

SOLUTIONS TO THE MINDANAO CONFLICT

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For good reasons, concerned citizens of the Philippines, from the highest officials of the nation to the lowly villagers in the countryside, have focused their attention at one time or another on the current phenomenon described by some people as the "Mindanao conflict." The direct and indirect effects of this conflict on the lives of the Filipino people can only be ignored at tremendous peril to the stability of the Philippine nation. Health experts tell us that a diseased part of the human body in many cases affects seriously in terms of infection or disturbed function other parts or even the whole body itself. Similarly, in the realm of government, a troublesome part of a country's body politic affects parts or the whole of that body itself. The Mindanao conflict, therefore, is not a problem of any particular Filipino alone; it is a problem of all Filipinos. While the solution of the Mindanao conflict is primarily a function of government, it is demonstrable that the task is impossible without the support and wholehearted cooperation of the concerned citizenry.

Many students of the Mindanao conflict tend to debate on its cause (or causes), attributing it to one or more of such human inventions as religion, politics, economics, education or culture. One thing appears certain among them, however, and that is, that solving the problem calls for no simplistic move or two on the part of the government but a complex approach that may call for much of its resources.

The Existing Variables

As the antagonists continue to maneuver and fire on each

other as opportunity permits, the variables in the area of conflict more or less stand as follows:

1. Armed men of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) are scattered in Mindanao, particularly, in the province of Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Basilan, the two Lanao provinces, Sultan Kudarat, Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, and Davao Sur. They numbers approximately 9,500 and are equipped with assorted high-powered firearms.

2. The total number of firearms of various types in the hands of the civilian population in Mindanao is approximately 60,000.

3. The logistical support of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) from local sources, either imposed by them or on voluntary basis, is augmented by aid from foreign sources secured through their known leaders, Nur Misuari in Tripoli, Libya, Hashim Salamat in Cairo, Egypt, and former officials and Muslim political leaders in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The leaders in Jeddah are self-exiled because they have been disenchanted with the present Philippine government. In plain language, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in Mindanao is supported by foreign countries with money, arms and ammunition.

4. Nur Misuari, the leader of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), and his field commanders refuse to compromise with the Philippine government for a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Mindanao because, as it is today, the government insists invariably on having its own terms accepted by the National Liberation Front. The government believes that its own terms, if accepted, are not only good for itself, but also good for the people including the Muslims themselves. On the other hand, the leaders of the National Liberation Front (MNLF) believe that the Muslims are not offered any concessions substantial enough even for the purpose of their complete autonomy; furthermore, the terms preferred by the government in its terms of settlement will completely set back the eventual achievement of the socio-religious and political aspirations of the Muslims.

5. There has been a ceasefire agreement for the Mindanao conflict, often called the Tripoli Agreement, signed by representatives of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) headed by Nur Misuari and representatives of the Philippine government headed by Deputy Minister of the Ministry of National Defense Carmelo Z. Barbero.

6. The Philippine government has held a referendum in the provinces (enumerated above, item 1) in the Autonomous Region in accordance with the stipulation in the Tripoli Agreement, particularly in regions IX and XII. The government, through the referendum, gauged the reaction of the people on matters related to the Regional Autonomous Government.

The Backdrop: Place and People

Before going on with the discussion of the conflict, a brief description also of the physical geography and the people of the battleground as well as their history may be in order. Both the place and the people serve as the "chopping block" of the entire bloody action and thus give a clearer picture of the extent, relationships and components of the scenario of conflict.

Mindanao is the second largest island in the entire Philippine Archipelago. Parts of its land mass are elevated into rugged mountain ranges, uneven plateaus topped by the Bukidnon - Lanao plateau and hills of various shapes and sizes. The rest of its land mass is unevenly divided into verdant valleys and broad plains and extensive swamps. There exists in Mindanao various industries and its manufacturing and commercial enterprises are fast developing, enhanced by its tremendous water resources that are being harnessed into electric power as well as for irrigation; agriculture is its chief industry. Located on its central highland is Lake Lanao, second largest in the country. The lake is the source of the Agus River that flows and drops into the beautiful Maria Cristina Falls. The harnessing into electric power of the Agus River system which has already began will eventually afford cheap electric energy

throughout the entire island of Mindanao. There are hundreds of rivers on the island. The most extensive and navigable ones are the Agusan River and the Rio Grande, better known to the Mindanao people by its native name, Pulangi River. These two river systems afford cheap means of transportation.

Current estimates place the number of people who profess the religion of Islam and are called Muslims at 1.8 millions. The Muslims in Southern Philippines maintain ethno-linguistic communities, the principal ones being the following:

1. *Maranao* – mostly inhabit the two Lanao provinces and the border regions between these provinces and Bukidnon and Cotabato.

2. *Tausog* – mostly inhabit the scattered islands in the southernmost flank of the Philippines but are mostly concentrated around Jolo in Sulu province.

3. *Maguindanao* – chiefly concentrated in the Cotabato provinces.

4. *Samal(1)*** – inhabit parts of the Sulu islands, especially the outer ones.

5. *Yakan* – inhabit Basilan and its nearby islands and areas in the Zamboanga provinces.

6. *Badjao* – the famous gypsies of Sulu, inhabit parts of the Sulu chain of islands.

7. *Sanguil* – inhabit South Cotabato.

8. *Jama Mapun* – inhabit Cagayan de Sulu Island.

9. *Melebuganon* – inhabit Balabac Island between Palawan and North Borneo.

Assuming that these ethno-linguistic communities were able to maintain equivalent birth and death rates, the population and corresponding percentage for each community can be estimated by extrapolation or projection on the basis of the 1960 and 1970 census. On the basis of the total Muslim population of 1.8 millions as reported in the 1970 census, each ethno-linguistic community today should constitute the following population and corresponding percentage indicated: Maranao, 546,300 or 30.35 per-

cent; Tausog, 243,000 or 13.50 percent; Maguindanao, 696,000 or 38.70 percent; Sama(1), 180,000 or 10.00 percent; Yakan, 59,400 or 3.30 percent; Badjao, 22,140 or 1.23 percent; Sanguil 20,700 or 1.15 percent; Jama Mapun, 20,160 or 1.12 percent; and, Melebuganon, 11,700 or .65 percent. The major Muslim groups of Maguindanao, Maranao, Tausog, Sama(1), and Yakan who are in one way or another involved or affected in the Mindanao armed confrontation, constitute fully ninety-five percent of all Muslims in the Philippines.

Historical Genesis of the Conflict

Although the same can be said by the Christian majority, the Muslim minority believes that it is a victim of history. The discovery of the Philippines for Spain by Magellan on March 16, 1521 and the subsequent years of colonization by Spain and the United States of America have led to the alienation of the Muslims from their other brother Filipinos.

