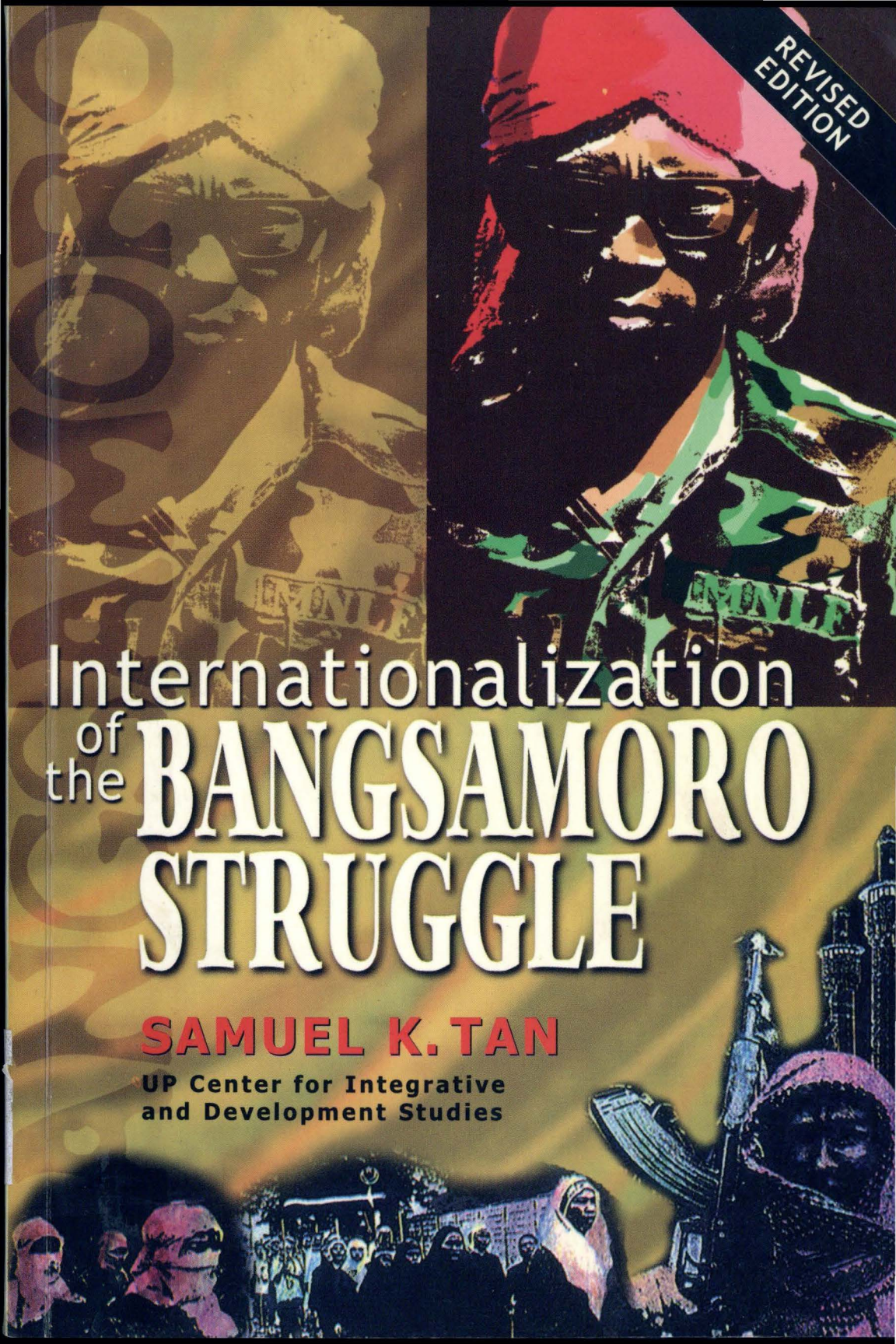




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Internationalization of the **BANGSAMORO** **STRUGGLE**

SAMUEL K. TAN

UP Center for Integrative
and Development Studies

Jan. 27, 2013



Internationalization of the BANGSAMORO STRUGGLE

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**BANGSAMORO
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SAMUEL K. TAN

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PREFACE

Because of increasing demand after the first printing in 1993 had served its purpose, there is a need to reprint *Internationalization of the Bangsamoro Struggle*, but with changes in certain portions. A new chapter has also been added - "Beyond Freedom: The Juma' Abu Sayyaf" to bring the analysis of the Bangsamoro struggle to the more recent metamorphosis of its radical strategy and tactics in a small but effective extremist group - the Abu Sayyaf. There is no doubt that the extremist group has added a new international and notorious image to the Bangsamoro struggle with its dramatic kidnap for ransom activities and series of violent and bloody attacks and bombings associated with the global network of Jaama'ah Islamiya and Al-Qaeda terrorist work.

Another addition to the original is Appendix C - The President's Report on the Mindanao Talks entitled "A Record of Our Hopes" during the Special Session of the Batasang Bayan on May 3, 1977. It is the first significant statement of President Ferdinand E. Marcos on the resolution of the Mindanao conflict following the successful conclusion of the Tripoli Agreement in December 1976. The report is so fundamentally comprehensive that a comparative analysis of government approaches to the Mindanao problem after Marcos provides a good framework for any scholar or student interested in the subject.

Beyond the foregoing changes and additions, the text and structure of the original have remained the same. Only necessary technical corrections have been done to avoid historical misconceptions. And the same expectations expressed in the first printing are reiterated in this revised edition, hoping that the wider readership will appreciate the updated work. Of course, Executive Director Ma. Carmen C. Jimenez of UP-CIDS should be gratefully thanked for initiating the reprinting of this revised work.

INTRODUCTION

The study of “Moro secessionism” is one of the most urgent and interesting inquiries since, the outbreak of the Huk Rebellion in Central Luzon after the last Pacific War. But in a sense the “Moro Problem,” as it is often referred to in historical and contemporary literature, is unique and distinct in Philippine revolutionary history. It is premised not so much on the overthrow of the national government or the political status quo - as was the case with the Huk uprising - but rather on the separation of one-third of Philippine territory described more precisely as the “Bangsamoro Homeland.” The territorial imperative consists of the entire islands of Mindanao, Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Palawan and all the adjacent islands and islets comprehended by respective provincial boundaries, involving about 44,500 square miles of Philippine territory.

Thus the Muslim struggle, which is prominently spearheaded by the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), is the most serious from the standpoint of national sovereignty and integrity. While the Marxist-Leninist radical movement poses a graver fundamental threat to internal security, it does not involve territorial alienation. It only seeks the reform or radical change of the status quo. In effect, it favors the preservation of Philippine territory and does not threaten the Republic’s sovereignty. It is in this context that the focus of research and study, especially academic, must be directed to the Bangsamoro struggle whose dimensions and implications for national interests and development have radically deviated from historical patterns.

This study is a modest attempt to contribute to academic efforts to provide a basis for understanding the “Moro issue.” It is not a definitive study. It has no pretensions to finality. It only seeks to initiate a process of inquiry that might be able to identify the basic components of a movement whose profound effects on Philippine interests and directions cannot be ignored.

Specifically, as expressed in the research proposal early in 1989, the study hopes to:

- 1) determine the internal causes or preconditions to conflict which hark back to the advent of colonialism in the archipelago;
- 2) identify factors responsible for the internationalization of the conflict; and
- 3) see if there is something important and basic in the Tripoli Agreement beyond the political provisions that constitute it.

The methodology employed in the study involves a multidisciplinary approach to written as well as oral historical data - which, by their very nature, require this kind of approach if they are to be of any relevance to contemporary problems of Muslim conflict. Although oral history was largely the basis of the study, published materials were utilized for the evaluation of oral historical data or for getting insight from external perceptions of the struggle. In a sense, the methodological thrust to bring both oral and written sources to shed light on the issue is what, to a large extent, is meant by the study's objectivity. Nonetheless, some amount of subjectivity is expected where empirical verification or basis is not possible.

But the methodological approach to the material is somewhat restrained by three unavoidable limitations: 1) the lack of access to diplomatic and international sources, especially primary ones like documents, correspondences, classified reports, etc. on Bangsamoro activities abroad; 2) the technical limitations of oral historical research arising from the underdeveloped academic/professional facilities of the local research areas; and 3) the lack of audio-visual aids, except the limited use of tape recorders, thus investing a great deal of hope on field diaries and personal descriptions of data gathered by research assistants, especially the field associate.

The reliability and validity of the study necessarily have to be achieved by corroborative and indirect sources which have access to otherwise unavailable materials or information. The interviews of field informants had to be confirmed or corroborated by interviews of those who constitute the core of MNLF leadership with some participation in external decision making processes. The difficulty of getting the views of the MNLF Chairman was somehow solved through analysis of the Chairman's taped speeches and messages, particularly those delivered in late 1989. This was then verified through discussions with some

members of the hierarchy, including one in the inner circle of the MNLF leadership, Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), the umbrella organization of the Muslim world.

For purposes of convenience, the study has three parts. The first deals with the etiology of conflict and the second with its international dimension. Three chapters (1, 2 and 3) present the first part and three chapters (4,5 and 6) comprise the second part. The third part provides the implications of the study in one distinct chapter (7). Appendices are provided for important references and an annotated bibliography of sources ends the study.

Finally, certain terms in the study need to be defined to avoid conceptual or interpretative ambiguities and problems. First to be clarified is "internationalization," which seems to be self-explanatory if its root in "international" is simply what it is all about. However, in the study which tries to narrow the parameter of analysis, the meaning is more confined to the specific world of Islam as represented by the Organization of Islamic Conference or its delegated authority in the Quadripartite Committee. The term, therefore, avoids the larger and complex diplomatic processes outside *darul Islam*. Otherwise, the theoretical aim of the study becomes difficult to manage. Nonetheless, within the limited time allotted to the project, efforts were made to touch on matters beyond the Muslim world, relevant to the subject of analysis.

The second term that should be defined is Bangsamoro, which has been adopted to the struggle or movement described in historical and other types of literature as *Moro* or *Muslim*. The term is contemporary or recent. It is not used in colonial and three decades of postcolonial history. The term *Moro* was used by Western sources to refer to the islamized inhabitants of the archipelago, whose level of culture or civilization, according to Western criteria and standards, was "primitive" or below Western concepts of human progress. Sometimes the term *Mohammedan* was used to emphasize the Muslim doctrinal relation to the Founder of Islam. This was the meaning adopted by the Philippine Supreme Court since colonial times. All the undesirable aspects of human behavior were associated with this level and the specific point of historical reference was the Spanish memory or perception of seven

centuries of Moorish rule in Spain, and from which the term *Moro* was derived. In a sense also, the term *Muslim* has a specific reference to religious distinction applied to those who have embraced Islam in the Philippines, but the distinction does not necessarily carry the same pejorative meaning of cultural depravity, inferiority or deficiency as does the term *Moro*. The post-independence era of Philippine history had seen the term *Muslims* being equated with a definite community of people who profess Islam and are more or less living in Southern Philippines.

The other and last term that needs clarification is “secessionism” in relation to “separatism” and “struggle,” two words often used interchangeably with the first. “Separatism” is the term the radical MNLF prefers to use when talking of the movement because it suggests the most significant stand of the MNLF - that the Bangsamoro nation was never really a part of the Philippines. The term “secessionism” which has generally been used by Filipinos, especially by the government, including Muslims who have supported government policies and efforts, suggests the idea that the *Moros* or *Muslims* are Filipinos but have opted for independence. Consequently, while both terms are premised on independence, the primary starting concepts are different. The study does not aim to resolve the conceptual issue but merely to situate it in proper historical and contemporary perspective. It is in this regard that the term “struggle” is instead used for the whole phenomenon of the Bangsamoro conflict to give the clear image of neutrality of inquiry and, hopefully, an objectivity of analysis. But where the specific views or perceptions of the MNLF are involved, “separatism” or its other forms will be used, in the same way that the term “secessionism” or its derivatives are employed in portions of the study dealing with the government position and its supporters.

Lastly, the theoretical approaches suggested by Harry Eckstein in “An Etiology of Internal Wars” is adopted in this study because it provides the kind of magnitude and latitude necessary in bringing together all the possible issues behind the Muslim struggle and therefore, has a better chance of providing the holistic analysis of the casual motivation of conflict. Briefly, Eckstein argues convincingly, after a theoretical review of the ideological models associated with the pre-Hegelian and Marxist paradigms, that the etiology of internal conflict, of which the Muslim

struggle is a good illustration, can best be viewed in two perspectives: first, in relation to what he calls “preconditions” to conflict and second, in what he calls the “precipitants” of conflict. The preconditions are the antecedent circumstances, historical or otherwise, that form the immediate context of conflict but are not necessarily its cause. The “precipitants” are the direct igniting circumstances of the conflict.

With the foregoing classification, we now begin the analysis of the Muslim struggle, starting with the historical processes that have contributed to the making of the Muslim perceptions of the roots of their long conflict, and the relation they have to the contemporary character of the movement. In the course of analysis, efforts will be made to show the interconnections between historical circumstances to demonstrate the convergence of these circumstances on the Muslim, individual and collective consciousness, thus providing explanation for the complex rationale of the Muslim struggle, especially its internationalization.

But secessionism as a social phenomenon cannot be fairly appreciated from the standpoint of its causal dimension. There is a larger context beyond cause that needs to be understood from the perspective of inter or multi-disciplinary methodology which, in a sense, demands a kind of comparative analysis. It is in this regard that Ralph Premdas’s model, referred to by the author as the “Primordial-Secondary Factors” approach, is indispensable as a theoretical tool. Premdas, after reviewing and assessing the various models like “modernization” of Arend Lijphart, “Internal Colonialism” of Michael Hechter, “The Political Economy” of the Marxist-Leninist School and the “Phases Stages” theory of John Wood et. al., suggests a more fundamental delineation between the “absolute” and, therefore, irreconcilable basis of secessionism and the “relative”, and therefore, vulnerable motivations of secessionism in order to understand the rise and fall, the stability and continuity of the secessionist movement in both developed and developing countries. The Premdas model thus meaningfully complements Eckstein’s theoretical approach.



CHAPTER I

INERTIA OF HISTORY

ECKSTEIN'S PRECONDITIONAL CRITERIA fit into the historical context of Moro Secessionism. The movement of Muslim history is guided by the internal rhythm of the Muslim struggle somewhat influenced only by the nature of Muslim institutions and the challenges confronting them. There are, therefore, four distinguishable lines of motion which have run through over 400 centuries of struggle since the introduction of Islam in the 13th century. These are: 1) the struggle for political power, 2) the struggle for economic progress, 3) the struggle for social distinction and 4) the struggle for cultural identity.

