, influence, and connection. They establish an extensive network among themselves and subject the political party

system to their disposal. They proclaim, of course, to promote the common good and people's welfare; but, what they often do is different from what they say. It is shown more fundamentally on the way traditional politicians circumvent the Constitutional provision prohibiting political dynasties in public service. Article II, Section 26 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution states: "The State shall guarantee equal access to opportunities for public service, and prohibit political dynasties as may be defined by law."

Apart from doing nothing substantial about it, Congress flagrantly violates said law since many members of the House of Representatives and the Senate come from traditional dynastic families themselves. As such, many government officials in both national and local government benefit over Congress' inaction on the anti-political dynasty provision of the Constitution. Moreover, amid worsening poverty among the masses, many political dynastic leaders allegedly corrupt government's coffers by misusing and amassing public funds, pork barrel and Internal Revenue Allotments (IRAs), while they can afford to heartlessly display their wealth with their ostentatious lifestyle and their unmitigated propensity for power and greed.

In most cases, political dynasties are able to sustain their reign because they are able to access the so-called "seven Ms of dynasty-building, namely: money, machine, media and/or movies, marriage, murder and mayhem, myth, and mergers (alliances)."⁷ Such state of affairs renders the country's political institutions weak and the political condition of the country feeble even as the economy is made to perpetually succumb to Filipino oligarchs who can easily buy off influence in government and circumvent the law and due process. Above all, political dynasty impedes genuine national development.

Political dynasty is usually sustained through generations. It has the advantage of passing down dynastic tradition, ruling oligarchs' experience, political and economic resources, and vast array of networks including their names to their children and grandchildren that would carry on their legacies. The effect of such hereditary notion of politics can be positive, at least relatively speaking, especially when the traditions and values inherited are good. Even then it does not imply there is virtue of political dynasty over a truly democratic polity. Conversely, if the values and practices are bad then the evil of the father can easily be inherited by his children.

To be fair, it may also be safe to say that in relatively open democracies people are partly to blame for continuously electing dynastic families in office in the exercise of their democratic choice. The right to choose is a power that belongs essentially to the people. Hence, when they keep electing leaders belonging to dynastic families there must be flagrantly wrong with the dispensation of their rights. This is not

to say, however, that electorates with hungry stomach and with lower democratic consciousness are guilty more than political dynasty that does all means possible to subvert the electoral process if only to gain political power. What is being impressed is that the demonstration of democratic choice is exceedingly constrained in a society where political institutions are weak and the electoral process is defective notwithstanding the unmitigated culture of corruption, vote-buying and fraud during and after election.

The presence of political dynasty and a flawed electoral process is not mutually exclusive, although the existence of one is often a virtual magnet by another. In a situation where the State is very weak, political dynasty freely can subvert the electoral process to its own whim making the conduct of regular elections and other forms of suffrage merely ritualistic and symbolic; often, election is used as a license by the political dynasty to gain power and to continue its reign. Election thus becomes the most ironic instrumentality of Philippine democracy responsible in creating and sustaining political dynasty in many parts of the country including those in Moro areas.

Political dynasty must be viewed as the major culprit in the whole scheme of things where it unscrupulously takes advantage of weak and defective electoral system while it exploits the vulnerability of poor electorates who, because of economic difficulty and expedient life, are enticed to trade-off during election time their votes with short-term pecuniary benefits. Avarice dictates most political dynasties to work doubly hard to win elections but rarely engage to reform the long-time defective electoral system of the country.

The reason is glaringly obvious: Apart from benefiting from flawed electoral set-up, political dynasty would have reason to evade accountability and responsible governance where democratic institution and electoral process remain faulty, let alone archaic. So that they use such a situation as their defensive mechanism and their source of argument: it is the electoral system that is at fault, not political dynasty. The chicken-egg debate of electoral system and political dynasty cannot be allowed to go on. Reform of the system should have been done long time ago possibly as early as 1946. Thus, if it was only done that early, political dynasty in recent times would have already no reason to exist. Political dynasty must be considered as the main delinquent – not the system of election and the poor electorates that vote for them out of expediency and economic difficulty.

III. Assumptions on Moro political dynasty

Many political studies commit an error when they portray political dynasty in Moro areas as similar with, if not a mere adjunct of, the political dynasty system in Luzon and Vizayas and the rest of Mindanao. They generally assume that political dynasties in the country, despite their diverse geographical, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, are a sector or class by themselves that share universal traits like the penchant of certain families – whether Filipinos or Moros – for power, wealth, control and network in various spheres of political, economic and social lives over their “dominions” in the country. They also suppose that political dynasties in Moro areas are generally caused by similar social and political dysfunctions in the Philippines. Such view is half-truth. It understates the distinct nature, historical context, political dynamics, cultural and sociological underpinnings of political dynasties in Mindanao, as it also minimizes the gravity of problems they posed especially in Muslim areas.

It is contended that political dynasty in Muslim areas is generally a product of two separate yet over-arching forces: one from above and another from below. The first is underscored by the fact of the Philippines being a weak State, the attendant consequence of which is the weakening of political institutions and the persistence of deficient democratic culture and defective electoral system thus continuously inviting “strong men” in various regions and provinces to take advantage of the country's political crisis even as they wrongfully represent the people and masquerade as “democratically” elected leaders.

The second may be broadly described as an entrenched feudal structure in Moro society, a condition that has fossilized over time due to the absence of broad-based economic and political reform in the area resulting from centuries of colonial onslaught and “multiple colonialism” in recent times. The eclipse of the two elements create a wide crater in Moro society that makes political dynasty even more inviting while impacting double weights in Muslim areas. The two over-arching forces do not, of course, exist in a vacuum. They are undergirded by social and economic structure that has given rise to elitism and oligarchic interest while shifting, too, the control of State's power into political dynasties, political clans and traditional politicians in practically all parts of the country especially in Muslim Mindanao.

In Moro areas, the two over-arching forces began to configure when Mindanao and Sulu were arbitrarily integrated into the Philippine colonial state system in the early 1900s that practically sandwiched the Moro people by two equally potent and destructive forces. As they suffered from being controlled from above by the new colonial State, the

Moros were heavily shackled, too, by the bondage of feudalism that long gripped the Moroland. The fate of the Moros was sealed when the United States illegally transferred their sovereignty to then colonized-turned-Philippine colonial state and was eventually consummated in 1946.

In essence, what was actually transferred was not only power and control into the helm of Filipino nationalists, oligarchs and landlords; most flagrant was the grafting of one feudal structure (Moroland) to another feudal, colonial and state structure (Philippines) creating thus a two-tier feudal system and Filipino neo-colony in Moro areas. Subsequently, it tilted the balance of control and domination in favor of the Philippine colonial state and its elite-dominated political set-up, oligarchic interest, transnational and capitalist instrumentalities in Mindanao, a situation that continues to worsen in recent years. Incidentally, the debate whether the Philippines is semi-feudal and semi-capitalist is not applicable to Moro areas. The latter suffers undoubtedly with lowest social formation and social development in practically all aspects as Muslim Mindanao consistently registers lowest in practically all major political, socio-economic and educational indicators both in the past and in recent years.⁸

IV. Filipino and Moro political dynasties compared

At first glance, Muslim political dynasties resemble their dynastic brethren in the national scene where the two over-arching forces and their corresponding undergirding structure are present in all areas in the Philippines – not only in the Muslim community. Indeed, by certain standards, both Philippine and Moro societies do share relatively common features of social formation, historical experience, and cultural affinity.

However, while having such commonalities, it is contended that they differ in terms of level of social, economic and political development which determine the varying impact, breadth and depth of two forces mentioned above. In short, while both political dynasties belong to the same species, their difference varies both qualitatively and quantitatively. It is shown more fundamentally on who possesses actual and substantial power, control and influence on major political, economic and social institutions. While dominant Filipino political dynasties are present in practically all parts of the country facilitated through wider and stronger reach of Filipino-dominated State and its attendant political and economic power, Moro political dynasties are limited to certain areas in Muslim Mindanao while their power and influence are mere pittance compared to actual power in the hands of national political dynasties and political elites.

Besides, Muslim politicians are simply allowed second fiddle role in Philippine politics just enough for them to feel they have some political space as members of national minority. In truth, such space is becoming narrower and constricted for Muslims especially in the higher echelon of national power owing largely to hegemonic nature and moneyed character of Filipino elite-dominated politics. Today, Muslim politicians could simply slug it out among themselves and run every election time from one position to another within the tiers of Barangay and House of Representatives and the attendant offices and positions in between. It's now highly improbable for them to reach the Senate more so to national, elective executive posts. It is so small a possibility for Muslims to be able to reach subsidiary national executive positions; they come, if at all, simply as appointive posts thus requiring Muslim appointees to be loyal servants and obedient soldiers to whoever appoints them. In most cases, their appointments are a form of payback, influence peddling, patronage, and even bribery – depending on whether they are scions of a political dynasty in Muslim Mindanao or are former MNLF rebels turned government officials.

It would now take an exceptionally unconventional, liberal Muslim, who must be young, articulate, highly driven and ambitious with some showbiz flair and intellectual savvy not to mention creativity to make some political and even cultural and religious camouflaging to package his/her identity and loyalty to be able to take a short climb up the Senate. Even then, it would mean he or she must have a knack on playing an often transitory at times dirty and unscrupulous gambit with national politics so s/he won't be easily thrown from board by either the Opposition or the Administration by virtue of their often “kami-kayo” mentality and their generally subjective standard of choosing national candidates with high electoral winnability. Or else, s/he must be ready to become a political butterfly that can metamorphose easily without being nostalgic or nursing hurt feelings but must maintain a singular focus: the quest for political power and influence whatever it takes.

With the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) becoming more an extension of Malacanang, to aim for the regional governorship is probably the shortest route to having an executive, albeit regional position. Unfortunately, the road to the ARMM is already heavily guarded by the strongest political dynasty in Mindanao today, an arrangement that almost borders on conspiracy with whoever sits in Malacanang, which obviously undermines the whole notion of political autonomy, self-governance and democratic representation for Muslim Mindanao.

The major mark in the unparalleled development of Filipino and Moro political dynasties is obviously the present of State in favor of Filipinos. Unlike Moros, Filipinos are fortunate to having their State

which could supposedly address any contesting entities (e.g., political dynasty) that encumber the expression of their sovereignty. Thus, by strengthening State's institutions and by addressing the country's democratic deficit and reforming the elitist social and economic structure, the problems posed by Philippine political dynasties can be made to supposedly wither away.

Another difference is that unlike in Muslim areas, the larger part of the country is not faced by attendant and persistent secessionist rebellion, militarization and historically-entrenched culture of resistance and dissent. Other areas do not suffer from the threat of terrorism and militant fundamentalism or experience recurrent war, ethnic strife including family and clan feuds (*rido*). More important, they do not have separate version of history which leaves the collective memory of "Filipino nation" intact and uncontested.

V. Moro struggle and the left

On the contrary, there is no denying that there are warlords mostly associated with political dynasties, brutal counter-insurgency and decades-old armed conflicts, and other cases of state terrorism in Luzon and Visayas, as there are also in the rest of Mindanao. While their existence is undeniably due to structural causes, unfair government agrarian program of favoring the wealthy and strong, electoral deformity and other forms of social inequity that pervade in many parts of the country, the greater part of explanation is the failure of the State to promote social justice and to strengthen the country's major political and economic institutions including the failure to push for broader democracy, electoral reform, and rule of law. The rise of Filipino warlords is also due to the inability of the State to clip the power and influence of oligarchy and political elites in the countryside thus triggering the proliferation of "strong men" in different regions and provinces.

With the failure of the State, the stark situation of the political life of the country dominated by political dynasties also produces its own antithesis of political struggle and armed resistance from Filipino progressive movements and insurgent groups mostly associated with the Left. On this score, the struggles of the Left and Moro movements converge at certain point while they also diverge at another point. Whereas the Philippine Left pursues structural reform, national democracy, and social justice including the espousal to abolish political dynasties, Moro struggle prioritizes the need to gain political power and to establish a separate State or at least to have substantial control over certain territories in Mindanao through the struggle for self-determination among Moro dominant political and revolutionary movements.

For the Moros, the primacy of waging self-determination before structural reform is that engaging in the latter without substantial political power can hardly prosper because dynastic families, ruling elites, political clans, warlords, traditional politicians, MNLF surrenderees including other disgruntled and opportunistic Moro rebels would eventually be conspired – as they have been consistently conspired – and even superficially empowered and naively pampered by the government and the Armed Forces of the Philippines to counter the Moro movements and the Bangsamoro struggle.

The conspiracy, albeit unspoken, between the State and Muslim political dynasty explains why recent species of dynastic families and traditional politicians in Moro areas are mostly “Frankenstein” creation of the State where many of them serve as stooges of political elite and oligarchic interest by Imperial Manila, undermining thus the growth and maturity of the Philippines toward a truly democratic polity since what is primarily promoted is not the common good and the interest of the State and the government as a whole but their own parochial, negotiated, dynastic and family interests. In turn, Moro dynastic families and traditional politicians are assured of government and military support including access to power while guaranteeing them, too, national party support, victory every election time, business protection including political and military control over their Muslim constituents. So that the over-all intended effect aggravates the national and local problem of governance, patronage politics, corruption even as political elitism, warlordism, clannish and dynastic politics pose too much burden on the State, making it weaker and weaker especially in far-flung areas of Mindanao and Sulu.

In this respect, the Moro struggle is undeniably a step shorter compared to the Left's, a situation not necessarily due to Moros' indifference on the idea of structural change and comprehensive social reform; it is just because of circumstances Moro movements are in, the latter is compelled to prioritize one form of struggle over another with the aim to have enough power in order to superimpose the dominance of warlords and dynastic interest so that, when Moro movements will eventually gain political power, they can be dealt with effectively later.

This view however does not imply that the Moro struggle is perpetually stuck by the straitjacket of separatist rebellion obsessed with attaining power with we-will-deal-with-you-later attitude toward political dynasty. It is believed that the capacity of Moro movements to diversify into wider arena of social engagement and political reform as a component of the struggle for self-determination remains widely opened, although it is recognized that Moro movements have been remiss in adopting clearer and broader revolutionary agenda and policy program on political dynasty and clan politics. Because of this silence, the

Left views the Moro struggle as short with structural reform agenda which it thinks is badly needed in a society suffering from too entrenched dynastic and clannish tradition.

What is being impressed is that the parallelism of Philippine and Moro societies particularly the presence of State that favors the former does not make the context of political dynasty and other attendant problems in the country similar with those in Moro areas. Having a weak State or failed State is fundamentally different from having no State at all as in the case of the Moros. Apart from the lack of State that would carry out comprehensive social, political and economic reform, Moros' social structure has largely remained fossilized for centuries. It has stunted the growth of political and economic system necessary to develop Moro society where Muslim areas have been made to suffer from a "cancer" that is endemic in Philippine society (e.g., defective political system, primitive culture of election). Whatever problem is generated from the fact of the Philippines being a weak State is unavoidably transferred down below thus hitting hard the most vulnerable people particularly the downtrodden Moro masses.

END NOTES:

¹ <http://www.culturebriefings.com/articles/poldynty.html>

² <http://www.pcij.org/i-report/2007/political-dynasties.html>

³ <http://www.pcij.org/stories/2001/clans.html>

⁴ <http://www.endpoliticaldynasty.com/who.html>

⁵ <http://www.yonip.com/main/articles/misc-doc0001.html>

⁶ http://newsbreak.com.ph/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4394&Itemid=88889066

⁷ <http://www.pcij.org/i-report/2007/dynasty-building.html>

⁸ See, "Top Ten Provinces with Lowest Human Development Index," Philippine Human Development Report, 2005. See, "Top Ten Provinces with Highest Poverty Incidence," National Statistical Coordination Board, 2006. See also, Jesus Llanto, "Muslim Mindanao Regains No. 1 Spot in Poorest Regions List," Newsbreak, March 5, 2008.

The Veiled Political Realities: The Case of Muslim Women in Palawan¹



By Maria Carinnes P. Alejandria

*Men are the managers of the affairs of women
For that God has preferred in bounty
One of them over another*

*And those you fear may be rebellious
Admonish; banish them to their couches,
And beat them. (Sura 4, verse 38)²*

Introduction

This text cited from the Sura has often been referred to by fundamentalists and conservative Muslims as one of the textual proofs that provide for the unquestionable submission of women to the will of men. This text has also precluded women from various socio-political and economic pursuits that their male contemporaries are permitted to venture in. This culture has pervaded not only the social but also the political realm. It is through this societal setup that Muslim women have generally been categorized under subservience and inferiority.³ From the wearing of veils to speaking in moderation, Muslim women have most often faithfully played their gender role characterized by submission in their male-dominated societies. This further resulted in a limited amount of literature that pertains to the activities, perspectives and contributions of Muslim women in their societies.⁴

Recent studies have proven that Muslim women have significant contributions to the achievement of their societies' socio-political aspirations. Changes in the performance and adherence of Muslim

women to their prescribed roles in their societies have also been documented in various studies.⁵ The factors that were identified to have predominantly affected the behavior of Muslim women in their societies are education, media, and exposure to modern perspectives. It is in this context that this study shall discuss and interpret the participation and adherence of Muslim women of Palawan in the political activities and beliefs espoused by their group.

The main question that is being addressed by this work pertains to the nature of political activity or inactivity of the Muslim women of Palawan. For this purpose, this paper is divided into three sections. The first shall present the historical underpinnings of the struggle of Muslim group for self-determination, more specifically those which transpired in the province. It is the contention of this author that the events of the past serve as potent frameworks through which the group addresses the contemporary challenges which beset them. This is to say that a political activity that failed to yield the desired results has lesser chances of being committed again by the members of the group. The second section discusses the contemporary political culture being practiced by the Muslim women of Palawan. The political action models of Wolfsfeld (1989) and the rational choice theory of Muller, et al (1987) served as the theoretical foundations of this work.⁶ The final section discusses the trajectory of the political development of Muslim women and the factors that instigated the changes which they address not only as Muslim individuals but more so as women under the veil of Muslim culture.

Historical underpinnings of Muslim struggle in Palawan

It is theorized that Islam may have reached the island of Palawan in the late 14th century, a few decades after the Sultanate of Sulu was established in Mindanao.⁷ Kamlian cited Rodil stating that “the sultanate is a political entity that is by right and as a matter of fact a nation-state, no different from a monarchy, exercising sovereign jurisdiction over the various people encompassed within its territory.”⁸ With this it could be deduced that both converts to Islam and those who practiced their indigenous forms of religions were subjected to the sovereignty of the Sultan of Sulu. In the same passage, Kamlian identifies the ethnic groups in Palawan that were subjected to the Sultan's rule. All are geographically located in the southern part of the province which is more adjacent to Mindanao. The groups that converted to Islam are the

Molbog and Palawani and those that continued to practice their indigenous forms of religion are the Batak and Tagbanua.

Perhaps the first documented revolt of the Muslims of Palawan against the Spanish rule was in 1574 when a group of local *datus* in the Calamianes, northern part of the province, joined in a plot to oust the colonizers from Manila.⁹ A series of Moro raids ensued between 1630 and 1780 in christianized areas of the province. As a response, the colonizers established forts in Cuyo, Culion, Linapacan, and Taytay.¹⁰ It is unclear who won the century-long unrest between the Spaniards and the local Muslims but on November 19, 1889, a document recognizing the authority of the colonizers over Paragua¹¹ was signed by both Muslim leaders and Spanish authorities. Earlier on November 20, 1897, a group of native soldiers from the highly Islamized island of Balabac staged an uprising against the colonizers.¹²

After the end of the Spanish rule, a new group of foreign colonizers entered the Philippine political setting — the Americans. The struggles of Muslims with the American colonizers in Palawan were also documented. The most prominent of these may have been the acts of insurgencies led by Datu Bataraza and Panglima Diani. It was presented by Ocampo that the administrative and military strategies employed by the colonizers included the relocation of Muslims residing in the northern part of mainland Palawan to the eastern part which is geographically adjacent to the administrative center in Puerto Princesa.¹³ This implies that from the present-day municipalities of Quezon and Rizal, Muslim populations were displaced to today's Brooke's Point, Bataraza, and Española. Datu Bataraza together with the said panglimas initially resisted the orders for relocation to the Moro Camps. However, through various means of material and political persuasions, Datu Bataraza and Panglima Tumay submitted themselves and consequently their followers to the reconfiguring of the territorial distribution in the province by the new colonizers.

Datu Bataraza was the son of a former Sultan of Sulu. He had political control over the Muslims residing in the eastern part of the mainland Palawan. Under his jurisdiction would be the panglimas like Tumay and Diani. An interesting fact is that according to Ocampo, based on historical documents, Datu Bataraza was not well-liked by his constituents. In fact, Panglima Diani, in his illegal repossession of his land, did not only resist the colonizers' policies on relocation but also the orders of Datu Bataraza.

Ocampo's account ends with the surrender of Panglima Diani in February 1912. Unlike Diani's reaction to foreign rule, Panglima Tumay briefly resisted it. After having been granted agricultural lands, Tumay accepted the colonizers' policies. However, despite the seeming success of the American government in the province in implementing the relocation program, several other Muslims remained antagonistic and escaped the Moro Reservation. According to Ocampo these acts of insubordination may be viewed in two perspectives. The first is the colonizers' viewpoint which exemplifies the treacherous nature of the acts of the Muslims while the other is from the Muslims who viewed their actions as products of their strong convictions and their attempts for self-determination.

After independence, Muslims feared that they might lose their identity through incorporation to the majority Christian Filipinos. The Dansalan Declaration presented by more than a hundred Bangsamoro leaders on March 18, 1935 supported this primary assumption. The declaration primarily states:

We do not want to be included in the Philippines for once an independent Philippines is launched there will be trouble between these two peoples who have not lived harmoniously together. Our public land must not be given to people other than the Moros... we foresee what conditions our children and we will be in.¹⁴

Several political actions underscoring the desire of the Muslims for self-determination were made by the members of the group. Such actions ranged from the creation of political organizations such as the Muslim Independence Movement to the outright use of arms and combat against the government. The government, on the other hand, promulgated various laws to address the institutional needs of the Muslim group. Violent acts were also committed by the government to subdue the Moros. Examples of these are the Jabidah massacre and Ramlon uprising where many civilian Moro Filipinos were eliminated and harmed with the major goal of consolidating the country.¹⁵

The rise of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and even the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) was supposed to be the means by which the members of the Muslim group could address the politics of neglect that the Philippine Government has been implementing on

them since its conception. The public declaration of the Bangsamoro National Identity was bannered in a manifesto released by the MNLF on April 28, 1974. It was chiefly consisted of the protests and aspirations of the Moro people. An excerpt of that manifesto states:

We, the five million oppressed Bangsamoro people, wishing to free ourselves from the terror, oppression and tyranny of Filipino colonialism, which has caused us untold sufferings and miseries by criminally usurping our land, by threatening Islam through wholesale desecration of its places of worship and its Holy Book, and murdering our innocent brothers, sisters, and folks in genocidal campaign of terrifying magnitude...aspire to have the sole prerogative of defining and chartering our national identity in accordance with our own free will in order to ensure our future and that of our children.¹⁶

The Muslims in the province of Palawan were not isolated from the cultural and political struggle of their contemporaries in Mindanao. A command center was established by the MNLF in the province during the height of its armed campaign.¹⁷

At this point, it could be said that the pervading political culture of the Muslims in Palawan during the colonial and neo-colonial period included the use of armed revolts in cases where dialogues with the members of the ruling class failed to yield beneficial results.

It is also noticeable that the participation of Muslim women during the whole process of the Moro struggle that was recounted in this juncture seems to be lacking. This could again be attributed to the cultural impediments to the active participation of women in political and economic affairs in their respective societies. Since, data pertaining to the actual involvement of the women in the Moro struggle are scanty, if not totally lacking, assumptions on the nature of their contribution in those historical markers of the Muslim's pursuit for self-determination could only be made. More often than not, the role of women in Muslim societies has often been confined to the provision of auxiliary services to their families and relatives. This might have been the same case that transpired during the colonization and the neo-colonialism period of the Republic.¹⁸

The Muslim women of Palawan

The age range of the women involved in this study is from 18 to 68 years old. Eighty-nine percent of the respondents are within the age range of 18-47 years old. The highest educational attainment that was identified with three respondents is a Master's degree. Majority completed at least an elementary level of education while 20 percent have received no formal education. The main forms of occupation that are engaged in by the informants are agriculture, fishing, government service, proprietorship, and studentship. A total of 40 percent have identified themselves as jobless and full time homemakers.