At the coming of the Spaniards, the people of the Philippine islands were not united into a cohesive nation in the context of modern concepts of nationhood. However, they sprang from a common ancestry and therefore had common or closely similar social organizations and institutions. All this commonality radically changed when the ancestors of what developed into the modern Filipino Christian society of today were subjugated, not really by means of the oft-vaunted Spanish armed might, but by the more subtle and yet more effective means of religious conversion.

In the case of the ancestors of what developed into the modern minority Muslims society of today, who were found mostly in the Southern Philippines or Mindanao-Sulu-Palawan region, they resisted and fought the Spaniards as dedicated nationalists in defense of their homeland and patrimony as well as their religion. For strategic and logistical reasons, they were able to maintain, for as long as historically possible, their own human dignity and practical independence from the Spaniards throughout the long

Spanish reign of more than three hundred years. Unfortunately enough in history the Christianized natives were gradually drawn into the Spanish-Moro conflict to fight their former Muslim brothers and this armed conflict between the Spaniards, together with their Filipino Christianized supporters on one side, and the Muslims on the other side began what seemed to have become an enduring cleavage between Christians and Muslim in the Philippines.

Justifiably or not, many other acts or evidence, such as piracy, slave raiding, kidnaping and other crimes against persons and property have been attributed by Spanish chroniclers to the Muslims of Southern Philippines and have become accepted today as cardinal truths by most people who read them in history books. As a matter of fact, these activities were largely part of the acts of war between the Spaniards and their Filipino Christian allies on the one hand, and the Muslims on the other and came down through history as "the Moro problem." Because of this so-called "Moro problem" the Muslims have been considered enemies of both the Philippine government and the Christian Filipinos.

The lot of the Muslims did not substantially improve in the successive governments that took over from Spain, even when the government was already in the hands of the Christian Filipinos. Progressively, the Moro problem assumed the nature of liberation and independent movements until, in contemporary time, it became the Mindanao Independent Movement (MIM) that afterward generated the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) that now engages in armed combats with government troops in the current Mindanao conflict.

It would seem, therefore, that the Mindanao conflict is the complex result of centuries-old inequities and misunderstandings that had been neither entirely religious nor ethnic in origin. From this point of view, the inequities and misunderstandings had been social, political and economic in nature, which can be traced back to as early as the coming of the Muslim missionaries in Mindanao, the coming of the Spanish colonizers, and the beginning of the

American colonization of the Philippines.

Immediate Causes

In fact, the present armed conflict may have been precipitated movements of certain Christian armed economic and mutual protection groups. These group were supposed to be associations of particular Christian ethnic groups for the purpose of "grabbing the lands" of Muslims. From the Muslim viewpoint, these were Filipino versions of terrorist organizations that engaged in robbery, landgrabbing and the destruction of Muslim property and lives. In response to these movements Muslim groups organized counter-movements to protect themselves that sometimes went beyond mere defense. Until the government successfully disengaged and suppressed these forces, life in Mindanao was perilous. Since the purported purpose of these organizations was the acquisition and defense of economic goods, many observers of the conflict tended to believe that economic matter is one cause of the Mindanao conflict.

Whatever had happened that further increased the original level of antagonism between either the Christian or government, on one hand, and the Muslim, on the other, incidental to the historical Moro problem, was aggravated by the emergence of the Mindanao Independence Movement (MIM) in 1968 headed by Datu Udtog Matalam, former governor of Cotabato province who lost his bid for reelection in the 1970 gubernatorial election. The movement later on initiated an armed confrontation with the government. The armed confrontation was strengthened by the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), a younger movement, headed by Nur Misuari which replaced the Mindanao Independence Movement (MIM) in 1969. The new movement is more aggressive and dedicated to the cause of Mindanao independence.

The original Mindanao Independence Movement was a political organization dedicated to a political end, independence for Mindanao. Its successor, naturally, is a political organization.

Even though the aims of the Mindanao Independence Movement and the present Moro National Liberation Front, no less, were tainted by personal political ambitions of the organizers (a demonstrable claim), some people believe that another cause of the Mindanao armed confrontation is political in nature.

When Martial Law was declared by the Philippine government on September 21, 1972, the Moro National Liberation Front capitalized on it. Even though the government explained that Martial Law is an instrument to save itself from being destroyed by its enemies, within and without, the Moro National Liberation Front unleashed the propaganda that Martial Law was a device of the government to christianize the Muslims. The propaganda line of the Moro National Liberation Front portrayed the ban on firearms as an affront on the way of life of the Muslims. And, when the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) required the surrender of all firearms in civilian hands, some political groups in Mindanao made this appear as an official stratagem to effect forcible conversion of Muslims to Christianity. The propaganda has convinced many people who now believe that religion may be the cause of the Mindanao armed confrontation.

During the whole period of the Mindanao conflict up to the very present time there has been reports of money and arms sent to the Moro National Liberation Front from nations outside the Philippines, particularly some countries in the Arab Middle East. The reports were indirectly confirmed by the presence of modern weapons of war in Mindanao. Some of these weapons were captured or surrendered to the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Part of the reports mentioned streams of outgoing and incoming members of the Moro National Liberation Front, going out for military and insurgency training in foreign countries and coming in presumably to participate actively in the armed struggle against the Philippine government. Is external interference another cause of the problem ?

At this point, it is pretty clear that there is no simple cause or causes of the Mindanao conflict. It follows that there is no simple

solution for it. Nonetheless, some solution must be found soon. In the meantime the conflict continues and development of all kinds are hampered or are at a standstill in the region because of the disturbed peace and order condition at the scene of the conflict. The complete dismantling of Martial Law and full restoration or return of the government to normalcy depends upon the restoration of peace and order in Mindanao. In theory, Martial Law was lifted all over the Philippines except in Regions IX and XII, the regions of the Muslim. But in fact and practice the President of the Philippines still holds on to his power under Martial Law of making laws by means of decrees. In view of the situational and factual presentation in the preceding discussion, this paper, therefore, proposes solutions to the conflict and recommendations to make the solutions effective and to insure success.

Solutions

The solutions to the Mindanao conflict may be divided, in time frame, into the short and the long range. The short and the long range solutions complement each other. Ideally, they should be undertaken simultaneously. The former is calculated to effect immediate results which, however, may be transitory or temporary. The results of the latter, may become discernible only after a long period of time, but it may be more lasting. Either result reinforces the other.

The ceasefire agreement between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Moro National Liberation Front is an example of the short range solution. The immediate purpose of the agreement was to stop the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Moro National Liberation Front from shooting each other so that each side could learn from the other what he was fighting for, with the humane possibility of a mutual solution to the problem. After the ceasefire they were to meet each other away from the din of exploding guns around a negotiation table, the commonly used venue for resolving the conflict of civilized men. The negotiation

between the authorized representatives of the combatants that followed the ceasefire should have resulted into making permanent the temporary ceasefire. The solution to the conflict between them that they tried to negotiate would have been an example of the long-range solution. Unfortunately, they failed to agree on the long-range solution of their problems. As a result of their failure, they eventually returned to the field of combat to resume hostilities.