The Struggle for Political Power

The advent of Islam in the Philippines in about A.D. 1280 was not accompanied by the immediate establishment of Islamic political structures and institutions. It would not be until after almost two centuries of gradual Islamization that what is now the Muslim South witnessed the rise of a concrete political system called the Sultanate in Sulu in A.D. 1450 and in Maguindanao in A.D. 1511. Thus, the pre-Sultanate period was marked by the struggle of the rajahships and datuships for the maintenance of their independence until Islamization inevitably led to the consolidation

and centralization of political authority in the Sultan who was the symbolic embodiment of Islam. The Sultanate, therefore, which integrated the datuships and rajahships as the foundation level of the political system, represented a blending of Islam and the indigenous political culture. This is what can be regarded as the Muslim political tradition that has figured in the subsequent struggle against colonialism, imperialism and neocolonialism.

With the advent of colonialism in the 16th century, the Muslim political struggle was elevated to a higher level of confrontation with two external powers, Spain and the United States. Spanish and American colonial policies, although different in approaches, were fundamentally the same as far as the Muslims were concerned because, as Christian powers, Spain and the United States shared the larger purpose of Christianization not only as a matter of colonial strategy, but also, as a matter of divine injunction. To colonialism, the Christianization of the archipelago would not only add to the harvest of souls, but also, to the economic exploitation of the islands, a direction that was predetermined by the impulses and aims of Western expansionism.

The reaction of the Muslim South, which was almost singly represented by the Sultanate, was to resist colonial intrusion and presence by diplomacy, if possible, or by armed conflict, if necessary. Therefore, as would be shown subsequently, violence and diplomacy became the means of the Muslim struggle against colonialism for more than four centuries. Although frequently suffering from Spanish spoiling expeditions during the two and a half centuries of Spanish rule, the Muslims succeeded in maintaining their political dominance by controlling the seas through various Muslim fleets which consisted of the Maguindanao and the Sulu fleets of various watercraft and vessels, especially the huge *caracoas*. The latter were the Sultanate's combat vessels.

But the subsequent neutralization of the Muslim fleets by the mid-19th century, especially after 1860, with the introduction of steam gunboats, inevitably led to the decline of Muslim political power and the erosion of the Sultanate foundations in both Sulu and Maguindanao. The

Sultanates were compelled to enter into treaties with Spain beginning with the Simuay Treaty in 1636 between Maguindanao Sultan Kudarat and Spain, and the Sulu-Spain Treaty of 1645, up to the humiliating treaty between Sulu and Captain General Jose Malcampo in 1876 following the destruction of the Sulu fleet in Jolo. The subsequent Spanish offensives in the next decade penetrated into the heart of Muslim land in Jolo, Lanao and Maguindanao. This resulted in the strengthening of Spanish military strongholds which further restricted the political range of Muslim activities. It also led to the emergence of a new Muslim response — the use of the *sabilallah*, an institution of conflict that individualized the concept of *Jihad* (Holy War) and, therefore, created a most serious problem to Spanish security in Muslim areas. In a sense, this new institution was an indication of the Muslims' unwillingness to give up political power even at the cost of self-annihilation and the destruction of their homeland. Only the retreat of Spanish incursions from Mindanao on account of the outbreak of the Revolution in Luzon in 1896 gave the Muslim struggle respite from a costly conflict. But the final settlement of the Spanish-American War through the Treaty of Paris in 1898, while resulting in the Spanish withdrawal from the Philippines, posed a more formidable challenge to the Muslim political struggle.

With a more sophisticated and devastating military technology and strategy, the American campaigns in Muslim land from 1899 to 1913 destroyed the Muslim military capacity and further emasculated the datuship's and Sultanate's political power, making political compromise more urgent. On August 20, 1899, the Sulu Sultanate concluded the Bates Treaty with the United States, which recognized American supremacy and presence in Sulu — but not necessarily American sovereignty as the native version of the treaty indicates. In Lanao, beginning in 1903, John Pershing had pressured the local *datus* into respecting American sovereignty by personally presenting themselves to Camp Vicors. But some recalcitrant *datus*, like Sajiduciman of Bayan and the *datus* of Bayabao, refused to do so. By the first decade of American rule, Muslim leadership had become divided — one faction continuing the anticolonial struggle and the other accepting the new option

of compromise in a liberal democracy. The organization of the Moro Province in 1903 provided the structure for the accommodation and the integration of the Muslim leaders willing to participate in the American colonial system. But those who opted to resist any compromise had to face an American leadership determined to crush any further challenge to American rule. In Cotabato, Datu Ali in 1903 and Datu Alamada in 1912 exemplified this continuing resistance, however futile. In Sulu, the armed resistance was more widespread and sustained by Panglima Hassan of Luuk (1903-1905), Datu Usap, Datu Pala, Paruka Utik, and even the Sultan himself whom the Americans suspected of supporting the resisting leaders. This suspicion led to the unilateral abrogation of the Bates Treaty in 1904. The last decisive battle was fought at Bud Bagsak in 1913, resulting in the Sultanate's ultimate loss of any political power through the Carpenter-Kiram Agreement of March 22, 1915 which only retained for the Sultan his spiritual power over his subjects. With the Sultanate's political collapse, the Muslims lost the political influence they had enjoyed since the 15th century. The American strategy to separate the Sultanate's political power from its religious function threw a monkey wrench on the institution's underlying Islamic concept. Henceforth, the "separation of church from the state" principle would deny the Muslims access to political power. Muslim leadership began, albeit reluctantly, to explore the possibilities in the American liberal, democratic system whose rules more often than not clashed with the Islamic system of governance.

But what exacerbated the Muslim frustrations in the struggle to recover their lost power was the integration of the Christian Filipino leadership into the American colonial administration's democratic structure as active partner, however subordinate its position might be. This meant that the Muslims had not only lost power to the Americans but also to the Christian Filipinos, a political reality whose psychological impact on Muslim consciousness would find its concrete expression in the expansion of the Muslim struggle to include the campaign against the Christian Filipino leadership. But the vast resources of the American colonial apparatus were behind the Christian Filipino leadership whose role in the entire scheme as enforcers of colonial aims and policies

dovetailed with the American plan to gradually shift the burden of bureaucratic administration in the local levels to the natives, thus reserving the highest level of colonial authority and power for the American officials in the central government.

Eventually, by the time civil government was established in Mindanao and Sulu in 1915 under the first civil governor, Frank W. Carpenter, the Muslims and the Sultanate, individually or collectively, had lost all political advantage or leverage, despite the sporadic outbreaks of disturbance up to the Pacific War in 1941. The road to political power under American rule was through participation in the democratic processes — especially election, which required sufficient educational exposure to American modern concepts and values. This area caught the Muslims, including their leaders, unprepared. Not that they lacked intelligence; rather, they lacked adequate knowledge of Western civilization, especially the ability to read, write and communicate in Spanish and/or English — two linguistic vehicles necessary for real participation in the American colonial bureaucracy. It was not until Frank C. Laubach brought literacy to the Muslim South, with the breakthrough of his literacy work in Lanao in the 1930s, that Muslim efforts for initial participation saw a meaningful direction. Only a few members of Muslim royalty, mainly the boys, found their way to American-established schools in Manila. A few, like Princess Tarhata Kiram and Hadji Gulamu Rasul of Sulu, had the privilege of being sent to the United States for education in the 1920s. Otherwise, Muslim education for citizenship and democratic participation would not really bear fruit until the middle of American rule.

By the time the United States had seriously considered the grant of Philippine independence in the Tydings-McDuffie Law in 1934, political advantage and power had become the privilege of the Christian Filipinos. The Muslims were literally left behind because of lack of academic/professional qualification and, therefore, had to either accept subordination to Christian Filipino leadership or to demand separation from the envisioned independent Philippine Republic. The latter was expressed by a group of Muslim leaders in a petition to the United States

President in 1930 not to include the Muslim South in an independent Philippines, but to organize it as a territory of the United States. But the rising star of the Christian Filipinos was an inevitable reality. It had been determined by the very rationale of American colonial rule, designed precisely to achieve the kind of native interaction consistent with the liberal democratic ideology and system. The Commonwealth government (1935-1946) provided the Christian Filipinos the transition period with which to crystallize the direction of the Filipino nation. For the Muslim political future, especially the Sultanate, the prospect of recovering the lost power of yesteryears was gone. No less than President Manuel L. Quezon ended the political succession of the Sulu Sultanate in 1936 after the death of the Sultan, thus subjecting all succeeding Muslim leaders under the Commonwealth authority. But Muslim leadership insisted on the Sultanate's continuity despite its apparent reduction to an impotent political entity vis-à-vis the Filipino national state. Undoubtedly, the question of identity and survival was paramount in the consciousness of the Sulu Muslims.

Two sultanates were established in 1937, one under Sultan Ombra Amilbansa, a datu from Simunul with no historical linkage to the royal datuship but whose claim to succession was premised on his marriage to Hadji Dayang Dayang Piandao, the last of the House of Kiram. The local leaders accepted this new political twist as the best way to reconcile the sultanate's need to survive and the imperative of national sovereignty as declared by Quezon. The latter recognized Ombra's Sultanate as part of the local political system for purposes of integration, but not for purposes of governmental administration. It was the Sultanate's parallel and subordinate relation that further eroded the institution's historical relevance to the traditional framework of power. Consequently, a rival Sultanate was established in Patikul under Datu Tambuyong, who assumed the title of Sultan Jainal Abidin II and who was supported by Princess Tarhata Kiram and her husband, Datu Punjungan. Since then, the postwar period of Philippine history, which was significantly marked by the establishment of the Philippine Republic in 1946, witnessed the political dichotomy in the Sulu Sultanate until the issue of proprietary

rights over the Bornean territory of the Sultanate pushed aside the latter's political issue. In September 1960, Sultan Ismael Kiram relinquished, in an instrument, the Sultanate's sovereignty to the Philippine government in the interest of achieving the best financial settlement or proprietary gains from the Borneo (Sabah) territory on which the British and Malaysian governments had laid absolute political sovereignty.

That the relinquishment of the Sultanate's claim to political sovereignty was relative to the economic issue was clear from the proviso of the 1960 "deed of cession" which declared that sovereignty would revert back to the Sultanate in case of the Philippine government's failure to pursue the Sultanate's claims over Sabah. At the outbreak of Muslim separatist or secessionist movements in 1968, the economic dimension of the Muslim political struggle had become the principal concern of Sulu leaders. In the process, the Sultanate had been reduced to almost an insignificant entity in the political decision-making processes of the State, including those directly affecting the future of the Muslims in the archipelago. The erosion of the traditional base of political culture and powers would shift the burden of political struggle to the new breed of Muslim leaders with an orientation far more radical but subtle, ruthless but effective, nontraditional but integrative.

The Struggle for Economic Progress

At the time of Western contact in the early 16th century, the Muslim South had developed a lucrative economic system that linked it to the rest of the Philippine archipelago in both a beneficial domestic trade and a kind of foreign trade that brought Southeast Asians and their goods into the Sulu archipelago from as far as Manila through Muslim intermediaries. The external trade attracted Western traders and companies which gave the Muslim South the strategic economic importance it enjoyed for a long time. The economic advantages and leverages of the Muslim South in the external trade provided the basis for its political influence and dominance in the archipelago through the Sultanates of Sulu and Maguindanao and an economically active system of local datuship and rajahship.

But this economic advantage would be effectively neutralized by the entry of Western colonialism at the turn of the 16th century in Southeast Asia. In the Muslim South, the impact of colonial intrusion and interference would be seen in a series of transformations in the patterns of economic processes and activities. The fall of the Muslim Kingdom of Manila to Spanish forces under Miguel Lopez de Legazpi in 1570 subsequently led to the elimination of one of the most strategic and progressive Muslim entrepôts of trade in the archipelago. From Spanish chronicles and records, Manila was the converging point of the archipelago's internal and external trade, including that with Brunei which involved the chieftains of Central and Southern Luzon. No less than Governor Francisco de Sande admitted that his expedition to Brunei in 1579 was related to the seizure of economic initiatives and control over the Brunei-Manila trade by conquest of the Muslim South. For this purpose, 400 Spaniards, 1500 natives and 300 Borneans were used, which constituted an alliance of economic interests seeking to profit from the breakup of Muslim monopoly.

The failure of Spanish efforts to obtain this economic objective shifted strategy to the neutralization of Muslim Mindanao by destroying the vital role of Sulu and Maguindanao in the trade pattern. This would be done through either conquest or diplomacy, or both. It was in this attempt to subdue the Muslims of Mindanao through an expedition under Captain Gabriel de Rivera that the Spaniards saw the importance of the Muslims' economic control to Spanish designs on the archipelago. Even the Spanish troops' food provisions were dependent on Spanish-controlled areas. De Rivera's forces had to retreat to Kawit in Zamboanga because proper subsistence could not be had in Pulangi which was controlled by the Maguindanaos. The same was true of the experiences of subsequent expeditions to Maguindanao. Spanish incursions into Maranaw territory under Captain Francisco Atienza with 50 Spaniards and Caragans in 1693 had to confront not only serious danger in the interior areas but also the access to food resources.

Therefore, the Mindanao Muslims' violent reactions to Spanish intrusion were not only in retaliation for the human losses inflicted by

Spanish weapons, but also to prevent the further disruption of a lucrative internal and external trade. The same situation also occurred in Sulu where Muslim economic losses to Spanish spoiling expeditions included not only the destruction of trading vessels and the looting of valuable merchandise and items by Spanish troops. This directly affected the economic resources of the Muslim leaders who played crucial roles in raids to the Visayas and Luzon. Rajah Bongsu personally led the raids on the Camarines in response to the reported maltreatment of Datu Ache, his immediate aide, and the confiscation of the latter's trading items despite the earlier peace agreement between the Sultan and the Spanish government.

In addition to the interdiction of trade, Spanish expeditions were also motivated by the desire to acquire lands as *encomiendas*. This was evident in the case of Captain Francisco Esteban de Figueroa, who lead a large expedition in 1596 to the Pulangi in Mindanao — a rather risky and costly venture which he personally financed and organized with encouragement from the government. The only conditions Figueroa asked were that a) he be appointed Governor of Mindanao for life and b) lands acquired by conquest and pacification be distributed as *encomiendas*, one-third to him and two-thirds to those involved in the expedition. Had Figueroa survived the Maguindao *kampilan* clash and succeeded, the agrarian pattern would have, earlier in Spanish efforts, wiped out the series of ancestral lands in Mindanao.