Yahya identified five major factors which are responsible for the formation of a diversified set of beliefs among Islamic advocates from the Muslim population in Quiapo, Manila.¹⁹ He identified the effects of urban life on the level and type of Islamic fundamentalism of his Quaipo informants. He found that urbanism and capitalism have significantly affected the religious practices of his informants. In this regard, the extent by which the Muslim women are exposed to urbanism and modern perspectives were also considered. Hence the set of respondents was taken from a rural setting in the province specifically, Balabac municipality and an urban-based set of respondents was also taken from Puerto Princesa City. A total of 67 informants were taken from the rural area while 66 informants were taken from the urban area.

The political action repertoire of Muslim women

In the study made by Wolfsfeld (1989), Political Action was defined as any form of political participation that an individual engages in to invoke governmental and institutional attention and response. Such actions could be categorized under four repertoires, namely, dissidence, inactivity, conformism, and pragmatism. The Dissidents believe that it is only true radical means of political action that the government authorities can be invoked to respond to their needs. The Conformists believe that it is only through constitutional-based actions that the government may be propelled to act on their requests. The Pragmatics believe that the most efficient way of capturing the attention and hence the action, of the government is through the combination of both constitutionally-based actions and the radical-oriented ones. The Inactives are passive political actors who believe that with or without

their involvement in the political system, the government will perform or neglect its prescribed role. A factor that may affect the level of political action of an actor is his or her level of political efficacy which is his or her belief on the extent as to which he or she could affect the government into action.

It was found that in terms of actual political action Muslim women in Palawan are inactive. This is not surprising because of the gender role that they must adhere to as members of the group. It was observed during focus group discussions that whenever their male counterparts are present Muslim women remained passive in answering questions posed to the group. However, in the absence of their male counterparts, they were more responsive to the questions posed to them. It was noteworthy, however, that in events when a Muslim woman of higher economic status is present in a group with men it seemed that her active participation in the discussion was acceptable to the men. This prompted the consideration of the economic status of the woman as a factor which affects her level of political action. Majority of these respondents live in the urban area in which intercultural relations are fostered.

A considerable number of the women respondents²⁰ were identified to be pragmatics. Majority of them reside in the rural area. Most of them believed that mere constitutional-based actions will not merit the involvement of the government in the attainment of their group's goal. Hence, apart from voting and lobbying, they have also been involved in local rallies and petitions. The most recent involvement of these women in a radical political action was in June 2006. A group of students together with their relatives rallied in front of the Municipal Hall of Balabac with the aim of invoking the approval of the Municipal council to provide for the former's fulfillment of its contractual responsibility with the Palawan State University (PSU) in reference to the satellite campus that the latter has established in the area.²¹ In one of the interviews that were conducted with the members of the rallying group, a female Molbog student stated that "we fought for PSU Balabac because we wanted to be developed, not only through education but also through the socialization that occurs here. PSU is the best medicine for the severe societal diseases of corruption and miseducation."²² This action of the young women Muslim was met with either positive reactions or with contempt from the older women and men of the Muslim community in the area. In a focus group discussion, one of the female elders strongly argued that the young women of her community are being miseducated with values that

are against the teachings in Koran. She reminded them that the traditional role of women which is bound by subservience must be observed despite one's level of educational attainment.²³ In this regard, it was deemed pertinent to include education as one of the factors that affect the political behavior of the Muslim women in Palawan. It was further observed that majority of the women interviewed who had attained at least a high school degree are more prone to political pragmatism than those who never completed formal education or at least elementary level who were chiefly characterized under inactivity.

Far more revealing was the considerable number of dissidents among the informants which surpassed the number of conformists. Among the 133 informants for this study, a total of 41 informants affirmed their involvement in the MNLF specifically during the war years. Although most of them have already relocated in Palawan after the supposed Peace Agreements, most are still keeping abreast of the developments in the Peace Talks in Mindanao. When asked of the nature of their current involvement in political affairs, the general answer was that of critical vigilance of the dealings of the government with their proposals. The possibility of joining an armed movement again was affirmed by 84 percent of the dissident informants. The condition that may lead them to such an alternative action was identified to the extent by which the government would continue to neglect their needs and their aspirations. It must also be mentioned that majority of the respondents who were identified as dissidents were found in the rural area, an environment which nurtures the philosophical belief of the society as an organism with interrelated parts. This is conducive for mass actions.

In terms of the informants' level of political efficacy, it was found out that 80 percent has a high degree of political efficacy. This is to say that most of the informants believe that they are capable of effecting the government to respond to their needs. A small percentage differentiates the number of women with a higher degree of institutional political efficacy with those who have a higher degree of mobilized political efficacy. The former type of efficacy highlights the belief that the actor is more efficient in propelling the government to action through institutional or conventional forms of political action. The latter type of efficacy exemplifies the belief that the actor is more efficient in invoking governmental response to their requests through mobilized or radical forms of political action.

The political values of the Muslim women

Political values constitute the general political perspectives of an individual regarding his or her involvement in the political sphere. The first element in this set of values is the perceived cost of a political action. If an action is too costly and the accompanying reward is not complementary to perceived cost, then the actor may be expected to desist from involving in that particular action. Seventy percent of the respondents believe that joining a political action is not costly. These respondents measured cost in terms of the effort and monetary value that they expend in joining a political action.

The next element is the perceived benefit of political action. This constitutes the rewards, in favor or in monetary value that an individual acquires by participating in a political activity. A total of 83 percent of the respondents believe that joining a political activity merits them less benefits than what they deemed is rightfully due them. If this is the case, using Muller's Rational Choice Theory, it is but only understandable that majority of the respondents were politically inactive. The cost, though not high, impedes the full realization of the sparse benefits. This is to say that there is no sufficient material motivation for the actor to indulge in political activity.

On the other hand, the respondents' interest in politics which was seen in the extent by which they keep abreast with the socio-political and economic developments in their area and in the country in general was found to be at high levels. This implies that they are aware of the current issues and problems that beset the government and the latter's modes of resolution.

It was also apparent from the results of the study that majority of the respondents have low levels of faith in people. A certain level of distrust on the motives of people in the performance of their political action exists among 89 percent of the respondents. This distrust is chiefly felt against political elites and members of the government. Surprisingly, this distrust did not exclude the Muslim politicians especially those coming from a different Muslim ethnic group. Gowing argued that prior to the creation of the MNLF, the Muslims have been ideologically and culturally divided.

Throughout their history, lack of unity has characterized the Moros – and inability of Maranaos, Maguindanaos, Tausogs, and Samals to join together in a common cause.

In the present warfare too, the Moros have been badly factionalized. But for the first time in their history, they have begun to think of themselves as Moros (Moro National Liberation Front, Bangsamoro state, Bangsamoro Army, etc) rather than as Maranaos or Tausogs.²⁴

The final element that was considered in reference to the political values of the Muslim women in Palawan is their level of support for regime norms. It was found that 35 percent of the informants have low support for the political beliefs and actions forwarded by the government. They believe that the extant political undertakings of the government are inefficient in countering the multitude of systemic problems that beset it. Theoretically a low degree of support for regime norms could be a good determinant of the probability that an individual will join forms of mobilized collective actions which more often than not are less constitutional.²⁵ If this theory is indeed applicable in the current discussed situation, it could be said that a considerable degree of potential involvement in rebellious political action could be expected from the respondents given several socio-cultural factors that could instigate them to action. One respondent from the rural area stated that if the government continues its politics of neglect toward the group then constitutional and conventional means of political participation may be inappropriate.²⁶

Transformations in political behavior

Based on Koran laws and the consequent Muslim culture, women are expected to merely echo the inclinations and aspirations of their men. This is to put forward the notion that if the male who is the leader of the household is inactively participating in political action then the women under their leadership should be abiding by the same perspectives and behavior. Through this study, however, it was found that the expected behavior of the Muslim women in Palawan did not coincide with their actual behavior specifically in terms of their political orientation and participation. Majority of the informants though inactive have strong political ideals which at some point are displayed given that their welfare is at stake.²⁷ Gen. Ayyobie interpreted this result as the evidence for the pervading pragmatism among the members of his group. He said, "We,

Muslims have to some extent attempted to play by the government's rule with the hope that it would pay more attention to our cause than if we go back to the old strategies. However, we remain vigilant and wary of their [government] motives."²⁸

Another reason that could answer for this phenomenon is the cultural background in which the women play the vital role of being the subordinate wife, mother, or child to the men in their societies. The fear of ostracism was often cited during focus group discussions. The implications of a political action on a Muslim woman's level of piouness were cited as a factor that is chiefly considered by the informants prior to their involvement in the political sphere. It was said that a truly pious Muslim woman is to be observed as moderate in action and in speech especially in public places.²⁹ Any woman who is identified as highly opinionated and radical is considered less pious. Hence, in a society wherein piety and religious conformity is commended, a woman is often disposed to perform her prescribed gender role in an attempt to be favored. This behavior is more prevalent among the informants from the rural areas than in the urban areas.

A recently formed socio-political group in Palawan that is predominantly comprised of Muslim members known as the Borraque Secretariat aims to provide aid to underprivileged indigenous political candidates³⁰ in terms of logistical and human resource support. The role of women in this group is still chiefly concentrated on the auxiliary. However, a noticeable change is that in a gathering of 60 male Muslim local leaders, three women were allowed to participate not as mere spectators but actual contributors in the decision-making. This is parallel to the pre-colonial role of women as advisers and arbiters in conflicts. Doro cited Mangorsi's work on the Meranao proverbs regarding the role of women in peacemaking wherein one proverb says: "A woman is a man's sage; his poor statement is toned down by her understanding; she changes grim words into words of stillness."³¹ The perhaps innate attribute of women as pacifiers is highlighted by this passage which qualified women as active participants in the political and judicial processes in their communities in the earlier period.

Prof. Adoracion Kuhutan in answering the question "why must women be more active in participating in the decision-making activities of the group" stated that apart from the fact that there are several perspectives that women possess which men generally lack, the growing number of educated Muslim women compared to men is not easily

dismissible. She was implying that the learning that women received through their education must be used in determining the course of action that the group must take in regard to issues and concerns.³² She nevertheless emphasized the importance of continuously defining themselves as Muslim women despite the extent by which they have been exposed to modernity.

In this context, has the Muslim woman changed? In the light of the foregoing discussion it could be said that the political behavior of the Muslim woman, specifically in Palawan, has attained various transformations in an attempt to balance the equation of cultural expectations on one side and alternative approaches to resolving political issues on the other. Political pragmatism has been one of the ways by which they attempted to fuse cultural traditions with modernizing perspectives in politics. Their involvement in mobilized forms of political action also signifies their attempt to be recognized by governmental institutions as a potent group of political actors.

Conclusion

The Muslim women of Palawan have indeed been redefining their roles in their societies—from passive spectators to possessors of high political ideals. Although they were identified as inactively participating in the political process in the province, let it suffice to say that the tempering power of cultural traditions may have greatly affected the extent by which they could exercise their rights as citizens of this country. The other reason for their inactivity was identified to their low level of trust on people, especially the political elite, and their low support for regime norms. Majority of the respondents believe that there are no sufficient institutional mechanisms that were provided by the government to enable them to interact with it in a more intensified manner. The fact that Talks in Mindanao is still on vague ground adds to the predominating distrust of the long-muted sector in the Philippine society. Though their level of political efficacy is considerably high, the unavailability of political and institutional mechanisms that should cater to their needs hampers their actual involvement in the political arena.

In a political equation wherein low support for regime norms added to high political efficacy may equal to dissidence, it would be disadvantageous to the government if it continues its politics of neglect toward the Muslims whose most suppressed members are the women.

The rationale of the government in relation to this argument which is often enumerating the supposed institutional modifications it has made to accommodate the Muslims' needs and aspirations loses its validity. Its politics of incorporation which it inherited from the colonizers pervades the solutions it formulated to resolve the almost 400 years of struggle of the Muslims for self-determination.

The case of the Muslim women in Palawan merely mirrors a far bigger scenario which is taking form in the Southern regions of this country. As much as the women in this study are striving toward their right to determine the course of their actions, the general Muslim populace has been trying to redefine itself not toward integration to the mainstream political culture, but to evade institutional blockades and pitfalls that the various regimes of the Philippine Republic have devised to dissolve the group into conformity notwithstanding the wisdom in the cultural cliché—unity in diversity.

The author is currently the Coordinator to the Social Sciences of the Institute of Tourism and Hospitality Management at the University of Santo Tomas. She is also completing her post-graduate degree in Anthropology at the University of the Philippines.

END NOTES:

¹This work is lifted from an earlier study completed by this author entitled *The Political Action Repertoire of Muslims in Palawan* (2007).

²The Koran Interpreted, Vol. 1, trans. Arthur J. Arberry (London: George Allen & Unwin; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955), pp. 509, 105-6. Also cited in Eickelman, Dale. *The Middle East An Anthropological Approach*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1989.

³This is not to propose a reductionist perspective. In fact several Muslim groups highlight various passages of the Koran wherein the advices of women are often esteemed and acknowledged by men.

⁴Monalinda Emperio Doro, "Management and Resolution of Rido Among Meranao in Baloi, Lanao del Norte:Case Studies" in Wilfredo Magno Torres III (ed), *Rido Clan Feuding and Conflict Management in Mindanao*

⁵Mardent, Amporn. Gendering Piety of Muslim Women in Thailand. Paper presented in the 2nd Graduate Workshop Conference on Piety and Pietization in Asia. Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, 2007.

⁶Wolfsfeld political action model presents a four-set category of political actors based on the nature of their political involvement. Political actors are labeled as either dissident, pragmatic, conformist, inactive. Mueller on the other hand proposed the Rational Choice theory which highlights the cost-benefit considerations that a political actor makes prior to committing an action. See Muller, Edward, Opp, Karl-Dieter and Kolsko, George. (1987) *Rebellious Collective Action Revisited*. *American Political Science Review* 81 and Wolfsfeld, Gadi. (1986) *Political Action Repertoire: The Role of Efficacy*. *Comparative Political Studies* 19, 104-129

⁷Ocampo, Nilo(1985) *Katutubo, Muslim, Kristyano: Palawan 1621-1901*. Germany: Salazar and Mendoza-Urban; Phils: Bahay-Saliksikan ng Kasaysayan (BAKAS)

⁸Kamlan, Jamail A. (1999) *Bangsamoro: Society and Culture*. Phils: MSU-Iligan Institute of Technology, Iligan Center for Peace Education and Research.

⁹Dizon, Eusebio Z. Report, National Museum, 2003

¹⁰The Spanish colonial government fortified its rule in the northern part of the province by establishing the capital in the island of Cuyo. The south remained highly oriented with the Sultanate of Sulu.

¹¹Palawan was originally called as Palao-yu by Chinese merchants. The Spaniards basing on the spatial characteristic of the groups of islands which resembled an umbrella used Paragua as the geo-political term for the said region. This term was later changed in 1905 to Palawan, a derivative term from the Chinese name for the area, with the capital being Puerto Princesa.

¹² Colina Tower was established by the Spanish Colonizers in Balabac. This structure signifies the intent of the Spanish colonizers to pacify the Muslim south. It also highlights the presence of a Christian military force in the south.

¹³ Ocampo, Nilo S. (1999) *Pagtugis kina Panglima Diani: Pagpapalikas sa mga Muslim ng Palawan, 1911*. ADHIKA Mga Pag-aaral sa Kasaysayang Bayan Tomo 1, 193-210

¹⁴ Kamlian, Jamail A. (1999) *Bangsamoro: Society and Culture*. Phils: MSU-Iligan Institute of Technology, Illigan Center for Peace Education and Research.

¹⁵ Santos, Soliman Jr. (2001) *The Moro Islamic Challenge: Constitutional Rethinking for the Mindanao Peace Process*. Phils: University of the Philippines Press

¹⁶ Kamlian, Jamail A. (1999) *Bangsamoro: Society and Culture*. Phils: MSU-Iligan Institute of Technology, Illigan Center for Peace Education and Research.

¹⁷ Interview with Gen. Estino Ayobbie, Chairman of the Borraque Secretariat, Former coordinator of MNLF in Palawan., Puerto Princesa City, January 2007

¹⁸ With few exemptions like the legend of Princess Urduja and the involvement of women in the MNLF war years.

¹⁹ A study of the factors affecting the level of Islamic Fundamentalism among Muslims in an urban setting in the Philippines was conducted by Mokhammad Yahya (2004). See Yahya, Mokhammad. (2004) *Exploring Islamic Fundamentalism Among Filipino Muslims in Quiapo*. (Master's Thesis, University of the Philippines Diliman)

²⁰ A total of 113 female respondents were interviewed for this study using a semi-structured questionnaire developed based on Wolfsfeld's design. Three focus group discussions were also facilitated intermittently from October 2006 to January 2007.

²¹ It was part of the agreement that the local government of Balabac shall allocate a part of its budget to the salary of the teachers that the University sends to the area. Due to the delayed enactment of the resolution that shall address the said need, the University proposed for the closure of the satellite campus due to its financial non-feasibility.

²² Interview with Shyrell Omar, Vice-president student council of Palawan State University Balabac Campus, Balabac, Palawan, August 2006. Also cited in Evangelista, Susan P. (ed) *The Lady and the Last Frontier*. 2007. Palawan State University, Philippines.

²³ Interview with Tiamdin Abdula, local resident of Balabac Municipality. Balabac, Palawan, October 2006.

²⁴ Gowing, Peter G. (1989) *Muslim Filipinos- heritage and Horizon*. Quezon City: Day Publishers

²⁵ Finkel, Steven, Muller, Edward, and Karl-Dieter Opp. (1989) Personal Influence, Collective Rationality, and Mass Political Action. *American Political Science Review* 83 , 886-903

²⁶ Interview with Narsing Banin, local resident of Balabac Municipality. Balabac, Palawan, October 2006.

²⁷ The rally that was staged in Balabac is one example of this cases.

²⁸ Interview with Gen. Estino Ayobbie, Chairman of the Borraque Secretariat, Former coordinator of MNLF in Palawan., Puerto Princesa City, January 2007

²⁹ Interview with Pahai Jikilani, local resident of Puerto Princesa City, January 2007

³⁰ The group do not solely support fellow Muslim candidates but also other candidates coming from other ethnic groups in Palawan.

³¹ Monalinda Emperio Doro, "Management and Resolution of Rido Among Meranao in Baloi, Lanao del Norte:Case Studies" in Wilfredo Magno Torres III (ed), *Rido Clan Feuding and Conflict Management in Mindanao*. See Mangorsi, Asinia B. *The Roles of Maranao Women as Reflected in Selected Maranao Proverbs*. Undergraduate Thesis. English Department, Mindanao State University, Institute of Technology.

³² Interview with Prof. Adoracion Kuhutan, Council Member of Borraque Secretariat and retired Professor at Palawan State University, January 2007

Songs of Resistance, Tales of Pride in Moroland



By Alexander Martin Remollino

The struggle for self-determination is an integral part of the history of the Philippines' Islamized tribes – the Tausugs of Sulu, the Maguindanaons of Maguindanao, the Maranaos of Marawi, the Kaagans of Davao, the Kolibugan of Zamboanga, the Sama of Tawi-Tawi, the Panimusan and Molbog of Palawan, the Iranun of Cotabato, the Sangils of Sarangani, the Yakan of Basilan, the Jama Mapun of Cagayan de Tawi-Tawi, and the Bangingi of Tongkil and Zamboanga.

These tribes – who collectively make up what is called the Bangsamoro – are not wanting in artistic and literary expression, like most indigenous peoples in the Philippines. All have a rich array of folk musical, dance and literary forms – which may be war dances, courtship dances, folktales, myths, legends, ballads, poems, riddles, proverbs, epics, and war songs.

They have expressed their struggle artistically. This is to be expected, since after all theirs is a struggle that has a strong cultural aspect to it.

Abraham Sakili, a professor of Islamic Art at the University of the Philippines (UP), goes as far as saying that the core of the Moro problem is not economic, not political, but cultural. Said Sakili in a recent interview with Newsbreak's Criselda Yabes:

The Muslims in the Philippines constitute a bangsa (nation) culturally distinct from and historically older than the Filipino nationality...

This distinct nationality has been forcibly incorporated and is in the process of being assimilated into the national body system. But to be clear, the Philippine government officials or policy makers might not be conscious of it. To them it is just a matter of integrating the Muslims...but with poverty and lack of political empowerment, they (the Muslims) have become vulnerable to the forces of assimilation. That's the nature of cultural encounter. Incidentally, the historical consciousness of the Muslims is so high that in spite of their lack of economic resources or inadequate political representation in the national body system, their strong consciousness has, in the meantime, provided the shield against such possibility.

The Bangsa Moro's struggles have been expressed mostly through their traditional narrative ballads: the Tausug *kissa*, the Kaagan *darangan*, the Maguindanao and Iranun *dayunday* or *bayok*, and the Panimusan and Molbog *toltol*. While traditionally tackling themes like love and religion, these ballad forms have also told tales of their respective tribespeople's heroic deeds in freedom struggles.

Calbi A. Asain, a professor at the Mindanao State University (MSU)-Sulu, wrote of the ballads in the Muslim cultural communities thus:

Ballads may be classified as folk songs, because they tell stories as they are sung. They, likewise, belong to the narrative genre. Ballads of other nations are oftentimes lyrical. Just like other folk literary genres, ballads are handed down by word of mouth. Ballads in the Muslim cultural communities rhyme. They are always solo and sung with *gabbang*, *kulintang* or *biyula* as simple accompaniment. In the Muslim cultural communities, ballads, more often than not, suggest a story. When we speak of ballads in the various Muslim cultural communities, we refer to the traditional ones, which are handed down from one generation to the next by word of mouth.

Most ballads in Muslim cultural communities are more of the historical type than lyrical. These are usually sung and arranged in quatrains. Historical ballads usually feature

important historical personalities, whose heroic deeds inspire the natives.

Contemporary ballads as in the case of the Tausug ballads reflect recent and famous Tausugs, who have made history in their political and ideological struggles.

Best known among the traditional ballads of the Muslim cultural communities is the Tausug kissa.

Sulu, the home of the Tausugs, is historically a symbol of U.S. imperialist aggression in the Philippines. It is in Sulu where Bud Dajo, the mountain site of a massacre of Moro resistance fighters by invading U.S. troops, took place early in the 20th century.

What is now known as the Bud Dajo massacre is described in some history textbooks as the “First Battle of Bud Dajo.” But the description of the event as a “battle” is highly disputable, considering the sheer difference in firepower between the U.S. forces and the Moro resistance fighters. The 790 U.S. troops who assaulted Bud Dajo used naval cannons against the 800-1,000 Moro resistance fighters who were mostly armed only with meleé weapons.

In the end, only six of the hundreds of Moro resistance fighters holding Bud Dajo as a stronghold survived, while there were 15-20 casualties among the U.S. troops.

For decades, the Tausugs did not forget what happened in Bud Dajo in 1906. The announcement in February 2003 that the year's Balikatan military exercises between U.S. and Philippine troops would be held in Sulu summoned bitter memories of the Bud Dajo Massacre and led to protest actions where thousands of Sulu residents participated.

In one of these protest actions, over a hundred women trooped to the provincial capitol in Jolo and chanted songs they would oppose U.S. troops setting foot in Sulu.

Everyday during these times, radio stations in Sulu played songs recounting tales of how Jolo's warriors fought the American invaders early in the previous century. One of the songs went thus:

We heard the Americans are coming
And we are getting ready
We are sharpening our swords to slaughter them
When they come...

Our ancestors are calling for revenge...

These songs are known as the *kissa*, which are traditional narrative ballads of the Tausugs. In an article in 2006, journalist Linda Bansil described the *kissa* as “narrative stories that have historical, folkloric or religious themes that one can learn many lessons from.”

Traditionally dealing with tales of love or with stories based on the Islamic view of creation and the sacrifices of the Biblical (non-Quranic) character Abraham (who is considered by Muslims as one of the prophets together with Jesus Christ), the *kissa* eventually came to tackle also the Tausugs' struggles for freedom.

One of the more famous *kissa* is the *Parang Sabil* (Sword of Honor) *Kissa*. It is a tragic story of lovers, in which a foreigner took the woman from the man. The man avenges his loss and is killed in the end. Interwoven in the *Parang Sabil Kissa*, then, are two tales: the story of two lovers, taking place against the backdrop of the American occupation of Sulu in the early 20th century.