The fighting going on in Mindanao between government armed forces and those who opposed them may be puzzling to some people. This may be so because while many rebels in Mindanao have been coming down from the hills to return to the fold of the law in response to the government's policy of attraction and program of amnesty and reconciliation, still there has been no let-up in the ongoing war, nothing long enough to indicate even only a semblance of the restoration of the disturbed peace and order condition of Mindanao.

But to students of the Moro problem or Moro wars, the puzzle is not very hard to unravel. The Moro wars have been characterized by alternating periods of flare-ups and lulls. The lulls could last days, months, years or decades. The wars have the characteristic of a volcano.

Short Range Solutions

The following short-range solutions to the Mindanao conflict may make it possible to bring peace and stability to the war-torn region:

1. Full implementation of the provisions of the Tripoli Cease Fire Agreement. This action on the part of the Philippine government will remove the political cause of the conflict. The regional governments organized for Regions IX and XII should be endowed not with a watered-down autonomy but an honest-to-goodness autonomy.

The national government should give adequate financial

support to the autonomous regional governments and should continue to do so until such a time when the revenues of the latter become adequate for their own needs. The financial support of the autonomous governments may be augmented with money from foreign sources, either through their own solicitation or that of the national government. The autonomous governments should assume the principal role in pushing Mindanao development programs, in accelerating the rehabilitation of people and places in Mindanao, in accelerating and expanding works on reconstruction, and in a meaningful pacification campaigns.

The autonomous government should establish linkages with all government and private agencies engaged in development and in the improvement of the life of the people. It should work hard to overcome as fast as possible the disparities in development between Mindanao and other regions of the Philippines. It should gain the trust and confidence of multi-cultural population and its leaders. Knowing the characteristics and traits of the people in Mindanao, diverse as they are, should bring these people into the fold of the law and the control of autonomous government.

2. Full implementation and application of the Muslim Codefied Personal Law, called *Shariah*. Although the Code was already approved, mere approval is meaningless without implementation and application. To implement and apply the law, Muslim courts should be organized and established in Autonomous Regions IX and XII. Qualified Muslim judges and court officials should be appointed to operate the courts. In addition to various offices for Muslim affairs such as the Hadj agency, Ministry of Muslim Affairs, Muslim attaches to embassies, aids to building mosques and madrasah schools, the Amanah Bank, the application of the *Shariah* should be able to remove the last vestiges of the claim that religious matter is a cause of the Mindanao conflict.

In connection with the speculation of some people that the principal cause of the non-implementation and non-application of the *shariah* is the inavailability of qualified judges to preside over the courts and the lack of qualified lawyers to practices in

them, here is a suggestion offered for consideration of government authorities. This suggestion, however, presumes that the national government invests the responsibility toward the autonomous regional governments to qualified Muslim members of the present Integrated Bar of the Philippines and subsequently law school graduates that have taken courses on the *shariah*, such as the present law students of Mindanao State University, after they have passed the Philippine bar examination. Once this responsibility becomes an exclusive concern of the autonomous regional government, this government should appoint and organize a *Shariah* Qualification Standard Board from among *shariah* experts in the regions. This Board should examine the would-be judges and lawyers of the *Shariah* Courts to be established in the regions. It should also lay down guidelines in qualifying judges and lawyers for the courts. It should recommend judges to be appointed to the courts and lawyers to be certified, both actions to be done by the regional governments. This suggestion is based on the belief that the *shariah* is a concern particular to the Muslims and as such the *shariah* experts should have special competence and therefore the implementation, application and administration of the *shariah* should be in their hands.

3. Utilize the services of Muslim to police their own rank in order to establish and keep peace. The present Muslim officers and men already in active service in the armed forces of the Philippines should be organized into a brigade-size or larger unit in accordance with the needs of the troubled areas in Mindanao. They should constitute the police and security forces in the areas of the conflict. If the officers and men in active service are not enough Muslim reservists and new recruits may be mustered into service in order to complete the strength of the police-security forces. The unit should be under a commander with unified staff officers representing a fair distribution among the Muslim ethnic groups. Each ethnic group should have its own local unit.

4. Use Muslim leaders in the pacification campaign. It is generally recognized that each Muslim ethnic community has its leaders. By leader is meant a person of stature who is not only respected but actually loved by the people. The true leader of the people is not necessarily a politician. The true leaders of the people not only know the character or traits of their people, but also know their needs, their sufferings, their aspirations but also know their needs, their sufferings, their aspirations and hopes. The people will believe their true leaders because they are men of integrity, unselfish service, honesty and truthfulness or high credibility. They have no personal and selfish interests for their paramount interest is the welfare of the people.

These leaders should serve as emissaries of the government to the Muslim communities. They should launch a massive information campaign for peace. They should have the backing and full support of both the government of the autonomous region as well as the national government. All local officials should be required by the government to extend cooperation and support and never hamper the work of the community leaders or become stumbling blocks through petty jealousies and self-interests.

The community leaders should explain to the people the real objectives of the government. They should convince the people of the sincerity of the government in carrying out such objects as:

- (a) Preserving and enhancing Islam, not only as the heritage of the Muslims, but also as the heritage of the Filipino people;
- (b) Preserving and advancing Islamic culture and tradition;
- (c) Promoting the well-being of the Muslim communities;
- (d) Rectifying the distorted image of the Muslim history.

The government should order and undertake a systematic expurgation, revision, rewriting or writing of new suitable history or textbooks that will reflect the true Muslim moral character, intellectual aptitude, social acumen and historic accomplishment.

To improve Muslim-Christian relationship, it is more reasonable that there should be elimination of the negative image of

Christians held of them by the Muslims as well as vice versa. In the same category is the elimination of negative or derogatory terms, names and descriptions of and about each other.

(e) Bringing the levels of development of Muslim people and society, through massive programs, in all fields – political, social educational, economic – to the levels of the most modern ethnic Filipino people and society in other parts of the country.

(f) Putting an end to all forms of discrimination against the Muslims in employment, whenever they are qualified for employment openings, in the higher echelons and agencies of the government including government-controlled or owned corporations, commercial or business enterprises.

(g) Giving the Muslims the kind of education suitable for them as Muslims but within the context of Philippine laws and the Constitution.

5. Create an inter-agency task force for Muslim community development. The task force should be composed of government officials selected on the basis of their proven loyalty to the present Philippine government, their honesty and integrity, their sympathetic attitude toward Muslims, their long experience in works among the Muslims, and their selfless dedication to public service. The task force may be a composite group of Muslims, Christians, and non-Muslim-non-Christians – their only credentials are the qualifications already mentioned.

The task force, whenever possible, should involve concerned citizens, community leaders, business or civic organizations especially those interested and engaged in social uplift projects for Muslim communities. The task force should have the full backing and support of both autonomous and national governments.

The task force should, in its work of development, plan or implement activities and programs such as the following:

(a) Human resources programs.

(b) Infrastructure programs.

(c) Massive literacy and adult education program.

