

PEACE, CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

OCCASIONAL PAPERS

Series No. 94-1

Reflections on the Peace Process

Ed Garcia

Associate Professor of Political Science
College of Social Sciences and Philosophy
University of the Philippines-Diliman



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FOREWORD

Shortly after the 1986 EDSA uprising, the University of the Philippines-Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP-CIDS) conceptualized a series of researches aimed at substantiating the democratization process. A significant number of these studies focused on peace and human rights issues.

While most of these researches were undertaken by UP faculty members concerned with peace and human rights, it was only in 1993 that the University committed itself to forging a community of UP peace scholars and advocates. The UP Board of Regents approved the institution of a UP-CIDS Program on Peace, Conflict Resolution, and Human Rights towards the end of the administration of UP President Jose V. Abueva. In preparation for the formulation of the short- and medium-term agenda of the Program, the Center convened several meetings and discussions. It also called upon its Fellows to share their ideas on the substantive issues which lie at the core of the program.

On October 11, 1993, Prof. Edmundo Garcia, UP's foremost peace scholar and advocate shared his reflections on the peace process with twelve individuals who are all committed to peace. His ideas and the enriching discussion which followed his paper presentation are published in this occasional paper.

The discussion highlights the need to articulate evolving paradigms on the peace process—frameworks which will incorporate the participation of an organized citizenry, psychosocial issues, the balancing act of advocates, as well as insights on healing and forgiveness.

The UP-CIDS is grateful to the following individuals and institutions for making this publication possible. Dr. Jose V. Abueva, Dean Ofelia Angangco, Sister Andy Collantes, OSB, Ms. Teresita Quintos-Deles, Dr. Serena Diokno, Ms. Miriam Ferrer, Dr. Priscila Manalang, Commissioner Paulynn Sicam, Dean Ajit Singh Rye, Sister Soledad Perpiñan, RGS, Prof. Elizabeth Marcelino, Mr. August Obregon and of course, Prof. Ed Garcia generated the ideas in the October 11, 1993 discussion which inspired this occasional paper. The Ford Foundation supported the research on which Prof. Garcia's reflections were based. Vicente Antonio Garcia II and Anna Jhorie Perez painstakingly transcribed the proceedings; Bella Lucas abstracted the highlights of the discussion; Jocelyn de Jesus and Prof. Maybelle Guzman provided editorial assistance; Mike Arciga prepared the camera-ready version of the paper; and Teresita Tamayo coordinated with the printing press.

As in all other UP-CIDS publications, the views expressed in the paper are those of the author whose academic freedom is upheld by the University.

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REFLECTIONS ON THE PEACE PROCESS*

INTRODUCTORY THOUGHTS

1. *The International Conjecture*

At no other period in recent political history, perhaps, has there been more opportunities for erstwhile adversaries to break ground or break bread together in the pursuit of a negotiated peace. Although at this point countries in conflict still face numerous problems, there have nevertheless also been unprecedented opportunities. Although one dominant major power lords it over international politics today, there is an emerging collective conscience of global citizens—important, no matter how seemingly imperceptible—capable of putting pressure on major actors to demonstrate their capacity to work together toward desired ends.

And although major conflicts persist and armed hostilities regularly erupt in places such as Somalia or Sudan, in the former Yugoslavia and Georgia in the former Soviet Union, there is somehow a greater willingness on the part of the international community and the citizens in diverse countries to create the necessary space for former enemies to be helped along, if possible, the proverbial paths to peace.

The events at the turn of the decade — from the collapse of the Berlin Wall to the breakup of the Soviet Union and the communist regimes of the Eastern Bloc — somehow turned a historic page. The East-West conflict paradigm which was used to explain conflicts and justify major power interventions from Central America to Southeast Asia somehow lost its rationale. The stark reality was blunt and far from simple: there are deep-seated reasons and often legitimate grievances which explain protracted conflicts. And unless these are dealt with, the conflicts remain.

At the same time, in a clear demonstration of the inherent interrelatedness between peace and politics, there has been another development in the southern cone of a forgotten continent. For much of the world, apartheid and the racist discrimination which this system represented demonstrated the power wielded by a privileged few in South Africa and supported by large

* Paper presented on 11 October 1993

companies quietly tolerated by collaborating governments to completely disregard international human rights standards and the norms of human decency.

The release of Nelson Mandela, the Peace Accord of 1991 and the multiparty negotiations which has led to the Transitional Executive Authority now laying the groundwork for the first multiparty elections in April 1994 in South Africa have created a groundswell of seismic proportions in the African continent.¹ What did not seem possible just a few years back, — not without much difficulty of course — now seems more probable. Who would have imagined a Nelson Mandela appealing before the General Assembly of the United Nations for an end to sanctions in South Africa?

2. *The Middle East Breakthrough*

The political tremors have not been limited to the European and African continents. They have struck the parched lands of the Middle East as well.

For several months, quiet diplomatic work and a unique dialogue took place in an out-of-the-way farmhouse not far from the city which hosts the Nobel Peace Institute for Peace in Oslo, Norway. Back-channel negotiations between Palestinian and Israeli dialogue partners were hosted by Norwegian diplomats and academics seeking a formula that could break ground in a complex situation involving the Arab world as well as peoples and governments from other regions.

Few believed that a historic first step could be recorded in the Middle East where a generation has grown up seeing nothing but the violence and the bitterness of a conflict that seemed nearly impossible to resolve. But the path to unheralded Jericho seemed also to offer — together with the arid area of the Gaza Strip — an opportunity to take a single step resulting in a historic handshake celebrated at the steps of the White House lawn.

Although this act of mutual recognition has not resulted in the resolution of all outstanding issues — nor does it signify an irreversible march to a secure peace in the region — it has nevertheless been hailed as a major breakthrough in an area where tragedy has all too often overwhelms hope. It has been fiercely criticized by those on both sides who either felt that it was inadequate or that it gave away too much, but it was remarkable for having provided a decisive first step to convert a situation where gunfire was ex-

changed for decades to one where dialogue can take place within a span of five years to work out a new political arrangement.

Indeed political reverberations from these major international developments will also probably reach our shores. In fact, some contend that a number of these shockwaves had originated from our land when the politics of people's power prevailed not too long ago.

3. *Citizens' Participation in Peacemaking*

Peacemakers from various countries, including one from the Middle East, South Africa and the former Yugoslavia, a Buddhist monk from Cambodia and a diplomat from Nicaragua, sat for several days in a colloquium exploring ways to bring about peace in similarly-troubled lands. It was a quiet gathering — deliberately discreet, necessarily small — where participants shared concrete experiences as well as their reflections on the difficulties of their efforts, learning from the successes and mistakes of peace processes they had lived through or studied closely.

Among their conclusions summed aptly in what was called the Manila Declaration 1993, were the following: they shared "the conviction that the processess of peace-building are best sustained and guaranteed by the active participation of organized citizens" who not only can mobilize to create the conditions for peace, but also demand compliance with peace accords.²

Furthermore, they declared that "it is the right of the civilian population in countries at war to participate in the process of peacemaking, as wars are being fought in their name and it is they who are most affected." At the same time, they identified different sectors that can be empowered to play significant roles such as women, youth, and the survivors of war. Moreover, they recognized "that there is no standard definition of peace processes but that they take place in different ways and follow different stages under a variety of political and sociocultural contexts."³

The colloquium also recommended that third-party participation based on indigenous actors and processes be availed of, taking note of the following essential characteristics: impartiality, influence on the parties, commitment to the process and an interest in a just and sustainable outcome. Finally, in the context of today's world, the participants highlighted the need "to create a long-term agenda for social movements...to pave the way for a global war prevention and peace-building coalition."⁴

A REVIEW OF THE PEACE PROCESS

1. *The Aftermath of the Failed Talks of 1986-87*

In a research study supported by the University of the Philippines-Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP-CIDS) on "Peace Efforts and Attempts at Negotiation of Conflict in the Philippines," Dr. Maris Diokno does a painstaking assessment of the failed talks in 1986-87. In scholarly fashion, she outlines some of the crucial reasons why the chances for a lasting peace presented by the downfall of the tyrant Marcos were squandered. In that period, perhaps more than any other in recent memory, there were indeed high probabilities of transforming swords of war into ploughshares.