Eventually, *kissa* were also written and composed about the Martial Law period, as well as about the lives and exploits of MNLF leaders Nur Misuari and Rizal Alih.

While the ballads in the other Islamized tribes are less known than the *kissa*, they are historically known to have followed the same pattern of development as their counterpart in the Tausug province.

As Asain has written, these are commonly performed in gatherings to the accompaniment of the *gabbang* (a native xylophone with 17 bamboo keys) or the *biyula* (which is similar to but bigger than the Western violin), or the *kulintang* (a row of small, horizontally-laid gongs). Some of the performances are known to have been recorded in music albums and played on local radio stations.

The fight to preserve identity is inevitably woven into the Moro peoples' struggle for self-determination. As Sakili said:

(The solution to the Mindanao problem) needs will, sincerity and understanding of the Muslim perspective of the Mindanao problem which at its core requires guarantee in safeguarding and empowering of the distinct and Islamic-based Bangsamoro identity. In diagnosing and solving problem such as involving the Muslims in the Philippines, culture should not be taken for granted. It is most powerful in the human psyche. Though culture is unconscious and often taken-for-

granted, it is a vital force that animates and motivates one's life, and defines one's reasons for existence.

Aside from explicitly expressing resistance through their ballads, the Islamized tribes in the Philippines also have their folktales by which their ways of life are made known, a subtle form of asserting cultural identity.

Best known among these is the Maranao *agmaniyog*. These are usually about the sultans and their subjects. The *agmaniyog* give prominence to the customs and traditions of the Maranao.

Struggles for freedom and self-determination take place not only in the political realm but also in the ideological and cultural fields.

It is thus no surprise that the Moro peoples' struggle has found artistic expression.

Appendices

Appendix A

Qudarat-Lopez Peace Treaty

Zamboanga, June 24, 1645*

1) That the said Sultan, King of Mindanao, his children and heirs shall truly be the friends of the King of Spain and the Spaniards shall be his friends and neither party should violate the truce. If on the part of the Spaniards or the Mindanaos, someone breaks the law by waging war or making offense, the abused shall report it either to the governor general or to the governor of Zamboanga or to the King of Mindanao for their own satisfaction that the violators be punished. For whose satisfaction, he should wait for six months, within which it is understood that peace should never be violated, after which he would be notified about them.

2) That the enemies of the Spaniards will be theirs and those of the Sultan will be of the Spaniards. If they would have other enemies with whom they would make war, they should notify him that he may give his aid and requesting him, he might as well help fight their enemies, and the ordinary support which the Spaniards used to give in time of war as aid, the Sultan shall also give to the Spaniards and to their faction or party.

3) That the captives captured by either party in war shall be divided equally, i.e., one half for the Spaniards and the other half for the Mindanaos. The same thing should be done to the seized artilleries and other firearms. Those which are already found in each party, which they thought to return, should not be included in the partition. Clothing and other effects should be returned to the person from whom they were taken. All the Christians who will be captured shall be set free. The same thing shall be applied to the Muslim captives.

4) That the vassals which belong to the Sultan are those who acknowledge and are paying tribute to him from Iho river, in the interior, and the middleground of the small by the Tagalooc up to the river Simuey (Sibuguey)

* From the personal files of Ambassador Alunan C. Glang. Copied from the book, *Bangsamoro, A Nation Under Endless Tyranny* by Salah Jubair.

5) That if any people rise against the Sultan, and become converted with the help of the Spaniards, they become the vassals of the Sultan. And those who rise against the Spaniards and are reduced with the help of the Sultan, they belong to the Spaniards. But those who are at present do not pay tribute to either party, if they want, they could do it to the Spaniards, however, if they were conquered by both parties, the tributes shall be divided equally.

6) That although the Butios, people of the mountain, and those of Magolabon do not pay tribute to the Sultan, they belong to him. And those who live beside the Lake Malanao and rivers of Dagum, Taraca and Bansayan belong to the Spaniards. Those left their towns due to the past wars, they could stay with those whom they like preferably with the Sultan, but if they return there and restore their living somewhere in the said lake, they should be tributaries to Spain.

7) That any of the natives, subjects of Spain, who would like to deal business with the Mindanaos, is free to do so, same thing with any of the Sultan's subjects who would transact business in Zamboanga or in other places under Spain but each and everyone of them should be subject to the order of the Leader of the domination where they are transacting their business. The Muslims converted to Christianity, who come from Zamboanga, are not obliged to return to where they come from just to follow sect, they could attend in the church which will be built within the town of the Sultan, with a minister in it. If they escape from one place to another due to crime, they ought to be delivered to the proper authority that there be justice on the part of the offended, if found guilty he would be fined.

8) That the Sultan earnestly requests the governor of the Island and the governor of Zamboanga to admit Manaqiur, Datu and King of Taolanos, as their friend because he is his brother-in-law.

9) That the subjects of the Sultan, going to Zamboanga to trade any goods, they ought to pay 5% to the Royal treasury as a manifestation of friendship with the King of Spain.

10) That the Jesuits be given license and be permitted to build a house and church within the town of the Sultan, consulting the minister when

and where to erect them so that those Christians there would have a place of worship. Those who would be in ransom should be delivered compulsory paying to the owners 40 pesos for men and women who are in good health, 30 pesos for the unmarried youth and 20 pesos for the old and sick and 10 pesos for the children.

Present during the signing of the Peace Agreement:

- 1) Sultan Kudarat
- 2) Badiamuda and Goadin, his sons
- 3) Manaquior, Datu of Tagolanos
- 4) Balamana, nephew of the Sultan
- 5) Ugbo, general of the navy
- 6) Tobinga, Mampanguitomoan, Dumoloon, Matag Patiocan and other chiefs
- 7) D. Francisco Atienza Ibañez, governor of Zamboanga
- 8) Captain Pedro Duran Monforte
- 9) Fr. Alejandro Lopez, Rector, Colegio de Zamboanga

Appendix B

TREATY BETWEEN THE SULTAN OF SULU AND THE UNITED STATES, 1842

Preceding the text of the treaty are some Arabic characters.

I, Mohammad, Sultan of Sooloo, for the purpose of encouraging trade with the people of the United States of America, do promise hereby and bind myself that I will afford full protection to all vessels of the United States, and their commanders and crews visiting any of the islands in my dominions, and they shall be allowed to trade on the terms of the most favored nation, and receive such provisions and necessaries as they may be in want of.

2ndly. In case of shipwreck or accident to any vessel, I will afford them all the assistance in my power, and protect the persons and property of those wrecked, and afford them all the assistance in my power for its preservation and safe-keeping, and for the return of the officers and crews of the said vessels to the Spanish settlements, or wherever they may wish to proceed.

3rdly. That any one of my subjects who shall do any injury or harm to the commanders or crews belonging to American vessels, shall receive such punishment as his crime merits.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal, in presence of the datus and chiefs at Soung, island of Sooloo.

February 5, 1842

Here follows a signature in Arabic script

Witnesses:

Charles Wilkes

Commanding Exploring Expedition

William L. Hudson

Late Commanding U.S. Ship Peacock

R.R. Waldron

Purser, U.S. Exploring Expedition

Appendix C

Petition to the President of the United States of America from the People of the Sulu Archipelago

PREAMBLE

Whereas, the territory now inhabited by the Sulu people was never under the control of Spain, or a part of its dominion, and only upon the advent of the American Army in Sulu did the people of Sulu recognize sovereignty – that the United States of America, and,

Whereas, the government of Sulu people under the American Government, as administered by General Leonard Wood and Major Hugh L. Scott, and other American military governors following them was a just government, and,

Whereas, the Filipino people in the northern provinces of the Philippine Islands has no right to force their government upon the inhabitants of these parts, inhabited from the time immemorial by our own people, and to include our territory in theirs, and,

Whereas, it would be an act of great injustice to cast our people aside, turn our country over to the Filipino people in the North to be governed by them, without our consent, and the thrust upon us a government not of our own people, nor by our own people, nor for our own people, and therefore,

We, the People of Sulu Archipelago, recognizing our right to petition the great and good Government of the United States of America and in order to form a more perfect understanding between the President of the United States of America, and the Congress of the United States of America, and ourselves, to establish justice in our courts, insure our own domestic tranquility, promote our general welfare, and redress the wrongs and outrages already committed on our people by the present government, do hereby make this our petition to the President of the United States of America, thru his Honorable Commission, General Leonard Wood, and the Honorable W. Cameron Forbes, to wit:

Article I.

Whether or not independence is granted by the Congress of the United States of America to the Northern Provinces of the Philippines, it is [the] desire of the people of Sulu that the Sulu Archipelago be made permanent American territory of the United States of America, and for the following reasons:

1. The people of the Sulu Archipelago are loyal to the American Government, and have been greatly benefited by the said government, and desire to remain under said government.
2. The people of Sulu will realize that if independence is granted to the Philippine Islands, and Sulu Islands are included, the taxes which would necessarily have to be lived upon the people would be too burdensome to endure without open revolt. That where we are paying one peso tax now, we would then be called upon to pay more than ten pesos in taxes.
3. The Philippine Legislature has failed to legislate any laws for the benefit of the Moro people. The Special Form of Government which was inaugurated by General Wood, when Governor of the Moro Province, and which was very beneficial to us, has already been set aside by the past administration.

The Philippine Legislature has failed to work for the benefit of our people. They have failed to recognize our religion. They have failed to pass any laws recognizing our marriages celebrated by our Mohammedan priests, and according to the present laws in force in the Philippine Islands, and also the decision of its courts, our wives are concubines, and our children illegitimate. The Philippine government can not protect our religious customs, nor our marriages, as they have no laws to guide them in these questions.

4. The Philippine Legislature has failed to appropriate sufficient money for the maintenance and construction of roads, the preservation of our health, the maintenance of schools, although draining our treasury of the taxes paid by our people, and appropriating the money for their own purposes in the northern provinces.

5. The Philippine Government has placed their Constabulary among us to preserve law and order. In this connection, they have utterly failed, year

after year. While stationed among our people the Constabulary has committed many outrages upon our people such as the following:

The petition goes on to cite a number of instances of alleged abuses on the part of the Constabulary patrols harass the people' loot, steal property from our houses, and take our produce, etc., without our consent promiscuously search our houses without warrant, molest our women, and graft from our people. The officials quite frequently force the people to make gifts to them, such as good ponies, cattle, barongs, etc. They maltreat Moro prisoners, while Filipino prisoners receive the best of treatment and attention, and are never sent out to work under guard.

Practically all the trouble and dissension for the past few years in Sulu has been caused by the Filipino Constabulary.

6. The Philippine Government has failed to give us justice in their courts, some instances of which we here mention, as follows:

In Criminal Case No. 2671, before Filipino Justice of the Peace of Jolo, the deputy clerk of court of First Instance, at Jolo, a Filipino civil service employee, a municipal councilor of Jolo, also Filipino, and other Filipinos were fined by the Justice of the Peace only P15.00 for gambling. This withstanding the fact that he had instructions from the Judge of the Court of the First Instance, and the Governor of the Province of Sulu to impose jail sentences on those found guilty of gambling.

A week later two poor, ignorant Moros from Lu-uk, far from Jolo and civilization plead guilty to playing a centavo game of ligud. They were fined fifty pesos each. The Filipinos in the first case were playing monte, which in itself is a prohibited game of chance under the laws of the Philippines.

Sometime after this nine Moros were fined by a Constabulary Officer, acting in the capacity as auxiliary justice of the peace at a remote place from Jolo, one hundred pesos each for violation of the municipal district ordinance punishing gambling. Under directions from the Provincial Commander, also a Filipino officer, these same Moros were again prosecuted under the general statute for gambling and in the Court of First Instance upon pleading guilty were each given five days imprisonment and a fine of five pesos, and had to pay the costs as well. This was in criminal case No. 1963 in the Court of First Instance.

There never has been a Filipino prosecuted under both laws by any Filipino justice of the peace or prosecuting officer, although many have been prosecuted under the ordinance. The Moros for small games have been fined generally from thirty to one hundred pesos and imprisonment ranging to several months, and we cannot understand this discrimination, or why we should be tried twice for one offense, especially when the Filipinos are not so treated. No Filipino has received a large fine or such imprisonment from these courts in Sulu, except in one case in the Court of First Instance.

Here follow a number of specific cases, each given its court number, in which it is claimed justice was not done or that discrimination in favor of Filipinos was shown. Some complaints specify inefficiency and incompetence of officials.

Constabulary officers, acting as deputy governors, station commanders, and auxiliary justices of the peace *ex officio* have held our people in confinement for periods of time without any formal complaint and without a trial or hearing. In this triple capacity these officials do with our people as they see fit.

The Provincial Commander, also acting as Auxiliary Justice of the Peace *Ex-Officio* as Asturias Barracks, and as deputy governor, as well, has repeatedly held our people in confinement at the guard house for periods of time without any formal complaint, trial or hearing.

Thru their soldiers these officials arrest us, without warrants, prepare their own complaints, after examining the witnesses from the prosecution, and in most cases, sign the complaint themselves. On trial of the case, of course, we are convicted, and are then in many cases denied the right appeal, especially in remote places in Jolo, Siasi, and Bongao, where he cannot obtain legal advice, or any one to prepare our appeal and bond.

Now there are prisoners being held in confinement without complaint or hearing by Constabulary officers at Camp Rommandier, Camp Andres, Camp Indanan, at Taglibi, at Asturias Barracks, (Guard House), on the Island of Jolo. The Siasi jail is full of prisoners awaiting preliminary hearing, most without any complaint yet presented to the Courts. In the Auxiliary Justice of the Peace Court *Ex Officio* at Jolo, there are two Moros

who have been in confinement about two months without hearing and they are confined in the Provincial jail.

The Auxiliary Justice of the Peace Ex Officio has not been to Siasi to try cases since March 4, 1921, and therefore, all prisoners confined since then are necessarily without any formal complaint being presented to the Court, and held now by the deputy governor there, a Constabulary Official.

Article II.

We, the people of Sulu ask that law and order be maintained by American troops, as they have in the past treated us justly, they do not steal our property, and they do not mix nor meddle with our women.

Article III.

We, the people of Sulu guarantee that we ourselves will maintain law and order in the event our territory is made a part of the American nation. We feel assured that the American Government at Washington will provide special laws for our people, protecting our religion and our customs, and that under the protecting arm of America we will have just courts, wherein we will receive justice.

Jolo, Province of Sulu, P.I.
June 9, 1921

Appendix D

THE TRIPOLI AGREEMENT

Agreement Between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and Moro National Liberation Front with the Participation of the Quadripartite Ministerial Commission Members of the Islamic Conference and the Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Conference.

In the Name of God, the Omnipotent, the Merciful.

In accordance with the Resolution No. 4 Para. 5 adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Islamic conference in its Fourth Session held in Benghazi, Libyan Arab Republic during the month of Safar 1393 H. corresponding to March 1973, calling for the formation of Quadripartite Ministerial Commission representing the Libyan Arab Republic, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Senegal and the Republic of Somalia, to enter into discussions with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines concerning the situation of the Muslims in the South of the Philippines.

And in accordance with the Resolution No. (18) adopted by the Islamic conference held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in Jumada Alakhir 1393 H. corresponding to June 1974 A.D. which recommends the searching for a just and peaceful political solution to the problem of the Muslims in the South of the Philippines through the negotiations.

And in accordance with the Resolution No. 12/7/S adopted by the Islamic conference held in Istanbul in Jumada El-Ula 1396 H. corresponding to May 1976 A.D. empowering the Quadripartite Ministerial Commission and the Secretary General of the Islamic Conference to take the necessary steps for the resumption of negotiations.

And following the task undertaken by the Quadripartite Ministerial Commission and the Secretary General of the Islamic Conference and the discussions held with H.E. President Marcos, President of the Republic of the Philippines.

And in realization of the contents of Para. 6 of the Joint Communiqué issued in Tripoli on the 25th Zulgeda 1396 H. corresponding to 17th November 1976 A.D. following the official visit paid by the delegation of the Government of the Philippines headed by the First Lady of the

Philippines, Mrs. Imelda R. Marcos, to the Libyan Arab Republic and which calls for the resumption of negotiations between the two parties concerned in Tripoli on the 15th of December 1976 A.D.

Negotiations were held in the City of Tripoli during the period between 24th Zulhija 1396 H. to Second to Moharram 1397 H. corresponding to the period from 15th to 23rd December 1976 A.D. at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs presided over by Dr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the Libyan Arab Republic, and comprising of the Delegations of:

1. Government of the Republic of the Philippines, led by Honorable Carmelo Z. Barbero, Undersecretary of National Defense for Civilian Relations.
2. Moro National Liberation Front, led by Mr. Nur Misuari Chief of the Front.

And with the participation of the representatives of the Quadripartite Ministerial Commission:

The Libyan Arab Republic - represented by Dr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia - H.E. Salah Abdalla El-Fadl, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Libyan Arab Republic.

The Republic of Senegal - Mr. Abubakar Othman Si, Representative of the Republic of Senegal and Charge d'Affairs of Senegal in Cairo.

Democratic Republic of Somalia, Libyan Arab Republic.

With the aid of H.E. Dr. Amadou Karim Gaye, Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Conference, and a delegation from the Secretariat General of the Conference composed of Mr. Qasim Zuheri, Assistant Secretary General, and Mr. Aref Ben Musa, Director of Political Department.

During these negotiations which were marked by a spirit of conciliation and understanding, it has been agreed on the following:

First: The establishment of Autonomy in the Southern Philippines within the realm of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of the **Philippines**.

Second: The areas of the autonomy for the Muslims in the Southern Philippines shall comprise the following:

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Basilan | 8. Sultan Kudarat |
| 2. Sulu | 9. Lanao del Norte |
| 3. Tawi-tawi | 10. Lanao del Sur |
| 4. Zamboanga del Sur | 11. Davao del Sur |
| 5. Zamboanga del Norte | 12. South Cotabato |
| 6. North Cotabato | 13. Palawan |
| 7. Maguindanao | |

Third:

1. Foreign Policy shall be of the competence of the Central Government of the Philippines.
2. The National Defense Affairs shall be the concern of the Central Authority provided that the arrangements for the joining of the forces of the Moro National Liberation Front with the Philippine Armed Forces be discussed later.
3. In the areas of the autonomy, the Muslims shall have the right to set up their own Courts which implement the Islamic Shari'ah laws. The Muslims shall be represented in all Courts including the Supreme Court. The representation of the Muslims in the Supreme Court shall be upon the recommendation from the authorities of the Autonomy and the Supreme Court. Decrees will be issued by the President of the Republic of their appointments taking into consideration all necessary qualifications of the candidates.
4. Authorities of the autonomy in the South of the Philippines shall have the right to set up schools, colleges and universities, provided that matters pertaining to the relationship between these educational and scientific organs and the general education system in the state shall be subject of discussion later on.
5. The Muslims shall have their own administrative system in compliance with the objectives of the autonomy and its institutions. The relationship between this administrative system and the Central administrative system to be discussed later.
6. The authorities of the autonomy in the South of the Philippines shall have their own economic and financial system. The relationship between this system and the Central economic and financial system of the State shall be discussed later.

7. The authorities of the autonomy in the South of the Philippines shall enjoy the right of representation and participation in the Central Government and in all other organs of the State. The number of representatives and ways of participation shall be fixed later.
8. Special Regional Security Forces are to be set up in the area of the Autonomy for the Muslims in the South of the Philippines. The relationship between these forces and the Central security forces shall be fixed later.
9. A Legislative Assembly and an Executive Council shall be formed in the areas of the Autonomy for the Muslims. The setting up of the Legislative Assembly shall be constituted through a direct election, and the formation of the Executive Council shall take place through appointments by the Legislative Assembly. A decree for their formation shall be enacted by the President of the Republic respectively. The number of members of each assembly shall be determined later on.
10. Mines and mineral resources fall within the competence of the Central Government, and a reasonable percentage deriving from the revenues of the mines and minerals be fixed for the benefit of the areas of the autonomy.
11. A Mixed Committee shall be composed of representatives of the Central Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the representatives of the Moro National Liberation Front. The Mixed Committee shall meet in Tripoli during the period from the Fifth of February to a date not later than the Third of March 1977. The task of said Committee shall be charged to study in detail the points left for discussion in order to reach a solution thereof in conformity with the provisions of this agreement.
12. Cease-fire shall be declared immediately after the signature of this agreement, provided that its coming into effect should not exceed the 20th January 1977. A Joint Committee shall be composed of the two parties with the help of the Organization of the Islamic Conference represented by the Quadripartite Ministerial Commission to supervise the implementation of the cease-fire.

The said Joint Committee shall also be charged with supervising the following:

- a. A complete amnesty in the areas of the autonomy and the renunciation of all legal claims and codes resulting from events which took place in the South of the Philippines.
 - b. The release of all the political prisoners who had relations with the events in the South of the Philippines.
 - c. The return of all refugees who have abandoned their areas in the South of the Philippines.
 - d. To guarantee the freedom of movements and meetings.
13. A joint meeting be held in Jeddah during the first week of the month of March 1977 to initial what has been concluded by the Committee referred to in Para. 11.
 14. The final agreement concerning the setting up of the autonomy referred to in the first and second paragraphs shall be signed in the City of Manila, Republic of the Philippines, between the Government of the Philippines and Moro National Liberation Front, and the Islamic Conference represented by the Quadripartite Ministerial Commission and the Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Conference.
 15. Immediately after the signature of the Agreement in Manila, a Provisional Government shall be established in the areas of the autonomy to be appointed by the President of the Philippines; and be charged with the task of preparing for the elections of the Legislative Assembly in the territories of the Autonomy; and administer the areas in accordance with the provisions of this agreement until a Government is formed by the elected Legislative Assembly.
 16. The Government of the Philippines shall take all necessary constitutional processes for the implementation of the entire Agreement.

Fourth: This Agreement shall come into force with effect from the date of its signature.

Done in the City of Tripoli on 2nd Muharram 1397 H. corresponding to 23rd December 1976 A.D. in three original copies in Arabic, English, French languages, all equal in legal power.

For the Government of the Republic of the Philippines:

Hon. Carmelo Z. Barbero

Undersecretary of National Defense for Civilian Relations

For the Moro National Liberation Front:

Professor Nur Misuari

Chairman of the Front

Dr. Ali Abdusaalam Treki

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Libyan Arab Republic and
Chairman of the Negotiations

Dr. Amadou Karim Gaye

Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference

Appendix E

Jeddah Accord January 3-4, 1987

Joint Statements of the Philippine Government and the MNLF Panels

The two panels agreed to continue discussion of the proposal for the grant of full autonomy to Mindanao, Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Palawan subject to democratic processes.

In the meantime, the MNLF panel proposes that President Corazon C. Aquino will issue an executive order suspending pertinent provisions of the draft constitution on the grant of autonomy to Muslim Mindanao in the scheduled plebiscite on February 2, 1987, to allow the MNLF to undertake democratic consultations with the people of Mindanao and its islands, and that the Philippine Government panel shall present this proposal to President Aquino for her approval.

MNLF Panel

Philippine Government Panel

NUR MISUARI
Chairman

AQUILINO PIMENTEL, JR.
Chairman

Witnessed by:

S. S. PIRZADA
Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference

OIC Headquarters,
Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,
January 3, 1987

Summary of the points taken up in the meeting between the Philippine and the MNLF Panels held at the Organization of the Islamic Conference Headquarters, Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on January 3, 1987

The two panels have taken up the following points:

1. The substantive part of the talks will be held in Manila, Zamboanga or any other place in the Philippines mutually acceptable to both parties. For this purpose, a joint commission composed of three members from each side shall be created to discuss and draft the mechanics and details of the proposal to grant full autonomy to Mindanao, Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Palawan. The Joint Commission is tasked to do everything possible to complete its work within ninety (90) days from February 9, 1987.
2. The provincial committees shall be created to monitor and implement the observance of the agreement on the cessation of hostilities between the Philippine Government and the MNLF.
3. The MNLF proposed some form of reorganization involving certain political and governmental institutions to enhance a conducive atmosphere for further talks. The MNLF proposed that an Executive Order be immediately issued for this purpose.
4. The Philippine and the MNLF Panels agreed to propose the immediate formulation and implementation of a comprehensive economic and social development program in priority areas mutually agreed upon.
5. Both panels agreed to jointly pursue the dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information regarding the Bangsamoro issue as part of the vital pursuit of democratic processes in arriving at a just and lasting solution to the Bangsamoro problem.
6. The Philippine panel agreed to exercise its best efforts to provide a secure and peaceful atmosphere to enable the MNLF to undertake consultations with the component peoples in the proposed area of autonomy.
7. The Philippine panel likewise agreed to propose to the authorities of the Republic of the Philippines to provide security to the three-man representative of the MNLF Panel to the Joint Commission referred to in Paragraph 1, above, and to their staff

in the discharge of their duties as members of the Joint Commission. Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, January 3, 1987.