(d) Human settlement program concerned with housing, health, water, energy, transportation or mobility, clothing, education and technology, ecological balance, economic base, sports and recreation, home industries.

(e) Manpower development, skill training program.

(f) Food production program.

(g) Formulate scheme for agricultural, fisheries, industrial credits, loan associations, cooperatives, marketing associations for Muslim communities.

(h) Land redistribution and protection of Muslim traditional land ownership;

(i) Socio-cultural development program.

6. Disarmament or collection of loose firearms. Mere confiscation of arms or their voluntary surrender by civilians, rebels, terrorists and the lawless never attain any substantial degree of success. The arm holders acquired them through several means but principally through purchase. They purchased these firearms with their hard-earned cash or other resources and they treasure them as valued and prestigious property. It is very difficult for them to surrender their firearms for nothing.

In some cases, the firearms holders would rather fight using their guns than surrender them. A person is emboldened by the possession of firearms although ordinarily he lacks courage for fighting or trouble-making. Without firearms, he may never want to fight. The possession of firearms is like liquor in its effect; it gives a person a false sense of security, strength and bravery.

A financing scheme should be established to purchase the firearms. As already mentioned, 60,000 of them are in the hands of the civilian population of Mindanao. As long as these weapons of war remain in the hands of civilians the peace and order situation in Mindanao will remain explosive and only an uneasy peace and order could be established at certain short periods of time.

In addition to allowing the Amanah Bank to accept firearms as payment for going on the hadj, this bank should be authorized

to purchase them. For this purpose, branches of the bank should be organized in all important cities and towns in the areas of conflict. These bank branches should, in addition to its normal functions as banking institution, purchase the loose firearms in Mindanao.

The guidelines for the firearms purchase may be:

(a) Only firearms verified and certified by competent authorities to be cached or kept in Mindanao should be purchased. This means that guns from other areas of the country should be excluded in the purchase.

(b) Only modern guns, foreign-made and of recent vintage should be purchased. This means that guns of native origin or manufacture, such as *paltik*, are excluded.

(c) Gun-running or smuggling must be prevented by all means. The normal course of the laws in this matter should be strictly observed and enforced.

(d) Once the firearms are purchased, there should be a fail-safe system to keep and account for them. The system of safe-keeping should insure that these weapons of war will never again get back into the hands of the sellers or other civilians or anybody who may be tempted to sell them again to wrong persons.

7. *Massive information dissemination.* A massive information campaign in Muslim communities should be undertaken by all suitable agencies of the government with the help and cooperation of the private sector. The Muslim communities must always be kept informed of what the government is doing, is planning to do, what is happening in other parts of the country, and what is happening in other parts of the world.

Information on health and medicine, on productivity activities, on arts and culture, dangers of communism and other ideologies, on other human-interest activities should help dispel the belief of the Muslim that they are intentionally, through lack of communication, isolated and also neglected. All information media should be utilized — print, radio, television, cinema.

8. *Infrastructure projects.* Infrastructure projects should be set in full swing in Mindanao. The farm-to-market roads should be given top priority. Isolation is the friend of the lawless because isolated places become his sanctuary, but accessibility is advantageous to the people and the government. Other infrastructures such as irrigation systems, bridges, power lines for electrification, dams for water systems, port facilities, should not be neglected.

9. *Reconstruction and rehabilitation.* Many people believe that the civilian population in Mindanao has suffered more than the armed combatants even in terms of casualties. The estimated number of civilian casualties from 1973 to 1978 is 75,000 to 100,000. Whole villages in Mindanao have been burned down, farms devastated and work animals and other means of productivity destroyed. Thousands of people have been rendered homeless, displaced and became refugees. They are living on the kindness and generosity of friends and relatives in order to survive.

The people victimized by the armed conflict deserve war damage compensation and prompt ministrations to their needs. Rehabilitation of people and places in Mindanao is an immediate national concern. This deserves the undivided attention, not only of the government, but also of the fortunate Filipino citizenry not affected in the Mindanao conflict. Only tangible and observable results in rehabilitation and reconstruction work will satisfy the suffering people. Mere promises, no matter how grand in scale, will never do.

There are priorities in rehabilitation and reconstruction. The reconstruction and rehabilitation of mosques and living quarters of the people are top priorities. Reconstruction and rehabilitation work on people and communities is very expensive but war that has all the promise of escalating will cost a great deal more.

10. *Recreation Centers.* Recreation centers based on the

government physical fitness program should be established in Muslim communities. These centers should be a joint venture of the government, the private sector, athletic and civic foundations. The centers should serve as community assembly points for socializing and discussing of important issues affecting the people, in addition to their natural functions of providing wholesome recreation and training for sportmanship and teamwork. The games in the centers are means of dissipating the excess energy of youth which if not given expression or outlet may be used for doing mischief.

11. The role of the Armed Forces of the Philippines in the Mindanao conflict. It is very obvious that the ultimate objective of an army in any war is to triumph over its opponent. There are many factors that determine the outcome of war. On one hand a combination of one or more sets of these factors leads to victory and on the other hand, other clusters of different factors in combination with one another lead to defeat. Such factors as number and type of armed forces its training quality, discipline and morale, its tactics and strategies, its support from the civilian population, its resources in manpower, supply, armament and equipment, the state of a country's economy, the political and diplomatic capabilities of a country's leaders, efficiency of the government in operating and managing a war, all are decisive in winning or losing a war.

The armed forces of a nation is not to be adjudged as good or bad only on the basis of such attributes such as tactics and strategies, maneuverability and mobility, efficiency and bravery in battle. The characteristics and performances of the present military units deployed by the government to tackle the military aspect of the Mindanao conflict need to be reformed and improved. It is important that the military in Mindanao is able to perform its role in the most satisfactory and honorable ways expected of troops that, through the necessity of protecting the interests of

the government, were drawn into combat against their own countrymen in a civil strife. Immediate action of the government is needed on the following:

a) The government should use in Mindanao only professional soldiers, well-trained and disciplined. Raw recruits that may have been utilized in the early days of the conflict only to meet the needs of the hour must be replaced with a professional soldiers.

b) The government should muster out or, if so warranted by evidences, court martial or charge with crime in the civil courts officers and men who have committed crimes against the people in Mindanao. These should include those who killed civilians indiscriminately, looted or burned down houses, disturbed the peace by indiscriminate firing, raped, maltreated civilians and prisoners, etc.

c) The government should not allow the armed forces to act like an army of occupation in the areas of the conflict. They must be made to realize that they are there to protect the civilians and the interests of the government. The government should not allow the military to wrest authority from the duly constituted officials of government of the towns, cities and provinces of the areas of conflict. Even the work of the military to keep peace in the areas of the conflict should be a joint responsibility of the civil government and the military.

d) The government should not allow the military to interfere or intervene in the normal operation of businesses in the areas of the conflict nor must it be allowed to interfere in the normal flow and movements of goods and services in these areas.

e) The government should require armed forces personnel to stay in camp when they are not actively pursuing their normal duties and responsibilities. This is important because their mere presence in urban centers or rural areas can be hazardous to the civilian population, sometimes provoking attacks by either rebels or the lawless in population centers.

f) Petty rivalries and jealousies or outright enmities between various branches of the military must be placed under strict control and should be resolved by higher authorities immediately.