What had not been accomplished by direct conquest through subsequent expeditions since 1596 was gradually realized by the process of town — or settlement — building from native converts in Mindanao as well as migrants from Luzon and Visayas who were encouraged by Spanish pacification efforts, and, especially, Christianization. This more or less followed the *reduccion* successfully applied by the Spanish government in Luzon. Thus, as fast as converts were made and areas pacified, permanent settlements were established whose affairs were managed by the religious. In Mindanao, the role of the Jesuits and the Recollects was decisive in gradually strengthening Spanish rule in the Southern islands, including the alienation of territories from ancestral

lands of hill tribes and Muslim groups. The 19th century in Mindanao was marked by the rise of towns in Davao, Cotabato, Misamis, Zamboanga, Surigao and even in the Sulu archipelago, in the process, breaking up the economic patterns of internal trade which was dominated by the Muslims. The destruction of the Muslim naval hold by mid-19th century after the disastrous Antonio de Urbiztondo expedition to Jolo in 1851, also altered the external trade of Southern Philippines in favor of Spanish rule and other European powers which had converged economically on the region, either through treaties or international pressures. Consequently, the 19th century for the Muslims marked the final loss of the economic advantage they had enjoyed for so many centuries, despite the withdrawal of Spanish troops from the south in 1899.

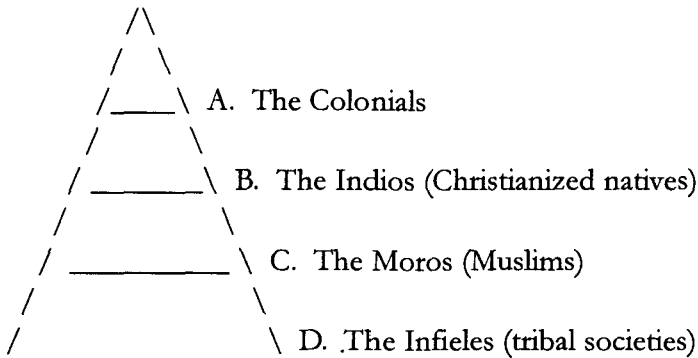
The American entry into Southern Philippines, following American acquisition of sovereignty from Spain in the 1898 Paris Treaty, subtly eased out whatever economic sway the Muslims had retained. The pattern of internal and external trade continued to push the Muslims and other cultural communities toward the periphery of the American colonial system. The Christian Filipinos and foreign sectors performed the role of economic intermediaries subverting Muslim influence. The end of the American war against the Filipino revolutionists in 1901 had encouraged even former military personnel to explore the economic possibilities in the archipelago. American entrepreneurs, adventurers and business firms began looking at the rich lands and resources of Mindanao, particularly in areas like Davao, Cotabato, Lanao, Bukidnon, Basilan and Sulu. Even Japanese interests, which were first noted in the American road project in Luzon, started to move to Davao where they developed abaca plantations. The holding of industrial fairs during the term of Gen. Tasker H. Bliss as Governor of the Moro Province (1906-1909) was not only to reorient the natives, including the Muslims, toward the American free enterprise economic system, but also, to draw the American agricultural and business interests to the development of American plantations and businesses in Southern Philippines. The best examples were the rubber plantations in Basilan, the coconut plantation

in Zamboanga and Sulu, and the pineapple plantations in Cotabato and Bukidnon.

By the end of American colonial rule, the economic system of the Philippines had already integrated the Philippine territory along the American free enterprise and monetary systems which were zealously enforced by the American colonial officials who utilized the Christian Filipinos effectively as enforcers. Such an integration forced Muslim participation to the periphery of the colonial economy. Specifically, agricultural production was pegged to the basic consumption needs of local societies and the traditional barter trade exchanges between traditional communities. In the case of the Sulu archipelago, Tausug-Sama economic interdependence flourished. But the external trade between the Muslims had been so restructured to fit into the needs of the colonial economy, in which the Muslims merely supplied the raw materials since the technology and expertise were provided by the Christian Filipinos, Chinese and other foreign intermediaries. In particular, the more important foreign trade, which in precolonial times was a near-Muslim monopoly, was dominated by the Americans. Consequently, the Muslim loss of revenues from trade and commerce, aggravated by increasing population and new economic needs, fueled Muslim frustrations. The absence of any participation in industrial or semi-industrial activities generated by colonial policies and programs steadily eroded the Muslim capacity to gain any economic advantage from the colonial system. The local Muslim leadership was particularly affected, inducing them to turn to the political arena as the quickest avenue to the economic and material concessions of colonialism. But the political road to well-being, as earlier explained, had become a difficult struggle, except in cases where Muslim leaders were prepared to subordinate themselves not only to the American, but also, to the Filipino political leadership. The case of the sultans and datus was illustrative of the necessary emasculation of their political role — a reality they had to accept, however painful and humiliating. The effect of such a politico-economic deterioration was evidenced by the loss of their status and importance in colonial society.

The Struggle for Social Distinction

The loss of political and economic power led to the decline of social importance. Being rooted in power through superior technology and economic wealth in a colonial monetary system, the colonial system deprived the Muslim and other cultural communities of the capacity to achieve the level of equality in social status. Generally prejudiced against the natives, whether Indios, Moros or “Pagans”, the colonial system accorded the Christian Filipinos a higher status than the non-Christians. Thus the structure of colonial society looked like the following:



Under the colonial structure, the native leaders or elites — including the sultans and datus, whether Christian, Muslim or “Pagan” — were subordinate to the colonialists. The only difference was that in the native social stratification, colonial officialdom and the people regarded Christian Filipinos as socially higher than the Muslims and “pagans”. It can be seen from the socially-determined hierarchy that the Muslims had been relegated to a secondary position in society. This was a contrast to the precolonial period when Muslims enjoyed a comparatively higher social status than other ethnolinguistic groups. In colonial society, public recognition of Muslim royalties was confined to their respective local areas of jurisdiction. With the establishment of American rule throughout the archipelago, colonial society further reduced the Muslim royalties and leaders to lesser importance even in their own localities. The sultans, datus and other local leaders had to struggle to gain

attention and significance, together with their own subjects whose access to equal social opportunities had eventually been made possible through colonial education and individual initiative.

The emergence of a new Muslim middle class composed of the educated and professionals further eroded the status of the traditional elite. Consequently, they had to pre-empt the pending fall into social oblivion by allowing their own sons and, later, daughters, to acquire colonial education, which was hitherto considered inimical to their traditional values. The case of Princess Tarhata Kiram and Hadji Gulamu Rasul of Sulu was illustrative of the irresistible cooptation of the Muslim elite by colonialism. The subsequent employment of royalties, like Dayang-Dayang Hadji Piandao, the last of the House of Kiram, in the civil service reduced the Muslim royal class to ordinary government employees. The limitation of the once vast landholding of the Sultan of Sulu to a few hundred hectares also reduced the Sultan to a mere landholder, and even just a cultivator of his private land — with little significant difference to the bigger landlords in Mindanao. He had been replaced by a number of American planters with bigger land concessions, and migrant Christian Filipinos from Luzon and the Visayas who had acquired rich lands during the American period, especially during the Commonwealth under President Manuel L. Quezon. In fact, it was part of Quezon's agrarian policy to encourage by law and other means the settlement of Christians in Mindanao and Sulu as a way of finally integrating Muslim Mindanao into the "national mainstream." The flow of thousands of Christian settlers to "the Land of Promise", as Mindanao was popularly called, became the work of pioneer leaders like Gen. Paulino Santos, whose role in the settlement of the fertile valleys of Cotabato gave him a prominent place in the history of Cotabato so that the capital was named in his honor. At the same time, the process of Christian migration and settlement altered the character and contour of Muslim ancestral lands through land laws imposed by colonialism throughout the archipelago.

With traditional elitism virtually stripped of both its dignity and prestige as a result of political and economic processes, and with an emergent

Muslim middle class of *ilustrados* and professionals, Muslim societies, including that of Sulu, was made vulnerable to both the good and the ills of progress. The consequent ferment stirred by exposure to modern Western influences — from chewing gum to ideas — resulted not only in institutional dichotomies in Muslim societies, but also in an intrusion into the Muslim value systems. It was in this area of Muslim culture — the very foundations of Muslim strength and identity — that Muslim fears and anxieties began to build up. This became more obvious when the prospects of Philippine independence became clear with the American withdrawal of sovereignty and the Tydings-McDuffie Law, notwithstanding the effects of the Pacific War on the Philippines which raised speculations about the extension of American rule even after 1946.

The Struggle for Cultural Identity

The eventual grant of Philippine independence in 1946 gave rise to Muslim fears that whatever political, economic, social and cultural possessions they had preserved under the American liberal democratic system might finally be lost to the Christian Filipinos who had become virtual heirs to the American colonial government. Among the Muslims' real fears included a crisis in identity. To a large extent, Muslims believed that their Islamic roots were being threatened by the dynamic changes initiated by colonialism. The Muslims wondered whether or not they could remain Muslims in the light of the change from American to Filipino rule, and vis-à-vis unrelenting pressures from Christian Filipinos in Moroland. But then, the new Republic was more concerned with addressing postwar recovery and reconstruction so that even the Muslims — who were no less affected by the war — were preoccupied with the need to restore order in their societies. The Muslim leaders, including the Sultans, actively participated in winning some benefits and aid from the American postwar financial package for Philippine reconstruction.

No significant Muslim disturbances were noted during the first decade of the Republic — except for the Kamlon Uprising in Sulu in 1950 which was triggered largely by inter-Muslim feuds and unresolved land problems. The government's role in pacifying the conflict unfortunately

turned into one of confrontation with the Kamlon people who suspected the government to be supporting their local enemies and fanning the flames of conflict.

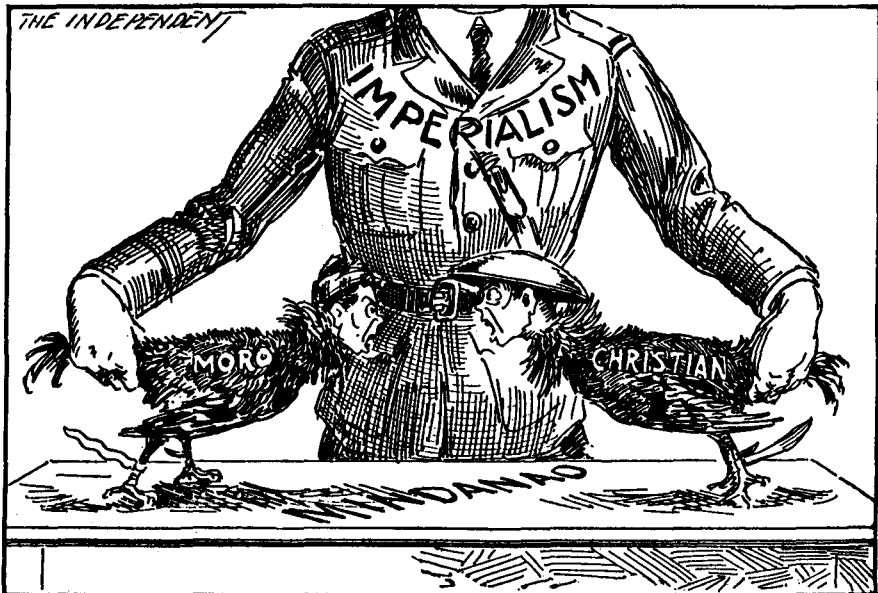
The surrender of Kamlon and his subsequent incarceration at Muntinlupa — instead of being immediately resettled outside of Jolo, preferably in Tawi-Tawi, together with his followers — only confirmed the Muslim perception that the government could not be fully trusted. The cunning former President Ferdinand Marcos pardoned and released Kamlon on September 11, 1968, Marcos's birthday. Good media coverage was given this event by way of showing Manila's sincerity in restoring good relations with the Muslims. Ironically, the year also saw the founding of the secessionist movement by a militant group of Muslim youths and traditional leaders — including Nur Misuari, who was to gain national and international recognition with his Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). Appropriately, the MNLF considered March 18 its memorial day, to commemorate the massacre of Tausug-Sama trainees on Corregidor Island after the Jabidah project fiasco.

The government's answers or solutions to the nagging issue of Moro demands and aspirations could be seen in clear historical perspective. The next chapter categorizes the various government approaches. The historical context represents the "preconditions" in Eckstein's model. The "precipitant(s)" that triggered the secessionist movement in 1968 was the Jabidah Massacre on March 18, 1968 which has since become Bangsamoro Day. This has been celebrated yearly by the MNLF as its founding anniversary. What was the Jabidah Massacre? How did it bear on the secessionist struggle? Why did it eventually become the MNLF's point of reference? These are some of the questions that lead to the understanding of what Eckstein means by "precipitants" of internal conflict.

To Muslim secessionists, the Jabidah Affairs clearly demonstrated the Filipino leadership's regard for the Muslim minority in the country. The revelation of Jabin Arula, the lone survivor of the massacre, that innocent Muslim youths were recruited and trained for a subversive and sabotage mission against their Muslim brothers and kinsmen in

Sabah, made Muslims in the Philippines and the Ummah realize that as Filipinos, their rights to life, liberty, and happiness were not guaranteed and protected by the very government expected to ensure these rights. Consequently, to Muslim perception, Filipinism as an ideology is limited and relevant only to the aspirations of the Christian majority in the country. This brought to a powerful focus the convergence in Muslim consciousness of their historical losses to colonialism and Filipinism, including the last and most sensitive — their Islamic identity. In effect, Muslims believed that the unfortunate tragedy that befell the youthful trainees on Corregidor, hidden from the public, happened precisely because they were Muslims.

Although many Filipino politicians, including Benigno S. Aquino, Jr., denounced and criticized the Marcos administration for the massacre, they failed to neutralize the event's psychological impact which led to the secessionist alternative. Not a few regarded the high-profile tirades against government as more of an anti-Marcos reaction than of any real empathy for the Muslim cause.





CHAPTER II

THE MORO IN HISTORY

ONE OF THE products of more than six centuries of Muslim history is the development of a Moro-*Mujabeden-Mujahidat* consciousness and profile in contemporary times. In the course of centuries of historical interaction from the introduction of Islam around A.D. 1280 up to the present, the Moro has acquired a name that evokes two contrasting perceptions of the Moro personality. The imagery serves as a means of understanding the attitudes, values and behavior of the Moro in relation to himself, his own kind and other people.