Why did these expectations not materialize? Why did the parties fail to reach some kind of political understanding and overcome the obstacles? I find the insights shared by Maris Diokno incisive, shedding light on the reasons why the peace process did not prosper: first of all, the importance of preparation and a single position, especially with regard to a government that had to contend at times with the shifting positions of its own Armed Forces; secondly, the need for more creative confidence-building measures; thirdly, the importance of concentrating on the substance and not the procedures, not even the cease-fire, as one gets embroiled in accusations of bad faith and mired in disagreements; fourthly, the requirement of consistency in its approach to the various armed opposition groups; fifthly, the premium on discretion as far as negotiations are concerned; yes, there must be regular information but it must not fuel speculation and create another virtual battlefield; sixthly, the need to set no preconditions and thus avoiding inflexibility with regard to a framework for the talks; and, lastly, a role for third parties.⁵

There are, of course, other factors, such as the internal dynamics within the revolutionary movement, which influenced its own posture and strategy regarding the peace talks and its desire to reach a negotiated peace settlement. The government's own will, or lack thereof, to deal with the roots of the conflict and to embark on major social reforms, especially in the countryside, must also be taken into account to explain why the talks faltered and finally broke down. However, the fact remains that when the negotiations were called off, the lines of communication similarly broke down. The avenues for dialogue were blocked, while it has taken far too much time to seek ways of reopening the negotiations. It seemed that another war had to be launched, justified by the failed talks as the former President Corazon C.

Aquino confessed in her assessment of her administration in a convocation held in the University of the Philippines at the end of her term in 1992.⁶

Thus a “proper war” was waged, resulting in charges of human rights violations and countercharges of abuses of humanitarian law. Displacements, renewed hostilities, coup attempts and half-hearted legislative action and reform measures were some of the resulting developments during this period that did not contribute to the creation of a better climate for the resumption of talks and the pursuit of a negotiated end to the long drawn-out conflict.

2. *Citizens’ Initiatives Leading to the Creation of Peace Formations*

However, even while the first talks were floundering, citizens’ efforts, especially those undertaken by churchpeople and concerned members of the community of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), were also taking place. Representatives of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines and the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, as well as the Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines, all played important roles, not only in keeping the people aware of the issues in the way of peace, but in encouraging the people to work for justice to bring about a just peace.

In the brief cease-fire period in 1986, NGOs such as the Peace Promotion and Monitoring Council and the National Citizens Peace Monitoring Council, participated in the efforts to supervise the conduct of the hostilities.

Citizens’ initiatives led to the formation of movements such as the Coalition for Peace (CfP) in early 1987, the National Peace Conference and the People’s Congress and the Multisectoral Peace Advocates in 1990. There was support for a Peace Vote campaign in the elections of 1992, as well as discreet exploratory Citizens’ Peace Missions in the same year. Communities in places such as Sagada in the Mountain Province, Cantomanyog in Negros Occidental, and Bituan, Tulunan in North Cotabato organized “peace zones” to create the social space for dialogue and seek ways of dealing with their immediate concerns.

The point that must be made here is that citizens refused to accept the fact that the end of the peace talks meant the end of the peace efforts. If the issue of peace and the substantive agenda related to the causes of the conflict have been kept alive, it was in large part due to a peace constituency that somehow had gathered momentum.

3. *The Ramos Government's Peace Initiatives
and the National Unification Commission*

Undoubtedly, when President Fidel V. Ramos assumed office in mid-1992, there were no expectations that he would place the question of peace high in his list of priorities. He had been Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines that has pursued relentlessly a counterinsurgency offensive. As Secretary of National Defense in the Aquino government, Ramos had been responsible for government positions that did not facilitate the peace process. That he would pursue peace efforts now was highly unlikely although others felt that precisely his having been a soldier that could bring the military establishment around, in much the same way that Richard Nixon with his impeccable Republican credentials could not be faulted for his diplomatic initiative that led to the reestablishment of relations with the People's Republic of China.

Postelection developments and the dynamics of public pressure sufficiently influenced events, so that the Ramos government found it necessary to take on the question of peace on several fronts: the NDF-CPP-NPA, the military rebels and the Moro National Liberation Front in Mindanao. At the same time, the demands of economic realism suggested that no economic takeoff was possible unless investor confidence was restored, predicated on a measure of political stability. Thus, political realism dictated the importance of decisive action on the peace front.

The appointment of a National Unification Commission (NUC) in the early months of the Ramos administration demonstrated that the President could not ignore the demands of a people that sought negotiated solutions to the armed challenges facing a government supported only by a quarter of the electorate.

Undoubtedly, this point was made clear in the numerous public consultations conducted by the NUC mainly under the auspices of the church and community leaders in different parts of the country. What people pointed out time and again was the importance of dealing with substantive issues designed to tackle the basic ills of the land, such as the elimination of poverty and the effort to achieve economic equity, the recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples, and the respect for people's basic rights, as well as the improvement of the administration of justice, the establishment of a pluralist democratic society and the protection of the environment.⁷

Unfortunately, there were hardly any breakthroughs in the area of negotiations with the NDF. Since the Joint Declaration of The Hague in September 1992, even exploratory talks have been stalled. The issues raised in the negotiations have been more or less identified by significant sectors of society. What is now required in the present conjuncture is sufficient will and imagination to reach a comprehensive political agreement that can lay the basis for a just and sustainable economic development.

The fact that the government has finally designated a negotiating panel points toward more serious efforts to resume interrupted talks. If the lessons of past failures should be taken to heart and risks are carefully converted into opportunities, then, though the current reading of the prospects for a negotiated peace may not seem so bright, as the more experienced on repeated occasions have forewarned, nevertheless, it just might be possible to arrive at a negotiated resolution of the armed conflict that has been going on for over two decades.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PEACE PROCESS

I would now like to share some reflections on the peace process that I hope will be relevant to the efforts of both peace advocates and the negotiators representing the parties in conflict.

Since day one after the Marcos dictatorship fell in 1986, I recall how the issue of peace and politics had become a central question for a number of citizens. Could the politics of peace define the character of our future? Borne on the shoulders of people's power, the first steps of the government were precisely along that direction: the release of political prisoners, the creation of an independent human rights commission, the designation of credible emissaries to initiate talks leading to peace.

Nearly seven years after, we have not moved very far from those first bold steps. Aspirations to reach a comprehensive agreement have not been realized, although the desire to do so remains and the efforts of citizens from different walks of life attest to the fact that people will not give up so easily on this pursuit. In this spirit, I share these modest reflections, realizing that they attempt to convey what practitioners, peace researchers and advocates alike have distilled from varied experiences and now would like to contribute for the consideration of those who can help influence the shape of things to come.

1. *Sustaining a Commitment to a Negotiated Political Settlement and Keeping Lines of Communication Open*

If people are convinced that the costs of a protracted war have become unacceptable, since the burdens of war are largely borne by the very people both sides claim they represent and fight for, then this conviction must be expressed in clear and unequivocal terms in a preference for negotiated outcomes that are not dictated by military logic.

The established traditional approach, supposedly based on sound military wisdom, presumes that one can be interested in a negotiated outcome of the conflict while improving one's leverage by scoring victories on the battlefield. This mentality implies keeping open the option of a military victory — or the semblance of one as part of the strategy.

In reality, however, this spiral can know no end. What seems to be far more important, therefore, is the conviction properly conveyed by both sides that there is an unequivocal commitment to a resolution of the armed conflict by political means. This position would require, at the very least, that lines of communication are kept open, that different channels of dialogue are probed and alternative venues explored — even in the most difficult of times.

2. *Enabling Citizens' Participation*

The final declaration of an international colloquium on peacemaking observed that citizens' participation and third-party mediation can provide positive contributions to the peace process not only in the Philippines, but in other areas of conflict as well.⁸

History tells us that political processes can be subject to numerous imponderables or sidetracked by peripheral issues. The sustained participation of citizens, however, can provide resources capable of generating ideas and support necessary to see a process through. Furthermore, their participation can ensure that the talks remain on track and are not undermined by marginal disagreements. They can be called on as some kind of guarantor to ensure that a single-minded effort to reach negotiated agreements is pursued.

In the Philippine case, one can point to a singular fact: citizens' participation has characterized attempts to bring the parties in conflict to accept the negotiations as a preferred option; moreover, citizens' groups have identified substantive talking points that could eventually be the subject of common understanding or possible agreements in more formal negotiations.