These forces should cooperate in keeping the peace rather than in breaking it.

g) The government should counteract by means of a vigorous information campaign in the areas of the conflict the possibility of coalition between the communist New People's Army and the Moro National Liberation Front. This can be done by focusing information on the known and accepted fact that communism is an implacable enemy of Islam. It should be pointed out that a communist government established through revolution never rule in partnership with non-communist elements but uses all means including force to eliminate or purge non-communist elements in government and, whenever possible, in society.

h) The government should stop altogether the practice of extending political and economic patronage of Muslim leaders who claim control and dominance of the Muslim population but attend only to their self and family interests. This practice breeds ill-feeling in the Muslim masses. What the government should do is give the Muslim peoples equality in enjoying benefits and in the opportunities for development and advancement.

i) The government should establish a Muslim Council composed of wise and learned non-partisan Muslim religious, academic, economic and socio-cultural leaders with recognized capabilities and integrity to advise it on all Muslim affairs. This is in addition to the existing offices for Muslim affairs that may be performing good work but are nevertheless subject to political influences and consideration.

Long-Range Solutions

The long range solutions are as follows:

By all standards and criteria, education is the most effective solution to the disturbed peace and order condition in Mindanao. Incidentally, it is in this field where there is a consensus among Muslims that they were treated with indifference, if not outright neglect by their government. They believe that there exist inequities in educational resources and opportunities, particularly in

terms of the availability of schools from the lowest to the highest levels.

The need for knowledge that only education can make available to a person in the maintenance of peace and order in society cannot be overlooked. No one can stop a bullet once fired from a gun. But good education, certainly, can stop the man holding the gun from ever pulling the trigger that fires the bullet. Ignorance makes a man reckless. He feels he has nothing to live for; he has nothing to hope for. Ignorance is the 'twin' brother of poverty. The ignorant man has not much in worldly possession or intangible values which are in his interest to defend.

The propaganda line used successfully with poor Muslims runs like this: 'Fight against the haves; you have nothing to lose except the shirt on your back. If you win you have everything to gain!' Educate the Muslim and he becomes careful, discriminating, wise. He will have much hope for the future. His education alone is enough value for him to defend. The effectiveness of education in the solution of any problem including the Mindanao conflict lies in what it accomplishes in the life of the individual. Education affects individuals as follows:

1. Education is an agent of change. It is discipline of mind and character through study of instruction. Education civilizes the "raw nature of man" and makes man truly human. Education brings progress and modernization and frees him from the shackles of conservatism and traditionalism; it brings him into experimentation and innovation; it liberates the individual from the bondage of ignorance and superstition; it brings him into the light of knowledge and the acquisition of the scientific attitude, the accuracy of modern mathematics and science. Education enables the individual to travel from the narrow street of provincialism into the broad avenue of the cosmopolitanism.

Education always means change for the better. In the case of the Muslims, centuries-old attitudes and behavior have to be changed. Certain old values including pseudo-Islamic values have to be changed.

2. Education prepares the individual for a profession or voca-

tion. Some educators define education as preparation for life. This definition proved to be limited in scope. Education is not only a preparation for life but it is a process concerned with life and living. In a world that requires the individual to be a keen competitor in order to survive, that requires him to have specialized skill or expertise; only he who is prepared for a profession or vocation is able to meet the competition.

Educate the Muslim so that he become a professional. He will use his time in pursuit of his profession. Without education, he will be idle and more likely than not he will use his time and effort in planning and fomenting revolution or mischief. The devil can always use idle hands for his own purpose.

3. Education is a surveyor of knowledge and information. It is aptly said "know the truth and the truth makes you free!" Education gives the individual the means to safeguard himself from the inroads of propaganda. The uninformed is gullible. The well-informed is discriminating. The ignorant accepts myths and fantasies, gossips and rumors as facts. The well-informed can sift the truth out of a mass of data, half-truths and outright falsehoods.

Educate the Muslims and he will gain understanding. He will understand what his government is doing for him and for other Filipinos. He will understand what his government and all other Filipinos means to him. Understanding is a prerequisite to rapport and social accommodation and adjustment. Rapport and social accommodation and adjustment leads to peace and order in society.

4. Education is a means of social mobility. In a democratic society education makes it possible for people from lower social strata to move upward. Vertical social movement is a value in a status-conscious society. Education is the great leveler and equalizer. The stratification of Muslim society in the *dato* system gives undue advantage to the high 'caste', the social elite. Inter-marriage between lower and higher social classes, impossible in the old days, is made possible through education. The virtue of tolerance is developed through education. A Muslim runs into trouble with his

fellows because of his attitude that other people outside his own tribe are 'non-persons.' This is due to his closed society. For example, he refers to his Christian brothers as "sarawang a tau" (different people, foreigners).

Educate the Muslim to give him a broad view of mankind. Help him attain the status of a 'world citizen'. If he recognizes the Arab as his brother, and not so only in spiritual matters, education should enable him to understand and even love the rest of mankind, more particularly his own Filipino brothers.

5. Education brings about productivity. All studies conducted on the relationship between education and productivity have shown that they have direct relation to each other. Among the working classes, the literate produce more than the illiterate on a man to man basis, everything being equal, of course. The majority of illiterate Muslims cannot cope up with life and living. In the industrialization of Mindanao, the Muslim looks askance at his lack of employment in the factories already operating or being built. The answer is very simple. The illiterate is hardly the man to run or operate a factory, much less to manage it. Although he is supposed to be given priority in employment in his area when work opportunities are made available in industries or factories, he needs enough education in how to operate machines, in industrial sanitation and health, in industrial safety, in labor-management relationships and cooperation, in skill training and development, and in all other necessary matters in the operation of modern machines and industries. In protest against what appears to him to be discrimination even in his own homeland and in raging jealousy of those who are enjoying employment and the 'fat' of his ancestral land, he joins any movement that may redress his grievances, regardless of whether the movement is righteous or criminal. But education will qualify him for productive employment. He will be able to produce the goods and services that will motivate to live and he will see that he can enjoy fully the product of his labor only there is peace and order in his area. Instead, therefore, of being the troublemaker, he will become a peace keeper.