The Moro in Tradition

From oral literature, which represents the richest source of Moro cultures, the Moro at once presents the typical image of a native with a natural instinct to recreate some aspect of Mother Nature in poetic, musical and artistic expressions in order to fill the void in his preliterate mind. The image varies from one ethnic group to another, which serves to heighten the complexity of the Moro mind and personality.

As seen from various well preserved ethnic literatures, the Moro moves from one diversity to another while being bound by a common thread. The Tausug *parangsabil*, an ethnoepic of beauty, glorifies the exploits of a unique individual called the *sabilallah* (from the Arabic,

meaning one who dies for the faith). In the epic, the Moro emerges as a hero seeking death as the only means toward the highest self-fulfillment. His passion to kill as many of the enemy - who is not a Muslim - is an act that brings social and spiritual merit. The *darangan*, an epic of sublime passion, is an embodiment of Maranao and Maguindanao psyche. The Moro image in this epic rises from the hero Bantugan, whose anti-Spanish or anticolonial struggle is glorified as a mark of heroism and culture.

From the oral literatures of the three major groups (Tausug, Maranao and Maguindanao), the Moro image is an expression of that remarkable courage which defies death and is dedicated to the Moro cause. In effect, the oral traditions present the positive image of the Moro as a lover of freedom and an enemy of all forms of foreign intrusion and bondage. And yet, there are other equally important types: the farmer; the woman who patiently grinds cassava for food; the fisherman who paddles his *vinta* to sea; and, finally, the artist who sings the *luguh* and the *lolo*, who dances the *pangalay* or *singkil* with utter grace, and who carves the *ukekil* (*okir*) or *gulis* designs on his watercraft, utensils and weapons. The various images of the Moro personalities portray the less perceived dimension of the Moro character, that which shows the Moro as a lover of peace, a humanist interested in his creativity and a man sensitive to the rhythm of nature and the universe. The gestures and sounds he makes with his hands, mouth and feet, while inscrutable to Western sensibilities, express the sublime in him.

The Moro's prehistorical image was distorted by colonialism and civilization which transformed it into its antithesis. This same distortion has kept the Moro alive in written sources and has made history a source of great injustice. But the Moro's survival in colonial history and his neocolonial forms in contemporary times is attributable to the life-giving energies he has imbibed from his Islamic roots. In effect, the period during which his personality was changed by Islam was really the beginning of his ancient history.

The Moro in Ancient History (1280-1565)

The 13th century, probably around A.D. 1280, marked the beginnings of Islam in the Philippines. A new consciousness was superimposed on the Moro mind as he began to appreciate what Islam could offer. As he embraced the faith, he began to feel that he was part of a larger world, the *darul islam* which the *ummah* conceptually created. It is anchored on the belief that he who believes in Islam, especially the Five Pillars, becomes a part of a universal body of believers bound by common spiritual ties. This is expressed forcefully in the *shahada*, the First Pillar: "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his messenger." The Moro consciousness effortlessly transcended the boundaries of ethnicity and geography and provided a sense of community otherwise absent in pre-Islamic societies.

With this new consciousness, the Moro was transformed into a personality which sought like-minded spirits while searching to give new meaning to his activities and struggles. And yet, while cherishing his Islamic acquisition, he was not willing to entirely abandon his old ethnic culture. Instead, he found to his great satisfaction the blending of the two elements and, in the process, created a folk Islamic tradition. Around this cultural synthesis has revolved his life. Thus, the Moro had reconciled two forces, a world view which enabled him to see his roots as inseparable from his environment while simultaneously providing him a window to a vast world of new realities and hopes. Undoubtedly, he was deeply religious, venerating Allah as the one true God, although he also paid significant attention to the ancient spirits that animated his world. Thus the significance of the *tonong* among the Maranaos, the *ombob* of the Sama, the *kokok* and *lagtao* of the Tausugs, and in addition, the *jinns* which the early Muslim mystics (*awliya*) introduced. The importance attached to pre-Islamic spiritual institutions was evident in many rituals and rites such as the *lalabutan* (food offering), *duwaa* (thanksgiving) and *hinang-hinang* (special ceremonies). Usually, the festivals and feasts for religious purposes or otherwise became appropriate times for folk-Islamic traditions to come to public notice as people gathered to see themselves moving in a world of their own - Islam and



A Maranao datu and his two aides

native cultures sharing preeminent roles in their activities. One, therefore, sees in the Moro cultural milieu, before Western contact, the integration of Islam into the life of the people. The "al Fatihah," the opening chapter of the Koran, found a special place in rituals which included varieties of local customs and colors. At the hours of prayer, the Moro performed the required *rakaat* in either the *masjid* or *langgal*. The latter was the typical Southeast Asian house of prayer rather structurally and architecturally different from the mosque.

But the Moro was more than a religious and cultural creature. He, too, was a fisherman, farmer and trader, whose intermediary role was evident in Philippine internal trade particularly between Mindanao-Sulu and Visayas, Mindoro and Manila, and in the external trade between Brunei and the Philippines. In his economic activities, the Moro developed seafaring values that literally made the sea his playground and the watercrafts creative preoccupation. Thus, he produced remarkable varieties of seacrafts such as the *sappit*, *kumpit*, *pelang*, *sakayan*, *biggung balanghay*, *parau*, *caraoa*, etc. which served particular purposes. He also became an expert sailor who knew the currents, the wind and other forces of nature. But he also developed a mystical relation with his environment, attributing to nature certain supernatural or supranatural intelligence quite beyond his understanding. Consequently, by his own fertile imagination, he formulated rituals and formulas to neutralize nature's wrath such as the storm, thunder, lightning. The *tawal* and *duwaa* were two rituals he frequently performed to calm the sea, tame the storm and salute the thunder. The ideal location of Moroland in a relatively typhoon-free zone reinforced the Moro's trust in his mystical powers. The *tawal*, which has been preserved through time, is a verbal formula from Koranic passages - particularly the "Fatihah" - uttered in a solemn and exorcistic manner. The *duwaa* is a food-offering ritual to give thanks and praise to Allah's divine favor. The Moro's seafaring life thus developed in him not only a fatalistic attitude toward life, but also, a courage honed by constant encounters with natural dangers and the threat of death. Risk-taking became a source of excitement, and constant exposure to the hazards of trade helped forge the Moro character

that earned him an unflattering niche in the Filipino psyche and western historiography.

And yet, Moro energy also found expression in the subtle world of art as he applied his inborn instinct to carve the *ukkil* or *okir* on the bow of his seacraft and the beam of his house on land or stilts; the geometric engravings on his gravemark as well as the intricate designs on his weapons, utensils, tools and instruments. He was indeed an artist of nature. But in no other expression of art was the mystique of the Moro imagination more evident than in the colorful designs and motifs of the *malong*, *batawi*, *badju*, *bigot*, *pis* and the literary varieties thereof, in which creative feminine touches played an important part. The same was also obvious in the more noted culinary arts of Moro ethnic groups, which was in the tradition of the Indo-Malay world. The Moro as artist had a strong sense of pride in his art and exercised the liberty of expression which was strongly influenced by his folk Islamic culture.

The development of the Moro from the harmonious blend of the Islamic and the indigenous was his most extraordinary achievement, the constant source of his self-fulfillment. It was at this time, around the 15th century, when the synthesis of culture definitely strengthened the *ummah*, when a new political institution debuted in Moro history. The “Sultanate,” as the institution was popularly known formally emerged in 1450 when “Sheriul Hashim” Abu Bakr founded the Sulu Sultanate, the first in Philippine history. Then, early in the 16th century, at around 1511, Sherif Kabungsuwan established the Maguindanao Sultanate in Maguindanao, the modern-day Cotabato City in Mindanao mainland.

This new political structure broadened both the Moro’s political vision and sense of authority beyond the confines of the datuship or the rajahship. The Moro datu/rajah and his subjects were not subject to the higher authority of the Sultan whom they readily accepted because under Islam, the Sultan was regarded as the “shadow of God” and, therefore, carried a divine mandate. This was one of the most important contributions of Islam to the Moro mind. While the Moro zealously guarded his personal liberties and individuality, he now accommodated

a higher authority whom he was willing to obey. He viewed this new divine authority not as a challenge or threat to his freedom, but as a means of enhancing that freedom, since the essence of his struggle was intertwined with his faith in God. The Sultan's authority complemented what he possessed because it provided him with a dimension of commitment beyond the self. In a sense, he found a greater sense of security in a system that succeeded in bringing together the otherwise independent and often conflicting local chieftaincies under a common loyalty. It was this final blending of the Moro as an individual and an *ummat sin nabi* (follower of the Prophet) that brought the new Moro personality which would confront the challenge of colonialism as it bewildered the Occidental mind.

The Moro in Colonial History (1565-1946)

In 1565, the first major challenge to the Moro came upon these shores. The last Spanish expedition under Miguel Lopez de Legazpi established Spanish presence in Cebu where Rajah Tupas and his subjects accepted Spanish rule and were converted to Christianity. From this initial contact, Spain launched the process toward the conquest of the Moro and his homeland. In 1570, the Spaniards under Martin de Goiti, upon instructions from Legazpi, took the initiative to penetrate the Moro stronghold of Manila, the most developed trading center in the archipelago. The Moro chieftain, Rajah Sulayman, was to experience the first major challenge to Moro independence and way of life. As a man of courage and peace, ready to receive a friend or fight an enemy, he welcomed Goiti's overtures of friendship through the help of a Moro convert. The preliminary contact led to the first *sandugo* (blood compact) between a colonial emissary and the Moro. This ritual of friendship, sealed by drinking a mixture of the parties' blood, provided the basis for Spanish entry to Manila as it neutralized Moro resistance to Spanish presence. But the compact was threatened by rumors of a Spanish plan to force the Moros to pay tributes as token of their recognition of Spanish sovereignty, the way it had been done in Cebu five years back. When word about the plan got to Rajah Sulayman, an outbreak of

hostilities nearly erupted, but Goiti promptly denied the rumor. The Spaniard reiterated his mission of friendship through another *sandugo*, this time involving Sulayman and two other powerful chieftains of Manila and thereabout — Rajah Lakandula and Rajah Laya (Matanda).

The peace and friendship, however, did not last long. The outbreak of hostilities was precipitated by a mutual distrust over the movements of Spanish and Moro vessels in Manila Bay. The hostilities ended with the burning of 1,500 Moro houses, the death of 500 residents and the capture of several weapons and *lantacas* (native cannons). The famous Battle of Bankusay (modern Tondo) finally eliminated Moro resistance in Luzon. Shortly after, the Spaniards with their Visayan allies occupied the Moro stronghold of Manila. To the Moro, this event marked a new history of relations with the West, and the bloody road to peace became an option. As events would show, the Moro would be travelling this road for centuries, the Moro generations after the fall of Manila letting their blood along the way.

Following the Spanish conquest of Manila, the colonizers immediately began the interdiction of the lucrative Brunei-Manila trade for both political and economic reasons. This move was also to justify the Spaniards' preemptive conquest of Mindanao and Sulu, the base of the Moro sultanates. The Moro now had to face Spanish thrusts into his home beginning with the expedition under Francisco Sande in 1576 which consisted of 40 ships, 400 Spaniards, 1000 Filipinos and 300 Borneans. This was followed in 1578 by another expedition to Jolo under Captain Esteban de Figueroa and two more in 1579 to Mindanao, Sulu and Borneo under Gabriel de Rivera and Juan de Arce Sardonil. To the Moro - whether datu, warrior or serf - the Spanish operations were efforts not only to erode his economic foundation, but also, his political and cultural future in the archipelago.

The Moro responded to these armed intrusions not only by resisting, but also, by initiating retaliatory raids right into the heart of Spanish bastions, sparing no villages or communities. For the Moro as a fighter, the period from the Figueroa expedition in 1578 to that of Urbiztondo in 1850 marked his successful attacks on the Colonial State, determined

only by the blow of the *vendavales*, *bonanzas* and *brisas*. Spanish records of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries have preserved what the Spaniards referred to as *piraterías mohametanas* (Moro piracies). Spoils of raids, especially captives, obsessed Spanish writers, chroniclers and reporters - especially the religious, who readily attributed deliverance and escape to God's or some saint's miracles. In fact, a human interest story is told in a *Relacion* written by a priest in 1628, of a Spanish woman who was taken captive in the Sulu raid led by Sultan Bongsu of a shipyard in Camarines in 1626. A Spanish fleet of *caracoas* under Captain Cristobal de Lugo gave chase. Jolo, the home of the Sultan, was attacked, including the Sultan's palace on a hill. But negotiations to retrieve the Spanish woman failed, because the woman opted to remain as an influential person in the Sultan's kingdom. This prompted the imaginative historian to ask: what could the Moro Sultan have possibly offered Doña Lucia that led her to prefer captivity? Going by the record of his exploits, written by no less than his enemy, the Moro had also demonstrated a romantic charm second to none.

And yet, while he spared no effort to destroy his enemy, the Spanish or Christian *kafir*, the Moro was a pragmatic trader who sought fortunes or opportunities from his sanguinary activities. At the turn of the 18th century, he had factored in a new motive for his raids to the Visayas and Luzon, the lucrative returns from the slave trade in Southeast Asia, as well as the need for farm hands and such help in his own homeland. He thus developed the art of war and trade; mere vendettas were of secondary importance. Thus, captives of all sorts were taken: the able-bodied for the farms and labor markets; the marriageable women for the slave markets in Batavia (Jakarta) where Chinese, European and native buyers were ready to bid for concubines or house help; the weak, old and infirm for the human sacrifices of Bornean tribal rituals; and the children for adoption and rearing in Moro households where, eventually, they would be integrated as new Moros ready to act and serve as one. In fact, a story is told of a child taken in one of Sultan Kudarat's depredations. He was raised as one of the Sultan's own children. Later, when presented with the choice of returning to where

he came from, among the Spaniards and Christians, he chose to remain in Moroland where his freedom was recognized, protected, and preserved. Evidently, the natives found life under Spanish rule repressive and Moroland was considered some sort of refuge.