3. *Recognizing Domestic Third-Party Participation
in the Facilitation of Dialogue and Mediation in Talks*

Third-party participants, can play the role of “friends of the process” whereby they can facilitate, catalyze, mediate or arbitrate, if not merely observe the process or witness accords that are reached. If the parties require, they could also make suggestions regarding deadlock-breaking mechanisms in case of an impasse.

Domestic third-party participants, in particular, are well placed enough to facilitate contacts, to help create a significant peace constituency, and, generally, to improve the climate for dialogue. A pool of impartial and credible resource persons can be called on to represent significant sectors, such as the churches, the academe, the basic sectors, business, the NGOs and civic organizations, to help identify issues that can be sources of agreement or those that may be potentially disruptive during the talks.

They can also help formulate talking points to deal with a number of issues critical to the progress of the peace process, as well as propose “deadlock-breaking mechanisms” that can act as safety nets if irreconcilable positions bring about dead-ends during the negotiations. Moreover, in the event of an accord between the parties to the conflict there is always room for third party monitoring to effectively ensure compliance with the agreements.

4. *Preparing for Formal Talks*

As was mentioned earlier, the success of the formal direct talks are best assured if there is adequate and comprehensive preparation. This requires a multiplicity of tasks that encompass efforts on many levels: engaging in informal talks, exploring talking points while probing possible areas of agreement, working at single texts as possible starting points for conversation, and so on. Moreover, this may mean identifying resource persons and technical teams to help advance and clarify both the process and the issues, including the detailed formulation of positions.

In fact, the Joint Declaration signed in The Hague in September 1992 by the emissary of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the representative of the National Democratic Front (NDF) takes note of this prerequisite when it recommends that formal negotiations take place “after the parties have reached tentative agreements on substantive issues in the agreed agenda through the reciprocal working committees to be separately organized by the GRP and the NDF.”⁹

5. *Building Confidence Between Parties in Conflict*

Difficult situations often come up that may involve delicate questions subject to different interpretations. What can make a big difference in diffusing such situations is the level of trust between the parties-in-conflict that have become dialogue partners. Both sides are looking for signs of good faith, of political resolve, of capacity to deliver what is promised, of the mandate to perform what they have set out to do, and of the capacity for leadership to harness support for their positions.

Experience has shown the importance of looking for mutually acceptable and trust-building initiatives not merely unilaterally declared postures. The release of political prisoners or of hostages is a case in point. The suspension of offensive military operations for humanitarian reasons or as political gestures as in the short-lived armistice during the critical decision on the withdrawal of US facilities and troops from Philippine territory in September 1991 provides examples of actions intended to improve trust as well as the climate for further dialogue.¹⁰

6. *Searching for Acceptable Processes, Venues and Timetables*

In the search for acceptable processes and in the attempt to respond to questions, such as venues and timetables, mediation and possible single texts which can serve as starting points for discussion, it is important to maintain flexibility and the capacity to understand that text is best read in context.

While adherence to principles may be important, flexibility in procedural issues may be equally crucial to break an impasse and move things forward. Behind what may initially seem to be hard and fast positions are interests that must be understood and attitudes which can best be transformed by creative approaches, not inflexible posturings.

Experienced observers of negotiation processes can readily identify hidden insecurities lurking behind suspiciously belligerent attitudes. Thus, reacting to positions that themselves may be provisional or tentative rather than the unexpressed interests behind them may be counterproductive. The question of venue, for example, perhaps points to two different perspectives: on the one hand, the importance given by one party to be recognized as a legitimate and equal representative of people in opposition to government, and the importance given by the other party to be accepted as a sovereign authority answerable to no other power outside its jurisdiction on the other.

The difference in the question of venues is a manifest demonstration of different perspectives which can best be resolved by first dealing with the interests behind the seemingly fixed positions.

7. *Defining the Substantive Issues*

What the concerned sectors have done during the past few years, especially those among the peasant, worker, urban poor, fisherfolk, and indigenous people's communities, is to identify what they consider to be the most important issues which constitute the peace agenda. These have been further subdivided into immediate demands, medium- and long-term demands, as well as those that can be tackled by the executive, the legislative, or by policy directions that may require longer-term political processes.

An example of this effort is the document entitled, "Basic Peace: Peace Agenda of Four Sectors," which brings together in a single document the inputs through the years of various sectors which, they themselves see have relevance to the attainment of social peace — in the short as well as in the long term.¹¹

There is no guarantee that any negotiated political settlement will settle all the issues that have caused the conflict. Nevertheless, there are priority issues that have to be addressed somehow in order to lay the basis for profound changes leading to a just society to be built in due time. Thus, there are demands of an immediate nature; there are also issues that may require medium- and long-term approaches. Consequently, attention must necessarily and equally be placed on post-agreement mechanisms to ensure the resolution of outstanding issues related to the creation of a just and peaceful society.

8. *Identifying Possible Agreements in Different Areas in the Negotiations*

Based on the Joint Declaration of The Hague in September 1992 and the material on the history of the efforts to negotiate a political settlement, the following points can logically be considered as the most viable areas for possible future agreements which can become the building blocks of a more comprehensive accord envisaged to resolve the armed conflict:

- a. Human rights and international humanitarian law;
- b. Guidelines on peaceable assembly
and recognition of the rights of people's organizations;

- c. Participation of significant sectors and their organizations in important political and economic fora;
- d. Electoral reforms, political participation, and possible constitutional reforms; and
- e. Socioeconomic reforms.

There has been no dearth of proposals on these issues from citizens, and peace groups as well as people's organizations. They certainly represent a significant sign of hope. They also prove that, given the chance, a breakthrough can be made since there are substantive areas of possible agreement supported by significant sectors of the population.

The question that must be asked, therefore, is why can the focus not be placed on the substantive issues which in fact have caused the conflicts to rage? Why can there not be more time spent on discussing measures to deal with the issues raised by the concerned sectors, so that the longed-for solutions are put in place?

9. *Aiming for the Disposition of Armed Forces
and Setting Out a Timetable for Compliance*

The negotiations are primarily political in character. If successful they can bring about the creation of a just and peaceful society by political means thereby resolving the issues that fueled the armed conflict in the first place. An essential part of this process is the disposition of armed forces. To be successful a timetable with determined objectives by stages can be set in place.

This would involve the effort to respond to the following issues:

- a. Indemnification of victims and resettlement of combatants, as well as provision of lands/jobs for displaced communities/combatants;
- b. Incorporation of combatants into legitimate police/military units or tasks such as that of forest rangers, or an environmental defense corps tasked with the defense of the seas and the forests;

- c. The question of amnesty resulting from negotiations and a "Commission on Truth" patterned after that of El Salvador, which could receive complaints of patterns of systematic abuse of rights and humanitarian law committed during the course of the war to ensure that the proper steps be taken to avoid their repetition in the future and to check the impunity with which they were committed.¹²

10. *Elaborating Effective Monitoring Mechanisms
with Monitors Composed of Citizens and Institutions
with Nationwide Reach and Credibility*

Agreements are only as good as the kind of effective enforcement that can be put in place. Thus, effective monitoring mechanisms which incorporate citizens and institutions with nationwide reach and credibility are essential if they are to work.

At the same time, it is worthwhile noting that the most effective sanction widely relied on in this regard is the moral judgement rendered by one's own people expressed in a clear and unequivocal manner through mutually acceptable channels. Nevertheless, it is still important that the parties institute their own systems of reprimanding persons who abuse their authority or members who violate agreements.

Moreover, there are historical antecedents of "peace accords" that are reached and signed, only to be violated. There are a number of examples of difficulties in this regard which have led to the resumption of hostilities or continued violations of rights guaranteed under the agreements even after accords have been reached. Such has been the case in Angola and Mozambique, Liberia and Nicaragua, and the violence in the townships surrounding Johannesburg and Capetown in South Africa.¹³

It is thus equally important to design "safety nets for ensuring the continuity of talks or sustaining the peace efforts" since the fact that accords have been signed does not mean that there peace will follow. More pressing issues may emerge as well as new priorities that must be dealt with if the peace is to be deepened progressively and advanced irreversibly.

11. *Working Out a Long-Term Peace Education Program and Harnessing Media Participation in Creating a Climate Conducive to a Sustainable Peace*

In postconflict societies, it is clear, as was expressed during the International Colloquium on Peacemaking, that healing and reconciliation among members of the different communities may be necessary.¹⁴ One cannot expect that, just because a peace accord has been forged, peace will prevail throughout the land. The wounds of war will have to heal and the bitterness of those who consider themselves the aggrieved parties will also have to be allowed to heal.