Socio-Economic Solution

The social and economic causes of the Minanao conflict are intertwined. It is more convenient to treat them together. The effectiveness of the socio-economic solution of the conflict lies, in the case of the social, in its high emotional value that touches the sensitive human spirit, and, in the case of the economic, in its direct fulfillment of physical human needs. The socio-economic imbalance in this country is of such unbelievable magnitude that before Martial Law and the onset of the accelerated implementation of land reform by the government, ninety-two percent (92%) of the wealth of the nation belonged to less than ten thousand (10,000) extremely rich families constituting only five percent (5%) of the entire population. Therefore, any remedial measure to redress the socio-economic imbalance must, in the ultimate analysis, do away with too much concentration of wealth in the hands of a few. The implementation of such measure may take the form of any of the following:

1. *Social justice.* Emphasis on this government policy is not new; it took place as far back as the Commonwealth Government administration of President Manuel L. Quezon. A fair deal to the people in the form of equity in the distribution of wealth was inaugurated. Land and economic reforms are parts of this policy. "Land for the landless" became a slogan of the government. Economic activities of all types were accelerated by the government. To open more avenues of employment, home industries were established, promoted and patronized.

In the Muslim situation, it is not a matter only of land redistribution. It is a matter of helping them safeguard and protect their own traditional tribal lands. It is incumbent upon the government to deliver this help because it is not a part of the Muslim landholding system to possess titles to their lands. The Muslims have the concept of "ancestral land ownership" and actual occupation and utilization are, to them, sufficient as a stamp of this "ownership." As long as the country's laws of land ownership are not willing to consider the Muslim's concept of traditional

land ownership, there will always be land troubles in Mindanao, which will serve to fan the flame of discontent and armed uprising and secession. It should never be forgotten that the Muslims fought for nearly four hundred years to defend their own land. In accordance with his religion, the Muslim can rightly resort to *jihad* (holy war) if he loses his land or home to an encroaching *kaffir* (non-believer of Islam).

The concept of *public land* to the Muslim is different from that of the government's. To the Muslim, public land means *hak o La* (land of God, inalienable) and as such belongs to the *agama* (politico-socio-religious unit organized around a mosque). It belongs to the community of Muslims, even if it may be utilized for earning a living by a particular individual, family or tribe. The land may even be titled in the name of an individual, family or tribe. The land may even be titled in the name of an individual but if the land is bought by a Christian, without the concurrence of the entire clan to whom the land is entrusted, or the consent and acknowledgement of the elders of the *agama*, the land is still deemed owned by the community. On this concept lies the trouble for the many Christian settlers who bought lands from so-called Muslim leaders only to find out later that there are a hundred other claimants to original ownership of the land in exactly the same degree as the sellers claimed for themselves.

2. *Equalizing resource development and economic opportunities.* The Muslim's feel that what they have in the form of natural resources are exploited without benefit to them. Filipino and foreign corporations or industries still exploit natural resources in their areas. They are not even afforded employment in these ventures that are exploiting resources in Mindanao. 'Imported' labor is utilized or employed in the operation of manufacturing or productive industries in their own midst.

Although they number two million (2,000,000), in the area of the national government, they have no representation in the echelons or in important government agencies. Throughout the whole history of their own country, not one Muslim was appoint-

ed to the Supreme Court of the Philippines. It is very rare for a Muslim to be appointed to office of cabinet (ministry) or sub-cabinet level. There is no Muslim member in the Civil Service Commission, Philippine Historical Commission, Institute of National Language, National Textbook Board, Commission on Election.

Even in the planning and formulation of curriculum for Philippine schools in which Muslim interest is at stake, the Ministry of Education and Culture and Sports has not called upon the services of truly qualified Muslim educators who are experts in curriculum-making. It is very tragic to note that disaster becomes inevitable when the Ministry of Education and Sports rams into the 'throat' of the Muslim a curriculum not acceptable to him because it is in all aspects a Christian program of studies. (A more detailed discussion of this point will be taken up later on under the broad topic of Islamic institutions and historic legacy and heritage.)

The development of the Muslim areas in terms of mining and other industries, agricultural business and productivity, trade and commerce, animal industries and fisheries, home industries, self-employment and small business entrepreneurship,, energy and power industries, infrastructures such as roads, bridges, irrigation, port facilities is at the tail-end of the spectrum of Philippine national development. 'The present Marcos administration seems to be attempting a Herculean job of accelerating development in Mindanao. But it needs plenty of time to really overcome the lethargy and cumulative disparate development effects caused by the long years of neglect by all his predecessors.

Islamic, Historic Legacy and Heritage

The educational aspiration of the Muslims is a persistent one that started after their ancestors were converted to Islam. This began between the last quarter of the thirteenth and the first quarter of the fourteenth centuries. This aspiration, in part, was generated by the necessity of learning the Arabic alphabet and script which would enable him to read and/or write selected verses of the Ara-

bic Qur'an.

In spite of the desire of the Muslims for education, after the Moro Province was created by the Philippine Commission under the American regime in the Philippines on June 1, 1903, a remarkable enrolment of Muslim children in the public system of education was registered in the Province. Gowing wrote of the reaction of Tasker Bliss, second governor of the Moro Province thus:

Bliss was distressed that out of some 20,000 school age children in the Moro Province in 1906, only 4,231 were actually in school and of those only 570 were Moros. He then called for more emphasis on education for the Moros, urged that it be relevant to their actual needs and that it be in the Moro languages initially and that preference be given to native teachers. "In time," he said, "the teaching of English to the great mass of pupils will naturally come, but it should be the last thing taught them instead of the first."

Bliss also advocated government support for the traditional "pandita" schools of the Moros. In 1908, the Province began supplying books, paper, blackboards and other supplies to these schools whose curricula were limited almost entirely to the reading and writing of Arabic rendering of Moro languages. Bliss thought government support was worthwhile if only to win the goodwill of the Moros who would appreciate the government's interest and learn that its attitude was friendly and not hostile. "In time," he wrote, "There will be a natural transition from the pandita schools, to the lowest grade of the public school," (Peter G. Gowing, "America's Proconsuls in Mindanao, 1899-1913," *Mindanao Journal*, VIII: 1-4, pp. 21-22).

Some people explained that the lack of enthusiasm of the Muslims for education, as reflected by the low enrolment of their children in the public schools under the American regime during the early years, was the result of the Muslim parents' fear that if

subsequent wars between them and the Americans should occur, which they never discounted to happen, their children would be made hostages by the Americans. This did not preclude the other possibility that the Muslim parents also believed that the public schools would lead to their children's conversion to Christianity. It would seem that from the beginning of their ancestor's contact with the Muslim Arabs that brought them Islam, the Filipino Muslims focused their educational aspiration on Islamic education which they believed to be the only kind most relevant to them.

The problem of education with regard to the Muslims may have been solved had the Muslims been given a different type of education based on the Islamic model. At any rate, the idea of Bliss of a relevant education for the Muslims was confirmed later, in 1921, by the Monroe Educational Survey Commission that recommended, among others, in its report a different education for the Muslims in the Southern Philippines. The fact that the recommendations of the Commission concerning education for the Muslim was not even properly implemented even on trial basis in the past is reason why it should not be implemented now.