MNLF Panel

By

NUR MISUARI

Chairman

Philippine Government Panel

By:

AQUILINO PIMENTEL, JR.

Chairman

JOSEPH B. BANGHULOT

Member

AGAPITO A. AQUINO

Member

Joint Statement of the MNLF and the Philippine Government Panels

The two panels met in the evening of January 3, 1987 at the Headquarters of the Organization of Islamic Conference in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and agreed to:

1. create a Joint Commission which will discuss and draft the mechanism and details of the proposal for the grant of full autonomy to Mindanao, Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Palawan subject to democratic processes. The Joint Commission shall be composed of three members from each panel and shall initially meet in Manila on February 9, 1987. It shall endeavor to complete its work within 90 days from said date;
2. create provincial committees to monitor and implement the observance of the agreement on the cessation of hostilities between the Philippine government and the MNLF; and
3. propose the immediate formulation and implementation of a comprehensive economic and social development program in priority areas mutually agreed upon.

Both panels express their sincere gratitude and appreciation to King Fahd Ibn Abdul Aziz, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, for graciously allowing this meeting to be held in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The MNLF Panel hereby conveys its heartfelt gratitude to Her Excellency, President Corazon C. Aquino of the Republic of the Philippines, for sincerely addressing the aspirations of the Bangsamoro people and for sending a Philippine panel most suitable for this delicate negotiations.

The panels also wish to thank the Organization of Islamic Conference, thru its Secretary-General H.E. Syed Shariffuddin Pirzada, for continuing

to provide its good offices in assisting the parties in their efforts to achieve a peaceful and lasting solution to the Bangsamoro problem.

Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, January 4, 1987.

MNLF Panel

By:

NUR MISUARI

Chairman

Philippine Government Panel

By:

AQUILINO PIMENTEL, JR.

Chairman

Appendix F

**Program of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines
Ratified by the First National Conference of the
National Democratic Front of the Philippines
July 1 – 7, 1994**

The Twelve Points of the NDF Program

1. Unite the people for the task of overthrowing the semicolonial and semifeudal system through a people's war and completing the national democratic revolution.
2. Prepare the way for the establishment of a people's democratic republic and a democratic coalition government.
3. Strengthen the people's army and a defense system.
4. Uphold and promote the people's democratic rights.
5. Terminate all unequal relations with the United States and all other imperialist powers and other foreign entities.
6. Implement a genuine agrarian reform, program, promote agricultural cooperation, develop rural production and employment through modernization of agricultural and rural industrialization, and ensure agricultural sustainability.
7. Dismantle the dominance of the US and other imperialists and the big comprador-landlords over the economy, implement a program of national industrialization, and ensure an independent and self-reliant economy.
8. Implement a comprehensive and progressive social program.
9. Promote a national and progressive people's culture.
10. Uphold the rights of the Bangsa Moro and Cordillera peoples and other indigenous peoples to self-determination and democracy.
11. Advance the revolutionary emancipation of women in all spheres.
12. Adopt an active, independent and peaceful foreign policy.

10. Uphold the rights of the Bangsa Moro and the Cordillera peoples and other indigenous peoples to self-determination and democracy.

For more than three hundred years of Spanish colonial rule, the people in southern and central Mindanao who have come to be known as the Bangsa Moro, the peoples of the Cordillera mountain range and other indigenous peoples living in mountainous and hilly areas waged a heroic and sustained resistance to colonialism and imperialism. It took the superior might of US imperialism to subdue them by force of arms and draw them into the ambit of colonial rule by bribing and coopting many of their leaders and undermining their system of livelihood and traditional institutions. But these compatriots of ours have managed to continue their resistance in various ways, repeatedly rising in revolts and preserving a distinct culture. Under the puppet neocolonial republic, the local ruling classes and their US masters marginalized these compatriots even further and treated them as inferior peoples. They became victims of institutionalized discrimination and oppression, massive landgrabbing and widespread armed terror and abuse. The Marcos fascist dictatorship multiplied these crimes a hundred times over by acts of genocide against the Moro people and wide-scale dispossession of the Cordillera people and other indigenous peoples of their ancestral lands.

The Moro people fought back, launching one uprising after another – an armed resistance which rapidly developed into a full-blown revolutionary struggle for self-determination. The Cordillera peoples likewise rose in armed resistance, which they integrated into the revolutionary struggles of the entire Filipino people. Other indigenous peoples joined the national democratic struggle.

The NDF upholds the right of the Bangsa Moro, the Cordillera peoples and other indigenous peoples to self-determination. They have the right to decide their own destiny, to free themselves from national exploitation, chauvinism and discrimination, to achieve democracy, to rule themselves and to pursue social progress in an all-round way and in accordance with their specific conditions.

This principled stand is in line with the NDF's aspiration to build a Philippines where there is unity, equality and brotherhood of all peoples and nationalities and to forge a nation that is founded upon real independence from imperialism, democracy for the people, and genuine autonomy for the Bangsa Moro, the Cordillera peoples and other indigenous peoples.

The right to self-determination includes the right to secede, more so under conditions of national oppression. The Bangsa Moro had raised the banner of secession in its struggle against the US-Marcos dictatorship. Under a democratic Philippines where the equality of peoples and nationalities is guaranteed, the Bangsa Moro is urged to take the valid and viable option of a genuinely autonomous political rule.

Upon its establishment, the people's democratic government shall affirm the right to self-determination of the Bangsa Moro, the Cordillera peoples and other indigenous peoples. It shall guarantee them genuine autonomous rule and rightful representation and participation in the central government. It shall resolve their claims to ancestral lands with due recognition of historical realities and shall redress their long standing grievances. It shall guarantee them equal political, economic and social rights as well as respect for their way of life.

Genuine autonomy would mean authentic and full guarantees for self-governance within the framework of the people's democratic republic of the Philippines, a structure of government that ensures full participation and decisive say by the people of the autonomous areas on all matters affecting their lives, recognition of their right to ancestral land, priority in employment and economic opportunities, returns from the economic development of their areas mainly accruing to them to hasten their social progress, and respect for their tradition and culture. Outside the autonomous areas, they shall be entitled to significant representation in the national people's congress and to proportional representation in organs of power in Mindanao at various levels. The social, legal, religious and cultural traditions of the Bangsa Moro, the Cordillera peoples and other indigenous peoples shall be respected. At the same time, they shall be encouraged to interact with the richly diverse cultures in the Philippines. The historical, social and religious ties of the Bangsa Moro with their Islamic brethren abroad shall likewise be respected.

The central government shall help the autonomous areas and people therein to develop according to their decisions and specific conditions. It shall give them all the necessary support to enable them to advance and progress together with the rest of the nation.

Source:

http://ndfp.net/joomla/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=42&Itemid=60&limit=1&limitstart=10

Appendix G

In the Name of God, the Omnipotent, the Merciful Peace Agreement

The final agreement on the implementation of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) with the participation of the Organization of Islamic Conference Ministerial Committee of Six and the Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Conference.

Whereas, the President of the Republic of the Philippines, His Excellency Fidel V. Ramos, has pursued a peaceful settlement of the armed conflict under the principle of peace with honor and to serve the paramount ends of national unity, solidarity and progress for all Filipinos;

Whereas, the MNLF, led by Professor Nur Misuari, inspired by their quest for peace and prosperity, had in the past asserted the right of the Moro people to freely determine their political status and freely pursue their religious, social, economic and cultural development;

Whereas, the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), upon the request of the GRP initiated the First Formal Peace Talks between the GRP and the MNLF during its Third Ministerial Conference in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which resulted in the signing of the Tripoli Agreement on December 23, 1976, the document which served as a basis for a just, lasting, honorable and comprehensive solution to the problem in Southern Philippines within the framework of the Philippine Constitution;

Whereas, by the Grace of the Almighty God and owing to the bold and innovative initiative of the Philippine Government, under H.E. President Fidel V. Ramos, and the dedication and perseverance of his duly appointed representatives, headed by the Presidential Adviser for the Peace Process Manuel T. Yan, coupled with the highly positive and laudable response of the MNLF leadership under its founding Chairman, H.E. Professor Nur Misuari, a peace process has been conducted and pursued successfully for the last four (4) years, with the most constructive and beneficial participation of the OIC Ministerial Committee of the Six,

headed by its distinguished Chairman, H.E. Ali Alatas, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, and his four (4) able assistants as facilitators of the talks, namely: H.E. Ambassador S. Wiryono, H.E. Dr. Hassan Wirajuda, H.E. Ambassador Pieter Damanik, and H.E. Ambassador Abu Hartono, and the OIC Secretary General, H.E. Hamid Algabid, and his deputy, H.E. Ambassador Mohammed Mohsin, and with special mention to Libyan Ambassador, H.E. Rajab Azzarouq;

Whereas, the parties acknowledge the valuable role of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) in promoting and upholding the rights, welfare and well-being of Muslims all over the world;

Whereas, the parties likewise, acknowledge the role of the OIC Ministerial Committee of the Six comprising the nations of Indonesia as Chair, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Senegal and Somalia in the search of a just, comprehensive and durable peace in Southern Philippines;

Whereas, in accordance with the Statement of Understanding signed in Tripoli, Libya on October 3, 1992 and the subsequent Statement of Understanding signed in Cipanas, West Java on April 14, 1993, the parties agreed, through the good offices of the Great Libyan Arab Jamahiriyyah, inspired and guided by its great leader, H.E. Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, the Government of the Republic of Indonesia under the wise and able leadership of H.E. Bapah President Suharto, and H.E. OIC Secretary General, Dr. Hamid Algabid, to hold formal peace talks to discuss the modalities for the full implementation of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement in letter and spirit; to include those portions of the Agreement left for further discussion and the transitional implementing structure and mechanism;

Whereas, the parties affirm their solemn commitment in the aforementioned Statement of Understanding as well as the Memorandum of Agreement signed in the 1st Round of Formal Peace Talks held in Jakarta, Indonesia on October 25-November 7, 1993; the Interim Agreement signed in the 2nd Round of Formal Peace Talks held in Jakarta on September 1-5, 1994; the Interim Agreement signed in the 3rd Round of Formal Peace Talks held in Jakarta on November 27-December 1, 1995; the Interim Agreement signed in the 4th Round of Formal Peace Talks held in Jakarta on August 29, 1996; and in the nine (9) meetings of the Mixed Committee held in various places and dates in the Philippines and Indonesia;

Whereas, all these agreements resulted from the consensus points reached by the Mixed Committee and the Support Committees (Support Committee No. 1 - National Defense and Security; Support Committee No. 2 - Education; Support Committee No. 3 - Economic and Financial System, Mines and Minerals; Support Committee No. 4 - Administrative System, Right of Representation and Participation in the National Government, and in all Organs of the State; Support Committee No. 5 - Shariah and the Judiciary; and the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Transitional Implementing Structure and Mechanism in meetings held in various places in the Philippines and Indonesia;

Whereas, the parties have rationalized and consolidated all the agreements and consensus points reached, with the assistance of the Mixed Committee and the various support committees established for the purpose, into a final peace agreement;

Whereas, the parties affirm the sovereignty, territorial integrity and the Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines; and

Whereas, this final peace agreement constitutes the full implementation of the Tripoli Agreement.

Now therefore, the Parties do Hereby Agree on the Following:

I. Implementing Structure and Mechanism of this Agreement

1. Phase I shall cover a three (3) year period starting after the signing of the peace agreement with the issuance of Executive Order establishing the Special Zone of Peace and Development (SZOPAD), the Southern Philippine Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD), and the Consultative Assembly. During this phase, the process of the joining in of MNLF elements with the Armed Forces of the Philippines will start. The joining in of MNLF elements with the PNP as part of the regular police recruitment program will also take place in this phase.
2. Phase II shall involve an amendment to or repeal of the Organic Act (RA 6734) of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) through Congressional action, after which the amendatory law shall be submitted to the people of the concerned areas in a plebiscite to determine the establishment of a new autonomous government and the specific area of autonomy thereof.

- a. While peace and development programs are being implemented in the SZOPAD, a bill to amend or repeal the RA 6734 shall be initiated within Phase I (1996-1997). The bill shall include the pertinent provisions of the final Peace Agreement and the expansion of the present ARMM area of autonomy. After a law shall have been passed by Congress and approved by the President, it shall be submitted to the people for approval in a plebiscite in the affected areas, within two (2) years from the establishment of the SPCPD (1998).
- b. The new area of autonomy shall then be determined by the provinces and cities that will vote/choose to join the said autonomy (1998). It may be provided by the Congress in a law that clusters of contiguous Muslim-dominated municipalities voting in favor of autonomy be merged and constituted into a new province(s) which shall become part of the new Autonomous Region.

II. The Transitional Period (Phase I)

Phase I shall be implemented as follows:

3. There shall be established a Special Zone of Peace and Development in the Southern Philippines (SZOPAD) covering the provinces of Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte, North Cotabato, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Davao del Sur, South Cotabato, Sarangani and Palawan and the cities of Cotabato, Dapitan, Dipolog, General Santos, Iligan, Marawi, Pagadian, Zamboanga and Puerto Princesa. Within the next three (3) years, these areas shall be the focus of intensive peace and development efforts. Public and private investments shall be channeled to these areas to spur economic activities and uplift the conditions of the people therein.
4. There shall be established a Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD), composed of one (1) Chairman, one (1) Vice Chairman and three (3) Deputies, one each representing the Muslims, the Christians, and the Cultural Communities. They shall be appointed by the President.

5. The SPCPD shall be assisted by the Darul Iftah (advisory Council) which shall be created by the Chairman of the SPCPD.
6. The local government units in the area including the ARMM, shall continue to exist and exercise their functions in accordance with existing laws.
7. Appropriate agencies of the government that are engaged in peace and development activities in the area, such as but not limited to the Southern Philippines Development Authority (SPDA), shall be placed under the control and/or supervision of the Council as its implementing agencies to ensure that peace and development projects and programs are effectively accomplished. Based on the foregoing, the following agencies or entities will be placed under the control and/or supervision of the SPCPD, to wit
 - a. The Southern Philippines Development Authority (SPDA) may be attached to the SPCPD and be placed under the latter's direct supervision insofar as SPDA offices and projects in the SZOPAD are concerned. The SPCPD can exercise a further degree of control over SPDA by allowing the Council to submit recommendees to the President for appointment as officials of SPDA;
 - b. The Regional and Field Offices of the Office of Muslim Affairs (OMA) which are situated and operating within the Special Zone of Peace and Development (SZOPAD), shall be placed under the direct supervision of SPCPD, provided that the coordination, linkages and complementation between the central OMA and SPCPD shall be defined by a Presidential issuance;
 - c. The Regional and Field Offices of the Office of Southern Cultural Communities (OSCC) which are situated and operating within the Special Zone of Peace and Development (SZOPAD), shall be placed under the direct supervision of SPCPD, provided that the coordination, linkages and complementation between the central OSCC and SPCPD shall be defined by a Presidential issuance;

- d. Task Force Basilan, which shall be reorganized into the Basilan Development Task Force, to undertake development activities in Basilan shall be placed under the control and supervision of SPCPD;
- e. Task Force MALMAR, to be reorganized into the Central Mindanao Development Task Force, to undertake development activities in Central Mindanao shall be placed under the control and supervision of SPCPD;
- f. Sulu Development Task Force Ñ an interagency task force that shall be organized to undertake development projects in Sulu shall be placed under the control and supervision of SPCPD; and
- g. Special Development Planning Group Ñ this is an ad hoc body composed of staff officers and planning experts from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and other concerned agencies which could be organized to support directly the staff planning requirements, shall be placed under SPCPD.

The foregoing enumeration of agencies or entities shall not preclude the President from exercising his power or discretion to delegate, subject to existing laws, certain powers or functions to the SPCPD, or to place other agencies or entities under the control and/or supervision of the latter.

- 8. The SPCPD, in consultation with the Consultative Assembly, utilizing the funds from the National Government, shall monitor, promote and coordinate the development efforts in the area, including the attraction of foreign investment, especially from OIC member countries and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).
- 9. The powers and functions of the SPCPD and the Consultative Assembly are derivative and extension of the powers of the President. The powers referred to here are only those powers of the President that could be delegated under the Constitution and existing laws.

10. There shall be established a Consultative Assembly with 81 members composed of the following:
 - a. The Chairman of the SPCPD shall be the head and presiding officer of the Assembly;
 - b. The Governor and the Vice Governor of the ARMM, the 14 Governors of the provinces and the 9 City Mayors in the SZOPAD;
 - c. 44 members from the MNLF; and
 - d. 11 members from various sectors recommended by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and people's organizations (POs).
11. The Consultative Assembly shall exercise the following functions and powers:
 - a. To serve as a forum for consultation and ventilation of issues and concerns;
 - b. To conduct public hearings as may be necessary and to provide appropriate advice to the SPCPD; and
 - c. To formulate and recommend policies to the President through the Chairman of the SPCPD and make rules and regulations to the extent necessary for the effective and efficient administration of the affairs of the area.
12. The OIC shall be requested to continue to extend its assistance and good offices in monitoring the full implementation of this agreement during the transitional period until the regular autonomous government is firmly established and for this purpose, help generate broad international support for the Zone of Peace and Development.
13. A Joint Monitoring Committee composed of members coming from the GRP and the MNLF, with the help of the OIC, shall continue to meet to review and identify agreements that can be immediately implemented, and monitor the implementation of this Agreement during Phase I.
14. The provisions of the 1994 and 1995 Interim Agreements and subsequent agreements entered into by the GRP and the MNLF that would not require legislative action shall be implemented during Phase I.

15. The funds for the operations of the Council and the Assembly shall be initially sourced from the funds of the Office of the President. Funding for development programs and projects shall come from the appropriations of Congress as may be drawn from the General Appropriations Act. A supplementary budget for the year 1996 will be recommended to Congress for the purpose.
16. The term of the SPCPD and the Consultative Assembly shall be for a period of three years and may be extended by the President upon recommendation of the Council itself.
17. The term of office of the SPCPD and the Assembly shall coincide with the three-year term of office of the officials of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) elected in 1996.
18. The powers and functions of the Council shall be as follows:
 - a. To take charge in promoting, monitoring and coordinating the improvement of peace and order in the area;
 - b. To focus on peace and development efforts more particularly in the depressed areas and cause the implementation of peace and development projects;
 - c. To provide support to local government units as necessary;
 - d. To exercise such other powers and functions necessary for the effective implementation of its mandate as may be delegated by the President;
 - e. To assist in the preparation for the holding of elections, referenda or plebiscite and people's initiative in the area as may be duly deputized by the Commission on Elections (COMELEC);
 - f. To cause the creation of such offices or instrumentalities as shall be necessary for the effective and efficient administration of the affairs of the areas. There shall be approval from the Office of the President for budgetary purposes.
19. The joining of the MNLF elements with the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Provision of Security Protection for Certain

Officials of the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development:

- a. During the transitional phase (Phase I), there shall be a program or process to allow the joining of MNLF elements into the PNP and to be part of the PNP in accordance with guidelines and procedures under existing laws. The Philippine Government shall allocate one thousand five hundred (1,500) PNP vacancies for this purpose to be filled up by MNLF elements during the transition period, and another two hundred fifty (250) items for special or auxiliary services.
- b. The processing of MNLF elements will start upon the establishment of the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD). The police training programs to be undergone by the joining MNLF elements shall be as prescribed by existing laws and regulations, and shall be conducted by the PNP.
- c. The concerned officials of the Council (e.g. the Chairman and his Deputies) shall be provided security and protective assistance by the national government, as the security situation warrants and as part of confidence-building measures. An AFP/PNP security detail shall be immediately and particularly assigned to the Council. This special AFP/PNP security detail shall be composed of former MNLF regulars who shall have been granted AFP or PNP appointments and duly integrated into the AFP or PNP. This security detail shall be of appropriate size in accordance with the needs of the situation, without prejudice to augmentation by regular AFP or PNP units as the need arises and in coordination with the AFP and PNP commanders concerned. This security detail which shall not be utilized for law enforcement, but solely for the security and protection of SPCPD officials concerned, shall conduct themselves in accordance with existing policies and regulations in order to prevent undue alarm to the population during movements of concerned officials.

- d. To have good coordination between the AFP and PNP on the one hand and the SPCPD on the other, a liaison system will be set up composed of the AFP, PNP and SPCPD senior officials.

20. The joining of the MNLF forces with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP):

- a. Five thousand seven hundred fifty (5,750) MNLF members shall be integrated into the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), 250 of whom shall be absorbed into the auxiliary services. The government shall exert utmost efforts to establish the necessary conditions that would ensure the eventual integration of the maximum number of the remaining MNLF forces into the Special Regional Security Force (SRSF) and other agencies and instrumentalities of the government. There shall be a special socioeconomic, cultural and educational program to cater to MNLF forces not absorbed into the AFP, PNP and the SRSF to prepare them and their families for productive endeavors, provide for educational, technical skills and livelihood training and give them priority for hiring in development projects.
- b. In the beginning, the MNLF forces will join as units distinct from AFP units. They will be initially organized into separate units within a transition period, until such time that mutual confidence is developed as the members of these separate units will be gradually integrated into regular AFP units deployed in the area of the autonomy. Subject to existing laws, policies, rules and regulations, the appropriate authorities shall waive the requirements and qualifications for entry of MNLF forces into the AFP.
- c. One from among the MNLF will assume the functions and responsibilities of a Deputy Commander of the Southern Command, AFP, for separate units that will be organized out of the MNLF forces joining the AFP. The Deputy Commander will assist the Commander of the Southern Command, AFP in the command,

administration and control of such separate units throughout the aforementioned transition period. The Deputy Commander will be given an appointment commensurate to his position and shall be addressed as such.

- d. The government recognizes the skills, capabilities and achievements of the MNLF and its capacity to develop its members for the highest echelons of military and civilian leadership. The ranks and grades of MNLF forces joining AFP shall be subject to the decision of the President in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief of the AFP along the principles of universality, nondiscrimination, equity and preferential treatment for the poor and underprivileged.
- e. The government shall take affirmative measures to continually improve the capabilities of those MNLF forces joining the AFP to enhance their opportunities for professional advancement in the military service. It shall undertake initiatives to provide professional training and military schooling in foreign countries to former MNLF members absorbed into the AFP in consonance with the education and training programs with the AFP.
- f. All other matters regarding the joining of MNLF forces into the AFP not expressly covered by this Agreement shall be prescribed by the President in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief of the AFP.

III. The New Regional Autonomous Government (Phase II)

The following provisions shall be implemented after a law amending or repealing the Organic Act of ARMM shall have been enacted by Congress and approved by the people in the concerned areas in a plebiscite therefore. Accordingly, these provisions shall be recommended by the GRP to Congress for incorporation in the amendatory or repealing law.

A. Executive Council, Legislative Assembly, Administrative System and Representation in the National Government Executive Council

- 21. Executive power shall be vested in the Head of the regular Autonomous Government duly elected at large by direct vote of the people of the Autonomous Region. There shall also be a Vice

Head of the Regional Autonomous Government also elected in the same manner. The Head of the Regional Autonomous Government may appoint three (3) Deputies. The Head, the Vice-Head and the three (3) Deputies shall comprise the Executive Council of the area of Autonomy.