But the Moro could only enjoy his values and freedom for as long as his mastery of the sea and homeland remained undisturbed. Otherwise, as it was by the 1850s, disequilibrium would surely set in. Over the next decade, the Moro character and image also began to change. The introduction of the steamboats or gunboats in the last half of the century effectively wiped out the Moro fleet. Consequently, the Moro raids to the Christian areas, while still conducted with as much daring, became increasingly counterproductive to Moro interests. The renewed Spanish thrusts into Moroland eventually stopped the Moro raids and transformed Moro responses into defensive reactions to Spanish presence in their own homeland. The destruction of Moro villages, farms, and seacraft crushed the Moro capacity to retaliate. Despair set in and his dependence on powers beyond himself - on the supernatural and his charms - increased tremendously.

Before long, the Moro became a bundle of frustrations, anger and fantasies - a fanatical personality and fighter willing to die at any moment for his struggle and especially for his faith. By the late 19th century, especially after the campaigns of Jose Malcampo in 1876, the Moro had become the *sabilallah* whom the Spaniards called *juramentado* (amuck). It was this image of the Moro as a mere death-seeker that dominated the perception of outsiders, especially the Christian communities whose losses from the *sabilallah* were notorious not in number but in the manner of death. This Moro image was most certainly feared, and as such, formed the Moro stereotype in Philippine literature and history, as well as the basis of Christian prejudices against the Moro peoples.

At the turn of the 20th century, when a new colonial power had taken over Spanish rule, the Moro had acquired a notoriety that eclipsed his highly evolved image in precolonial times. The peaceful trader had become the scourge of the sea, preying on vessels flying the colonial emblem. The former nature lover and artist had become a bitter and

ferocious nemesis of the symbols of Hispanism and Christianity. Even the gentle Moro women assumed the warlike posture of their men. But this new savage image could not be blamed entirely on the Moro. The image was largely propagated by colonial writers whose interpretation of Moro history and culture remained unchallenged simply because the Moro ignored the development of an intellectual tradition. The Moro was unmindful of the intellectual necessity to neutralize the onslaught of colonial propaganda against him and his culture. The failure to develop this intellectual tradition enabled colonialism and neocolonialism to preserve the prejudice against him, the cause of the greatest hindrance to Moro aspirations.

Thus, the United States, which succeeded Spain in 1898 as colonial ruler, confronted for the first time the Moro savage whom early American writers described as not much different from the North American Indians. What mattered to the Moro, as exemplified by the resistance of Datu Ali in Cotabato (1903-1905), Panglima Hassan in Sulu (1903-1905), Datu Tungul, Datu Gamour and Datu Ampuanagus in Lanao (1902-1903), was the defense of the Moro homeland and the 'ancient liberties' he dearly cherished. Having lost to the Spaniards his economic preeminence in the Southeast Asian trade, his fleet having been demolished by Spanish gunboats, his Islamic faith was certainly under great threat, too. But instead of being broken, the Moro was toughened by conflict: he swore forever before Allah and his mother's grave to resist every foreign intruder in his homeland. His fanatical and passionate defense of his freedom and independence was the only thing that kept him alive generation after generation.

Naturally, when the United States tried to force her sovereignty on the Muslim South from 1899 onward, the Moro resisted every American expedition and defied the new military weapons the Americans used. The Moro lost several lives in the Lanao campaigns from 1899 to 1903, in the operations against Datu Ali from 1903 to 1905, in the Bud Dajo Massacre (1905) and the Bud Bagsak encounter (1913), the last decisive fight. After 1913, the Moro was compelled by circumstances to accept, at least nominally, American rule. Consequently, revolts, uprisings and

disturbances punctuated the half century of American rule in Moroland. The battles and encounters during the period of the Moro Province (1903-1913) were succeeded by organized disturbances during the entire span of the civil government (1914-1935). The most prominent of these violent reactions to continuing colonial and Christian rule were the disturbances in Kidapawan (1917), the independence movement in Lanao led by Datu Mamadra (1924), the Tahlil Uprising in Jolo (1927), and the Kutah Fights in Lanao (1930-1934) during which Moro leaders like Dimakaling and Amai Milon threatened not only to resist government operations but also to proclaim their own government. In a sense, the Moro had become wary of what they perceived to be subtle colonial efforts to derail their aspirations as expressed in numerous letters of datus and sultans to the American authorities. It was only the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941 that more or less blunted the Moro independence movement.

The Japanese invasion of the Philippines in 1941 and the consequent establishment of Japanese presence in Moroland were accompanied by unparalleled atrocities which spawned a Moro-Christian united front, under American leadership, against the so-called "yellow peril". Many Moros joined the USAFFE and other anti-Japanese organizations until the enemy was finally ousted in 1945. The Moro contributed his share of sacrifice and blood and, somehow, the common experiences of the war gave both Moro and Christian reasons to live together and help each other. But the political inertia of earlier Moro independence movements had not been forgotten. When the United States proclaimed Philippine independence on July 4, 1946 and transferred sovereignty to the Christian Filipinos, the Moro faced a great dilemma: Would he now accept a subordinate role under the Christian Filipinos whom he had regarded with suspicion and misgivings? Would he now abandon his struggle for independence for a prospect that was thus far ambiguous?

The Moro and Filipino Rule (Since 1946)

Like his Filipino-Christian counterpart, the Moro regarded Philippine postwar independence as more symbolic than real. His political freedom

was now determined by neocolonialism which indirectly allowed the manipulation of a former colony for certain interests. American economic, military and cultural rights and privileges in postwar Philippines neutralized the gains and prospects of Filipinism and nationalism. Moro loyalty to the American colonial state remained the only way of responding to the postwar dilemma. He now adopted a bifurcated response. One was represented by a segment of the Moro elite who were not satisfied with Filipino concessions or commitment to the Moro struggle. The intensity and fervor of secessionist agitations from 1946 to 1968 were subdued, often diluted and neutralized by the government's preemptive concessions to political and traditional leaders. But the growing neglect of Moro societies, especially their socioeconomic improvement, eventually provided the more idealistic Moro youths and professionals the reason for organizing the secessionist movement in harmony with the imperatives of traditional patterns.

This became particularly necessary and urgent after the government's failure to deliver benefits. The Kamlon uprising in 1951-1955 failed to bring results beyond nominal benefits to Haji Kamlon and his immediate kin. The Commission on National Integration (CNI), which was organized in 1957 to take care of non-Christian minorities, succeeded in providing scholarships to only a small number of Moro youths who would ironically constitute a group that supported the secessionist cause. Although direct beneficiaries of the meager educational funds of the CNI, the Moro youths saw how they and the other minorities were denied access to national benefits because of an unjust social system. By 1960, the Moro homeland had been virtually taken over by a Christian majority except areas like Lanao, Cotabato, Basilan and Sulu. In fact, the fact-finding Senate Committee under Sen. Manuel Manahan reported in 1963 that the Moro people had been alienated by worsening problems of education, livelihood, health, transportation and communication, and especially, landgrabbing, which robbed the Moro of their rights to ancestral lands.

Thus, the 1968 proclamation by Gov. Udtog Matalam of Cotabato, a traditional Maguindanao leader, of a Mindanao Independence

Movement (MIM) caught the government by surprise. It declared that the establishment of an Islamic state in Mindano was the only answer to Moro aspirations. However, it was only useful in publicly formalizing an aspiration of the Moro people. Matalam was persuaded by the government to reconsider, which he did, so that the initiative passed on to the new Moro breed who organized themselves into the MNLF. In effect, historical forces had made the Moro a liberationist.

Nuruladji Misuari, head of the MNLF, epitomized the new Moro breed - the liberationist, the alternative leadership to the traditional which included that of Rashid Lucman, the man responsible for organizing the Moro youth in 1969 for secession. Inevitably, as Lucman would later reveal, he had to part ways with Misuari because of the latter's ideological leanings. In brief, Misuari had an ideology distinct from that of the traditional leadership.

What was, and is, Misuari's Moro ideology? It is actually a synthesis of Islamic and Marxist elements springing from Misuari's personal and professional experiences. Misuari was born in Cabingaan, Sulu, an island inhabited by Tausug-Sama and somewhat isolated from modernization processes. Nur, as he is popularly known among colleagues and professionals (and "Professor" to the general Moro public), does not hail from the traditional elite. His humble origins drove him to the pursuit of progress through education and his personal resources. Early in his academic life, he had shown radical inclinations that would later be of much use. But it was during his years at the University of the Philippines, the state university famous for its academic standard and as the home of radical thinkers and ideas, that shaped his consciousness. As a student of Political Science and Asian Studies, and later, as Instructor in the Department of Political Science, Nur's extensive exposure to radical ideology and experience led him to become one of the founding members of the *Kabataang Makabayan*, together with Jose Maria Sison. It was also in the University that Nur saw from an intellectual and pragmatic perspective the arduous and frustrating struggle of the Moro people for their rights and progress. It was not long before he became convinced that only the radicalization of the

Moro struggle along progressive lines can ultimately propel the struggle to triumph. Thus, his departure from the State University to the local Muslim College in Jolo marked the new road to liberation which, in 1969, had found expression in the movement that carried his name.

The Moro liberationist as exemplified by Misuari has become a modern and formidable foe, no longer circumscribed by the limitations of traditional concepts and strategies which had burdened his predecessors. As a modern freedom fighter, Nur could appreciate both the confrontational approach of his forebears and the guerilla tactics of a contemporary people's war. He saw the practicality of the struggle to achieve victory at the least cost as well as to achieve glory by dying.

The Moro had thus learned to value the liberationist concept of a people's war which recognizes above all else the collective interest of the people rather than the individual's self-fulfillment. Whereas before, the Moro would not run away from combat even when he was staring defeat or death in the face, the Moro liberationist regards retreat or evasion as an equal act of heroism. And yet, he too, is willing or ready to die, if doing so achieves the highest collective good and is an effective strategy against the enemy. Consequently, the liberationist has endeavored to acquire expertise in the use of modern weaponry, technology and propaganda, including the subtle use of the media. He has also come to value the establishment of ties with other like-minded movements, giving as much support to his comrades as he has received from them. In short, the Moro has joined the international ranks of liberationist fighters in the Third World and has acquired the international stature exactly the opposite of the global image accorded him during the age of colonialism. This new and international dimension of the Moro insurgency, as the Philippine government calls the Moro struggle, has made Moro secessionism the most potentially explosive of all internal conflicts.

The Moro Today

Today, the Moro no longer stands at the crossroads of history where he found himself immediately after the last world war. He has definitely

taken the road to liberation and independence, two revolutionary aims that have made secession the only option left to the Moro people. The less extreme alternative of autonomy, which was agreed upon by the Philippine government and the Moro representatives in the Tripoli Agreement of 1976 - the first such settlement internationally endorsed - was an accommodative measure to allow serious reflection for both parties on the ultimate interpreted autonomy as the limit of its compromise just as the Moro leaders, regardless of factional affiliations, have regarded autonomy as, at least, an acceptable minimum for the immediate solution of current problems. The Aquino government, since its takeover in 1986, has reiterated the same position and the inalienability of Philippine sovereignty in the dramatic meeting between Aquino and Misuari in Jolo in September 1986 and, again, expressed in the Jeddah agreement after the Plebiscite of February 2, 1987. But while the newly-ratified Constitution institutionalized the government position, it has also institutionalized the Moro distrust of the Filipino government.

No less than Misuari had expressed public and official opposition to the autonomy provision of the Constitution before the February 2 plebiscite. But the government ignored his demand to suspend that particular provision until after peace talks had been concluded. In effect, the ratification of the Constitution drew a definite line that made independence non-negotiable as far as the government was concerned. This has, therefore, created for the Moro struggle a problem not so much in objectives but in strategy and methods. The MNLF has amply demonstrated that it has taken autonomy as a basis of peace talks, a fact that placed the Misuari-MNLF faction in the same position as the MNLF Reformists under Dimas Pundato and Macapanton Abbas, and the MILF (Muslim Islamic Liberation Front) under Ustadz Hashim Salamat. Interestingly, the three factions represent the three major ethnic groups, respectively: Tausug, Maranao and Maguindanao.

Whether or not the ethnic character of Moro factionalism, which serves as a deterrent to Moro aspirations, has been exploited by certain interests, it has definitely been used by the Moro factions to obtain

substantial concessions and commitments from the government. But the government, from the Marcos to the Aquino administrations, has followed the unitary approach to the Moro problem. Marcos concluded the Tripoli Agreement in 1976 with the MNLF under Misuari and, despite the subsequent breakup of the Moro movement into three factions, the Aquino leadership continued with the unitary approach. But why has the Moro response in recent times resisted the unified stand on negotiations? Some have advanced the view that the factional character of the movement has made it quite difficult for the government to realize an acceptable solution, thus keeping the problem in a highly negotiable state for more concessions to Moro demands, including the ultimate independence of Moroland. On the other hand, Moro factionalism has also reduced the armed threat to Philippine security.

Interestingly enough, the Moro factional leaderships have expressed the sincere desire to see a unified Moro profile in dealing with the government. This is apparently the view of OIC (Organization of Islamic Conference) and, in a sense, also that of the government. And yet, the unification of the MNLF, MILF and MNLF Reformists has eluded the Moro mediators. One barrier to this is the insistence of the Pundato-Abbas and Salamat factions that equal status with the Misuari group be accorded them by the government. The other hindrance to unity is Misuari's consistent position that he is the sole representative of the Moro people. His claim is based on both the implicit recognition of such view in the 1976 Tripoli Agreement and on the support of the Islamic states.

Thus, the Moro personality and mind have presented today a complex problem to both the Moro people and the government. Conference after conference has been held by public and private agencies, institutions and organizations as well as by interest groups seeking an honorable solution to the Moro Problem. The most recent was the "First Scientific Workshop on Muslim Autonomy" in the Makiling National Park from September 15 to 19, 1986. Discussions were extensive and workshops were conducted up to the wee hours of the morning. The various commissions tasked with specific issues or areas of concern arrived at

some consensus. But the expected "Organic Act for the Muslim Autonomous Region" had yet to be crystallized in conjunction with the provision of the 1986 charter. It is precisely the constitutional mandate which poses a problem to any lasting solution since Misuari's secessionist faction had earlier opposed such a constitutional limitation on Bangsamoro freedom.