In this regard, a long-term peace education program in schools and in communities, in churches and in the media may be helpful in creating a climate conducive to a sustainable peace. Peace can only be sustained by a generation that is equipped to live in peace with one another, able to settle differences in nonviolent ways through dialogue or through discussions or debate which must be part of ongoing political processes in the country.

12. *Looking for Different Tracks in the Peace Process and Formulating a Substantive Peace Package that can Significantly Advance the Process*

If one must follow the traditional procedures in the peace process, utilizing official channels that involve the officially designated representatives of both sides, it may be possible that the efforts will take much time. The Philippine case amply demonstrates this fact.

What may perhaps contribute to the more decisive facilitation of the conflict is an attempt to look for different tracks or channels where the effort to identify a substantive peace package can help make a difference.

To supplement the efforts of the official negotiations, second-track peace initiatives can be undertaken. For example, such an initiative can take the form of "back channel efforts" to draw up an acceptable "peace package" that can be the Philippine counterpart of a "Jericho" breakthrough.¹⁵ There are no guarantees of success from any one path or formula. All the more reason, perhaps, why efforts to explore different tracks must be attempted and alternative peace packages formulated. If official talks do not break ground, somehow peace initiatives coming from citizens can suggest small steps that one day might just result in some kind of breakthrough that will define a

turning point in the country's prospects for peace. Hopefully, when that moment arrives there will no longer be any turning back.

ENDNOTES

¹ International Alert Report on the Evaluation of the Peace Process in South Africa, 1993.

² Manila Declaration 1993: International Colloquium on Peacemaking, July 1993, Manila, Philippines.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Maris Diokno, "Peace Efforts and Attempts at Negotiation of Conflict in the Philippines: Assessment of the 1986-87 Talks and the Peace Process," UP-CIDS, 1992.

⁶ Corazon Aquino, "Reflections on Our Democracy," *The Aquino Administration: Record and Legacy*, UP Press, 1992, p. 6.

⁷ National Unification Commission, "Report on the Pursuit of a Comprehensive Peace Process," 1993.

⁸ Manila Declaration, *op. cit.*

⁹ Joint Declaration, September 1, 1992, The Hague, The Netherlands.

¹⁰ The text of the NDF Ceasefire Declaration was sent to the floor of the Senate during the deliberations of September 11, 1991.

¹¹ National Peace Conference, "Basic Peace: Peace Agenda of Four Sectors," GZO Peace Institute, 1993.

¹² *El Salvador Agreements: The Path to Peace*, United Nations, 1992.

¹³ International Alert Report on the Evaluation of the Peace Process in South Africa, 1993.

¹⁴ International Colloquium on Peacemaking, Roundtable on Healing and Reconciliation, July 3, 1993.

¹⁵ Towards a Peace Agreement Between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front (Draft Proposals for a Peace Package), October 1993.

REACTIONS AND OPEN FORUM

Reaction / Paulynn Paredes Sicam

I must congratulate Professor Ed Garcia for the paper. I thought I would hear something I have heard many times before, but I like the way Prof. Garcia clarified a lot of things and put these in the proper order in a very logical and very dispassionate way.

I would like to start with a review of the peace process that took place in 1986-1987. You said that then, perhaps more than at any other time in recent memory, there was indeed a high probability of transforming swords into plowshares. I think that those of us who were part [of the process] in one way or another [I was part of it as a journalist] were carried away by the moment, by the romanticizing of that moment. It was right after EDSA and we felt this was really the right time.

But looking back now, and at what Maris Diokno said were reasons why the peace process did not prosper, my feeling is that it really was not the right time.

The government had the right people, it had to carry out the peace process; but it still had to deal with a lot of baggage. The Left seemed to have had their own problems too at that time but I am not in a position to [comment on this]. However, I don't agree with Prof. Garcia on that point [that the 1986-87 talks were a wasted opportunity]. Although we all shed a lot of tears at the time, saying we wasted an opportunity, I don't think — even if we were able to sign an agreement — that [the] government could have stuck to its promises and commitments. The military would not have allowed it to do so. A negotiated political settlement could not have been reached. You could have had a military settlement of sorts, but not a political settlement.

Now we come to the Ramos government. I think Prof. Garcia correctly pointed out in his paper that President Fidel V. Ramos (FVR) is able to pursue the process with a lot more strength, a lot more commitment because, being a soldier, he could not be suspected of pursuing communist agendas as Cory was. Precisely because he had "been a soldier, he could bring the military establishment around in much the same way that Richard Nixon, with his impeccable Republican credentials, could not be faulted for his diplomatic initiative that led to the reestablishment of [U.S. diplomatic] relationships with the People's Republic of China."

But I'm not even sure that the [peace] effort began with FVR. The effort in the military establishment began with middle-level officials who were influenced by the Multisectoral Peace Advocates (MSPA) and the Coalition for Peace (CfP) and all these citizens' initiatives for peace. They were also influenced, of course, by their own findings about what was going on in the Left, which was telling them that this was exactly the right time to start the process.

In fact, if you remember, right after the [1992] elections, while the counting was still going on, it was the Chief of Staff who first said that this was the right time for a negotiated political settlement with the Left. He floated the idea as early as 1992 at a time when some of us in [the] government were sitting with some middle-level military officers and talking about the possibilities of selling a peace agenda to the incoming government. This peace agenda which was presented to the President led to the formation of the National Unification Commission (NUC).

I have a question here on the NUC. You said that the current reading is that the prospects for a negotiated peace may not seem so bright at this point. I'd like to know why. You also said that in spite of The Hague Declaration and the public consultations, the talks were stalled and there has been no substantive progress. I think it should be explained why there has been no progress. If there is something that has been left unsaid in this paper, [it is the fact that] there is probably no parity in the present strengths of both sides, and this figures very, very strongly, very, very heavily on why things have not moved. I think this sentence that I would like you to elaborate on might shed light on this point.

In connection with the twelve points that you brought up, let me start with the first one: Sustaining a Commitment to a Negotiated Political Settlement and Keeping Lines of Communication Open. Sitting as an adviser to a subcommittee of the peace panel, I have learned that there is now an attempt to define what is meant by a negotiated political settlement. I first heard this phrase in 1986 when Jose Maria "Joma" Sison brought it up at a *kapihan* at the Manila Hotel. It was a tantalizing phrase, but I don't know if anybody has ever really defined it. Maybe this is the time to do so. I know [the] government is worried. What does the term mean? Let's talk about it. Let's break it up and find out what it really means.

Prof. Garcia pointed out that the NUC process is precisely [toward building a] constituency. In fact, one of the problems I kept bringing up with the NUC during the consultations was: Does President Ramos know what

this is all about? Does he realize what these consultations mean and what they could probably do? Building a strong constituency and raising strong expectations for peace could actually pressure him too much into doing certain things that he may not be ready for. But according to the NUC, he was always apprised of the situation; that he knew what was going on.

Another point that must be brought up is constituency-building. Many of the initiatives of the government, like for example, the dismantling of private armies, were a response to what came out of the NUC consultations. Let me clarify that I'm not speaking for the peace panel; I'm just reporting on what has come out in the discussions. The panel members feel that [these initiatives] should be presented as part of the confidence-building measures of government. The NUC consultation is where they started and that's how they got into the agenda in the first place. So, one of the ways the government should strengthen its hand is to label its initiatives properly. If an initiative is really a product of the NUC consultations, then it should be properly claimed as part of these confidence-building measures.

As far as the domestic third-party participation is concerned, I think certain groups have been tapped informally to see if they could be part of the process. I think the Church has been asked to be a third-party negotiator here.

There are certain points that Prof. Garcia brought up that I cannot comment on, even if I would very much like to, because they're part of the internal discussions and I'm not a spokesperson for the panel.

You talked about the role of the media in reporting on venues, time-tables and processes. I really think these are important. Somebody has got to look at the media. Somebody has to educate the media on the substantive aspects of this process. Reporting on the venue, for example, has been too hysterical — when actually, as you pointed out, this is not even a substantive issue. But at the moment, that's the only thing they have to chew. Nothing else is given to them. Also, the media is not prepared. The people [who are] covering the peace process do not have the background to cover this with any kind of substance, so they chew on the headline-making items that are not that important. Perhaps if there is something that the University, the Center for Integrative and Development Studies (CIDS), the citizens' group should do, it is to work on the media and make them positive partners in this process. But the only way they can be positive partners is if they are really schooled on the substantive issues.