22. The President shall exercise general supervision over the Regional Autonomous Government and all local government units in the area of Autonomy through the Head of the Regional Autonomous Government to ensure that laws are faithfully executed. The Head of the Autonomous Government shall exercise general supervision over all local government units in the area of autonomy to ensure that national and regional laws are faithfully executed, and see to it that they act within their assigned powers and functions. Legislative Assembly
23. Legislative power shall be vested in the Regional Legislative Assembly.
24. The Legislative Assembly shall be composed of members elected by popular vote, with three (3) members elected from each of the Congressional Districts.
25. There shall be sectoral representatives in the Legislative Assembly whose number shall not exceed fifteen percent (15%) of the total number of elected Members of the Legislative Assembly coming from the labor, disabled, industrial, indigenous cultural communities, youth, women, non-government organizations, agricultural, and such other sectors as may be provided by Regional Law to be appointed by the Head of the Autonomous Government from among the nominees of the different sectoral groups; provided, however, that the youth representative shall not be less than 18 years of age nor more than 21 years of age at the time of his appointment.
26. The people's initiative, by way of a plebiscite or referendum, is recognized.
27. The Regional Legislative Assembly shall exercise legislative power for application in the area of autonomy except on the following matters, to wit:
 - a. Foreign Affairs;
 - b. National Defense and Security;

- c. Postal Service;
 - d. Coinage, and Fiscal and Monetary Policies;
 - e. Administration of Justice except on matters pertaining to Shari'ah;
 - f. Quarantine;
 - g. Customs and Tariff;
 - h. Citizenship;
 - i. Naturalization, Immigration and Deportation;
 - j. General Auditing, Civil Service and Elections;
 - k. Foreign Trade;
 - l. Maritime, Land and Air Transportation and Communications that affect areas outside the autonomous region; and
 - m. Patents, Trademarks, Trade names and Copyrights.
28. The Legislative Assembly may create, divide, merge, abolish or substantially alter boundaries of local government units in the area of autonomy in accordance with the criteria laid down by law subject to approval by a majority of the votes cast in a plebiscite called for the purpose in the political units affected. It may also change the names of such local government units, public places and institutions.
29. Any member of the Legislative Assembly who accepts an appointment and qualifies for any position in the Government, including government-owned-and/or controlled corporations or institutions and their subsidiaries, shall automatically forfeit his seat in the Legislative Assembly.
30. No member of the Legislative Assembly may personally appear as counsel before courts of justice or quasi-judicial and other administrative bodies. Neither shall he directly or indirectly, be interested financially in any contract with, or in any franchise or privilege granted by, the Government or any subdivision, agency or instrumentality thereof, including any government-owned-and/or-controlled corporation or its subsidiary, during his term of office. He shall not intervene in any matter before any office of the government for his pecuniary benefit or where he may be called upon to act on account of his office.

31. In case of vacancy in the Legislative Assembly occurring at least one year before the expiration of the term of office, a special election shall be called to fill the vacancy in the manner prescribed by law; provided that the member elected shall serve for the unexpired term.
32. The Legislative Assembly shall elect from among its members a Speaker and such other officers as the rules may provide. The Speaker shall appoint the personnel of the administrative organization of the Legislative Assembly.
33. The powers, functions, responsibilities and structure of the different Departments, agencies, bureaus, offices and instrumentalities of the regional government including regional government-owned-and-controlled corporations in the areas of the autonomy shall be prescribed and defined by the Regional Legislative Assembly.
34. No person shall be elected member of the Legislative Assembly unless he/she is:
 - a. A natural-born citizen of the Philippines;
 - b. At least 21 years of age on the day of elections;
 - c. Able to read and write;
 - d. A registered voter of the district in which he/she shall be elected on the day he/she files his/ her certificate of candidacy; and
 - e. A resident thereof for a period of no less than five years immediately preceding the day of election.
35. Every member of the Legislative Assembly shall take an oath or affirmation of allegiance to the Republic of the Philippines before taking his/her seat.
36. The Legislative Assembly shall adopt its own rules of procedure by a majority vote of all its Members including the selection of members of its standing committees and the suspension or expulsion of its Members.
37. A majority of all the Members of the Assembly shall constitute a quorum to do business, but a smaller number may adjourn from day-to-day and may compel the attendance of absent members in such manner, and under such penalties as the Assembly may provide.

38. The Legislative Assembly or any of its committees may conduct inquiries or public consultations in aid of legislation in accordance with its rules. The rights of persons appearing in or affected by such inquiries shall be respected.
39. The Legislative Assembly shall keep a Journal of its proceedings and a record of its caucuses and meetings. The records and books of account of the Assembly shall be preserved and be open to public scrutiny. The Commission on Audit shall publish an annual report of the itemized list of expenditures incurred by the Members of the Assembly within sixty (60) days from the end of every regular session.
40. The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly shall, within ten working days from approval thereof, submit to the President and to both Houses of Congress a certified true copy of all laws and resolutions approved by the Legislative Assembly.
41. No member shall be questioned or be held liable in any other place for any speech or debate in the Assembly or in any committee thereof.
42. The Chief Executive of the Autonomous Government shall approve the budget of the Autonomous Region. If, by the end of any fiscal year, the Legislative Assembly shall have failed to pass the regional appropriations bill for the ensuing fiscal year, the regional Appropriations Act for the preceding fiscal year shall be deemed automatically re-enacted and shall remain in force and effect until the regional appropriations bill is passed by the Legislative Assembly.
43. No provision or enactment shall be embraced in the regional appropriations bill unless it relates specifically to some particular appropriation therein. Any such provision or enactment shall be limited in its operation to the appropriation to which it relates.
44. The procedure in approving appropriations for the Legislative Assembly shall strictly follow the procedure for approving appropriations for other departments and agencies of the Regional Government.
45. A special appropriations bill shall specify the purpose for which it is intended, and shall be supported by funds actually available as certified by the Regional Treasurer, or to be raised by a corresponding revenue proposal therein.

46. Discretionary funds appropriated for particular offices shall be disturbed only for public purposes to be supported by appropriate vouchers and subject to such guidelines as may be prescribed by regional law.
47. All money collected on any regional tax levied for a special purpose shall be treated as a special fund and paid out for such special purpose only. If the purpose for which a special fund was created has been fulfilled or abandoned, the balance, if any, shall accrue to the general funds of the regional government.
48. Trust funds shall only be paid out of the regional treasury upon fulfillment of the specific purpose for which said funds were created or received.
49. Except as provided by its rules, the Legislative Assembly shall meet in open session. Regular session shall commence on the 4th Monday of April and shall continue to be in session for such number of days as may be determined by the Assembly until thirty (30) days before the opening of its next regular session.
50. The Legislative Assembly shall meet in special sessions at the request of one-third ($1/3$) of all its Members or by call of the Chief Executive. Such special sessions must be convened with specific agenda.
51. No bill shall become a law unless it has passed three (3) readings on separate days and printed copies thereof in its final form have been distributed to its Members three (3) days before its passage, except when the Chief Executive certifies to the necessity of its immediate enactment to meet a public calamity or emergency.
52. Every bill passed by the Legislative Assembly shall, before it becomes a law, be presented to the Chief Executive. If he approves the same, he shall sign it, otherwise, he shall veto it and return it with his objections to the Legislative Assembly, which shall enter the objections at large in its journal and proceed to consider it. If, after such reconsideration, two-thirds ($2/3$) of all the Members of the Legislative Assembly shall agree to pass the bill, it shall become a law. In all such cases, the veto shall be determined by yeas and nays, and the names of the members voting for or against shall be entered in the journal. The Chief Executive shall communicate his veto of any bill to the

Legislative Assembly within thirty (30) days after the receipt thereof; otherwise, it shall become a law as if he had signed it.

53. The Legislative Assembly may request the presence of the Chief Executive, Vice- Chief Executive, Cabinet members or their deputies, as the rules shall provide, for questioning on matters falling within the scope of their assigned powers and functions.
54. Subject to the rules of the Legislative Assembly, the legislative power to inquire on matters relating to the exercise of administrative functions by an agency of government within the Autonomous Region shall be in the form of written questions.
55. The Chief Executive shall submit to the Legislative Assembly not later than two (2) months before the beginning of every regular session, as the basis of the regional appropriations bill, a budget of expenditures and sources of financing, including receipts from existing and proposed revenue measures.
56. The fiscal year of the Autonomous Region shall cover the period January 1 to December 31 of the same year.
57. The Legislative Assembly may not increase the appropriations recommended by the Chief Executive for the operation of the Autonomous Government as specified in the budget. The form, content and manner of preparation of the budget shall be prescribed by regional law; provided, however, that pending the enactment of such regional law, the budgeting process shall be governed by existing national laws and rules and regulations prescribed by the Department of Budget and Management.
58. The Chief Executive shall have the power to veto any particular item or items in an appropriation or revenue bill, but the veto shall not affect the item or items to which he does not object. The veto may be reconsidered by the Assembly by a vote of two thirds (2/3) of all its Members.
59. The financial accounts of the expenditures and revenues of the Autonomous Region shall be audited by the Commission on Audit.
60. No money shall be paid out of the Regional Treasury except in pursuance of an appropriation made by regional law.

61. No regional law shall be passed authorizing any transfer of appropriations; however, the Chief Executive, the Speaker of the Assembly, and the Presiding Justice of the highest Shariah Court may, by law, be authorized to augment any item in the Regional General Appropriation Law for their respective offices from savings in other items of their respective appropriations.
Administrative System
62. The Regional Autonomous Government shall have the power to enact its own Regional Administrative Code and Regional Local Government Code consistent with national laws and the Constitution provided that it shall not in any way diminish the powers and functions already enjoyed by Local Government Units. Right of Representation and Participation in the National Government and in all Organs of the State
General Principles:
 63. Representation in the National Government by the inhabitants of the Autonomous Region may be effected through appointment or elections and must be subject to standards and guidelines prescribed for the position. When representation is done by appointment, the inhabitants of the Autonomous Region will be appointed by the President of the Philippines to herein specified positions which are policy determining, highly technical, primarily confidential and supervisory upon recommendation by the Head of the Autonomous Government.
 64. Right of representation shall not be construed in such a way that applicants from the Autonomous Region, especially Muslims, and Cultural Communities, for lower positions in the above organs of the government cannot be appointed anymore thereto.
Manner of Representation and Participation Executive
 65. It shall be policy of the National Government that there shall be at least one (1) member of the Cabinet (with the rank of Department Secretary) who is an inhabitant of the Autonomous Region to be recommended by the Head of the Autonomous Government.
 66. It shall likewise be a policy that there shall be at least one (1) official in each of the departments and the constitutional bodies of the national government who shall be appointed in executive, primarily confidential, highly technical policy-determining

positions, from among the inhabitants of the Autonomous Region upon recommendation by the Head of the Autonomous Government. The Head of the Autonomous Government shall participate as ex-officio member of the National Security Council on all matters concerning the Autonomous Region and such other matters as may be determined by the President.

67. Government-Owned and Controlled Corporations (GOCCs) or institutions and their subsidiaries in the area of autonomy: where Government-Owned and Controlled Corporations (GOCCs) are operating mainly or with a subsidiary in the area of autonomy, as a policy, the Regional Autonomous Government shall be given some representations in the Board of Directors or in the policy-making body of said GOCCs or their subsidiaries consistent with their respective charters.

Legislative

68. It shall be the policy of the National Government that the Regional Autonomous Government shall have one (1) representative in Congress as a Sectoral Representative. This is aside from the representatives/congressmen elected from the congressional districts located in the autonomous region.

Judicial

69. It shall be a policy of the National Government that at least one (1) justice in the Supreme Court and at least two (2) in the Court of Appeals shall come from the Autonomous Region. For this purpose, the Head of the Autonomous Government may submit the names of his recommendees to the Judicial and Bar Council for consideration. This is without prejudice to the appointment of qualified inhabitants of the Autonomous Region to other positions in the judiciary in accordance with their merits and qualifications.
70. The GRP shall endeavor to cause the appointment, as a member of the Judicial and Bar Council, a qualified person to be recommended by the Head of the Regional Autonomous Government.

71. The GRP shall request the Supreme Court to create the Office of the Deputy Court Administrator for the Area of Autonomy, and to appoint thereto a qualified person recommended by the Head of the Regional Autonomous Government.

Civil Service Eligibilities

72. The civil service eligibility requirements for appointment to government position shall be applicable in the Autonomous Government. As necessary, the Civil Service Commission shall hold special civil service examinations in the region to further increase the number of eligible therein. For a period not longer than five (5) years from the establishment of the Regional Autonomous Government, the GRP will endeavor to provide for appropriate civil service eligibility to applicants in the Autonomous Region, provided, the minimum educational qualifications for the position are met.

B. The Establishment of the Special Regional Security Force for the Autonomous Region (Phase II of the Implementation of the Tripoli Agreement) General Principles

73. When the new regular Autonomous Regional Government shall have been established, there shall be created or constituted a PNP Regional Command for the new Autonomous Region, which shall be the Special Regional Security Forces (SRSF) as referred to in Paragraph 8, Article III of the Tripoli Agreement.
74. The Regional Legislative Assembly may enact laws governing the PNP Regional Command for the Autonomous Region/SRSF consistent with the constitutional provision that there shall be one police force in the country which is national in scope and civilian in character.
75. The PNP Regional Command for the Autonomous Region/SRSF shall be composed of the existing PNP units in the area of autonomy, the MNLF elements and other residents of the area who may later on be recruited into the force.
76. The powers and functions of the PNP Regional Command for the Autonomous Region/SRSF, which shall be exercised within the

territories covered by the Regional Autonomous Government (RAG), shall be the following:

- a. Enforce all laws and ordinances relative to the protection of lives and properties;
 - b. Maintain peace and order and take all necessary steps to ensure public safety;
 - c. Investigate and prevent crimes, effect the arrest of criminal offenders, bring offenders to justice and assist in their prosecution;
 - d. Exercise the general powers to make arrest, search and seizure in accordance with the Constitution and pertinent laws;
 - e. Detain and arrest a person for a period not beyond what is prescribed by law, informing the person so detained of all his rights under the Constitution and observing the inherent human rights of the citizens; and
 - f. Perform such other duties and exercise all other functions as may be provided by law.
77. The PNP Regional Command for the Autonomous Region/SRSF shall be charged with the maintenance and preservation of peace, law and order, and protection of life, liberty and property in the region in consonance with the Constitution. Organization of the PNP Regional Command for the Autonomous Region/SRSF
 78. It shall be civilian in nature or character.
 79. It shall be regional in scope of operations.
 80. It shall be headed by a Regional Director who shall be assisted by two (2) Deputies, one (1) for Administration and one (1) for Operations.
 81. It shall have regional, provincial, and city or municipal offices.
 82. At the provincial level, there shall be a provincial office, headed by a Provincial Director.
 83. At the city or municipal level, there shall be an office/station which shall be headed by a Chief of Police. Powers of the Head of the Regional Autonomous Government over the PNP Regional Command for the Autonomous Region/SRSF

84. Act as the Deputy of the National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) in the region and shall be the ex-officio Chairman of the Regional Police Commission (REPOLCOM).
85. Exercise operational control and general supervision and disciplinary powers.
86. Employ/deploy the elements of the Regional Command through the Regional Director.
87. Assign/reassign officers and other personnel through the Regional Director.
88. Recommend to the President the appointment of the Regional Director and his two (2) Deputies.
89. Oversee the preparation and implementation of the integrated regional public safety plan.
90. Impose, after due notice and summary hearings of citizen's complaints, administrative penalties on personnel of the Regional Command except Presidential Appointees.

Creation of the Regional Police Commission

91. There shall be created a Regional Police Commission (REPOLCOM) by the Regional Legislative Assembly consistent with the Constitution.
92. The REPOLCOM shall be under the supervision of the NAPOLCOM.
93. The Chairman of REPOLCOM shall be an ex-officio Commissioner of the NAPOLCOM.

C. Education

The Integrated System of Education

94. The Regional Autonomous Government shall have an educational component comprising of existing schools, colleges and universities in the present area of autonomy and such other schools and institutions in the future expanded area of autonomy, with the possible inclusion of state universities and colleges (SUCs) to be decided later on. The relationship of the Regional Autonomous Government educational body with the national educational system shall be that of a system and sub-

system with emphasis on the autonomy of the sub-system. In the event that SUCs should be included as part of the educational component of the Regional Autonomous Government, the autonomous government recognizes the fiscal autonomy and academic freedom of the SUCs as mandated by their respective charters.

95. The Regional Autonomous Government educational system shall, among others, perpetuate Filipino and Islamic ideals and aspirations, Islamic values and orientations of the Bangsamoro people. It shall develop the total spiritual, intellectual, social, cultural, scientific and physical aspects of the Bangsamoro people to make them God-fearing, productive, patriotic citizens, conscious of their Filipino and Islamic values and Islamic cultural heritage under the aegis of a just and equitable society.
The Structure of Education System
96. The elementary level shall follow the basic national structure and shall primarily be concerned with providing basic education; the secondary level will correspond to four (4) years of high school, and the tertiary level shall be one year to three (3) years for non-degree courses and four (4) to eight (8) years for degree courses, as the case may be in accordance with existing laws. Curriculum
97. The Regional Autonomous Government educational system will adopt the basic core courses for all Filipino children as well as the minimum required learning and orientations provided by the national government, including the subject areas and their daily time allotment. Teaching materials and curriculum contents shall promote solidarity, unity in diversity, Filipino and Islamic values.
98. The addition of more required learning and instructional materials shall be the prerogative and responsibility of the Autonomous Government.
99. The minimum requirements and standards prescribed by Department of Education Culture and Sports (DECS), Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) will be followed by the Autonomous Region.

100. The same textbooks of the National Government will be used by schools in the Autonomous Region. The formulation, shaping and revision of textbooks are the responsibilities of the Regional Autonomous Government and the National Government and within agreed norms, academic freedom and relevant legal limits, the formulation and revisions shall emphasize Islamic values or orientation, in addition to Filipino values which include Christian values and values of indigenous people, modern sciences and technology as well as the latest educational thrusts. Having adopted the core curriculum of the national government in consideration of achieving the highest quality of education, students and graduates of the education system of the Autonomous Region shall be fully accredited when they transfer to non autonomous regions.
101. The integration of Islamic Values in the curriculum should be done gradually after researches and studies are conducted.
102. The teachings of Islamic Values, as well as Filipino values, shall be incorporated in Good Manners and Right Conduct in appropriate grade levels including the tertiary level subject to agreed norms, academic freedom, and legal limitations.
103. Muslim culture, mores, customs and traditions which are mainly based on Islam, as well as the cultures, mores, customs, and traditions of Christians and indigenous people, shall be preserved through the regular public and special schools in the Autonomous Region, considering that schools are perpetuating vehicles of the values of the people. Administration of Educational System
104. The management and control, and supervision of the entire educational system in the area of autonomy shall be the primary concern of the Regional Autonomous Government, consistent with the declared policies of national educational bodies. The national education bodies shall monitor compliance by the regional educational system with national educational policies, standards and regulations in collaboration with the educational authorities of the autonomous region. The head of the educational system of the Regional Autonomous Government shall have the right to participate in policy and decision making activities of the national educational bodies.

105. The Regional Autonomous Government shall be represented in the Board of SUCs in the region as co-chairman or at least, co-vice-chairman, as may be provided by law. Appointment to SUC Boards shall be made by the President of the Philippines.
106. The Regional Autonomous Government will be responsible for specific administrative, management functions and powers, educational supervision and school administration, and regulation over private schools.
107. The organizational structure of the educational system in the autonomous region shall follow the basic structure of the national educational system. The Regional Legislative Assembly may add special structures, if necessary. It shall follow whatever organizations of the curricular years as found in the national set-up.
108. Locally funded programs will be the responsibility of the Regional Autonomous Government.
109. The selection, recruitment, appointment and promotion of teachers and employees shall be the responsibility of the Regional Autonomous Government in accordance with general qualification standard prescribed by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) provided that the Regional Autonomous Government can initiate regionally-defined standards which are not below national standards.
110. The selection, recruitment, appointment and promotion of elementary, secondary and tertiary education employees shall be the responsibility of the Regional Autonomous Government in accordance with general standards of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) and other recognized bodies.
111. Primary disciplinary authority over officials and employees of the Regional Autonomous Government will be the area of concern of the Regional Autonomous Government in accordance with Civil Service Commission (CSC) rules and regulations. Administrative sanctions deemed appropriate and reasonable as determined by the Civil Service Commission will be the area of concern of the Regional Autonomous Government.

Religious Instruction

112. Religious instruction in public schools should be optional, with the written consent of the parent/guardian, taught by the authorities of the religion to which the student belongs, and should not involve additional costs to the government in accordance with national policies.

Medium of Instruction

113. Filipino and English shall be the medium of instruction in the areas of the Autonomy; provided that Arabic shall be an auxiliary medium of instruction.
114. Regional languages may be used as auxiliary official languages in the region as well as auxiliary medium of instruction and communication.
115. Arabic shall be recognized as a medium of instruction in Madaris (schools) and other Islamic institutions.
116. Arabic shall be taught as a subject in all appropriate grade levels as presently required in the existing laws for Muslims, and optional, for non-Muslims. Madrasa Education
117. Existing Madaris, including Madaris Ulya shall be under the Regional Autonomous Government educational system as presently organized in the area of autonomy.
118. Madaris teachers shall receive compensation out of the funds of the Regional Autonomous Government provided they are employed in the public schools. Non-formal Education and Specialized Education
119. The Regional Autonomous Government educational system shall develop the full potentials of its human resources, respond positively to changing needs and conditions and needs of the environment, and institutionalize non-formal education.
120. The educational system shall respond positively and effectively to the changing needs and conditions of the times as well as regional and national needs of the environment through the proper use of the latest educational technology, development, planning, monitoring, evaluation, and appropriate and timely educational intervention as well as linkages with national and international institutions.

121. The Regional Autonomous Government educational system shall institutionalize non-formal education in scope and methodology, to include literacy, numeracy and intensive skills training of the youth and adult, to allow them to participate actively and productively in the mainstream of regional and national life.

Scholarship Grants and Assistance

122. Universities and colleges in the areas of autonomy may seek and receive overseas donations for educational purposes.
123. The Regional Autonomous Government educational system will handle, by administrative arrangement with the national DECS, CHED, and TESDA scholarship programs, both local and foreign, including those provided by the autonomous region pursuant to the provision of existing laws.
124. Disadvantaged but deserving students will be given financial assistance by the Regional Autonomous Government out of funds given by the national government for the purpose and from other sources of funds.

Funds for Education

125. Funds for education constituting the share of the Regional Autonomous Government as contained in the General Appropriations Act should be given directly to the Autonomous Government

D. The Economic and Financial System, Mines and Minerals

126. The Regional Autonomous Government in the area of autonomy shall establish its own Regional Economic and Development Planning Board chaired by the Head of Government in the area of autonomy. The Board shall prepare the economic development plans and programs of the Autonomous Government.
127. The pivotal role of banks and other financial institutions for development in the area of autonomy is recognized.
128. The Regional Autonomous Government in the area of autonomy has the power to promote tourism as a positive instrument for

development provided that the diverse cultural heritage, moral and spiritual values of the people in the area of autonomy shall be strengthened and respected.

129. The Regional Autonomous Government in the area of autonomy shall have the power to grant incentives including tax holidays within the power and resources in the area of autonomy.
130. The Regional Autonomous Government in the area of autonomy advocates equal opportunities for all the inhabitants of the area of autonomy regardless of ethnic origin, culture, sex, creed and religion.
131. In enacting tax measures, the Regional Legislative Assembly shall observe the principle of uniformity and equity in taxation and shall not impose confiscatory taxes or fees of any kind.
132. The Regional Autonomous Government in the area of autonomy shall have the power to enact a Regional Tax Code and a regional Local Tax Code applicable to all local government units within the area of autonomy.
133. All corporations, partnerships or business entities directly engaged in business in the area of autonomy shall pay their corresponding taxes, fees, and charges in the province, city or municipality in the area of autonomy where the establishment is doing business.
134. All corporations, partnerships or business entities whose head offices are located outside the area of autonomy, but doing business within its territorial jurisdiction, either by using, exploiting, and utilizing the land, aquatic and all natural resources therein, shall pay their income taxes corresponding to their income realized from their business operation in the area of autonomy through the province, city or municipality where their branch offices are located. In case the business establishment has no branch in the area of autonomy, such business establishment shall pay through the city or municipality where its operation is located.
135. The Regional Autonomous Government in the area of autonomy as a corporate body, may contract domestic loans.
136. The Regional Autonomous Government recognizes the pivotal role played by banks and other financial institutions in the

economic development of the area of autonomy. Toward this end, the Autonomous Government shall:

- a. Encourage the establishment of banks and bank branches in the area of autonomy;
- b. Encourage the entry and establishment of off-shore banking units of foreign banks in the area of autonomy.

137. The Regional Autonomous Government may accept foreign financial and economic grant for the development and welfare of the people in the region.

138. The Regional Autonomous Government may issue its own treasury bills, bonds, promissory notes, and other debt papers in consultation and coordination with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

139. The Regional Autonomous Government may contract foreign loans within the purview of national laws and pertinent monetary and fiscal policies.

140. In the pursuit of the region's economic growth, development and welfare, the autonomous government shall have the right to formulate economic and financial policies and implement economic and financial programs, taking into account national laws and policies.

141. The Regional Autonomous Government in the area of autonomy shall encourage, promote and support the establishment of economic zones, industrial centers, and ports in strategic area and growth centers to attract local and foreign investments and business enterprise.