In 1980, Misuari declared two concepts relevant to the Bangsamoro struggle. These are "*gaosbangbug*" and "*kaadilan*". The former consists of two specific concepts compounded into a whole: *gaos* which means "strength" and *bangbug* which means "commitments", "conviction" or "jurisdiction". By integrating the two ideas into a native ideological component, Misuari has introduced into the MNLF struggle the primacy of the "capacity to commit" to a cause. This commitment is anchored on the second component expressed in *kaadilan*, which refers to "destiny", similar in implication to the messianic expectation of the "Datu Adil". This second concept, which was declared by Misuari in 1983, refers to the antithesis of all forms of injustices to the Moro people and, therefore, expresses the ideal state of political, economic, social and cultural existence. In a sense, this is equivalent to the utopian future that, in the MNLF ideological dissertation, is beyond the narrow interests of the State and Society. Taken together, *gaosbangbug* and *kaadilan*, from the indigenous ideology of the MNLF, are necessary in a theoretical attempt to derive a guiding principle from the roots of culture in a folk Islamic tradition.

Although the terminologies are Tausug, the concepts are general and expressible in similar ethnolinguistic terminologies. In effect, they can be subsumed under the more preferable designation, *Bangsamoro* ideology. This term provides the national identity to an otherwise ethnic concept because it integrates into a forceful ideology the concept of Islam and diverse ethnic traditions. The Moro today is no longer just a liberationist; he has become a real nationalist who has finally found a nation to speak of, a community of people distinct from the Filipino. Undoubtedly, the Filipino nation had already been formed by history and culture by the turn of the century and confirmed by international

treaties and recognition. It is precisely this kind of argument that gives much credibility and right to the Bangsamoro to claim as valid their own notion of a nation which their distinct history and culture had shaped much earlier than that of the Filipino.

As a nationalist, the Moro considers his nation no longer a matter for debate. Only the strategy to get the Philippine government to accept this reality interests him. It is this search for the best method that occupies his energies and mind. This sense of nationhood forged along historic rights rises in direct proportion with the inability of the government to satisfy Moro aspirations. In fact, continuing peace talks between the government and the MNLF, with other Moro groups taking secondary roles, are premised not on the abandonment of the historic Moro claim to nationhood but on the possibility or prospect of realizing a "nation within a nation", an autonomous structure that can reconcile the prerogatives of national sovereignty on the one hand and the demands of Moro aspirations on the other.

How this elusive reality can be captured in a political agreement has been the main thrust of both informal and formal talks since the Tripoli Agreement of 1976. Moro representatives led by Habib Hashim accepted the negotiating premise of autonomy and expressed sincerity to finish the talks as early as possible within 45, instead of 90 days. But in a radio interview over Radyo ng Bayan, the same Habib Hashim reiterated the Moro adoption of autonomy as the official MNLF position, albeit with a somewhat different definition of autonomy than was generally assumed by government negotiators. Autonomy, as clarified by Hashim, is based on popular consultations, not plebiscites.

What the latest Moro proposal for peace specifically implies is that the autonomous region enjoys the freedom to have the government it wants as well as its own security force, educational and economic systems, taxation and cultural development programs that accord with Moro concepts. It concedes merely nominal and ceremonial relations with the Philippine state for a semblance of national sovereignty. This possibility drastically reverses the system of governance that has kept the country under the highly centralized government. As a pragmatic

secessionist, the Moro wants to realize the substance of independence and relegate the form to subsequent struggle. Through the approach, the retrieval of ancient liberties and historic rights can be achieved with the least bloodshed, so that the Moros' energies can be devoted to plans of Marxist-Leninist paradigm - the deprivation theory developed by a number of writers, particularly Ted Robert Gurr in *Why Men Rebel*, or the purely theological approach which attributes all evils, including human conflict and violence, to the work of the Devil and man's depravity. It is highly provocative for the scientific mind to attempt a study of Moro secessionism making use of John Stuart Mill's "four methods of experimental inquiry" namely, "the method of agreement", the "method of difference", the "method of residues" and the "method of concomitant variations."

But it may hardly be rewarding to follow any of the models expressly developed for analytical purposes simply because the models are derived from situations unique or peculiar to the cultural group or groups used for model-construction, or perhaps, from purely written dissertations on the subject, however important the latter might be. Without necessarily denigrating the theoretical contributions of a host of constructionists to theory-building, Eckstein's "An Etiology of Internal Wars" is convenient and useful in studying the Moro independence struggle and movement. Eckstein suggests that in dealing with "causal explanations" or "different kinds of causality" one has to distinguish between "preconditions" and "precipitants" of internal wars. The "preconditions" are "those circumstances that make it possible for the precipitant to bring about political violence." While not discounting the validity of studying internal wars from specific standpoints such as economic, social, political and cultural factors, Eckstein considers the more comprehensive view in terms of preconditions and precipitants more meaningful.

The suggestion is practical and useful in approaching Moro secessionism which has become more complex because of clear historical continuities, multi-ethnic realities and external interests in contemporary Philippine society, especially in the Mindanao-Sulu-Tawi-Tawi-Palawan

area. The independence or secession issue is brought about by the long historical antecedents in the Moro struggle which spans about 400 years. Thus, any theoretical model dealing largely with contemporary explanations unjustly ignores the historical struggle. In fact, the major demands of the Moro negotiators are rooted in historical, not contemporary facts. It is this historical aspect that fits conveniently into Eckstein's "preconditions", just as the contemporary realities that lead to Moro secessionism fit into his "precipitant" category. But how the Moro in the Philippines can finally be understood and his struggle put in meaningful perspective will depend, perhaps, on insights into other movements or struggles in the world.



ARMM Governor Nur Misuari, his wives Radzma and Fatima, and President Fidel V. Ramos with House Speaker Jose De Venecia witnessing during the oath taking of Governor Misuari at the Sherif Kabungsuan Cultural Complex, Cotabato City, September 30, 1996.



MNLF Chairman Nur Misuari and Ambassador Manuel Yan concluding the Peace talk in Jakarta, Indonesia, before President Suharto with Indonesian Foreign Affairs Minister Ali Alatas signing the peace document as Chairman of the OIC Ministerial Committee of Six, August 29, 1996.



CHAPTER III

OPTIONS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

THE SEARCH FOR solutions to the Muslim issue have followed three lines of possibilities which also marked the Philippine-Muslim relations' three periods of postwar history. The period from 1946 to 1968 was dominated by the integrationist view of the problem. The second, from 1968 to 1987, was characterized by a trend toward the secessionist option and the last, from 1987 up to the present, saw the emergence of the separatist alternative.

The Integrationist Approach (1946-1968)

After the end of the Pacific War in 1945 and the subsequent proclamation of Philippine Independence by the United States on July 4, 1946, whatever issues remained in Filipino-Muslim relations were generally perceived by the Filipino leadership as problems that could be resolved by the rapid integration of the Muslims into the new Filipino republic. Not a few Muslim leaders shared this view, as shown by their government participation and in their involvement in other aspects of national development as Filipino citizens.

Prominent political families in the Muslim South that were simultaneously wielders of traditional power were actively involved in postwar national and local elections. In Lanao, the Alontos, the Lucmans and the Dimaporos were politically active families. Later, the Tamanos, the Pangandamans and the Marohomsars joined the political arena. In Cotabato, Maguindanao political families like the Sinsuats, the Mangelens, the Pendatuns, the Piangs and, later, the Matalams and the Masturas participated in the contests for positions in the government. The Sulu archipelago bred the Kirams, the Abubakars, the Tulawis, the Rasuls, the Sangkulas, the Annis, and, later, the Tans and the Loongs. Other smaller clans also began transforming politics into often bloody interfamilial feuds.

However, what contributed to the integration's dynamic quality was the successful involvement of Christian and non-Musim families in the electoral processes. The Maranao voters elected Tomas Cabili, a Catholic, to Congress. The Tausug and Sama elected Leon Fernandez, a Catholic lawyer, Governor of Sulu and Felix Bello and Vicente Santos won as Mayors of Siasi. The Izquierdos, the Calixtos and the Carpizos enjoyed political patronage in local Jolo politics. The same was true of some prominent Chinese families like the Tans, the Lims, the Kongs, the Teos and the Hos who landed political roles in predominantly Muslim areas. In fact, the pattern continued along this integrational direction until about 1968 when a new element in Muslim attitude and, consequently, aspirations, resulted from the Jabidah Massacre.

While Muslim political families maintained the postwar period's integrational pattern as a matter of practical importance, the new element saw the beginning of radicalism in the Muslim struggle different in nature and purpose from, although similar in objective and goals to, the earlier Muslim revolts. This radical element is related more to the idea of "secessionism" which presumed the recognition of the Muslim South as a part of Philippine territory, and, therefore, subject to Philippine sovereignty. This also marks the second period of the Muslim struggle and the State response — The Secessionist Option.

The Secessionist Option (1968-1976)

Spearheading the secessionist movement is the Bangsamoro Liberation Organization (BMLO) led by Datu Rashid Lucman of Lanao in 1968 which was established following the Jabidah Massacre. Lucman initiated this step to create an umbrella organization for various Muslim groups seeking independence from the national state, albeit with little unity to speak of. The various groups, although Muslim, remained very much divided by ethnic and other local factors. In the view of the movement's Muslim leaders, it was crucial to have a unified front composed of the three largest Muslim groups in the archipelago: the Maranaos, the Maguindanaos and the Tausugs (including Sama). Even with the smaller factions out for one reason or another, the struggle for independence would still be formidable. Thus, the 90 or so Muslim youths who were sent to Malaysia for combat and revolutionary training came from the three major groups. Three of these young radicals would later emerge as the rallying personalities of the three ethnic components of what became known as the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF): Dimasangkay Pundato, Hashim Salamat and Nur Misuari, representing the Maranao, Maguindanao and Tausug-Sama, respectively.

At this point in time, in the late sixties, the Muslim struggle was ideologically anchored on a semi-conservative view that the Muslims were Filipinos and thus historically constituted a part of the Philippine state. Somehow, their long neglect by the government compelled them to seek independence from the Philippines. This view could be attributed to the initial core of leadership where traditional leaders like Rashid Lucman and Domacao Alonto of Lanao, Udtog Matalam of Cotabato and Maas Bawang of Sulu wielded considerable influence. Traditional leadership, which was either the beneficiary or self-appointed conduit of state resources intended for the benefit or development of their localities, tended to downplay whatever radical elements had permeated the Moro consciousness. Somehow, the ties of traditional leadership with the central authority in Manila kept the Muslim struggle within what the central government perceived as a controllable level. There was something in these relations that would hinder a Muslim breakaway

process from its historical linkage with the Filipino State. In fact, events would show that the traditional element in the Moro struggle had been most vulnerable to compromises with the government as they were responsible for paving the way for the return to the “fold of the law” of a good number of rebels.

One of the most tangible means of compromise was the 1976 Tripoli Agreement which was concluded between the MNLF under Nur Misuari and the Philippine government represented by Carmelo Barbero, with representatives of the OIC as witnesses. While there was a breakthrough in the series of peace talks following the 1974 outbreak of MNLF hostilities in Jolo, it was also from this point when a rift in MNLF leadership began to appear. Expectably, the traditional leaders began to see the difficulty of winning over the Moro struggle which had definitely moved along radical lines.

The Separatist Alternative (1976-1990)

In a series of statements and public speeches after 1976, Nur Misuari clarified the MNLF’s ideological thrust. There was actually no formally recognized ideology of the Movement other than Misuari’s declaration. Nor was there any institutionalized set of doctrines adopted by the movement. Thus, the MNLF ideology was perceived by other leaders in the Muslim struggle as Misuari’s ideology. This was, of course, something to be expected in a struggle where no historically determined ideology had guided Muslims of various ethnic or local persuasions. The result was a somewhat reluctant acceptance of Misuari’s dominant role, notwithstanding the general acceptability of Misuari’s ideological declarations. Although in the germinal stage, Misuari’s ideological concoction of Islamic, Socialist and Marxist-Leninist sources turned out to be a good rallying point for the youthful recruits from schools or from the ideology oriented elements.

In contrast to the traditional view, Misuari’s ideology primarily established the fact of an independent “Moro Nation” long before Spanish colonialism. It was never a part of the Filipino state or nation, but was in fact developing separately from the Filipino or Christian

community. It was in the course of this development that a bitter struggle had to be waged against the colonial government which vigorously sought to subdue the Moros. The MNLF movement was therefore a way of reasserting and/or establishing the separateness of the Moro nation. Secessionism could not be correct because it implies being a part of the Filipino state from which the movement seeks independence. Thus, the idea of separation as an ideological thrust brings a new radical dimension that would appeal to a larger number of Muslims. The idea that the Moros were never a part of any nation boosted the Moro claim that they were never conquered.

In response to the increasing intellectual pressure for more concrete components of the MNLF ideology, Misuari declared in a speech in Maimbung - and published in the MNLF's official paper, *Mahadlika* - that the MNLF ideology could be viewed from two concepts - *gaosbaugbug* and *kaadilan*. While these were indeed attractive to Tausug-Sama elements, they were ambiguous to the non-Tausug-Sama components. In a way, this ideological linkage of the MNLF with Tausug-Sama reinforced the ethnic perception of MNLF leadership as being substantially reoriented to suit the interests of an ethnic group. This is similar to the ethnicization of the Mindanao State University along Maranao interests. While *gaosbaugbug* and *kaadilan* may not really conflict with non-Tausug-Sama concepts, the ideology's ethnic character was an inescapable factor in the movement which greatly affected the stability of the MNLF leadership and struggle.

The crack in the movement's solidarity was occasioned by a confidential note from Rashid Lucman to the Tripartite Committee of the OIC wherein he mentioned certain Muslim leaders who should be contacted by the organization to resolve the pending Muslim issues. Lucman also implied that Misuari's ideology had taken the Marxist-radical line and thus would not be in the best interests of Islam and Muslims in the Philippines. Then, the reported breakaway of Hashim Salamat, and later, Dimas Pundato from the MNLF served to isolate the Maranao and Maguindanao groups from the movement, reducing the MNLF under Nur Misuari to a Tausug-Sama-based separatist struggle.

Misuari's reaction to the reported breakaway of the MNLF Reformists and the MILF (Moro Islamic Liberation Front), the new names taken by the Pundato Maranao and the Salamat Maguindanao groups, respectively, was to deny the move as a fundamental repudiation of the MNLF ideology. He confirmed the break as motivated by purely personal interests. He charged external forces, including the Philippine government, of exploiting the internal issues of MNLF leadership.