That amnesty should come at the end of the negotiation, I absolutely agree. However, there must be a way of dealing with, legitimizing, probably forgiving, the people who are already coming in now. You have a lot of rebel returnees who are asking to be legitimized, so there's got to be some kind of process, some kind of mechanism to get them back in with the least possible danger to them.

Prof. Garcia's conclusion about the second-track peace initiative is something that should not be discussed too much in public. The media may start looking for such an initiative and it's probably not going to escape their notice. The beauty of the Middle East accord was that nobody knew it was going on. It's something we can latch on to and use [as a model] if it becomes necessary. A discussion in a room like this would probably be fine, but bringing it to the headlines would not do the process any good. I absolutely agree that there is such a need for this [discussion]. The process is taking too long as it is, but I don't think you can fault the process itself. From my reading, from my understanding of the situation, the disparity between the balance of forces, the balance of power, is really playing a big role here. There seems to be stalling on the part of the Left. I don't even understand why they are stalling at this time. But a presentation like this would probably be more complete if — since we are talking of a specific process — it were done in the context of the situation of both sides. Thank you.

Reaction / Miriam Coronel Ferrer

When I went through the outline of Prof. Ed Garcia, I found all his points very valid. But what I really wanted to find out when I came over to listen to his talk was the operational framework he was using in defining the overall peace process. What is that peace process he is talking about, and how and why is it going to operate? This is what I came up with after listening to his talk. I think there were two major points identified by Prof. Garcia. One had to do with the role of the citizen as a cause for peace — a reason why there has to be peace — and [the role of] the citizen as an actor in the peace process. That is one of the major items.

A second item has to do with the description of the process. In Part III of his reflection, we realize, as Prof. Garcia does, that the process indeed is going to be multilateral and multitrack in nature: meaning, initiatives will have to emanate from all sectors. It will have to take the form of parallel or interlocking sets of initiatives and will take a long time [to achieve]. In a way, it's going to be protracted. I think this is a departure from the previous framework that was elaborated in the Multisectoral Peace Advocates (MSPA) pro-

posals given in 1990, which came up with a graph showing several stages [of the process]. [The process was] viewed as one stage leading to another stage, leading to another, until a political settlement is achieved. I remember this framework as a staircase.

Now, if you look at Numbers One to Twelve [in Prof. Garcia's paper], you will see that they do not follow a time sequence. One doesn't lead to two, doesn't lead to three and so on to the twelfth item. Prof. Garcia has identified all as important initiatives, so they can take place simultaneously, although some would take longer to achieve. Some will be operating even after a political settlement has taken place. I think it is important for us to get down to brass tacks: how to push the peace process forward. At the same time, there's a greater need now for us to come up with a more elaborate framework, one in which we can discuss what we mean by peace, justice and reconciliation.

Perhaps on one plane, this elaboration could be a framework for peace, justice, and reconciliation. And on a larger plane, a framework for social change, how social change actually takes place: because, while we may be able to convince people — whether the parties in direct conflict or the people at large — on specific [issues], the greater question that has to be answered is, how do we rally them behind that bigger framework where everybody knows, more or less, where everything is going?

Perhaps I can give some initial ideas on the possible content of these frameworks, most of which have already been implicitly identified in discussions of different peace groups, as well as in Prof. Garcia's books, but which haven't really been tied together and presented more explicitly. To start with, most conflict theories think of conflict resolutions as a problem of resource distribution: for instance, the distribution of power. In Cambodia, they are arguing about whether or not the Khmer Rouge should have a share in political power. In the Philippines, of course, you know that a major stumbling block in all talks has to do with the National Democratic Front (NDF) insisting on a coalition government. The proposal of the NDF to pass through a transitional government — a coalition transitional government — is a manifestation of the power agenda that lies in the nature of a conflict. But of course, the question of resources can also include other aspects, such as land and land reform.

One interesting framework which has been brought out by one feminist and which we should also start thinking of, is the element of forgiveness in any process of peace, justice, and reconciliation. According to Arendt [that's

her name], it is very important to look at that element as one important ingredient. It is not just a question of redistributing resources, but also that [the question of forgiveness] could relieve us of the baggage of the past.

Prof. Garcia talked about healing the wounds of war. I think this comes into that component [of forgiveness]. If we look at the more advanced peace processes that are taking shape, it is becoming clearer how that element [of healing] has to get into the definition of justice and reconciliation. For instance, in El Salvador, one sticky point was what to do with the generals who had been found guilty of human rights violations by the Commission on Truth. Does justice mean imprisoning these generals? Does justice mean giving them a life sentence for crimes that they had committed?

Arendt will argue that, if this is how we will continue to define justice and reconciliation, then we can never really break out of that cycle of revenge, that cycle of violence that continues to eat up society. It has also struck me that human rights groups in the country, which we know are quite radical in orientation, have also tried out different dimensions of [justice and reconciliation]. For instance, in the Marag Valley case, indemnifying victims of [military] operations would seem to be the only practical solution [to the question of justice and reconciliation] because they can no longer rely on the records to define whether or not certain soldiers are guilty, or on the legal system itself to define how justice will be meted out.

Highlights of the Open Forum

Prof. Ajit Singh Rye: We are fortunate to have time to reflect on the peace process. Perhaps, as Prof. Garcia has pointed out, we need to look first at the root [of the problem] more carefully: we should look into the possibility of social change. I also recognize the value of forgiveness. It must be emphasized that the fear on both sides is, "What will happen after peace is restored?" Army officers will be brought to trial. Some revolutionaries [will be brought to] trial. And these people might not be too eager to hasten the process of peace until they have been [exonerated].

There are problems, of course. I agree that we have serious societal, cultural, economic and political problems. If the government can solve some of these, or at least be free to solve some of these, then [rebel leaders] would have reason to make a comeback. The peace process might be a bit delayed, but I think there are many things going for it.

Ms. Coronel Ferrer: I would just like to stress that to forgive doesn't mean to forget. Remembering is important, so that the same mistakes won't be repeated. You can forgive without having to forget.

Dr. Ofelia Angangco: Thank you, Prof. Garcia, for touching on citizens' participation. Over the past four years, I've been working with a women's NGO, and I'm glad that one of our other guests has been quite interested in the role of women in the peace process. One of these groups in Cagayan Valley has been working with the victims of Marag Valley for the past two years — helping them adjust to a more peaceful community life through livelihood activities.

The big problem that they presented to me when I last visited them was how to sustain this effort. Initially, they were able to get some kind of funding. They also have been raising funds on their own, but the amount they need will run to several hundreds of thousands of pesos. I wonder to what extent this peace process concerns itself with sustained assistance over time, not just over a one-year period. Ms. Ferrer was saying that we probably need a larger operational theory for the peace process because it can't be accomplished overnight. There's so much psychological resistance. There are many other intervening variables, such as, for instance, the role of the leader behind the movement. This is what the NUC should consider: how to keep this sustained commitment possible. I'm afraid that, while NGOs may have all the favors, they will not always have all the funding.

Secondly, I would like to comment on Ms. Sicam's perception of the role of the media, the role of the University, and the role of the Center [in the peace process]. Many of those involved in this process — citizens, etc. — do not really understand the hidden agenda, if there is any, behind the peace process. I'm glad Paulynn, who is a journalist herself, is a little cautious. Perhaps she has not come out too strongly, but I think, beneath her statement, she's worried about her fellow-practitioners who are not yet quite ready. Every time I watch television, I hear a battery of young — I won't call them pseudo — journalists. They're just starting out in their careers. They get an "ambush" interview, take one statement out of context, and then blow it up. And we have a host of other tabloids, as well as newscasters [that do the same thing]. It saddens me to listen to [a morning news program] where two newscasters, a man and a woman, do not just do straight reporting, but even make commentaries as well. In fact, I really had invited [former Institute of Mass Communication Dean] Gloria Feliciano to this session because I think the media has so much to do [with the process], but something cropped up and she had to beg off. But [perhaps it should be asked:] to what extent

should [the information office] of every agency of government be responsible for giving out all [the necessary] background information to ensure accuracy in reporting?

Thirdly, people, such as those in NGOs, who are part of the citizens' participation movement, should do their work more systematically.

Teresita Quintos Deles: I would like to bring up the dilemma faced by peace advocates who need to push the government to advance toward a social reform agenda because it is important to the peace process. We also need to push for a third-party role in the negotiations. This has [complex nuances in terms of our] relationship with the government.