142. The Regional Autonomous Government in the area of autonomy shall undertake encourage, promote and support the establishment of economic zones and industrial centers. And, in order to attract local and foreign investments within the area of the zone and outside but within the area of autonomy, the government in the area of autonomy may grant incentives to investors as may be defined in an Autonomous Investment Act to be formulated by the Regional Legislative Assembly within one year from its organization.

143. The residents in the area of the autonomy shall have preferential rights over the exploration, development and utilization of natural resources in the area of autonomy respecting existing rights on the exploitation, exploration, development and utilization of natural resources.
144. The Regional Autonomous Government in the area of autonomy shall enjoy fiscal autonomy in budgeting its own revenue resources and block subsidies granted to it by the National Government and foreign donors. Budgeting includes planning, programming and disbursing of funds.
145. The National Government shall appropriate for the area of autonomy a sufficient amount and for a period (both to be determined later) for infrastructure projects which shall be based on a development plan duly approved by the Regional Autonomous Government taking into account national policies.
146. Except strategic minerals which will be defined later, the control and supervision over the exploration, exploitation, development, utilization and protection of mines and minerals in the area of autonomy shall be vested in the Regional Autonomous Government.
147. In the regulation of the exploration, utilization, development, protection of the natural resources inclusive of mines and minerals, except strategic minerals which will be defined later, the government in the area of autonomy shall enact rules and regulations and shall impose regulatory fees, taking into account national policies.
148. An Islamic Banking Unit shall be established in the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas which shall be staffed by qualified Islamic banking experts nominated by the Governor of the Regional Autonomous Government. The Governor of the Regional Autonomous Government shall nominate at least three (3) qualified persons from the area of autonomy, from which nomination the appointing authority shall appoint the Head of the Unit. The same procedure shall be observed as regards the rest of the positions in the Unit.
149. The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas shall have a Regional Office with full banking service in the capital of the government of the

Autonomous Region to respond to the growing needs of the banking community in the area of autonomy which shall be established within one (1) year from the establishment of the Autonomous Government. The Governor of the Autonomous Government shall submit a list of qualified recommendees to the appointing authority from which the staff of the regional office may be chosen; provided that that staffs that are now occupying and already appointed to positions in the regional office are considered as recommended by the Governor of the Regional Autonomous Government.

150. The Regional Autonomous Government shall establish a body in the area of autonomy with the same powers as the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) consistent with the Special Economic Zone Act of 1995.
151. All current year collections of internal revenue taxes within the area of autonomy shall, for a period of five (5) years, be allotted for the Regional Autonomous Government (RAG) in the Annual General Appropriations Act; provided that:
 - a. The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) shall continue to collect such taxes and the BIR Collection Districts/Offices concerned shall retain such collections and remit the same to the RAG through an approved depository bank within thirty (30) days from the end of each quarter of the current year;
 - b. Out of said internal revenue tax collections, fifty percent (50%) of the tax collected under Section 100 (Value-added tax on sale of goods), 102 (Value added tax on sale of services), 112 (Tax on persons exempt from value-added tax), 113 (Hotel, motels and others), and 114 (Caterers) of the National Internal Revenue Code (NIRC), as amended, in excess of the increase in collections for the immediately preceding year shall be shared by the RAG and the local government units (LGUs) within the area of autonomy as follows:
 1. Twenty percent (20%) shall accrue to the city or municipality where such taxes are collected; and

2. Eighty percent (80%) shall accrue to the RAG. In all cases, the RAG shall remit to the LGUs their respective shares within sixty (60) days from the end of each quarter of the current year. Provided, however, that the provinces, cities, municipalities and barangays within the area of autonomy shall continue to receive their respective shares in the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA), as provided for in Section 284 of the Local Government Code of 1991.

Provided, finally, that the five-year (5) periods herein abovementioned may be extended upon mutual agreement of the National and Regional Autonomous Governments.

E. Shari'ah and Judiciary

152. The Regional Legislative Assembly of the area of autonomy shall establish Shari'ah Courts in accordance with the existing laws.

F. Totality Clause

153. This Peace Agreement, which is the full implementation of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement, embodies and constitutes the totality of all the agreements, covenant and understandings between the GRP and the MNLF respecting all the subject matters embodied herein. This Agreement supersedes and modifies all agreements, consensus, covenants, documents and communications not referred to or embodied in this Agreement or whose terms and conditions are otherwise inconsistent herewith. Any conflict in the interpretation of this Agreement shall be resolved in the light of the Philippine Constitution and existing laws.

G. Effectivity Clause

154. This Agreement shall take effect immediately upon the signing hereof by the parties, unless otherwise provided herein.

Done in the City of Manila on the 2nd day of September 1996.

For the GRP:

H.E. AMB. MANUEL T. YAN
Chairman of the GRP Panel

For the MNLF:

H.E. PROF. NUR MISUARI
Chairman of the MNLF Panel

With the participation of the OIC Ministerial Committee of the Six and the Secretary-General of the OIC

H.E. MR. ALI ALATAS
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the
Republic of Indonesia / Chairman of the
OIC Ministerial Committee of Six

H.E. DR. HAMID AL-GABID
Secretary-General of the OIC

Appendix H

Agreement by the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) (July 18, 1997)

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

WHEREAS, the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) signed on July 18, 1997 in Cagayan de Oro City, the Agreement on a General Cessation of Hostilities;

WHEREAS, there is a need to further give meaning and substance to the general cessation of hostilities by hastening the return of the evacuees in Pikit, North Cotabato and Pagalungan, Maguindanao;

NOW, THEREFORE, the GRP-MILF Sub-Committee on Cessation of Hostilities agree, as they hereby agree, on the following:

1. The GRP will gradually reposition its forces in Rajamuda and its environs to their original positions before June 16, 1997 and will continue to secure the Cotabato City-Davao City highway to insure the safety of travelers. The gradual repositioning of the GRP forces shall be completed within fifteen (15) days after the signing of this agreement;
2. The GRP and MILF shall encourage the return of evacuees to their respective residences. MILF elements who are residents of the area shall be allowed to return to their homes immediately; however, they will not establish military outposts/positions nor display firearms.
3. Law enforcement in the aforementioned areas shall be primarily undertaken by the GRP authorities, provided, however, that before the conduct thereof, prior coordination/consultation shall be made with the nearest MILF designated liaison in the area.

This Agreement shall take effect on the 4th day of September, 1997.

SO AGREED.

Done in the City of Cotabato, Philippines, this 3rd day of September, 1997.

For the GRP:

MAJ. GEN. JOSELIN B. NAZARENO, AFP

Chairman, GRP

Sub-Committee on Cessation of Hostilities

C/SUPT. FRANCO M. CALIDA, PNP

Member, GRP

Sub-Committee on Cessation of Hostilities

ESMAEL S. DAULOG, PNP

P/Sr. Superintendent

CAPT. ROLANDO T. GARCIA, PN

Member, GRP

Sub-Committee on Cessation of Hostilities

COL. MANUEL B. IBANEZ, JR., PA

Member, GRP

Sub-Committee on Cessation of Hostilities

COL. JOSE G. CORALES, PA

Member, GRP

Sub-Committee on Cessation of Hostilities

LT. COL. RUDY R. SO, PA

Member, GRP

Sub-Committee on Cessation of Hostilities

MGEN OSWALDO P. VILLANUEVA (Ret)

Executive Director, GRP-SPAG

(GRP-Consultant)

For the MILF:

ATTY. OMAR B. UMPAR

Acting Chairman, MILF

MILF Legal Counsel and

Sub Committee on Cessation of
Hostilities

SAIPODEN "Tony Falcon" TOMAWIS

Member, MILF

Sub-Committee on Cessation of Hostilities

BAOAWI "Boy" HASHIM

Member, MILF Sub-Committee

on Cessation of Hostilities

ALEEM USMAN MANGKABONG

Member, MILF

Sub-Committee on Cessation of Hostilities

ABDUL NASSER TANGGOL

Member, MILF

Cease-Fire Committee

DAN DIMAKNAL

Member, MILF

Cease-Fire Committee

JANNATI MIMBANTAS

Member, MILF

Cease-Fire Committee

ABDULMANAF MANTAWIL

Chairman, MILF Secretariat

Technical Committee

Appendix I

Moro Jihad, Interview with Sheikh Salamat Hashim

Published in the 23rd Issue of Nida'ul Islam Magazine

April – May 1998

MILF Leader, Sheikh Salamat Hashim to "Nida'ul Islam":

"Perhaps the Moro struggle for freedom and self-determination is the longest and bloodiest in the entire history of mankind"

The Philippines has inherited and developed a deep hatred against Islam and the Muslim people. After annexing the Bangsamoro homeland, a systematic design to liquidate Islam and to destroy the Islamic identity of the Bangsamoro Muslims was launched.

The MILF led up a program to be implemented phase by phase in twenty years (from 1981-2000). This program covers all aspects of "Jihad in the way of Allah" and human endeavors

Bio-data of Sheikh Salamat Hashim

Salamat Hashim was born on 7th July, 1942 in the Municipality of Pagalungan, Maguindano. He comes from a religious family of seven..

Salamat's first teacher was his mother. It was through her tutorship and guidance that at the age of six he could read the Holy Qur'an and memorised many of its verses.

At the age of six he started formal education, finishing his elementary education in 1954 with honours and his secondary education in 1958 also with honours.

In 1958, Salamat joined the pilgrims from the Philippines for Hajj. He took this opportunity to stay behind and study in Makkah under the care of Sheikh Zawawi. He attended regularly the halaqat held at the Masjid al Haram and enrolled at the Madrasat as-Sulatiyah ad-Diniyah.

In 1959, he went to Cairo, which at that time was the centre of political activism in the Middle East. There, he enrolled at Al-Azhar University. He graduated from al-Azhar's Ma'had al-Buhuth al-Islamiyyah as-Sanawiyyah in 1963, then enrolling at al-Azhar's college of

Theology for a bachelor's degree program majoring in Aqeedah and Philosophy and graduated in 1967. Pursuing his scholastic inclination further, he took up his postgraduate courses in the same university and finished his master's degree in 1969. He completed the academic requirements for a doctoral degree, but was unable to write his dissertation because he had to return to the Philippines by then to organise the Moro revolutionary movement.

Salamat was an active student leader. His active participation to different student activities exposed him to various revolutionary trends, both Islamic and Secular, which Cairo was known for at that period. This exposure brought him awareness of the colonial oppression his Muslim brothers and sisters were suffering back home, an awareness which gradually transformed him from a scholar to an Islamic revolutionary.

Among the student organisations he took part in are the Philippine Muslim Student Association and the Organisation of Asian Students in Cairo. He was elected President of the former and Secretary-General of the latter.

While in Cairo, he clandestinely organised a core group among the Bangsamoro Muslim students who planned the Bangsamoro revolution in the early sixties. To finance their early activities, each member contributed half of his meager allowance to a common fund.

It is interesting to note that amongst the revolutionary Muslim thinkers who influenced Salamat, two Muslim personalities made a lasting impression on him: Syed Qutb and Syed Abul A'la Maududi. It was, however, Syed Qutb's writings which shaped his Islamic outlook and political beliefs. The impact that Syed Qutb and Maududi made on him was what inspired him to plant the seeds of Islamic revolution in the Bangsamoro homeland.

Known but to a few, Salamat was the one responsible for covertly arranging the military training of the first batch of cadres (Batch 90) that was to become the military core group of the Moro National Liberation Front. Working with a prominent political leader, he laid the groundwork for the organisation of the Bangsamoro armed struggle.

**What is the Sheikh's organisational role in the MILF?*

Name: Salamat Hashim.

Amir of the Bangsamoro Mujahideen and Chairman of Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

**Would you please give us a brief outline of the Moro Islamic Front?*

Brief Account on the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF):

a) Background:

The MILF is the vanguard of the Islamic movement in the Bangsamoro homeland in Mindanao and the neighbouring islands.

Its emergence is the crystallisation of the widespread animosity and deeprooted displeasure of the Bangsamoro people vis-a-vis the illegal and immoral usurpation of their freedom and self determination.

The Bangsamoro territory, which is the ancestral homeland of the Bangsamoro Muslims, was illegally and immorally annexed when the United States of America granted the Philippines independence in July 4, 1946.

The MILF is the realisation of the ideas, efforts and sacrifices of Bangsamoro students in the Middle East who banded together and clandestinely organised themselves in 1962. Those students were kindled and unified by the common feelings concerning the usurpation of their legitimate and inalienable rights to freedom and self-determination, and that the usurpation of Moro land was a plot against Islam and the Muslim people in the area. Furthermore it was a wanton design to destroy their identity and to liquidate them. Those students urged their counterparts in the Bangsamoro homeland and the Bangsamoro people in general to return to the fold of Islam and fight against the aggressors. They exhorted them to follow the path of Allah and launch Jihaad in the Way of Allah.

b) Methodology

The methodology of the MILF is complete submission to the Will of Allah. This is manifested and crystallised in the verse number 56, Surah 5: "I have only created Jinn and Man that they may serve Me."

The MILF makes sure that all its policies and activities are in conformity with the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah and its members and followers adapt a system of life in accordance with the teachings of Islam.

c) Objectives

- To make supreme the Word of Allah
- To gain the pleasure of Allah
- To strengthen the relationship of man with his Creator
- To strengthen the relationship of man and man
- To regain the illegally and immorally usurped legitimate and inalienable rights of the Bangsamoro people to freedom and self determination
- To establish an independent state and government and implement Shari'ah (Islamic Law).

d) Magnitude and Strength

The great majority of the Bangsamoro Muslims sympathise with and support the MILF.

However, there is no reliable statistics on the number of the Bangsamoro Muslim population in the area due to the usual distortion of facts about the Muslims by the government.

Sometimes they say more than two million. In some occasions they say more than four million. This was the number of Muslims in the area more than twenty years ago. Our rough estimate is about eight million or more, and 85% actively support the MILF, and the rest, with exception of about one percent, sympathise with the Islamic Front.

About 90% of the Bangsamoro Muslims supporting the MILF aged between 16 and 60 were trained in combat and arms handling and are therefore warriors and combatants.

** How can we differentiate between the Moro National Front and the Moro Islamic Front?*

If you look at the ideology and way of life adopted by each of the two fronts you will see the great difference. The MILF adopts the Islamic ideology and way of life. Furthermore, the Islamic Front believes in the Islamic concept of state and government. In contrast to this, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) is more inclined to secularism.

At present, the most distinct difference is that the MNLF recognised the Philippine Constitution and works under the Philippine government,

whilst the MILF does not recognise the constitution of the Philippines and fights against the government.

**What are the motives behind the Bangsamoro Muslims' uprising which started 30 years ago?*

The main reason behind the struggle of the Bangsamoro Muslims is the illegal usurpation of their legitimate rights for freedom and self-determination. The Bangsamoro Muslims are the native inhabitants of the islands of Mindanao, Basilan Sulu and Palawan. They were independent hundreds of years before the creation of the Philippines by Spain and the USA, her colonial masters. With the help of the latter the newly created imperialist puppet succeeded in her plot to annex the Bangsamoro homeland when she was granted independence by the USA in 1946.

It is worthwhile mentioning that the Philippines has inherited and developed a deep hatred against Islam and the Muslim people. After annexing the Bangsamoro homeland, a systematic design to liquidate Islam and to destroy the Islamic identity of the Bangsamoro Muslims was launched. The following are some of the methods used in the genocide:

- Grabbing Muslim lands
- Establishment of Christian settlements
- Individual and group migration from Luzon and Visayas to the Bangsamoro homeland
- Systematic killing of individual Muslims
- Group or mass massacres of Muslims including women, children and the aged
- Burning Muslim houses, Mosques, Madrasas (Islamic schools), taking livestock for food or selling, and the destruction of Muslim farms and orchards.

To make such a wanton design more destructive, the government exploited the natural resources of the Bangsamoro homeland to deprive them of such natural and God-given wealth.

** The Moro National Front signed a peace treaty with the government of Manila, can you explain the reasons for your opposition to such a treaty? Have your concerns been justified after the full or partial implementation of the treaty? And what was the fate of the Tripoli agreement which gives the Muslim people the right of autonomy?*

- The MILF did not recognise the so-called peace agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the MNLF for the following reasons:
- The agreement considered side issues only and never touched the core of the Bangsamoro problem which is the illegal and immoral usurpation of their ancestral homeland and the barbarous usurpation of their legitimate rights to freedom and self-determination.
- The agreement is devoid of justice and freedom for the Bangsamoro people and peace without justice and freedom for the aggrieved party is another form of colonial oppression.
- The agreement is a solution to the problem of the GRP only but not the Bangsamoro problem.
- The GRP-MNLF agreement is a violation of the Tripoli Agreement which is now nowhere due to that agreement. The MILF expected that the GRP-MNLF agreement concluded last year will be a total failure and that expectation is now a reality. In fact, a top MNLF officer said: "the outcome of the GRP-MNLF agreement is a double zero" because it did not solve the Bangsamoro problem and caused the abandonment and total failure of the Tripoli Agreement.

** The Filipino government is carrying out an intensive media onslaught which accuses the Mujahideen with crimes against the Filipino people, what is your response to this?*

The accusation is entirely baseless and categorically not true. It is a black propaganda against Islam and its followers and a brazen lie which aims at inverting the issue. The Bangsamoro Mujahideen are strictly following the teachings of Islam. As such, they do not commit any crime. The Philippine authorities are the ones committing crimes against the Bangsamoro people and even the Filipino people whom they are supposed to be serving are not spared.

** Can you explain in detail the ugly massacres that were carried out by the Filipino army and by its partisan militias against the Moro Muslims?*

Perhaps hundreds of pages will be needed to write the inhumane atrocities and heinous crimes and massacres perpetrated by the barbarous Armed Forces of the Philippines and its militia against the Bangsamoro Muslims. One example is the notorious Manili Massacre where seventy nine Muslim men and women were killed atpoint-blank range inside a mosque. Besides this is that barbarous Tacub massacre where sixty innocent Muslims were ordered by a unit of the AFP to lie down then shot at them until they were all killed. There is the infamous Colongcolong massacre where more than seven hundred Muslims, men and women including children, were massacred by the barbaric Armed Forces of the Philippines. There is also theNew Pasi massacre of nineteen innocent Muslims and the Tago-ig massacre of ten school girls plus their teacher. Moreover, hundreds of thousands of Muslim houses, mosques and Islamic schools were deliberately burned by Philippine authorities. In addition, their farms, orchards and other sources of livelihood were destroyed bythe AFP and its militia. In short, a genocidal war is being launched against the Muslims.

** How do these delinquent practices reflect upon the Muslims' subsistence and the need for immigration in lieu from the violence of terrorists and their agents?*

The barbarous massacres and heinous crimes perpetuated by the Government of the Philippines against the Bangsamoro people have a serious repercussion in their life. It caused them untold hardship, indescribable poverty and an unfortunate situation.

** Which parts of the Moro Islands have so far been liberated? How does the Front manage its affairs with the lack of financial support?*

The Liberated areas in the Bangsamoro homeland is less than one fifth of the previously independent Muslim areas. These areas are mostly in the countryside and highland covered by thick jungles.

** Why does the MILF continue to negotiate with the Filipino government who as you know conceal ill intentions?*

Many people in the world do not know the ill-will and bad intentions of the Government of the Philippines towards the Bangsamoro

people. We hope that during the process of the negotiations her deceptive design will be exposed.

**What are the latest military and security developments in the Moro Islands?*

Throughout the last month of Ramadhan corresponding to the month of January 1998, there were heavy armed engagements between the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF) and the AFP.

The most fierce encounters between the two armed forces took place in the provinces of Basilan, Zamboanga del norte, Zambaona del sur and in Buldon and Datu Piang in the province of Maguindanao. Enemy forces suffered casualties in terms of lives and equipment: fifty seven soldiers were killed including three high ranking officers and three battle tanks were destroyed. The Bangsamoro Mujahideen captured thirteen assorted firearms.

During the month of February 1998, exchange of artillery fire between the two warring parties continued. From the first week of this month (March 1998), fighting erupted at the demarcation lines between the two forces. And to this date, sporadic armed encounters occur in different areas. In short the Bangsamoro region is in a state of war and nothing can stop this war except the realisation of the Bangsamoro people's objectives.

**What are the plans of the MILF on all domains (military, livelihood, security and education)?*

• The MILF led up a program to be implemented phase by phase in twenty years (from 1981-2000). This program covers all aspects of "Jihaad in the way of Allah" and human endeavors, but it gives special attention to the following:

- Islamisation of all aspects of life of the Bangsamoro people
- Military build-up
- Self-reliance
- Strengthening and improvement of organisational, administrative and managerial capability.

Before the 20-years program expires in the year 2000, the MILF had already planned a new 50-year program which will start in 2001 and end in 2050. The plan was approved during the 15th General Assembly of the Moro Islamic Liberation front in Camp Bushra on December 15-17, 1997.

The new program will continue the previous tasks but will give special attention to the following:

- To establish justice
- To ensure full freedom and respect of human rights
- To overcome criminalities, poverty, ignorance and sickness
- To ensure equal opportunity and equal rights to earn and live honourably
- To ensure the establishment of equal rights
- To overcome grafts and corruption and exploitation of public properties for personal interest
- To undertake proper measures to solve social problems.

**How do you view the role of the Muslim communities in supporting the Jihaad in Islamic Moro Islands?*

The support of the Muslim Ummah all over the world to the Bangsamoro cause is very vital and much needed. Perhaps the Bangsamoro struggle for freedom and self-determination is the longest and bloodiest in the entire history of mankind. It started in 1521 when Spain invaded the Bangsamoro homeland 29 years after the fall of Andalusia. The Bangsamoro people fought against the Spanish invaders for 377 years and against American intruders for about 40 years and have been fighting Filipino barbarous colonial rule during the past 52 years. In short, the Bangsamoro people fought for 469 years to preserve their Islamic faith and identity and to defend their legitimate rights to freedom and self determination. They have no one to ask for help except Almighty Allah and then the Muslim Ummah, their brothers in faith.

**Do you have a final word to address your brothers around the world?*

We in the MILF would like to take this opportunity to inform the Muslim Ummah through your magazine about the predicament of the Bangsamoro Muslims here in this part of the world.

Islam made its foundation here in about the year 1310 CE, and independent Islamic principalities were established in the beginning of the 15th century. After one hundred years of Islamic grandeur in this part of the globe, the blooming Islamic states were invaded by foreign

intruders. Since then and until now, the Bangsamoro Muslims were still fighting to preserve their Islamic identity and regain their usurped freedom and independence.

Hence we are calling upon the Muslim Ummah all over the world to stand by our side and give the Bangsamoro Muslims moral, spiritual and material support.

Allah will surely compensate and reward you here in this world and in the Hereafter

Appendix J

In the Name of God Most Beneficent, Most Merciful

**General Framework of Agreement of Intent between the
Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro
Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)**

(August 27, 1998)

The Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), herein referred to as the Parties: Recognizing the need for a negotiated political settlement to bring an end to the armed conflict in Mindanao.

Desiring to contribute toward that end and to promote an enduring peace and stability in Mindanao.

Noting the Agreement on General Cessation of Hostilities of July 18, 1997, signed at Cagayan de Oro City, between the Parties; have agreed as follows:

Article I

The parties commit to pursue the peace negotiations on the substantive issues as soon as possible, and resolutely continue the negotiations until the Parties reach a negotiated political settlement.

Article II

The Parties affirm their commitment to protect and respect human rights in accordance with the principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Article III

The Parties negotiate with sincerity in the resolution and pacific settlement of the conflict, and hereby pledge to implement the joint agreements/arrangements previously signed by the Parties' representatives, such as the Agreement for General Cessation of Hostilities signed on July 18, 1997 at Cagayan de Oro City and other supplementary agreements.

Article IV

The Parties pledge to refrain from the use or threat of force to attain undue advantage while peace negotiations on the substantive issues are

Article V

The Parties recognize that there will be lasting peace in Mindanao when there is mutual trust, justice, freedom, and tolerance for the identity, culture, way of life and aspirations of all the peoples of Mindanao.

Article VI

This Agreement shall enter into force upon signature. Done at the Dawah Center, Crossing Simuay, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao, this 27th day August, 1998.