That Misuari recognized the seriousness of the breakaway of the Maranao and Maguindanao leadership components could be gleaned from the appeal of Misuari to his core of Tausug-Sama supporters as well as from his diplomatic maneuvers. In a Tausug message delivered in Tausug to his Sulu base in 1989, he reminded his constituents of the three motivating concepts which powered the Moro struggle: *hula*, *agama* and *bangsa*. While these concepts applied to the aspirations of other Muslim groups, including the Maranaos and the Maguindanaos, Misuari's message in Tausug clearly showed the intended audience. Briefly, the concept of *hula*, Tausug for homeland, suggests the idea of "territoriality." The second, *agama*, which means religious tradition, suggests the idea of identity. Then, *bangsa*, which means race, suggests the idea of proud origin beyond identity based on biological and historical beginnings. By the time of the Aquino administration, the separatist alternative had been reduced to the demands of the Tausug-Sama group. This fact was subsequently reinforced by the return of Dimas Pundato and his reformist group to the government, and Pundato's acceptance of the directorship of the Office of Muslim Affairs (OMA). In effect, Pundato as head of the MNLF Reformist, had followed the traditionalist approach to Moro problems by finally settling for integration. The other Maguindanao faction led by Hashim Salamat was the object of government overtures, and the prospect of the faction accepting the integrationist solution became brighter with the OIC support firming up in favor of Nur Misuari's MNLF by 1989. The OIC resolution of support in 1989 expressed strong support for Misuari as the rightful representative of the Bangsamoro people. This OIC endorsement has kept the separatist option attractive to the Muslims in the Philippines.

Government Responses to the Moro Issue

Since 1946, the government answer to Muslim movements and struggle had been based on the old colonial idea of integration. The only discernible distinction between the colonial and the Filipino approach is in the fact that the former was related to the necessity of Christianization and the latter was more or less guided by the constitutional guarantee of religious freedom. In other words, while the Spaniards and the Americans directly promoted the Christianization of the non-Christians as the basis of integration, Filipino administrations since 1946 sought to eliminate this kind of integration, at least, in terms of policy declaration.

But as it turned out, colonial bias against a non-Christian culture was difficult to eradicate. It continued to affect the implementation of state policies and programs as well as the role of private institutions in the development of non-Christian potentials. In other words, Filipino Muslims continued to suffer from neglect under a new Filipino leadership after independence in 1946. There were limited opportunities in government service and mostly in the secondary levels of the bureaucracy.

Consequently, despite excellent policies and programs which had virtually become merely political slogans and propaganda - especially before national elections - Muslim alienation from the State intensified, as the national population increased, which considerably strained available resources. Thus the minorities went several notches down the priority list. While there might not have been a deliberate violation of justice, the bias against the non-Christian minorities remained the single most important psychological barrier to nationalism and Filipinism. There is little use denying that the Christian majority in the country not only enjoyed the benefits of abundant resources, but also, the near-monopoly of national power as well. In fact, to a significant extent, they even shared sufficient power and influence in the local non-Christian communities including the Muslim areas.

The radicalization of the Muslim struggle through either Islamic orthodoxy or Marxist-Leninist ideology awakened the government to the urgent need to realize integration by more substantial concessions to the Muslim leadership, not necessarily to the Muslim masses. Apparently, the government correctly believed that by giving enough political, economic and social concessions to the various Muslim leaders, the Muslim threat to national security can be neutralized. To pursue this thrust in the government approach to the "Moro Problem" was most practical from the standpoint of resources. It did not take a good chunk of budgetary resources to take care of the Muslim leaders as it would to spend on the millions of needy Muslim masses throughout Southern Philippines. Thus, several Muslims from the traditional elite found themselves in prominent national and local positions, - a fact which caused the political integration of prominent Muslim families of Lanao, Cotabato and Sulu into the national leadership. This political concession was strengthened by the subsequent share of the Muslim leadership in the economic resources through trade, commerce, agriculture and other revenue-generating schemes.

In a sense, it was the cooptation of the Muslim elite by the government that seriously blunted the Muslim secessionist or separatist struggle, especially after the creation in 1957 of the Commission on National Integration (CNI) and in 1968 of the Mindanao State University (MSU), which gave the Muslim leadership the sense of importance they had been seeking, as well as the venue to project their political and intellectual profiles in Philippine society. Not a few from the Muslim sector gained considerable mileage from the far-reaching effects of the two government institutions. In fact, most of the young leaders in the Muslim struggle had come to notice via the Commission's scholarship program, which was its only meaningful contribution, and MSU's academic activities, which were largely participated in by Muslim intellectuals and academics.

By the late 1960s, the radicalization of the Muslim struggle along either secessionism or separatism had crystallized, constantly fed by the government's inability to meet Muslim demands for socioeconomic

benefits vis-à-vis their more progressive Christian neighbors. Certainly, the ineptness of the Muslim leadership to satisfy their constituencies contributed to the worsening situation. In fact, the political ferment in the Muslim areas had compelled even the traditional leaders to re-examine their goals and aspirations vis-à-vis their people. The young Muslim leaders had taken up the issue of Muslim destiny in the light of their continuing neglect and frustration. The ferment brought a segment of the Muslim traditional leadership into the radical option.

This crack in the relation between the government and traditional Muslim leaders alarmed the national leadership, especially with the declaration in Pagalungan, Cotabato by Gov. Udtog Matalam of the Muslim Independence Movement (MIM) in May 1968. This was a historic declaration on the part of the Muslim elite who had always tried to preserve their political ties with the national leadership which continued to invest in the former. A personal meeting between President Marcos and Governor Matalam was arranged in an attempt to neutralize the new radical threat. Although Matalam was persuaded to give the government the opportunity to prove its commitment to Muslim progress and welfare, the process toward a larger united front had become inexorable. The trend could only be accepted, its challenge met. The outbreak of war in Sulu in 1974 was the bloodiest and costliest conflict between the government and the newly formed Moro National Liberation Front, the symbol of a new Muslim unity seeking independence for the Bangsamoro.

Jolo, the setting of this bloody confrontation, was razed to the ground. Hundreds of government troopers and MNLF *mujahedeens* were killed. Residents were reduced to poverty as properties and valuables were lost to fire and theft. Other islands up to Tawi-Tawi triggered serious clashes with government troops, thus turning the entire Sulu Archipelago into a war zone. Clashes in Lanao and Cotabato, Zamboanga and Basilan were reported. The Muslim South saw the Muslim war of independence in which traditional and radical Muslim leaders joined hands against the government. The government's armed response to the MNLF challenge was premised on the outright rejection

by the government of any compromise on Philippine territorial sovereignty.

The realities of the post-1974 conflict for both the government and the Muslims pointed to the political and pragmatic way of dealing with the vital issues. The losses for both parties were tragic and the effect on nationalism and Filipinism had been serious. The logical direction was for the negotiating table peace talks, which were concluded, after hectic diplomatic work, in the historic Tripoli Agreement in December 1976. In this accord, the MNLF, under Nur Misuari, and the Philippine government, represented by Carmelo Barbero and witnessed by OIC representative, agreed to pursue a peaceful solution to the Muslim struggle without prejudice to Philippine sovereignty through the guarantee of a process toward Muslim autonomy.

However, the steps taken by the government to carry out the provisions of the Tripoli Accord, especially the holding of a national plebiscite and the establishment of the autonomous structures for the Muslim South, were coldly rejected by the MNLF. In fact, Nur Misuari through his spokesmen; lawyer Ibrahim Uy of Cotabato and Uztadz Zain Jali of Jolo, accused the government of insincerity and duplicity. The post-Tripoli relation between the government and the MNLF was marked by intensified propaganda against each other and calculated armed attacks, usually for politico-psychological purposes. Until the ouster of the Marcos government from power in 1986 by a coalition of forces led by Mrs. Corazon Aquino, no significant breakthroughs were achieved to resolve the impasse. This situation of political uncertainty and ambiguity was exploited by the "people power" installed government of Corazon Aquino to create a new hope for the Muslim struggle. No less than a visit of Aquino to Jolo to meet Misuari in September 1986 was initiated to give the new revolutionary government the mandate to implement the Tripoli Agreement.

Public and private talks followed between MNLF representatives and government officials in the Philippines. This process was augmented by official missions to the Middle East to dialogue with Nur Misuari and key leaders of the OIC. The Jeddah Accord, which was secured in

1987 by a team composed of Sens. Aquilino Pimentel and Agapito Aquino, gave bright prospects for a breakthrough in the search for solutions to Muslim problems. Just like the ambiguities of the Marcos approach to the Moro issue, the uncertainties of the Aquino formula brought only intensified charges by MNLF propagandists that the government was not sincere in solving the problems, and that it had in fact increased efforts to divide the Muslim people and to exploit their weaknesses.

By late 1989, the Moro issue had begun to take on its most recalcitrant stance, which made the prospects of a compromise dimmer. The new element responsible for this "hardening" was the increasing OIC disappointment over efforts of the Aquino government to implement the Tripoli Accord. The OIC attitude had been progressively expressed in various resolutions. The last one in 1989 gave the impression of an impending admission of the MNLF as a full member of the organization. This prospect of international recognition for the MNLF alarmed the architects of Aquino's diplomatic approach and brought to light the serious implications of the Moro issue. Clearly, it meant that the government would have to deal with the formidable OIC, which further meant that the MNLF would obtain a leverage or advantage in fighting the government.

Thus, the Aquino government, through the Department of Foreign Affairs, tried to neutralize the OIC factor by initiating diplomatic offensives to deny the MNLF any significant advantage. The MNLF's main vulnerability lay in its divided leadership and inability to maintain a decisive armed presence in areas it claimed as Bangsamoro territory. Thus, despite the call for direct MNLF- government talks, Foreign Affairs Secretary Raul Manglapus, presumably on Mrs. Aquino's instructions, expressed the government's readiness for talks, but only with a unified Muslim group composed of the MNLF under Nur Misuari and the other two splinter groups headed by Pundato and Salamat. By maintaining this negotiating position, the government succeeded in exploiting the problem of Misuari's leadership. Misuari's inability to forge a unified front seriously undermined the MNLF's posture in the OIC which had

long been expecting a Muslim united front principally represented by Misuari's MNLF. Apparently, the government had succeeded in softening the Pundato and Salamat groups through certain enticements. The first casualty, as it were, was Dimas Pundato of the MNLF Reformists who accepted the directorship of the Office of Muslim Affairs along with other perks that came with a patron-client relationship so well entrenched in the Philippine political system. The government had also penetrated the otherwise fundamentalist structure of Salamat's MILF with juicy offers of political positions and economic opportunities, including access to financial resources.

The government's encroachment on MNLF grounds got a boost from the much publicized creation of the autonomous government of Muslim Mindanao based on the results of the plebiscite in February 1991. The inauguration of the regional government headed by Gov. Zacaria Candao, a supporter of the Aquino leadership, boosted the government's diplomatic offensive to show the OIC that the administration was serious about honoring the Tripoli Accord. Although the OIC still maintained support for the Misuari faction, the government offensive appeared to have made a dent on the OIC stance. One more such stroke of genius on the part of the government would have knocked down the shaky situation altogether. Fortunately for the government, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait polarized the Arab and Muslim world between an Iraq-led faction and the Saudi Arabia faction. The MNLF's response - neutrality - certainly affected its relationship with the OIC. Without meaning to, the MNLF disappointed the Saudi Arabian leadership which was seeking to unite the Muslim world against Iraq's aggression. As a major contributor to the OIC and the benefactor of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and other Muslim revolutionary struggles including the MNLF, Saudi Arabia's possible withdrawal of support for unsympathetic groups signaled serious trouble. The MNLF thus became a casualty of the post-Gulf War realities and had to turn to the Bangsamoro homeland or other Muslim countries for support since the usual Saudi Arabian package may not appear as generous or forthcoming, for that matter.

The MNLF profile as the voice of Philippine Muslims continued to be muffled by its inability to stage credible attacks on government troops as it had in 1974 in Jolo, even in areas under MNLF influence. Government propaganda and resources succeeded in neutralizing MNLF bases by using Muslim politicians and traditional leaders who had been ignored or underrated by Nur Misuari. The ceasefire imposed by the 1976 Tripoli Agreement was exploited to explain the lack of MNLF armed response to government initiatives against suspected MNLF terrorists. The MNLF leadership was also forced to disown groups that engaged government troops or kidnapped civilians as “lost commands” - a psy-war strategy to dissimulate the MNLF’s lack of control over its field commanders, especially in remote areas.

Recapitulation

When we look back to the efforts taken by both the government and the MNLF to solve the problem of secessionism or separatism before 1978, the steps toward integration were almost all attributable to the government, with the Muslim leadership taking a don’t-know or don’t-care attitude. If taken together with the subsequent indifference of the MNLF to the idea of integration, the pre-1978 period of the resolution of conflict was marked by a one-sided initiative taken by the government, from Roxas to Marcos, and thereafter.

By the time the Marcos regime was replaced by the Edsa I revolutionary government of Cory Aquino in 1986, the Bangsamoro problem had led to an impasse and dilemma despite the efforts of the Marcos government to pursue unfulfilled expectations of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement. The Aquino government initiated confidence building measures to win back Misuari’s cooperation in the renewed peace process. The incorporation of a provision on the future of Muslim Mindanao in the 1987 Constitution was intended to guarantee the Bangsamoro rights to their just aspirations. This was followed subsequently by the sending of peace overtures carried by Emmanuel Pelaez, Aquilino Pimentel and Butch Aquino. The resulting Jeddah Accord

brought back Nur Misuari with a new significant posture from Saudi Arabia to meet Cory Aquino face to face not in Malacañang but at Mt. Carmel Catholic Church in Jolo, Misuari's base capital.

Subsequent events which marked the government process toward the establishment of meaningful autonomy through appropriate legislation only demonstrated some fundamental difficulty of reconciling the Bangsamoro desire for independence and the compromise pursued by the government that had rejected the aspiration. Eventually, charges and counter-charges of violation of agreements and bad faith marked the relations between the MNLF leadership and the Aquino government. The breakdown in the peace process gave the MNLF reason for strengthening its armed forces, as usual with encouraging support from some members of the OIC.

In other words, there was practically no meaningful Muslim input into their integration process in the national stream. The process, theoretically or otherwise, was left largely to the national leadership in Manila to decide on through either legislation or executive guidelines. The Muslim attitude toward these attempts was either due to lack of any clear vision of what integration meant or to the long history of government's lack of will in implementing integration.

The option, therefore, of secessionism or separation, which is based on the reality of independence, offered the simple way out. The only serious obstacle to this ideal was the grim determination of the government to resist any attempt to dismember the republic by peaceful or violent means. The government's rejection of Muslim independence and its insistence on "Muslim autonomy" as a compromise posed the single most important barrier to the MNLF struggle after 1968. The lack of Muslim armed resources to match the government's military capability clearly pointed to the need for some kind of foreign aid for the MNLF or, if possible, foreign intervention in favor of Bangsamoro independence. The international dimension of the Bangsamoro independence struggle had to be cultivated. The initiative towards this end is discussed in the next Chapter.