When we deal with the government, we claim spaces that open up. This move sometimes leads to the question — at least for those who are skeptical about the government's real intention — of how dynamics in government can really lead to [the inclusion of a] third party. I put this forward as something that faces the peace advocates now who want to claim and push for all spaces possible and not get sucked in. It's like [walking the] tightrope between making sure that you're not co-opted and making sure you're not paralyzed. Because you're so afraid that if you move into this space, you might be co-opted. And, of course, as peace advocates who, in your day-to-day work, try to respond and create initiatives, there are times you are not sure of the way you measure the balance.

Dr. Jose V. Abueva: We have to recognize a human element in the leadership of contending parties. It is difficult for anyone at the helm to give up his leadership position because this constitutes his self-image. I am very interested in the idea that rebels and revolutionaries, if we want them to change their status and their role, must be given an alternative, an attractive alternative. I said Misuari cannot give up being a revolutionary and become an ordinary politician — even if he were given all of Mindanao — with all the risks. Perhaps a minimum offer can come from the University, but I cannot make that offer anymore. I wish I had done it before August 5, 1993.

Prof. Elizabeth Marcelino: I must admit that I haven't read the paper, so I'm reacting mainly to the outline, and, of course, from the little that I already know of what's going on. I would like to emphasize on a psychosocial framework, which is somehow there, but which is not often articulated. As a psychologist working on a program on psychosocial trauma here at the UP-CIDS, I would like to further articulate this framework.

Prof. Garcia talked about healing. Dr. Jose V. Abueva talked about the self-image of leaders. I'd like to focus on these two points. We're really talking about the wounded here, and I mean wounded, literally, figuratively, and in every sense. I have worked a lot with children, and to them it's no longer a question of peace in the abstract.

Last Christmas, we tried to bring to the government the peace agenda from the children, by the children, with the children: not our own ideas of what it should be. And they [the children] came out basically with the day-to-day expression of children's rights, like "Can we eat three square meals a day?" "Can we go to school now?" [Classes are] no longer [held] where war is going on. "Can we expect a doctor when we are sick or at least a decent health service?" "Can we play?" These questions have really hit us as really basic. They're right there under our noses, but we're really looking so far ahead. What I'm really saying is that [the peace process] should start from here. The healing question is serious because that's where forgiveness comes in. There's a lot of anger, and this is good. But things cannot just stay this way. I think this is what the Left has to learn. Twenty-five years and we're still angry. It's good to be angry, but forgiveness comes as part of healing. And then there is the question of not forgetting. It's really important to remember: otherwise, there will be no recovery and we will be in a state of complete amnesia.

The question of self-image is [also] very important. We have had two consultations on psychosocial trauma with Carolina "Bobbie" Malay, Ralph Baylosis and the NDF people. Among the things they shared with us were their concepts of leadership. "Can we surprise ourselves?" [they ask,] and just suddenly say, "Okay, let's just lay everything on the table?" The example just given by Dr. Abueva is a really beautiful expression of something very human in all of us — a notion of leadership that is willing to give up leadership.

And there is the last point on reconciliation. The notions of reconciliation, justice and peace all come together in a package. The other side of the coin is always the notion of indemnification: How do we recover from all this? In a psychological sense, we have to define our parameters, [for us to get paid] back for lost time. Pay us back this amount, or let's go to court. But in a real psychological sense, what does a better life mean now? What are its parameters? I think there has to be an articulation of these questions in the framework.

Sister Andy Collantes: In a negotiation, there is content and there is process. And it seems in all [past] discussions, there has been a lot of content. What might be missing is process. So this is an appeal. How do we get to the members of the panel on both sides? They are very strong on content. This is the agenda: What shall we gain. We may all agree on the content, but we might fail to agree on the process. Process will include both psychological and psychosocial aspects and many other things, including Filipino culture. So would you also like to include these in the framework?

I think that the fear on both sides is, if they give in, how much will they lose? The important thing is to come up with a "win-win" formula whereby each can give up something without losing his dignity, and each will gain something to enhance his own status. I've listened to the government panel, and, working with them, I have heard a lot of discussion on the status of belligerency that has taken up much time. We are also moving into basic socioeconomic reforms. Some people think that the status of belligerency, human rights and international law should be the first priority. Other groups think that what is more important are political, constitutional, and socioeconomic reforms.

The claim of the first group is that they have gone into this kind of protracted work in order to remove the roots of injustice. This is why some members of the panel think they're in a very difficult position. They have to negotiate with the government, and the government would have to be sincere in its commitment to bring about reforms. If the government [makes this commitment,] then part of their problem is solved. In fact, they could say that it might be easier to convince the NDF than the government — such as part of Congress or even the judiciary — to help.

So, I go on to the third point. I think, in the last analysis, [our] hope lies in people's participation, in citizens' participation. I'm very happy that you have seen what the people are doing, so that during and after the negotiations, the citizens' groups will take care, not only of the peace talks, but of the peace process as well. The peace process is more important than the peace

talks: the peace talks are just the beginning of the peace process. So again, we should ask ourselves what we can do to strengthen people's initiatives.

Dr. Ma. Serena I. Diokno: What I think the situation calls for is a more quiet, very low-profile type of discussion. Citizens' participation is very important in terms of putting public pressure on both parties. But too many hands in the pot can destroy the process. When it comes to sitting down and talking, the real kind of talking, the role of citizens' group is to pressure the parties involved because without public pressure, [both parties] may not move. This is important. But in talks of this nature, there are certain things which, depending on the situation, are better left unsaid. Even if something is very clear to you, and you are ready to commit yourself in order to gain something from the other side, if the timing is inopportune, you don't push, you don't force it. There are certain things which I think are better left not pushed, not stated at this time.

Those of us who have dealt with the NDF for sometime know how it thinks and works. Once something is written down, that's it. You can be hounded for life by a piece of paper on which you have committed yourself. At this level of negotiation, the talks are essentially exploratory. They are at the nonformal level of working committees. When the working committees have come up with something definite, then the panel negotiates with government at a formal level. So in a rational, objective situation, the two parties see that this is the only way to go, but they will not commit themselves on paper at the nonformal level.

This is what I felt was lacking in the first (1986-87) talks. I felt that the government panel did not utilize the nonformal level to its fullest extent. There were some members of the panel who were leaking everything to the press — [former Speaker Ramon] Mitra, for instance, although it was absolutely within his capacity at that time to call for any kind of discussion (with the NDF).

I think this is why the NDF has that kind of feeling about [Congressman Jose] "Apeng" Yap, which the NUC has interpreted in more ways than one. Whatever you may say about Congressman

Yap, he can sit down and talk to them [the NDF] one-on-one. Who else in the NUC can do this? You may or you may not agree with the man, but [he has] a peculiar talent that [is needed] in negotiations. He can sit in an old-style, man-to-man, macho-style talks. There's that part that's for public consumption and there are things that are more private.

Nonetheless, in matters as delicate as this, there are things that are best not put on the table, moves that have to be calibrated, depending on the other side's reaction. A lot depends not only on timing, but also on the individuals concerned. Among the NDF and even in the government, we know which individuals would be more approachable, with whom we could have better rapport. We also have a feeling of which side to approach when we want to sell an idea or a program.

The other point I would like to take up are the guidelines for the peace assembly. If you don't mind, I would suggest that we just drop it.

[The Hague Declaration] is the only document we can hang on to that has the approval of the two parties. Even if the NUC has amended the finer points to include more, they have basically accepted it. So from that point of view, if we want to present anything to them, let us see how we can relate it to the Hague Declaration. Because, Louie [Luis Jalandoni] and the others will say, "That's nothing. Go back to the Hague Declaration. The principles you want are all there. We're just going back to the same thing that was signed last September."

Let's assume that it was accepted by Pres. Ramos with some finer points. Now the only question is how to bring those two — the original and the finer points — together from a purely pragmatic point of view. I think if we can do this, we can show the other side that the government will be serious in its approach to the process. Because that has the signature of the two parties. As citizens, we have a bit more leeway on how to do it. But even that leeway has to be circumscribed by the objective conditions at the time. And that Declaration is one of them.