FOR THE GRP:

LT. GEN. ORLANDO V. SORIANO (Ret)

Chairman, GRP Negotiating Panel

FOR THE MILF

ALEEM ABDULAZIZ MIMBANTAS

Chairman, MILF Negotiating Panel

WITNESSES:

AMB. MANUEL T. YAN

Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process

DR. ALUNAN C. GLANG

Adviser, MILF

REP. ANTHONY T. DEQUINA

Member, GRP Negotiating Panel

SHEIKH ABUKHALIL YAHYA

Chairman, Majlis Al-Shura

DR. EMILY M. MAROHOMBSAR

Member, GRP Negotiating Panel

SHEIKH ALI ISMAIL

Chairman, MILF Islamic
Supreme Court

DIR. ALMA R. EVANGELISTA

Chairperson, GRP Technical Committee

MOHAGHER IQBAL

Member, MILF Negotiating Panel

MGEN. SANTOS B. GABISON, JR.

Member, GRP Negotiating Panel

OMAR HASSAN

Member, MILF Negotiating Panel

Appendix K

NDF-MILF Alliance

Unity and Cooperation against the Reactionary Enemy

Editorial, Ang Bayan, January – February, 1999, Vol. XXIX, No. 1

The National Democratic Front (NDF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the two largest and most significant revolutionary armed forces in the Philippines today, are both vigorously expanding and intensifying their armed struggles. Recently, both made public their new and higher level of unity, cooperation and alliance against the Manila-based neo-colonial and reactionary puppet government and its US imperialist master.

In their declaration, NDF and MILF leaders stressed that the alliance will further consolidate and strengthen the revolutionary struggles of the Moro and Filipino people so that they could concentrate stronger blows against the reactionary enemy which exists primarily to exploit and oppress them.

Concomitant with the advance of the just and revolutionary struggle in Mindanao and the entire nation, the NDF-MILF alliance develops further the understanding, trust and respect between the Moro and Filipino peoples, whom US imperialists and local reactionaries have, for so long, divided and played against each other.

The NDF alliance with the MILF is based on the NDF program's recognition and support of the Moro people's struggle for self-determination and freedom. On the other hand, the MILF has declared support for the Filipino people's struggle for national liberation and democracy. The two movements are naturally and closely related due to their long common history of arduous and bloody struggles against foreign colonialists and the local reactionary puppet state. Territories of both sides have long had common boundaries. In some areas, the two revolutionary authorities even overlap.

Their alliance reflects the positive experience and deepening of mutual understanding not only among leading elements but also among ordinary members and the masses who support the two revolutionary movements.

The national significance of and the urgent need for the established alliance have been proven by the widespread and large-scale military offensives and the intensifying fascist suppression being perpetrated by the reactionary state in Mindanao.

More than a third of the AFP's maneuver battalions, which include 34 infantry battalions of the Philippine Army, the Navy's six Marine Battalion Landing Teams and a battalion of the Philippine Air Force, are deployed in guerrilla fronts of the New People's Army (NPA) and camps of the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF) in Mindanao. There is a high concentration of high-powered weapons of the AFP in the island, such as fighter planes and armored vehicles, tanks and cannons.

The Estrada regime is intensifying its counterrevolutionary war upon orders of US imperialists to secure Mindanao as a main port for their warships and a runway for their war planes.

Foreign monopoly companies likewise have their eyes set on the oil deposits in Liguasan Marsh and the rich mineral deposits in different parts of the island. Militarization and fascist abuse are most intense not only in areas where the NPA and BIAF are strongest but also in the areas covered by these giant foreign companies' speculation and mining activities.

The AFP and PNP's campaigns of suppression have been going on without letup in Mindanao. Cruelty and violations of the human rights of the people in the island, especially of the toiling masses, continue and go on unabated.

There is once again a widespread drive to form CAFGUs and fanatical vigilante groups. Towards this, the reactionary state actively provokes conflicts between the Moro and non-Moro masses. They shell and bomb not only open and suspected camps of the NPA and BIAF; even barrios and communities, homes and farms of ordinary peasants and minorities are not spared. Burning of houses and crops, arbitrary arrests and searches, tortures and execution of prisoners are widespread.

Despite all these, the NDF and MILF, the NPA and BIAF have further consolidated and strengthened. The revolutionary movement led by the Communist Party of the Philippines has vigorously revitalized itself and is now advancing. (see related article)

The MILF has militantly stood its ground against the reactionary government's pacification campaign and has squarely faced the AFP's fascist attacks after Nur Misuari and his MNLF betrayed the Moro struggle. Over the years, it has established and strengthened its camps.

The MILF's political authority prevails within its 47 camps, which in turn, serve as base areas for its struggle for an independent Moro state. Each camp covers entire barrios. The biggest are in Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Davao del Norte, North Cotabato, Saranggani, Zamboanga del Norte and Sultan Kudarat. Camp Abubakar, along the Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur border, serves as the main camp.

The MILF and BIAF continue to consolidate their armed strength to actively defend these camps against attacks by the reactionary state. In line with this, they have taken a militant stance in engaging in peace talks with the reactionary government to deflect AFP attacks on their camps, assert their right to establish and expand these and continue advancing the struggle of the Moro people for self-determination.

The NDF and MILF express their determination to continue and further develop and expand their unity and cooperation, base on mutual need and mutually acceptable principles.

The NDF assures the MILF that it recognizes and respects the identity, integrity and way of life and culture of the Moro people and is against any form of national oppression, discrimination, chauvinism and coercion against them.

The NDF guarantees the right of the Moro people to self-determination, extending to their right to secede from a state of national oppression and to establish their own state or choose federation or local autonomy under the People's Democratic Republic of the Philippines.

The NDF recognizes their right to a Moro homeland and to a system embodying the Moro people's social, political, economic and religious aspirations under a leadership that they so elect. In line with the principles of unity of the revolutionary movement, the NDFP assures the MILF that any understanding between the two movements shall be conducted within the framework of recognition and respect for each other's identity, integrity, principles and program and on the independence and initiative of each organization.

It is expected that through the continued and regular meetings of authorized representatives from both sides and, if necessary, of representatives from the highest and most basic levels of the organization, the objective of further consolidating and developing the revolutionary alliance between the Filipino people and the Moro people will be advanced.

Appendix L

In the Name of God
the Beneficent, the Merciful

**Implementing Guidelines on the Security Aspect
of the GRP-MILF Tripoli Agreement of Peace of 2001
(August 7, 2001)**

ARTICLE I
TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. GRP-MILF Agreement for General Cessation of Hostilities dated July 18, 1997, including its Implementing Administrative Guidelines dated September 12, 1997 and Implementing Operational Guidelines dated November 14, 1997.
2. General Framework of the Agreement of Intent between the GRP and the MILF dated August 27, 1998.
3. GRP-MILF Agreement on Safety and Security Guarantees dated March 09, 2000.
4. Agreement on the General Framework for the Resumption of Peace Talks between the GRP and the MILF signed on March 24, 2001 at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
5. Agreement of Peace between the GRP and the MILF signed on June 22, 2001 at Tripoli, Libya.

ARTICLE II
DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms shall mean as follows:

1. GRP Forces Ð as referred to in the GRP-MILF Agreement for the General Cessation of Hostilities signed in Cagayan de Oro City on July 18, 1997.
2. MILF Forces - as referred to in the GRP-MILF Agreement for the General Cessation of Hostilities signed in Cagayan de Oro City on July 18, 1997.

3. Hostilities - is defined as aggressive or offensive military action such as aircraft bombing, artillery shelling, naval gunfire, attacks, raids, ambushes, sabotage, and related actions such as kidnapping, hijacking of aircraft, vessels and vehicles, extortion, liquidation, arson, grenade throwing and other terroristic activities.

The “prohibited hostile acts” and “prohibited provocative acts” specifically enumerated under the Agreement for General Cessation of Hostilities-Implementing Operational Guidelines (AGCH-IOG-1997) are embraced in the term “hostilities” and are construed as such as of the entry into force (EIF) of this Agreement.

3.1. The following are considered prohibited hostile acts:

3.1.1. Terroristic acts such as kidnapping, hijacking, piracy, sabotage, arson, bombings, grenade throwing, robberies, liquidations/assassinations, unjustified arrest, torture, unreasonable search and seizure, summary execution, as well as burning of houses, places of worship and educational institutions, destruction of properties, and abuse of civilians.

3.1.2. Aggressive action such as attacks, raids, ambushes, landminings, and offensive military actions such as shelling, reconnoitering, and unjustified massing of troops.

3.1.3. Establishment of checkpoints except those necessary for the GRP's enforcement and maintenance of peace and order; and, for the defense and security of the MILF in their identified areas, as jointly determined by the GRP and MILF.

3.2. The following are considered prohibited provocative acts:

3.2.1. Display of MILF flag in non-identified MILF areas.

3.2.2. Providing sanctuary or assistance to criminal or lawless elements.

3.2.3. Massive deployment and/or movement of GRP and MILF forces which are not normal administrative functions and activities.

3.2.4. Public pronouncements that will tend to undermine the sincerity or credibility of either party in implementing the cessation of hostilities.

3.2.5. Other acts that endanger the safety and security of the people and their properties; and/or that which contribute to the deterioration of peace and order, such as blatant display of firearms.

4. Henceforth, should there be a delineation of lines/positions agreed upon by the Parties, any action that projects forces or fire beyond one party's identified line/position shall be considered offensive military operations, which is prohibited under this Agreement.
5. OIC Monitoring Team - representatives of the member States of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) as referred to in the Tripoli Peace Agreement dated June 22, 2001.

ARTICLE III

CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES AND SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS

1. The Parties shall commit their Armed Forces to a general cessation of hostilities pursuant to and in accordance with the Agreement for General Cessation of Hostilities of 1997 and its Implementing Administrative Guidelines dated September 12, 1997 and Operational Guidelines dated November 14, 1997, effective upon entry into force (EIF) of this Agreement.
2. The Parties agree to implement all necessary measures to normalize the situation in the conflict-affected areas, to pave the way for, and ensure successful rehabilitation and development of said areas.
3. The Coordinating Committee on Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH) of both Parties shall continue to perform their powers and functions in accordance with Rule III, Section 4, of the Implementing Administrative Guidelines of the GRP-MILF General Cessation of Hostilities (AGCH-IAG-1997) dated September 12, 1997.
4. Local Monitoring Teams (LMTs) are hereby established in all conflict-affected areas as mutually determined by the Parties.
 - 4.1. To perform the functions of the Independent Fact Finding Committee (IFFC) provided under Rule IV, Section 4, of the Implementing Administrative Guidelines of the GRP-MILF Agreement for General Cessation of Hostilities herein referred to as annex "A".
 - 4.2. To perform the functions of the Quick Response Team (QRT) provided under the Agreement Creating a Quick Response Team dated March 11, 1998 herein referred to as annex ÒBÓ.

5. The Local Monitoring Team shall be composed of five members, one each from the following:
 - 5.1. Representative from the Local Government Units, designated by the GRP;
 - 5.2. Representative from the MILF Local Political Committee;
 - 5.3. Representative from NGOs nominated by the GRP;
 - 5.4. Representative from NGOs nominated by the MILF; and
 - 5.5. Representative from the Religious sector, chosen under mutual agreement; and The LMTs shall designate their respective Chairman and Co-Chairman.
6. The Parties hereby invite representatives from the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), in particular Indonesia, Libya and Malaysia, and other interested OIC member States to observe and monitor the implementation of all GRP-MILF Agreements.
 - 6.1. The OIC Monitoring Team shall formulate its guidelines, procedures and ground rules upon its constitution.
 - 6.2. The Parties shall, upon request, provide the OIC Monitoring Team appropriate Technical and Administrative support, and security escorts in the performance of its functions.
7. The structure of the implementing mechanism on the Security Aspect of the Tripoli Peace Agreement of 2001 is attached as annex "C" and shall form part of this Agreement.
8. The CCCH of each party shall, through their Panels, coordinate with the OIC Monitoring Team to address violations of this Agreement in addition to its powers and functions as provided for in Rule 3 of the Implementing Administrative Guidelines dated September 12, 1997.
9. Police and military actions and administrative/logistic activities shall continue to be undertaken by the GRP throughout Mindanao and the entire country. In the pursuit thereof, confrontational situations between the GRP and MILF forces shall be avoided by prior coordination with the latter. These actions include but are not limited to, the following:
 - 9.1. Peacekeeping and police actions such as preventive patrols, investigations, arrest, searches and seizures undertaken by the

Government against criminality, especially against piracy, robbery, kidnapping, cattle rustling, murder and other criminal acts.

9.2. Defensive or protective actions of the GRP to ensure the security of its forces, facilities, installations, equipment and lines of communications and the safety and tranquility of the civil government and the population.

9.3. Hot pursuit of suspects by police and military personnel. Paramilitary/irregular forces shall not be allowed to engage in hot pursuit under the terms of this Agreement.

10. Defensive or protective actions shall also be undertaken by the MILF to ensure the security of its forces, facilities, installations, equipment and lines of communications and safety and tranquility of its civilian constituents.
11. In cases of alleged violations of this Agreement, the Parties shall refrain from taking offensive or punitive military actions of any type against each other without prior investigation by the CCCH of both Parties in coordination with the OIC Monitoring Team.

ARTICLE IV SAFETY AND SECURITY GUARANTEES

1. The Parties shall continue to respect and observe the provisions of the GRP-MILF Agreement of Safety and Security Guarantees dated March 9, 2000.
2. The safety and security guarantees extended by the Government to the MILF members who are directly and principally involved in the GRP-MILF Peace Talks signed on March 9, 2000 shall remain in full force and effect as a necessary safeguard for the conduct of the peace talks.
3. MILF members covered by paragraph 1 above shall not be restrained or arrested, searched, seized and harassed on their persons and property in connection with their participation or involvement in the peace talks, except in cases of commission of common crimes such as crimes against persons, chastity, property and other similar offenses.
4. The GRP and MILF Peace Panel Chairmen shall issue appropriate identification cards to MILF members covered by GRP-MILF Agreement of Safety and Security Guarantees.

ARTICLE V
EFFECTIVITY CLAUSE

This Agreement shall take effect upon signing.

Done on this 7th day of August 2001 at Putrajaya, Malaysia.

For the GRP:

IRENE M. SANTIAGO

Acting Chairperson

GRP Technical Committee

For the MILF:

ATTY. MUSIB M. BUAT

Chairperson

MILF Technical Committee

Attested by:

ATTY. JESUS G. DUREZA

Chairman, GRP Peace Panel

AL HAJ MURAD EBRAHIM

Chairman, MILF Peace Panel

(Annex "A")

RULE IV
COMPOSITION AND FUNCTIONS OF THE
INDEPENDENT FACT-FINDING COMMITTEE (IFFC)

1. The INDEPENDENT FACT-FINDING COMMITTEE (IFFC) shall be composed of members from the Interim Cease- fire Monitoring Committee (ICMC) which shall be deemed terminated upon the creation and convening of the IFFC.
2. Notre Dame University Peace Center and Maguindanao Professionals and Employees Association (MAPEA) representatives shall act as Chairman and Vice Chairman, respectively, of the IFFC.
3. Additional membership to the IFFC may be made upon joint approval by the GRP and MILF Panels through their respective CCCH.
4. The IFFC shall function under the following terms:
 - a. Conduct fact- finding inquiries on matters referred to it by either COORDINATING COMMITTEE, copy furnished the other COMMITTEE, on alleged violations/infractions of the provisions of this implementing guidelines and ground rules of the GRP-MILF AGCH.
 - b. Issue appropriate letters of invitation to persons whose declaration/statements may shed light on matters under consideration by the IFFC.
 - c. Coordinate with other offices and/or organization as may be necessary in the exercise of its functions/tasks.
 - d. Conduct inquiries and submit reports on the results of the inquiry supported by appropriate evidence to the CCCH with utmost dispatch. All reports and proceedings shall be considered classified. Only final reports and proceedings may be divulged to the public by either or both GRP and the MILF Panel.
 - e. Adopt such internal procedure as may be appropriate to enable it to expeditiously perform its task and submit the same to the CCCH for its notation and approval.
 - f. Employ the expertise of certain impartial persons or organizations in the performance of its assigned tasks.
 - g. Perform such other acts as may be jointly determined to be necessary by the CCCH for the accomplishment of its assigned tasks.

Annex "B")

AGREEMENT
(Creating a Quick Response Team)

THE OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE QRT

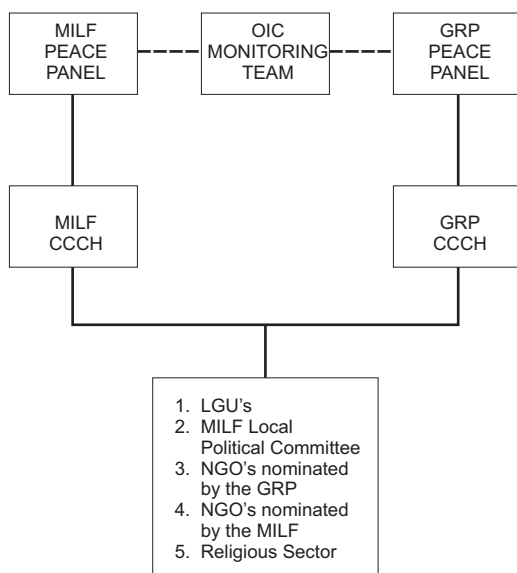
1. The official office and Address of the QRT is at the Notre Dame University Peace Education Center in Cotabato City. Sub-offices on other areas may be opened as the need arises.
2. The QRT shall be composed of the following:
 - 2.1. GRP Representatives - three (3) permanent members from the Secretariat of the GRP CCCH, three (3) alternative members;
 - 2.2. MILF Representatives - three (3) permanent members from the Secretariat of the MILF CCCH, three (3) alternative members;
 - 2.3. IFFC principals: one representative each from the Notre Dame University (NDU), Maguindanao Professionals, and Employees Association Inc. MAPEA and Cotabato City Media Multi-Purpose Cooperative (CCMMPC). Additional membership to the IFFC may be made upon joint approval by the GRP and MILF Panels through their respective CCCH. The names of the alternate members to the QRT will be submitted as soon as possible.

The QRT can avail itself of assistance from the following in the performance of its duties:

 - a. The AFP Commander in the area concerned;
 - b. The PNP Provincial Director of the Province concerned;
 - c. The MILF Commander or any other Officers operating in the area; and
 - d. The POCs in the Region, Province and Municipality concerned.
3. The QRT shall immediately addressed a reported conflict/confrontation between the GRP and the MILF forces. The reports may come from any of the following sources: GRP Panel and MILF Panel and the IFFC.
4. Upon receipt of the report, the QRT Chairman shall immediately convene the QRT, make proper presentation to the two principals and coordinate with the local commanders through the official representatives of both the GRP and the MILF regarding the quick response. It may conduct ocular inspections to assess and defuse the tension of the conflict.
5. The GRP and MILF CCCH shall convene immediately to assess and respond to the reports and findings of the QRT.

(Annex "C")

STRUCTURE OF THE IMPLEMENTING
MECHANISM UNDER THE DRAFT IMPLEMENTING
GUIDELINES ON THE SECURITY ASPECT OF THE
TRIPOLI AGREEMENT OF 2001



Joint Communique

The Peace Panels of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) today signed a set of guidelines for the Cessation of Hostilities during the visit of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo in Kuala Lumpur.

Under the guidelines, the parties have agreed to normalize the situation in the conflict areas in Mindanao and pave the way for the successful conduct of relief, rehabilitation and development programs.

The guidelines implement an Agreement for Peace entered into by the parties in Tripoli, Libya on June 22, 2001. These prohibit hostile and provocative acts, the harboring of criminals and lawless elements, and all other acts that endanger the safety and security of the people in Mindanao.

The guidelines not only silence the guns for the peace of mind of the people. These also prohibit all public pronouncements that will tend to undermine the sincerity or credibility of both parties in waging peace.

Toward this end, the war of bullets and of words shall cease; and the parties shall follow the road to peace through earnest and principled negotiations. This will accord the Bangsamoro people permanent spaces for peace, self-reliance and development.

To prove the sincerity of both sides, the implementation of the ceasefire is open for all the people and the world to witness. Local monitoring teams shall include representatives of Local Government Units, Non-Governmental Organizations and the religious sector. Representatives of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), especially Malaysia, Libya and Indonesia, have been invited to observe and monitor the ceasefire as well as the implementation of all agreements.

In this spirit, the Panels express their appreciation and recognition of the noble efforts of H. E. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, H. E. Prime Minister Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohammad and the Great Leader Col. Muammar Khadaffy of the Arab Socialist Libyan Jamahiriyyah for advancing the cause of lasting peace, development and stability of the region.

The Panels agreed to hold their next round of talks within September 2001 to discuss the remaining agenda items on rehabilitation, development and ancestral domain.

AUGUST 7, 2001

ATTY. JESUS G. DUREZA
Chairman, GRP Peace Panel

AL HAJ MURAD EBRAHIM
Chairman, MILF Peace Panel

Appendix M

Moro Islamic Liberation Front
(MILF)

Central Committee
Office of the Chairman



الجمهورية الإسلامية
(1-0-0-0)
اللجنة المركزية
مكتب الرئيس

Ref. No.

Date

الرقم: ١٠٠٠٠٠
التاريخ:

20 January 2003

Your Excellency:

In the name of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), we send our profound and felicitous greetings of peace on behalf of the Bangsamoro People of our historic homeland in Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan.

The Bangsamoro People have always looked upon your country, the United States of America, and its people, with esteem as a great champion of freedom and democracy. The founding fathers of the American Nation as firm believers of "self-evident truths" and "inalienable rights" have become inspirations for the Moro Nation in our quest for the right to self-determination.

Your ambassador to the Philippines, His Excellency Francis J. Ricciardone, who recently addressed the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines, raised the question of the US Government's desire to know "what they (MILF) want or how it's (the Problem) going to be resolved."

We take this opportunity to inform Your Excellency that the MILF is a national liberation organization, with leadership supported by the Bangsamoro People, and with legitimate political goal to pursue the right of the Moro Nation to determine their future and political status. As part of this process, we have an on-going negotiation with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines to arrive at a negotiated political settlement of the Mindanao conflict and the Bangsamoro problem, through the mediation and tender of good offices of the Government of Malaysia.

Your desire to be informed of the MILF goals reminds us of the historic, legal and political relationship between the Moro Nation and the US Federal Government as borne out by documents, treaty relations and instruments. Your official policy, under President William McKinley's Instruction to the First Philippine Commission of 1900, treated the Moro Nation initially as a Dependent Nation similar to the North American Indian Nations under treaty relations with the US Federal Government. Subsequently, the Moro Nation was accorded the political status of a US protectorate under the Kiram-Dates Treaty of 1899, confirming the Treaty of 1878 between the Sultan of Sulu and Spain.

Your policy to consider the Philippine archipelago as an unincorporated territory of the United States paved the way for the US Government to administer affairs in the Moro territories under a separate political form of governance under the Moro Province from the rest of the Philippine Islands.

Your project to grant Philippine Independence obliged the leaders of the Moro Nation to petition the US Congress to give us an option through a referendum either by remaining as a territory to be administered by the US Government or granted separate independence fifty years from the grant of Philippine Independence. Were it not for the outbreak of the Pacific War, the Moro Nation would have been granted trust territory status like any of the Pacific islands states who are now independent or in free association with the United States of America.

On account of such circumstances, the Moro Nation was deprived of their inalienable right to self-determination, without waiving their plebiscitary consent. Prior to the grant of Philippine Independence on July 4, 1946, American Congressional leaders foresaw that the inclusion of the Moro Nation within the Philippine Commonwealth would result in serious conflicts in Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan, arising from the inability of the Filipino leaders to govern the Moro people. This condition or states of affairs have continued to prevail to the present day.

In view of current global developments and regional security concerns in Southeast Asia, it is our desire to accelerate the just and peaceful negotiated political settlement of the Mindanao conflict, particularly the present colonial situation in which the Bangsamoro people find themselves.

We are therefore appealing to the basic principle of American fairness and sense of justice to use your good offices in rectifying the error that continuous to negate and derogate the Bangsamoro People's fundamental right to seek decolonization under the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV) of 1960. For this purpose, we are amenable to inviting and giving you the opportunity to assist in resolving this predicament of the Bangsamoro People.

With assurances of our highest esteem and cordial regards.