Islamic institutions and historic legacy and heritage may be utilized in appropriate forms in terms of the following:

1. Integrate the madrasah schools into the Philippine system of education. Doing so, in the Muslim areas should solve the problem of Muslims with regard to the question of educational relevance. In order to implement this integration, a national project should be authorized and created by the National Government through the Ministry of Education and Culture and Sports by way of its local agencies in the Muslim areas and the different madrasah schools. This integrated school system should become a school system for the Muslims. The program of instruction of the Muslim school system should be a combination of the curriculum of the schools in the present school systems of the government and the madrasah schools modified and structured in such a way that it will prepare the Muslims for life in Islam and for the mo-

dern professions or vocations.

The program of instruction should have the underpinnings of Islamic elements of culture and philosophy, thus overcoming the Muslim objection to the present educational system which is structured to result in essentially an education for a Christian. It should be recognized as a right of the people in all those areas with a population of more than fifty percent (50%) Muslim to opt for the use of this school system in those areas. This is to say that the Muslim system of education should not only be used in the autonomous areas of regions IX and XII but in all areas with predominantly Muslim population wherever these are found throughout the Philippines. To enjoy this right, the people of Muslim enclaves outside of regions IX and XII should file a formal application to the regional government in the Muslim area to which they wish to join their schools, stating among other things their desire to join the Muslim system of education and the reasons why they are qualified to do so. Upon approval of the application, the concerned regional government should issue a certificate of eligibility and approval to the applicant. With this approval, the applicant can begin using the Muslim school system in its area at the appropriate place and time for its operation.

2. Recognize the historic role and heritage of the Muslims in the Philippines. The Muslim Filipino claim to being a historic people is legitimate. Islam and its culture is a Philippine influence that Filipinos in general should appreciate. These are elements that contribute to the enrichment of the heritage and national identity of the entire Filipino people and should be made an important part of the national heritage of all Filipinos. The present administration of the Philippine government, in effect, when it proclaimed the observance of Muslim holidays throughout the areas of the autonomous regional governments of Regions IX and XII, when it erected monuments and recognized the contributions of Muslims heroes especially for the defense of the Filipino homeland and freedom, when it contributed to the building of mosques, madrasah schools, and even whole Muslim villages, etc., has

acknowledged the significant role of the Muslim and their heritage in the national life of the country.

There are still more that should be done for the Muslims. If the Filipino national flag truly symbolizes the freedom or independence of the Filipino people, then all the Filipino people in general and all those among them who fought for freedom especially should be recognized and honored by means of this flag. The Muslims should be represented with a symbol on the flag. A large sector of the Muslim population spearheaded by Muslim intellectuals asked the Philippine government that they should be represented with one more ray of the sun on the Filipino flag. The aspiration of the Muslims to be represented on the flag was based on the fact that the eight rays of the sun on the present flag represent the eight provinces of Central Luzon that revolted against Spain in 1898 in pursuit of freedom and independence of the Filipino people. While it was true that the Muslims did not revolt at that time, a revolt was not really necessary since they had never fully surrendered to the Spaniards their independence. If revolt was the requirement for representation on the flag, they had already done the 'revolting' at the earliest time that enabled them to maintain practical independence from Spain up to the very year 1898 and even to the earliest years of American occupation of the Philippines. If for one reason or another they cannot be represented with an added ray to the sun of the flag, another appropriate symbol to represent them can be devised.

What is important to them is a recognition of their fight for dignity and freedom for which much Muslim blood had been spilled including the more recent war with Japan in World War II. It is a common knowledge that the war with Japan did not only threaten the freedom of the Filipinos but for some years the Japanese had taken it away from the Filipinos. It is also a fact that cannot be denied that the Muslims contributed in liberating the Philippines from the Japanese.

3. The most suitable elements of the cultural heritage of the Muslims in terms of crafts and industries, arts and literature must

be preserved as part of the Filipino heritage. These cultural elements should be not only preserved, but also utilized as part of instruction in the Muslim system of education and free option accorded to the Christians if they so desire to use these in their own schools.

4. Utilize Muslim institutional, social and political organizations. History tells us that the Americans in their pursuit to integrate the Muslim into Philippine policy began by discrediting Muslim institutions and organizations with the end of abolishing them. The *dato* system of the Muslims was the first at which they directed their attention and efforts, but they failed in their attempt. Their experience had shown that there was nothing to gain in abolishing the *dato system* and that it is not yet even feasible to do so at this time. The *dato system* is an integral part and inseparable to the complex socio-political arrangements that accounts for the viability, operation and survival of the present-day Filipino Muslim Society. A destruction of the *dato system*, in effect, is tantamount to the destruction of this society.

It must be pointed out that the *dato system* is the centerpiece in keeping the proper order and functioning of Filipino Muslim society. It is the operating principle in the complex socio-political arrangements consisting of *adat* (tradition customary laws, rules, regulations, norms of conduct and behavior, etc.), *tari-tib* (socio-political order in society, customary laws, rules, regulations, etc.), Instead of thinking of destroying or abolishing the *dato system*, the government may as well use it in the solution of the socio political-problems of the Muslims. Regarding its use in these matters, Gowing and McAmis stated:

. . . In 1913, Dr. Najeeb M. Saleeby, Lebanon-born American physician and recognized expert on Moro affairs, who for a time served as Superintendent of Schools in the Moro Province, wrote his opinion that modernizing reforms could and should be instituted through the traditional leaders and structures of Muslim society,

principally the datuship. . . .

It is striking that in 1969 Alunan Glang makes virtually the same suggestion. Says Glang: "One of the biggest single factor that may bring about orchestration of the Muslim Filipino into the fabric of Filipino nation-life appears to be the Muslim leaders themselves whose pervasive influence has for centuries dominated and dictated much of the Muslim Filipino thinking and psychology."

These leaders, as we have stated above, constitute the evolved system known as datuship.

5. Restructure and reform the autonomous government of Regions IX and XII. The government should restructure and reform the government of the regions already conceded by it to the Muslims, preferably unite them into a single unit with a common Executive and Legislative Councils. The officials of the autonomous government should be elected by the people or appointed and distributed proportionately to the number of ethnic populations in the Muslim areas. The operational areas or territory of the unified government should not only be what are now assigned to the governments of Region IX and XII but all the provinces or portions of the nine provinces with predominant Muslim populations negotiated on by the Moro National Liberation Front in the Tripoli Cease Fire Agreement. It must be realized that this reform is very important because a large number of Muslims after the organization of Regions IX and XII were shocked to find that large parts of their traditional homeland, together with their Muslim populations, were outside the two regions allocated to the Muslims, witness South Cotabato, Davao, Bukidnon, Palawan, etc.

The government should pave the way and work toward the realization of an autonomous government for the Muslims modeled for its democratic concept on the state government of member states of the Federal Government of the United States of America and the Islamic concepts and principal used in the state govern-

ment of member states of the Federal Government of the United States of America and the Islamic concepts and principles used in the state government in the federated government of Malaysia. This autonomous government should not only have an Executive Council and a Legislative Council, but also, a Judiciary topped by its own Supreme Court. The National Government should authorize and allocate to the Muslim autonomous government representation with an attache in all its embassies in predominantly Muslim countries especially the Arab Middle East countries and Africa.