I don't want to move back over history. But when the Revolutionary Government wanted to negotiate with the Americans, both parties were talking about an honorable peace, an honorable way out. [Apolinario] Mabini asked, "What is honorable for both? We want independence, they want control. If we say independence, it would be distasteful and alienating. And if they say control, we would automatically reject it. So what is a healthy compromise?" Mabini came up with a very beautiful idea. He formulated it in qualitative terms that did not imply domination on the part of one or independence on the part of the other. When presented as such, it would not alienate either party. If the idea had been pursued at the time, it might have led to more honorable compromise between the two parties. Mabini said some things, such as: "Let's talk about whether there is a guarantee of our right as Filipinos. Let's talk about whether there can be equality in Philippine territory between you and us." He didn't use any terms like independence, but he presented only three areas for discussion. [The situation then] is somewhat the same [as the situation today]. And I'm afraid this question of integration [of the NPA] into the Armed Forces [will be problematic]. At that time [of the Revolution of 1898], "peace advocate" was a bad word. It was associated with a small group of opportunists who were suggesting integration. Even the Revolutionary Government threw the idea out of the window. What did they say? "*Kapuwitan imbes na kapitan.*" They made fun of the whole thing. And, of course, even General [Arthur] McArthur rejected it.

Moreover, in the Filipino culture, I do not know if we draw a distinction between forgiveness as a concept and forgetting as a concept. I'm not sure if culturally that distinction is clear. Historically, right after the [the Second World] War, I don't know if we forgave, but we did forget the collaborators. And we pretended as if that episode in our history had never happened. Since then, there have been a series of crises in our nation. And each time we have either forgotten or forgiven. I do not know which is which. As a historian, I'm just looking at the pattern. And if that distinction is not clear [to us], it will be clear to a Western, a European mind. Because in the Philippines, when you say forgive, what your parent will usually tell you is: "*Kalimutan mo na* [Forget it.]" We have to take into account the cultural context, even as these theories are suggested to us by peace theorists who are generally European.

As another example, people say: "Forget it, Maris. It's all over." But I find it so hard. For instance, when some of the members of RAM [Reform the Armed Forces Movement] talked to me. I said to myself. "Oh, my God! What is this?" I find it very hard to forgive [them] because of [their] many

human rights violations. And I do not know whether I'm unforgiving or I simply have not forgotten. I do not know.

In a sense then we just have to contextualize [the question] in our culture, in our psyche, so that we do not communicate the wrong thing. But we also have to remember as a people that we have never really brought to the bar of justice individuals who have committed crimes against us. Never in our history, not since the time of the *Katipunan*. And we have excused many of these acts. We ourselves have provided them with excuses. And then time passes.

So at this stage it wouldn't be healthy for any party to start claiming things as part of an achievement of the process. Because from the grassroots point of view, there has really been no progress — if you're talking about what Ed [Garcia] was really trying to say earlier, which was to sit down and talk to the other side. Our approach to the peace process has always been dialogical. There has to be a dialogue. Until we reach that point, I cannot say that we're getting anywhere in the process. And I have to see it happening — whether informally or formally — it doesn't matter, but it has to happen. I do not think it will help for one or the other party to start claiming [to have accomplished anything] because “we did this or we did that,” as in the matter of private armies, for instance.

When [Fidel V.] Ramos was the head of the Armed Forces, President [Corazon C.] Aquino, to her credit, ordered [General Ramos] to dismantle the private armies. He did not when he was only the Chief of the Armed Forces. Now that he is the President of the Philippines, he orders [Local Governments Secretary Rafael "Raffy" Alunan]: Raffy, dismantle the private armies!” But not all of us have short memories. To say now that [we are making progress] is not quite accurate.

Now this thing about the role of the military. For some reason, the process seems easier or faster under Pres. Ramos than under Pres. Aquino. However, I still have doubts because in the peace talks of the Multisectoral Peace Advocates (MSPA) in which Ed [Garcia], Ging [Teresita Quintos Deles], and I participated, it was Ramos who blocked everything. If you want to be a skeptic, you can say that this man is playing a political game. Because when he was sitting in Cabinet Cluster E, advising the president, he was the one blocking [the peace process]. Now that he's President, he's pushing it. Of course, he can say that the view from the Palace is different from where he was as Defense Chief. I've heard this comment from people who were in the

[parliament of the] streets who joined in government. "The view is different now, Maris." So let's give them the benefit of the doubt. That might be the case. But what I cannot forget — I will not forget — forgiveness aside, is how he [then Sec. Ramos] blocked the [first] talks. It was he who made the negotiations very difficult for us. And if you will recall, in one of our early talks, somebody asked, "What about the Right? The rebels?" [Then Chief of Staff General Renato] De Villa — who doesn't often blow his top — blew his top. But now, my goodness! Talks with the RAM-YOU [Reform the Armed Forces Movement-Young Officers Union] started way ahead of the two other armed groups. Perhaps we should exploit — how do they call it? — this rebaptism, this conversion. I know [Ambassador and Chief Negotiator] Howard [Dee] is in a spot because he's bound [by certain rules]. A short, quiet trip by Howard to talk with [NDF spokesman] Louie [Luis Jalandoni] might help clear the way. Except that he cannot [negotiate] outside Asia. Because when he talked to us, he said that [the trip of Ambassador Dee] is not a problem. But now it's a problem. I think that a little thing like that — just to talk one-on-one, with no record, no notebook, no pencil. Just talk, talk, talk. I think it can be done.

Ms. Sicam: I'd like to react to Maris's [Diokno] statements about the role of Pres. Ramos in blocking peace efforts during Pres. Aquino's time. This is not to defend Pres. Ramos. In fact, I was also very much annoyed with [his] blocking things during Pres. Aquino's time. But I think this has something to do with my earlier premise that he had a better appreciation of the situation then. He knew and he was not adventurous enough to push [the peace process]. He was not even sure of his own hold on the military itself. And he didn't want to rock the boat at a time when things were quite dangerous for the government. I think he now has more confidence in the situation and this is why he is pushing [the process].

Dr. Priscila S. Manalang: Somebody was talking about defining peace and negotiation. The trouble is, it is our people who have the greatest stake in the peace process. So we should get down to the nitty gritty when we define [these terms]. For example, what do we mean by "social transformation," favorite phrase of academicians. What we mean really is how to eradicate or reduce poverty. This is how academic double-speak reaches the public. We have to find a way to cross that communication gap so that the people, who are the most important factor, understand us.

Dr. Angangco: I'd like to comment on what Ajit (Singh Rye) said a while ago and on Priscila's statements. When you ask, "What is peace?" it's like asking, "What is security?" It's getting to be [difficult] to define [these

terms]. [The term security, for instance, could mean] personal security, then domestic, then community, in ever-widening circles.

Ms. Coronel Ferrer: We went on fieldwork in Tabuk asking women what for them was the road to peace and we found their definition to be very literal. They put it this way: The road to peace, the path to peace, is a road because what these three *barangays* really need is a road by which they can transport their produce.

I agree with Maris [Diokno] when she said forgetting maybe is a cultural problem. What she said about forgetting is something we can probably say for all colonized peoples. In Latin America, for instance, you will hear [or read] people like Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Galeano harping on the fact that they keep forgetting their past.

Prof. Garcia: First of all let me say that you don't know how grateful I am for the kind of exchange that took place this morning. I'm on the eve of a certain mission, and I really appreciate the many things that were said, especially as commentaries on a paper where many of the things have really been left unsaid. I did not intend to write one. But having heard the comments, I think it was well worth the risk. And I really am grateful for the exchange. Of course, I will not be able to answer or give my thoughts on all the points raised. But allow me to give my own reflections on a number of things.

I make a serious effort to look into the major breakthroughs, that in a sense, destroyed established paradigms. As a student of politics, I remember getting into discussions with my colleagues in the Department. In 1986 they said, "Ed, these things would never be possible." And yet they happened, [only] differently. In 1989, before the Berlin Wall fell, we said the same things. My friends from Africa did not expect certain developments to take place in such a fashion in Southern Africa. The same thing was true of the Middle East.

So what I'm trying to say here is, you have to break paradigms, established positions. My own feeling is that, if we follow the established path, how do we take the very logical steps? Perhaps we will never reach our goal. That's why [I believe in] a peace package conveyed through different channels, insisted on by the people at some other stage, but discreetly conveyed, communicated. I feel that we have to look for and explore different ways. [Mikhail] Gorbachev, [Nelson] Mandela, [Yasir] Arafat [did this]. It is difficult for leaders [not] to emulate what [these men] have achieved or stood for. It's

very difficult not to be challenged by what unpredictable paths can be pursued, what events can actually take place. I would summarize [these thoughts] in this fashion: How do you convert risks into opportunities? How do you advance — by looking at the various risk situations that you enter into — the various opportunities for peace?