Very truly yours,


SALAMAH HASHIM
Chairman

His Excellency George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House, Washington D.C.
United States

Through: His Excellency Francis J. Riodardone
United States Ambassador to the Philippines and Palau
US Embassy, Roxas Boulevard, Manila

Appendix N

IN THE NAME OF GOD THE BENEFICENT, THE MERCIFUL

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT ON THE ANCESTRAL DOMAIN ASPECT OF THE GRP-MILF TRIPOLI AGREEMENT ON PEACE OF 2001

The Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) herein referred to as the “Parties” to this Agreement,

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Agreement for General Cessation of Hostilities dated July 18, 1997 Between the GRP and the MILF, and its Implementing Administrative and Operational Guidelines;

The General Framework of Agreement of Intent Between the GRP and the MILF dated August 27, 1998;

The Agreement on the General Framework for the Resumption of Peace Talks Between the GRP and the MILF dated March 24, 2001;

The Tripoli Agreement on Peace Between the GRP and the MILF dated June 22, 2001;

The Tripoli Agreement Between the GRP and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) dated December 23, 1976 and the Final Agreement on the Implementation of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement Between the GRP and the MNLF dated September 2, 1996; Republic Act No. 6734, as amended by R.A. 9054, otherwise known as “An Act to Strengthen and Expand the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM)”; ILO Convention No. 169, in correlation to the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples, and Republic Act No. 8371 otherwise known as the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997, the UN Charter, the UN Universal Declaration on Human Rights, International Humanitarian Law (IHL), and internationally recognized human rights instruments; and

Compact rights entrenchment emanating from the regime of dar-ul-mua'hada (or territory under compact) and dar-ul-sulh (or territory

under peace agreement) that partakes the nature of a treaty device. For the purpose of this Agreement, a “treaty” is defined as any solemn agreement in writing that sets out understandings, obligations, and benefits for both parties which provides for a framework that elaborates the principles declared in the Agreement.

HAVE AGREED AND ACKNOWLEDGED AS FOLLOWS:

CONCEPTS AND PRINCIPLES

1. It is the birthright of all Moros and all Indigenous peoples of Mindanao to identify themselves and be accepted as “Bangsamoros”. The Bangsamoro people refers to those who are natives or original inhabitants of Mindanao and its adjacent islands including Palawan and the Sulu archipelago at the time of conquest or colonization and their descendants whether mixed or of full native blood. Spouses and their descendants are classified as Bangsamoro. The freedom of choice of the Indigenous people shall be respected.
2. It is essential to lay the foundation of the Bangsamoro homeland in order to address the Bangsamoro people's humanitarian and economic needs as well as their political aspirations. Such territorial jurisdictions and geographic areas being the natural wealth and patrimony represent the social, cultural and political identity and pride of all the Bangsamoro people. Ownership of the homeland is vested exclusively in them by virtue of their prior rights of occupation that had inhered in them as sizeable bodies of people, delimited by their ancestors since time immemorial, and being the first politically organized dominant occupants.
3. Both Parties acknowledge that ancestral domain does not form part of the public domain but encompasses ancestral, communal, and customary lands, maritime, fluvial and alluvial domains as well as all natural resources therein that have inured or vested ancestral rights on the basis of native title. Ancestral domain and ancestral land refer to those held under claim of ownership, occupied or possessed, by themselves or through the ancestors of the Bangsamoro people, communally or individually since time immemorial continuously to the present, except when prevented by war, civil disturbance, force majeure, or other forms of possible usurpation or displacement by force, deceit, stealth, or as a consequence of government project or any other voluntary dealings entered into by the government and private individuals, corporate entities or institutions.

4. Both Parties acknowledge that the right to self-governance of the Bangsamoro people is rooted on ancestral territoriality exercised originally under the suzerain authority of their sultanates and the Pat a Pangampong ku Ranaw. The Moro sultanates were states or *karajaan/kadatuan* resembling a body politic endowed with all the elements of nation-state in the modern sense. As a domestic community distinct from the rest of the national communities, they have a definite historic homeland. They are the “First Nation” with defined territory and with a system of government having entered into treaties of amity and commerce with foreign nations. The Parties concede that the ultimate objective of entrenching the Bangsamoro homeland as a territorial space is to secure their identity and posterity, to protect their property rights and resources as well as to establish a system of governance suitable and acceptable to them as a distinct dominant people.
5. Both Parties affirm their commitment to mutually respect the right to one's identity and the parity of esteem of everyone in the political community. The protection of civil rights and religious liberties of individuals underlie the basis of peace and justice of their totality of relationships.
6. Both Parties agree that the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity (BJE) shall have the authority and jurisdiction over the Ancestral Domain and Ancestral lands, including both alienable and non-alienable lands encompassed within their homeland and ancestral territory, as well as the delineation of ancestral domain/lands of the Bangsamoro people located therein.
7. Vested property rights upon the entrenchment of the BJE shall be recognized and respected subject to paragraph 9 of the strand on Resources.

TERRITORY

1. The Bangsamoro homeland and historic territory refer to the land mass as well as the maritime, terrestrial, fluvial and alluvial domains, and the aerial domain, the atmospheric space above it, embracing the Mindanao-Sulu-Palawan geographic region. However, delimitations are contained in the agreed Schedules (Categories).
2. Toward this end, the Parties enter into the following stipulations:
 - a. The GRP and MILF as the Parties to this Agreement commit themselves to the full and mutual implementation of this framework agreement on territory with the aim of resolving outstanding issues that emanate from the consensus points on Ancestral Domain.

- b. The Parties confirm their understanding that the mutual goal of reaching an agreement on Bangsamoro territory specific to mapping the outlying borders and the boundaries affecting local government units will lead to consolidation of the agreed texts on the Ancestral Domain Strands.
- c. The Parties affirm that the core of the BJE shall constitute the present geographic area of the ARMM, including the municipalities of Baloi, Munai, Nunungan, Pantar, Tagoloan and Tangkal in the province of Lanao del Norte that voted for inclusion in the ARMM during the 2001 plebiscite.
- d. Without derogating from the requirements of prior agreements, the Government stipulates to conduct and deliver, using all possible legal measures, within twelve (12) months following the signing of the MOA-AD, a plebiscite covering the areas as enumerated in the list and depicted in the map as Category A attached herein (the "Annex"). The Annex constitutes an integral part of this framework agreement. Toward this end, the Parties shall endeavor to complete the negotiations and resolve all outstanding issues on the Comprehensive Compact within fifteen (15) months from the signing of the MOA-AD.
- e. The areas covered by Category B are reflected on a map and list attached herein as agreed to by the Parties. Category B (the "Special Intervention Areas") refers to conflict affected areas outside the BJE which shall be the subject of special socio-economic and cultural affirmative action implemented by the Central Government pending the conduct of a plebiscite not earlier than twenty-five (25) years from the signing of the Comprehensive Compact to determine the question of their accession to the BJE. The areas reflected are subject to further negotiations by the Parties. The Annex constitutes an integral part of this framework agreement.
- f. Internal Waters
The BJE shall have jurisdiction over the management, conservation, development, protection, utilization and disposition of all natural resources, living and non-living, within its internal waters extending fifteen (15) kilometers from the coastline of the BJE area.

g. Territorial Waters:

(1) The territorial waters of the BJE shall stretch beyond the BJE internal waters up to the Republic of the Philippines (RP) baselines south east and south west of mainland Mindanao. Beyond the fifteen (15) kilometers internal waters, the Central Government and the BJE shall exercise joint jurisdiction, authority and management over areas and all natural resources, living and non-living contained therein. The details of such management of the Territorial Waters shall be provided in an agreement to be entered into by the Parties.

(2) The boundaries of the territorial waters shall stretch beyond the 15-km. BJE internal waters up to the Central Government's baselines under existing laws. In the southern and eastern part of the BJE, it shall be demarcated by a line drawn from the Maguling Point, Palimbang, Province of Sultan Kudarat up to the straight baselines of the Philippines. On the northwestern part, it shall be demarcated by a line drawn from Little Sta. Cruz Island, Zamboanga City, up to Naris Point, Bataraza, Palawan. On the western part of Palawan, it shall be demarcated by a line drawn from the boundary of Bataraza and Rizal up to the straight baselines of the Philippines.

The final demarcation shall be determined by a joint technical body composed of duly-designated representatives of both Parties, in coordination with the appropriate Central Government agency in accordance with the above guidelines.

h. Sharing of Minerals on Territorial Waters: Consistent with paragraphs 5 and 6 of the provisions on Resources, all potential sources of energy, petroleum in situ, hydrocarbon, natural gas and other minerals, including deposits or fields found within the territorial waters, shall be shared between the Central Government and the BJE in favor of the latter through production sharing agreement or economic cooperation agreement.

I. Activities Allowed on Territorial Waters:

(1) The Parties shall have authority to carry out the following activities within the territorial waters:

(a) Exploration and utilization of the natural resources, whether living or non-living, within the territorial waters;

- (b) Establishment and use of artificial islands, installations and structures;
- (c) Marine scientific research;
- (d) Protection and the preservation of the marine environment;
- (e) Conservation of living resources;
- (f) Regulation of shipping and fishing activities;
- (g) Enforcement of police and safety measures, including interdiction of the entry and use of the waters by criminal elements and hot pursuit of suspected criminal elements;
- (h) Regulation and control of contraband and illegal entry of prohibited materials and substances, including smuggling; and
- (I) Such other measures as the Parties may otherwise mutually agree.

(2) Activities relating to exploration and utilization of non-living resources, as well as paragraphs (c) and (d) of the Authorized Activities will be carried out on a joint basis agreed by the Parties which may be in the form of production sharing agreements or joint development pacts.

j. Establishment of a Joint Commission:

(1) The Parties shall establish a Joint Commission, which shall elaborate the modalities for the implementation and the carrying out of the Authorized Activities and the measures adopted in cases of allegation of breach, and carry out any other functions which may be assigned to it by the Parties for the purpose of implementing the joint management of resources.

(2) The Joint Commission shall consist of one representative from each Party, who are assisted by advisers as may be needed. The conclusions of the Joint Commission shall be adopted by consensus and shall only be recommendatory in nature. Only when the conclusions of the Joint Commission are adopted by the Parties do they become binding on the Parties.

k. Demarcation and Status of Territorial Waters:

The demarcation and status of the BJE territorial waters shall be finally determined together with the demarcation and final status of Category B territory of the BJE.

3. From and after entrenchment of compact rights over the Bangsamoro homeland and the territorial jurisdictions for associative governance shall likewise embrace those under

proclamation for agricultural and human settlements intended for the Bangsamoro people, all alienable and disposable lands, pasture lands, timberlands together with all existing civil and military reservations, parks, old growth or natural forests declared as forest reserves, watersheds, mangroves, fishponds, wetlands, marshes, inland bodies of water; and all bays, straits and channels found within the BJE.

4. All territorial and geographic areas in Mindanao and its adjacent islands including Palawan, and the Sulu archipelago that have been declared recognized, and/or delineated as ancestral domain and ancestral land of the Bangsamoro people as their geographic areas, inclusive of settlements and reservations, may be formed or constituted into political subdivisions of the Bangsamoro territorial jurisdictions subject to the principles of equality of peoples and mutual respect and to the protection of civil, political, economic, and cultural rights in their respective jurisdictions.
5. For purposes of territorial delimitation, the Parties have agreed to the joint determination of geographic areas encompassed within the territorial borders of the Bangsamoro homeland and territory based on the technical maps and data submitted by both sides as provided above.

RESOURCES

1. The BJE is empowered with authority and responsibility for the land use, development, conservation and disposition of the natural resources within the homeland. Upon entrenchment of the BJE, the land tenure and use of such resources and wealth must reinforce their economic self-sufficiency. Among the purposes or measures to make progress more rapid are:
 - a. Entry into joint development, utilization, and exploitation of natural resources designed as commons or shared resources, which is tied up to the full setting of appropriate institution, particularly affecting strategic minerals;
 - b. Stimulation of local economy by a range of mechanism, in particular the need to address unemployment and improvement of living conditions for the population in the BJE;
 - c. Intensification of measures needed to uproot the cause of poverty in the BJE through responsible harnessing and development of its natural resources; and
 - d. Undertaking program review of public services, industrial or trade-related and agrarian-related issues in situations of different sectors of the society in the BJE, which acquire

communal character deriving from the special nature of their industry.

2. The Bangsamoro People through their appropriate juridical entity shall, among others, exercise power or authority over the natural resources within its territorial jurisdiction:
 - a. To explore, exploit, use or utilize and develop their ancestral domain and ancestral lands within their territorial jurisdiction, inclusive of their right of occupation, possession, conservation, and exploitation of all natural resources found therein;
 - b. To conserve and protect the human and natural environment for their sustainable and beneficial enjoyment and their posterity;
 - c. To utilize, develop, and exploit its natural resources found in their ancestral domain or enter into a joint development, utilization, and exploitation of natural resources, specifically on strategic minerals, designed as commons or shared resources, which is tied up to the final setting of appropriate institution;
 - d. To revoke or grant forest concessions, timber license, contracts or agreements in the utilization and exploitation of natural resources designated as commons or shared resources, mechanisms for economic cooperation with respect to strategic minerals, falling within the territorial jurisdiction of the BJE;
 - e. To enact agrarian laws and programs suitable to the special circumstances of the Bangsamoro people prevailing in their ancestral lands within the established territorial boundaries of the Bangsamoro homeland and ancestral territory within the competence of the BJE; and
 - f. To use such natural resources and wealth to reinforce their economic selfsufficiency.
3. The BJE, and the Central Government agree on wealth-sharing based on a mutually agreed percentage ratio in favor of the BJE through an economic cooperation agreement or arrangement over the income and revenues that are derived from the exploration, exploitation, use and development of any resources for the benefit of the Bangsamoro people.
4. The BJE is free to enter into any economic cooperation and trade relations with foreign countries: provided, however, that such relationships and understandings do not include aggression against the Government of the Republic of the Philippines; provided, further that it shall remain the duty and obligation of the Central Government to take charge of external defense. Without prejudice to the right of the

Bangsamoro juridical entity to enter into agreement and environmental cooperation with any friendly country affecting its jurisdiction, it shall include:

- a. The option to establish and open Bangsamoro trade missions in foreign countries with which it has economic cooperation agreements; and
- b. The elements bearing in mind the mutual benefits derived from Philippine archipelagic status and security.

And, in furtherance thereto, the Central Government shall take necessary steps to ensure the BJE's participation in international meetings and events, e.g. ASEAN meetings and other specialized agencies of the United Nations. This shall entitle the BJE's participation in Philippine official missions and delegations that are engaged in the negotiation of border agreements or protocols for environmental protection, equitable sharing of incomes and revenues, in the areas of sea, seabed and inland seas or bodies of water adjacent to or between islands forming part of the ancestral domain, in addition to those of fishing rights.

5. Jurisdiction and control over, and the right of exploring for, exploiting, producing and obtaining all potential sources of energy, petroleum, in situ, fossil fuel, mineral oil and natural gas, whether onshore or offshore, is vested in the BJE as the party having control within its territorial jurisdiction, provided that in times of national emergency, when public interest so requires, the Central Government may, during the emergency, for a fixed period and under reasonable terms as may be agreed by both Parties, temporarily assume or direct the operations of such strategic resources.
6. The BJE take or profit split from total production shall be shared with the Central Government on a percentage ratio of 75:25 in favor of the BJE. All royalties, bonuses, taxes, charges, custom duties or imposts on natural resources and mineral resources shall be shared by the Parties on a percentage ratio of 75:25 in favor of the BJE.
7. The legitimate grievances of the Bangsamoro people arising from any unjust dispossession of their territorial and proprietary rights, customary land tenures, or their marginalization shall be acknowledged. Whenever restoration is no longer possible, the GRP shall take effective measures or adequate reparation collectively beneficial to the Bangsamoro people, in such quality, quantity and status to be determined mutually by both Parties.

8. All proclamations, issuances, policies, rules and guidelines declaring old growth or natural forests and all watersheds within the BJE as forest reserves shall continue to remain in force until otherwise modified, revised or superseded by subsequent policies, rules and regulations issued by the competent authority under the BJE.
9. Forest concessions, timber licenses, contracts or agreements, mining concessions, Mineral Production and Sharing Agreements (MPSA), Industrial Forest Management Agreements (IFMA), and other land tenure instruments of any kind or nature whatsoever granted by the Philippine Government including those issued by the present ARMM shall continue to operate from the date of formal entrenchment of the BJE unless otherwise expired, reviewed, modified and/or cancelled by the latter.
10. The Parties recognize an immediate need to establish a five-member BJE economic-expert mission (the "Mission") bearing in mind that the functioning of the economy and the operation of institutions involve financial and other resource management as well as parallel or complementary means, by which the Bangsamoro Development Agency (BDA) will manage and administer resources acquired for the above purposes, especially in coordinating strategies and programs for cooperation in all fields.
11. The Mission acts as a link in the conduct of BJE's associative parallel relationships and shall cooperate fully with all organizations involved in implementation of the peace settlement. It shall launch a plan and joint international appeal for the reparation and development of the conflict affected areas in Mindanao. Persons appointed thereto must be familiar with the specific economic, political and legal characteristics in the Mindanao-Sulu-Palawan region and must possess recognized competence, integrity, and high moral standing.
12. Cognizant that the Mission will benefit from international expertise, both the Central Government and the BJE hereby join the Third Party facilitator in inviting international funding institutions or equivalent entities for reconstruction and development to appoint two members and to designate one as the Chairman. The BJE shall designate one member as Co-Chairman. The remaining two members shall each be designated by the Central Government and the BJE.

GOVERNANCE

1. The recognition and peaceful resolution of the conflict must involve consultations with the Bangsamoro people free of any imposition in order to provide chances of success and open new formulas that permanently respond to the aspirations of the Bangsamoro people.
2. The ultimate objective of entrenching the Bangsamoro homeland as a territorial space is to secure their identity and posterity, to protect their property rights and resources as well as to establish a system of governance suitable and acceptable to them as a distinct dominant people. The Parties respect the freedom of choice of the indigenous peoples.
3. The Parties agree to invite a multinational third - party to observe and monitor the actual implementation of the comprehensive compact which will embody the details for the effective enforcement of this Agreement. The participation of the third - party shall not in any way affect the status of the relationship between the Central Government and the BJE.
4. The relationship between the Central Government and the BJE shall be associative characterized by shared authority and responsibility with a structure of governance based on executive, legislative, judicial and administrative institutions with defined powers and functions in the Comprehensive Compact. A period of transition shall be established in a Comprehensive Compact specifying the relationship between the Central Government and the BJE.
5. In the context of implementing prior and incremental agreements between the GRP and MILF, it is the joint understanding of the Parties that the term “entrenchment” means, for the purposes of giving effect to this transitory provision, the creation of a process of institution building to exercise shared authority over territory and defined functions of associative character.
6. The modalities for the governance intended to settle the outstanding negotiated political issues are deferred after the signing of the MOA-AD. The establishment of institutions for governance in a Comprehensive Compact, together with its modalities during the transition period, shall be fully entrenched and established in the basic law of the BJE. The Parties shall faithfully comply with their commitment to the associative arrangements upon entry into force of the Comprehensive Compact.
7. The Parties agree that the mechanisms and modalities for the actual implementation of this MOA-AD shall be spelt out in the Comprehensive Compact to mutually take such steps to enable it to occur effectively. Any provisions of the MOA-AD requiring amendments to the existing legal framework shall come into force

upon signing of a Comprehensive Compact and upon effecting the necessary changes to the legal framework with due regard to non derogation of prior agreements and within the stipulated timeframe to be contained in the Comprehensive Compact.

8. The Parties agree that the BJE shall be empowered to build, develop and maintain its own institutions, inclusive of, civil service, electoral, financial and banking, education, legislation, legal, economic, and police and internal security force, judicial system and correctional institutions, necessary for developing a progressive Bangsamoro society, the details of which shall be discussed in the negotiation of the Comprehensive Compact.
9. The Parties further agree to undertake activities which will enhance the capacity of the government institutions during the transition through technical assistance, information-sharing and human resource development.
10. Matters concerning the details of the agreed consensus points on Governance not covered under this Agreement shall be deferred to, and discussed during, the negotiations of the Comprehensive Compact.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned, being the representatives of the Parties
hereby affix their signatures.

Done this 5th day of August, 2008 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

FOR THE GRP:
RODOLFO C. GARCIA
Chairman
GRP Peace Negotiating Panel

FOR THE MILF:
MOHAGHER IQBAL
Chairman
MILF Peace Negotiating Panel

WITNESSED BY:
DATUK OTHMAN BIN ABD RAZAK
Special Adviser to the Prime Minister

ENDORSED BY:
AMBASSADOR SAYED ELMASRY
Adviser to Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Secretary General
and Special Envoy for Peace Process in Southern Philippines

IN THE PRESENCE OF:

DR. ALBERTO G. ROMULO
Secretary of Foreign Affairs
Republic of the Philippines

DATO' SERI UTAMA DR. RAIS BIN YATIM
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Malaysia

About the Authors



Lualhati M. Abreu had been into grassroots organizing since her activist days in the late 1960s at the University of the Philippines. She spent more than half of her life in Mindanao, grassroots organizing in the countryside and research work for several non-government organizations in the island. As a research fellow of Alternate Forum for Research in Mindanao (AFRIM), she has done a number of researches on the Moro people's issues and concerns. She received in July 2008 the UP Centennial Gawad Likhaan award in creative nonfiction Filipino division for her work, *Agaw Dilim, Agaw Liwanag*. She is presently completing her masteral studies in history at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City.



Maria Carinnes P. Alejandria is a faculty of the University of Santo Tomas where she teaches anthropology and history. She is currently completing her degree in PhD in Anthropology at the University of the Philippines. Her research interests include anthropology of religion, legal pluralism, and gender studies. Her interest in Muslim studies may be seen in her works such as *The Customary Laws of the Pala'wans: Conflict Resolution in the Context of Legal Pluralism*, *The Political Action Repertoire of Muslims in Palawan*, *The Syncretic Policy: Transformations in the Political Action Repertoire of Muslims in Pala'wan*. She is now pursuing a study on the religious-political behavior of Muslim women in Southern Thailand in reference to globalization.

🕌 **Kenneth E. Bauzon** is currently an associate professor of Political Science at St. Joseph's College in New York City. He received his B.A. degree in Political Science from Silliman University and his graduate degrees (master's degrees in history and in political science and a doctorate in political science) from Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. His fields of specialization are development studies and social change in the Third World, international political economy, and foreign and strategic policy in East Asia and the Pacific. He was a recipient of the Faculty Development Fellowship from the University of the Philippines, among others. He has authored two other books, namely, *Martial Law in the Philippines: Paradigms of Explanation and Liberalism* and *The Quest for Islamic Identity in the Philippines*. Bauzon has also contributed to scholarly anthologies and journals and has served on several journal editorial boards in the Philippines and the United States.

🕌 **Abhoud Syed M. Lingga**, executive director of the Institute of Bangsamoro Studies in Cotabato City, Philippines, holds a Master of Arts in Islamic Studies and Master of Arts in Education degrees. He received trainings in conflict prevention and peace building conducted by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR); human rights and people's diplomacy in the University of New South Wales; local government and civil society by Friedrich Naumann Stiftung in Germany; and leadership and management. He participated in various sessions of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations in Geneva. Lingga had been Associate Professor at the Mindanao State University in Maguindanao and lecturer at Cotabato City State Polytechnic College, Sultan Kudarat Islamic Academy Foundation College, and Mindanao State University Buug College. His research interests are on Bangsamoro self-determination, conflict management, human rights, sustainable development, and Islamic education.

🕌 **Alexander Martin Remollino** is a senior writer for Bulatlat.com, where he has written a number of articles about the Moro people's struggle, among others. His writings on Mindanao have usually dealt with the conflict's historical background, as well as developments in the GRP-MILF peace talks and violations of the 1996 GRP-MNLF peace agreement. He has also recently started writing a column for UPI Asia Online.

☪ **Temario C. Rivera** is professor of comparative politics and international relations at the International Christian University of Tokyo. He was formerly professor and chair of the UP Department of Political Science in Diliman, Quezon City. His major book, *Landlords and Capitalists: Class, Family and State in Philippine Manufacturing* (UP Press, 1994) won the outstanding publication award by the National Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) and the Manila Critics Circle in 1996. He holds a PhD in development studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and has been editor-in-chief of the *Philippine Political Science Journal* since 1993.

☪ **Bobby M. Tuazon** is the Director of CenPEG's Policy Study, Publication, and Advocacy (PSPA) program. He served as head of the Political Science Committee, Department of Social Sciences, in the University of the Philippines, Manila. He has co-authored and edited seven books dealing on human rights, environment, U.S. national security, politics and electoral reform, corruption and governance.

☪ **Julkipli Wadi** is an associate professor of Islamic Studies at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City.