6. Define integration in terms acceptable to the Muslims. To bring the Muslim Filipinos into the mainstream of Filipino national life through integration is a continuing policy of the Philippine government. The government pursued this policy since the earliest part of the American regime, yet for all practical purposes no positive results have been accomplished. This failure is mainly due to the existence of a wide gap in the interpretation of integration from the point of view of the government on one hand and of the Muslims on the other. It appears that, through integration, the government seeks to evolve a Filipino 'homogenous' society. This idea of homogeneity seems to mean that the diverse or ethnolinguistic groups, which as of now number more than ninety, will be characterized by uniformity in the ways of life of all its components. In the case of the Muslim, this is tantamount to assimilation into Filipino society, the vast majority of which is Christian. It is precisely to forestall assimilation ever happening to them that the Muslims fought wars for centuries. In other words, the Muslims take it as their main concern to preserve their way of life in Islam regardless of what this may cost.

The tenacity of the Muslim Filipinos in adhering to Islam as a religion and way of life may be elucidated by considering the psychological impact of Islam on a Muslim. Gowing and McAmis (*The Muslim Filipinos*, 1974:289) in discussing the topic of "Muslimness," stated as follows:

. . . What is more, identification of Muslim Filipinos

with their religion is stronger than ever. May observers have commented on the fact that Muslims frequently regard "Christian" and "Filipino" as synonymous — and asked if they are Filipinos, many will reply "No! We are Muslims."

This phenomenon is best understood in psychological terms. For the fact is that Islam, as it is variously understood by Muslim Filipinos, is intrinsic to their view of the meaning of their existence as human beings. Professor Jerome D. Frank, a psychiatrist at Johns Hopkins University, has pointed out that a psychologically crucial part of the "reality world" of any group is its belief about the meaning of existence. Human beings, he says, shield themselves from the unendurable realization that individual life is fleeting and their lives insignificant by embracing an ideology or religion which links their lives to some larger and more enduring purpose. Islam surely serves this function for Muslim Filipinos (just as Christianity undoubtedly does for Christian Filipinos). But any threat to Islam (even if it occurs thousands of miles away in the Middle East — witness the Muslim Filipino reaction to the Arab-Israel War of June, 1967), any demand that it be surrendered is intolerable. For the Muslim Filipino such a surrender would represent what Dr. Frank has termed "psychological death," a disaster harder to contemplate than Biological death.

On the subject of integration of the Muslim and cultural minorities into Philippine body politic, Gowing and McAmis (*ibid.* 289 ff.), stated, among other things:

In 1957, the Congress of the Philippines created the Commission on National Integration and charged it with the task of bringing about, as quickly as possible, "the moral, material, economic, social and political advancement of Non-Christian Filipinos" and of making

“real, complete and permanent (their) integration . . . into the body politic.” There is a problem, however, in understanding the word “integration”. In the minds of many Christian Filipinos, consciously or unconsciously, it means “assimilation”— a thing dreaded by Muslims.

In general there is virtually no sensitivity on the part of Christian Filipinos to the psychological factors involved. They little understand that in the Muslim view of life there is no separation between the religious and the secular. The Muslims believe that they are Islamic in everything they do. Their lands and communities are part of *dar al-Islam* (the “household of Islam”). Their laws and customs they see to be consistent with the Holy Qur’an, so far as they understand it. To quote again from Professor Glang: “Islam is to them not only a religion. It is a way of life. it permeates all human activities in the Muslim community. Hence, any move to change their society or to force obedience to practices and laws alien to their customs is seen as a challenge to their religion — and *ipso facto* a psychological threat to their very existence.”

In concluding their discussion of integration, Gowing and McAmis stated (Ibid. 290-291):

First, there simply has to be a clear understanding, both by Muslims and non-Muslims, of what is meant by “integration” in the Philippine context. So far attempts at such clarification have led only to obfuscation. What is needed is a recognition of the fact that the Muslim minority is one of the “givens” of Philippine national life. They are not going to become Christians and they are not going to disappear. If anything, they will continue to multiply in number. Any concept of integration must take into account the fact that contrary to what Christian Filipino may wish, the Muslims

constitute a minority that will struggle actively to preserve its differences and identity.

The *second* inescapable conclusion is that if there are to be changes in Muslim society of such a character as to enhance the welfare of the Muslims as human beings and also promote harmonious co-existence with non-Muslims in a modern Philippine State, then those changes must come about in a way which does not constitute a threat of "psychological death" to the Muslims. Changes must somehow come from within and not imposed from outside their society.

As a rule, Muslim Filipinos do not have to be persuaded that literacy is better than illiteracy, education is better than ignorance, health is better than disease, peace is better than warfare, electric lights are better than oil lamps, and so forth. But they would like to have these better things on their own terms and in such a way as to relieve them of the suspicion that these things come as agents or instruments of subtle Christianization. Moreover, the Muslims must be prepared for change — or "modernization"— an essential part of that preparation (which must be self-preparation) is their coming to see that the specific changes proposed are not incompatible with the essentials of their Islamic faith and traditional lifeways . . ."

Recommendations

The following recommendations should enhance the effectiveness of the proposed solutions to the Mindanao conflict:

1. As soon as the police-security forces is fairly established, there should be disengagement of forces of the present combatants. The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) should hold back its punches while all kinds of solutions to the conflict are being applied. In the meantime the military should engage itself in strengthening the policy of attraction and re-

conciliation of the government and in supervising the implementation of projects to improve life in the Muslim communities of Mindanao.

2. The armed forces should continue to police its own ranks and curb all excesses that men in uniform may be tempted to do. It should continue to weed out undesirable officers and men in uniform from its ranks. It must be remembered that in the context of Muslim society, behind every mistreated or killed innocent Muslim is a whole tribe that number in the hundreds. Because the *maratabat* (to lose face, insult in public) still works in the Muslim's way of thinking, any abuse of any man in uniform requires revenge or vengeance on the perpetrator or what he represents, which, in this case, happens to the Philippine government. Any abuse, therefore, done even to a lowly Muslim will substantially increase several times the number of oppositors to the government.

3. The ban on the sale of liquor which the Muslims, themselves, imposed by local legislation should be strictly observed and enforced.

4. Sincere and honest-to-goodness rehabilitation of rebel returnees or surrenderees which many people estimated to be about 26,000m men, more or less, in 1978-79 and which by now has swollen to anywhere between 50,000 and 100,000 should be expanded and accelerated. Training or learning centers for them should be established and supported. Efficient job placement for them should be established and operated with dispatch.

5. The Muslim leaders and people together should be vigilant in safeguarding themselves and their communities from the infiltration and encroachment by ideologues, particularly communist ideologues or local members of the outlawed Communist Party of the Philippines, especially members of its military arm, the New People's Army (NPA).

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