Second, I agree you have to make a distinction [between] content and process. That's why, if you noticed. [I mentioned at several points] the possible participation of citizens [and parallel efforts of] the friends of the process. How could [these] lead toward advances in [the process]? One of [these] was in fact discussed in terms of the framework for justice, peace and reconciliation and the framework for social change. What is very important is that the sectors themselves have elaborated on this kind of a framework through many years.

If you look at that basic peace agenda worked out by the sectors themselves, [you will see that] this, in fact, is already a framework for social justice, especially if you look at what can be dealt with immediately, in the medium-term and in the long-term, and what will require policy directions in the future. Also, what can be addressed by the executive, the legislative, and the public in the future. I believe that this is important. We will have to cull from [this] the actual inputs from the basic sectors and the community. In other words, this is not an agenda that you would write up in the abstract, but from facts from the various consultations that began not only with the NUC. Much of what now comprises our agenda has been part of the general aspirations of the majority of our people even during the struggle against Marcos.

This is where I'd like to bring in the question of healing and of forgiveness. [This is] in fact important to us. During the International Colloquium on Peacemaking, a whole, long session was devoted to this, especially because we had participants from Cambodia, Sochua Mu Leiper and Kim Teng Nhem, who had different positions as to how to deal with the Khmer Rouge and the kind of massive violence they were responsible for. But they now had to sit with each other, around the same negotiating table. This was the same question addressed by Hiskias Assefa, who dealt with the problems in the Horn of Africa in Ethiopia, Eritrea, Liberia, Somalia, and so on. And by Alejandro Bendaña who dealt with Nicaragua and the Contra and the Sandanista question. I would like to point out that the debate centered on [the question]: Is it possible [to achieve] reconciliation without going through these stages: truth, justice, forgiveness? In El Salvador, they have come out with a paper entitled "Peace without Justice." This [question] has also been

the subject of a big debate in the southern cone of Latin America where legislators stopped investigating those who have been guilty of committing human rights violations.

I am glad that these points have been raised. I do not claim that it is easy to arrive at a solution: but the point is, even some Church people in this dialogue have said that in your pursuit of justice, the element of forgiveness must already be present at the very outset. So in other words, what I'm saying is that it's an important track within the cultural context and the actual processes we're going through. Because this will definitely color what happens in the end. I recall our discussion on [the situation in Soweto] in the outskirts of Johannesburg in South Africa. Can you imagine the decades of enmity between the black community and the whites? Now they have to sit down and start working out the terms of a peace accord. When I think of our problems [in working out a peace accord], it seems insignificant compared with the problems faced by South Africa or Cambodia. How does one, therefore, learn from the lessons and experiences that the others present?

Let me go on to some of the more concrete points that were raised. Paulynn [Sicam] mentioned timeliness. I believe that that period when Marcos fell on the strength of people's power was a defining moment. Government could have defined the time. The leadership could have helped define the character for the goals that the government would pursue.

On the question of the debt, the government could have defined the character of the policies that it wanted to pursue. With all the concomitant risks. This is not the area where the debates should take place. I am aware of the different positions. It was a defining moment, but the government chose otherwise. This is the reason why I say an opportunity was missed.

Now why are the prospects not so bright? Again, there are certain things better left unsaid, and in a paper like this, I refuse to enter into that area. But essentially, I see what you are trying to point out: that there is a lack of unified positions on both sides. The inability of the other side right now to come up with a strong unified position. When a leadership is weak, it cannot take on a controversial position. For instance, the reason Arafat took the risks he did was precisely his belief that he could marshall his forces and, at the end of the day, convince [his constituencies] that this was the only position for the survival of his organization.

At present, the government itself, unlike Cory's, seems to have a better hold on the military which [had made] it difficult for a unified position to emerge. Having said that, I am afraid that the major problem this negotiating panel will face, will be to convince its own Congress of the kind of social measures that will require legislative action. In El Salvador, a package of legislative changes was necessary before a peace accord or a peace agreement could be reached.

[I feel] that the difficult tasks [the panel] will have to face is to convince both themselves and the other side of the kind of agreements that have to be forged, especially if they are going to listen to the agenda which the sectors will definitely present to them which, in fact, have already been written after many, many years of discussion.

The other point I would like to raise is that there has not been enough attention devoted to women. Perhaps others could write it better, but I would like to acknowledge that we would not be where we are [today] if leadership functions were not performed by women; if women did not play the kind of role and provided the kind of qualities to the peacemaking process. In the International Colloquium, it was clear to all of us from Cambodia, Nicaragua and the Philippines, especially, and also the former Yugoslavia, that the contribution of women was very crucial and gave a very different quality to these efforts.

Regarding the question of constitutional framework. I had a discussion with Ambassador Howard Dee on this point and he tells me that in no way does the government try to impose the constitutional framework in these negotiations. In fact, the government side subscribes to what it has already signed in The Hague Declaration which is [to observe] constitutional and political process. This is merely an internal document telling the negotiators that the NDF panel can be told by its own council to negotiate only within its own rules. So that when one side says that it will deliver something, then it will be credible because it is doing so under its given mandate. It is unfortunate that the communication lines between the two sides are not open. If it were, they would have been able to communicate directly and discreetly to each other before their messages blow up in the media.

What I think is required are postsettlement efforts even after an accord is signed, so that there is a commitment that the basic sectors will be involved in forums where decisions have to be made regarding economic development questions: foreign debt issues, agrarian reform programs, and so on. And even more than this are ways in which they can participate in the implementation of the programs. For instance, in the El Salvador Peace Accord there is very little on socioeconomic reforms, but I am told by the guer-

rilla groups there that what they felt to be their more significant gain was participation in the forums. At least, even if they did not settle everything right away in the talks, after the talks were over, they still had a chance, with the popular support, to pursue these issues further.

As to the point raised regarding the dilemma of peace advocates, this is where the multiplicity of roles becomes very important. That, although we may be advocates for certain issues that are important components [of the talks], when we concentrate on the peace process, we, in a sense also, play a particular role in which our credibility and our acceptability to both sides must be retained. That is why I feel [there is a problem of a] not-too-deep bench. The problem is that many of us are called upon to do so many things and some of our roles in fact are contradictory. And because of the lack of resources, because of the lack of people to do the tasks, we are forced to fill [a vacuum] when sometimes our particular peace role requires the exercise of discretion. This is really a very difficult dilemma that I just don't have an answer to.

I would like to end by saying that we have been talking with people from other countries, those building their democracies and those working out their peace efforts. Many people are grateful to Filipinos and Filipino NGOs and what we ourselves have been able to contribute. At the same time we should have the humility to admit that other peoples have really advanced much farther. And, therefore, we should learn from their experience. I am always humbled by this kind of exchanges. Those of you who have also talked with people from outside realize that peacemaking can be such a tortuous and lonely task. I have never tired of this analogy. Peacemaking is almost like a Sisyphean task. You are carrying [the load] alone: you are nearly near the top: you think you are nearly there. And the day you wake up, you're back down where you began. Sometimes it could just be a media leak, sometimes a misunderstanding of particular phrases, sometimes, as Pepe [Jose V. Abueva] pointed out, even the inability to understand personalities and self-images. That's why I'm grateful for the contributions that were made here regarding the psychosocial and the cultural aspects of this effort. Because these are not cut-and-dried. Sometimes even the credibility of people is so critical. That is why I miss Pepe Diokno. Because if there was one person who could really come through to the other side, it would have been him. That's why, as Paulynn [Sicam] pointed out, maybe President Ramos would be the ideal person to forge it within the government itself because nobody would accuse him of coddling the other side. These are the imponderables.

I said I wanted to end on this note. As a student of politics, what I

think as so crucial here is the ability to allow the breakthroughs that our established patterns of thoughts would normally reject. To allow surprises that normally the hard-nosed academics would call, say, a dream impossible. But to be able to keep trusting that somehow, the collective efforts of people and the collective wisdom that we acquire can bring us very far.

Thank you very much.

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The UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP-CIDS) was established in September 1985 to promote interdisciplinary studies on critical topics that influence development policies and issues.

The UP-CIDS initiates and supports research involving innovative methodological approaches and multi-disciplinary collaboration. While public policy questions are the primary concern of UP-CIDS, it also encourages basic research that is needed for informed formulation of policy.

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