CHAPTER IV

INTERNATIONALIZATION FROM WITHIN

THE URGENT NEED of the MNLF for foreign support was clearly felt when the government responded to the increasing pressures, violent or otherwise, from the Moro struggle by deploying more troops and military resources to Southern Philippines by the late 1960s. Estimates claimed that 70 to 80 percent of the AFP resources were readied for Southern Philippines. Marcos's determination to meet any armed challenge to Philippine sovereignty from the MNLF added pressure to diplomatic options. Realizing the inadequacy of Muslim domestic resources vis-à-vis government forces, the Bangsamoro struggle was forced to seek more international support, either through diplomatic pressures or the supply of much needed ammunitions and funds. The Muslim world was undoubtedly the most logical source for Muslim diplomatic contacts.

Muslim View of Foreign Support

The 35 selected respondents covering Zamboanga, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and Sulu, unanimously regarded move to solicit revolutionary help from the Muslim world as vital to Bangsamoro victory. The informants, who came from the MNLF rank-and-file and had served the movement

through the difficult years from 1970 onward, were highly optimistic over world Muslim support because of Islam. They believed that the MNLF was fighting for the cause of Islam, whose future in the Bangsamoro homeland was threatened by what they perceived as deliberate government efforts to convert Muslims to Christianity and thus destroy their sacred institutions. They were also convinced that Muslim land and properties would be confiscated by the government. This led to popular Muslim support for the MNLF separatist aims. The informants believed that the Muslim world would support the Bangsamoro struggle because, as Muslims, they should be helped by Muslim brothers everywhere. This perception of spiritual ties in the *Ummah* formed the basis for the popular confidence of the Bangsamoro in the ultimate triumph of their cause.

But Muslim leaders in government had also expressed the need for external aid from the Muslim world along socioeconomic lines to improve the standard of living in Muslim areas. They believed that the aid must be in various forms such as cash grants, investments in Muslim areas and projects with full funding from the OIC. Although they had not expressed support for external Muslim help for the MNLF separatist cause, their silence on this matter suggested some support for the MNLF effort to get full OIC aid. One prominent leader even said that a strong MNLF posture with OIC support gives the future Muslim community in the Philippines good leverage in their efforts to wangle attention and benefits from the government. In other words, the MNLF factor in the relation between the Christian majority and minority groups had a significant bearing on the government attitude toward minority rights and needs. Thus, it appears that both the Muslim leadership and people looked to the Muslim world as a vital source of help for their basic needs as well as for their struggle toward Muslim identity and destiny.

Voice from the Field

Significant in the MNLF's effort to capture international attention has been the attitude of the international community toward the Muslim struggle in the Philippines. Especially crucial is the attitude of the

Muslim world which has expressed itself largely through the OIC and, to a certain extent, through the other Muslim organizations. To develop this international attitude, the MNLF believed that the Muslim masses in the Philippines played a vital role, not only through active participation as *mujahedeens* and other functions, but also, through direct or indirect appeals for support from international sources.

Relevant to this issue of international support are the various opinions and sentiments of the MNLF's rank-and-file as well as of its broad supporters. They come from the provinces of Region 9, or Western Mindanao, and represent the reactions of the Sama, Tausug and Yakan ethnic groups that currently constitute the main MNLF base after the withdrawal of the Pundato and Salamat groups from the Moro coalition. The views presented provide a cross-sectional perspective of the secessionist movement as well as an insight into the local perception of the movement's international dimension.

From Tawi-Tawi

- a) *Mansur Sakili* is a Sama Muslim in his early forties (42), married with seven children and a resident of Bongao. A former public school teacher, he joined the MNLF in 1975 as a civilian volunteer for three reasons: the threat to Islam, the treatment of Muslims as second-class citizens and the neglect of the Muslim areas by the government. But he was not for independence as decreed by the MNLF; rather, he was only for a meaningful autonomy, the reason that later led him to return to the "fold of the law" and to support the autonomy act. Although still committed to the Muslim cause, he believes it can be realized through peaceful means and not through armed struggle. It is in this context that he looks at the involvement of the OIC as important because the OIC's financial and logistic support is rooted in history and religion. What he means is that the Muslim world can help in the peaceful settlement of the conflict. Sakili currently heads the Philippine Information Agency Extension at Bongao.

- b) *Sylvia Jalil* is a 34 year-old Sama Muslim, married with two children. She was in third-year high school and a member of the YMC and YMBB in Tawi-Tawi when she joined the MNLF in 1973 as a medical aide. Her participation in the movement was simply to provide the much-needed medical service for her “people.” Her desire to continue her studies led her to the termination of her involvement after about a year. Although she believes in the Aquino program as a solution, she boycotted the plebiscite and she looks to continued help for the MNLF from the Muslim world, especially Libya, Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei, as crucial to the ultimate grant of Bangsamoro independence with the least bloodshed.
- c) *Saidali Abdullah* is a Sama Muslim teaching at the MSU Branch in Tawi-Tawi. He is 40 years old and married with seven children. He had been a public school teacher for seven years when he joined the MNLF as a line officer in 1975 and served as such until 1977. He returned to the “fold of the law” to pursue his academic career, and earned a Bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education and postgraduate units towards a master’s degree in Health Education. He joined the MNLF because of the government’s exploitation of the Muslims and the rampant graft and corruption among government officials. He severed active involvement in the MNLF and “returned to the law” because he believed that reforms could be achieved at the local level. He believes the “peace solution of the Aquino government would not succeed because of the lack of sincerity and nonparticipation of the MNLF in the peace process.” He also deplores the failure of the Aquino government to give more political and administrative opportunities to qualified Muslims. He views OIC assistance to the MNLF as a vital factor in the Muslim struggle and believes it will flourish because it is based on the concept of Muslim brotherhood in the *Ummah*.
- d) *Ibnu Hassan* is 38 and married with three children. He is employed as a driver mechanic at MSU, Bongao. He joined the MNLF in

Parang, Sulu where he was born on January 1, 1955. He served in the MNLF as a fighter from 1970 until 1976 when he “returned to the law” because he wanted to earn a living, having only finished first year college. He joined the MNLF when it called on Muslim youths to get involved in the struggle against government injustice. His resolve was strengthened by the declaration of martial law in 1972 part of whose rationale, as stated by President Marcos, was to neutralize the Bangsamoro struggle for independence.

- e) *Panglima Abdullah Sansawi* is a Tausug Muslim landowner in Ipil, Tawi-Tawi, 55 years old and married with six children. Although he finished only two years of elementary education, he was recruited to the MNLF as a logistics supplier for the movement. He joined the MNLF because he believed that as a progressive landowner, his interests could be protected from any future political changes in the region. But after the surrender of MNLF Commander Yusop, he moved to Bongao and severed his connection with the movement. As a traditional leader, being a Panglima, he has been more interested in protecting his business interests and had nothing to say about the movement’s international dimension. The lack of adequate educational exposure is the obvious reason for Sansawi’s detachment from the struggle’s most pressing issues.
- f) *Hadji Hatab Yusop* is a Tausug Muslim born in Indanan, Sulu on May 18, 1950 and married with seven children. He voluntarily joined the MNLF in 1969 because he was thoroughly convinced by the MNLF propaganda that the government was bent on destroying not only the Muslim political future in the country, but also, their religious identity as Muslims. He was only in third year college when he joined the movement. But in 1974, he returned to the “fold of the law” after realizing that the MNLF struggle was not a “religious war.” He was convinced that the autonomy solution offered by the government was a better option to the Muslim problem and that independence, as desired by Nur Misuari, could only be realized through a voluntary grant by a government.

Hadji Yusop is currently the Deputy Governor of Tawi-Tawi and no longer actively giving assistance to the movement.

- g) *Datu Amiril Maindan*, a Tausug Muslim, was born on July 1, 1950 at Ipil, Tawi-Tawi and married with nine children. He was only in first year college when he joined the MNLF as a sympathizer in order to “avoid conflict” with the MNLF leaders. He cooperated with the movement because he believed the movement had legitimate cause to wage a struggle and to seek independence. He later discontinued active cooperation and became, instead, a security guard of the MSU branch in Bongao. Maindan had little to say about the struggle’s international aspect; he was more concerned with protecting his present job.
- h) *August Herrera* is a Catholic who has lived in Bongao for a long time. He thus considers himself a real native. He joined the MNLF because he sincerely believed in the justice of the Muslim struggle, having seen the government’s failure to redress Muslim grievances on account of the country’s defective political system. He finds democracy mind-boggling and believes that its modified form is more acceptable. But he thinks the autonomous government as designed by the Aquino administration is not the answer. He joined the MNLF as administrator and planning officer under Commander Yusop Dais. After a year, he joined the Civil Service as Budget Officer of the MSU branch in Bongao until his retirement.
- i) *Ibnu Unaid* is an inactive member of the MNLF strike force currently engaged in farming. He was born in Siasi in 1958, married with six children and residing in Bongao. He only finished grade 4 and joined the MNLF, like most recruits, to empathize with the Muslim cause. Although he did not fully understand the struggle’s rationale, he supported the movement until the death of Commander Dais, an event that led him to surrender to the government. He has since lost interest in the movement, concerned mainly with farming, his only source of income.

- j) *Sawadjaan Atiulla* was a retired public school teacher in Tapul, Sulu before he joined the MNLF as a coordinator. He is a Tausug Muslim, born in 1922 in Tapul and is married with four children. He has a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education. He has remained an active member of the MNLF because he believes in the struggle of the Bangsamoro people as beneficial to both Muslims and non-Muslims in Mindanao. He also thinks the government has not complied with the Tripoli Agreement of 1976 and that the establishment of the autonomous government in Muslim Mindanao will not bring peace and solve the conflict. He is confident in the final triumph of the Bangsamoro struggle which he believes must continue because it has the support of "foreign countries". Although a returnee, he has not lost his conviction.
- k) *Eliasir Jainal* is a former MNLF member under Commander Hadji Ishac Tahir of Tawi-Tawi. Before joining the movement, he was a policeman in Maimbung, Sulu. He joined the struggle because his relatives had also been involved with the MNLF, particularly Commander Tahir. He had only finished two years of high school when he joined the MNLF. He later returned to the "fold of the law" and lived in Isabela, Basilan together with his family of three children. He is 35 years old and is still a strong believer in the ultimate triumph of the Bangsamoro cause.

From Siasi

Siasi refers to both the progressive town and the island on which it is located. Later, the entire group of islands constituting a municipality in Central Sulu was called the Siasi Island Group. Today, the island opposite Siasi and its satellite islets constitute the municipality of Pandami, thus limiting the term to only the island and islets opposite Pandami as demarcated by the swift channel that has served as a trade route. It was in this Siasi Island Group that the MNLF succeeded in establishing a remarkable network of supporters. Those who represented a cross-section of the support base were as follows:

a) *Hasino Tingkahan* was a former Commander and Vice Chairman of the MNLF in Siasi, second only to the MNLF Chairman in the area, Hadji Jamalil Taradji. He was born on July 4, 1952 at Latung, Siasi, whose influential leader was the late Panglima Baladji Jumahali, Tingkahan's grandfather. He was the Vice Mayor of Siasi. He won unopposed in the 1987 local elections. He has continued to develop his farm as the main source of his family support.

Tingkahan was in second year high school when he joined the MNLF on January 10, 1972 out of conviction in the triumph of the MNLF cause. He was convinced by the MNLF declaration that the Marcos government was out to convert the Muslims to Christianity and, eventually, confiscate all their lands. He was appointed as the Commander of Latung. He had fought government soldiers several times and was wounded together with 18 of his men. He recalled being surrounded in one operation by 15 naval boats, including three PCFs. He surrendered in November 1976 together with 73 fully-armed followers. He cited personal differences with the MNLF Chairman of Siasi and the prospects of better medical treatment for his wife in government hospitals as his reasons for yielding. He was given amnesty and his ailing wife was granted free medical treatment in Manila.

Although he now lives quietly with his wife and nine children, he believes that the status quo is better than the autonomous setup. He also believes that the Arabs will continue to support the MNLF cause as a matter of obligation as Muslims.

b) *Cesar Utam* was a former commander of the Bangsamoro Army. He was born in 1957 in Jambangan, Siasi. His father was a public school teacher. He is married, with seven children and supports his family by fishing.

He joined the MNLF movement in 1972 on account of the declaration of Martial Law by President Marcos. He believed that martial law was not good for the Muslims. He trained for nine months in Libya and had traveled to places including

Sandakan and Tawao in Sabah and Zamboanga, Cotabato and Davao in the Philippines. As field commander, he was responsible for the areas of Bunut and Mount Sinumaan in Jolo, and Tictapul in Zamboanga del Sur. From Bunut, he attacked government troops in Indanan and the week's fighting resulted in an estimated loss of 100 Muslims killed and 200 wounded. No information was available on the government forces' casualties. According to Utam, a foreign journalist, Teddy Roland, witnessed the encounter. Later, Channel 15 in Europe televised the capture of two armored personnel carriers (APCs) by the Muslim rebels.

On November 18, 1989, Utam surrendered with his men in response to the initiative of the Aquino government through Defense Secretary Fidel Ramos. His specific reasons for returning to the "fold of the law were": (1) his desire for peace so he could educate his children; (2) the change of government from Marcos to Aquino; and (3) the internal problems in the MNLF leadership which gave rise to the dreaded "lost commands." But like most Muslims, he believes that the continuing support of the Arabs for the MNLF as a Muslim movement to protect Islam is crucial. However, he believes that the establishment of the autonomous Muslim government is a positive means towards achieving Muslim aspirations because it would mean the establishment of more *madaris* (schools) and Shariah Courts.

- c) *Sali Ilaji* was born on August 7, 1954 in Buan, Siasi to Police Sergeant Ilaji Haradji and Andahaw Salip Bassal. He was a criminology student when he joined the MNLF in 1972 after the declaration of martial law. He cites "disenchantment" with the Marcos administration, the foreign debt problem and the long government neglect of Muslim Mindanao as the reasons for his involvement with the movement. Because of his college and ROTC training, he immediately saw action in field battles against government forces. In 1973, he fought in Sibuco where, allegedly, 19 government soldiers died and three were wounded. After about three years of struggle, he decided to surrender through Admiral

Romulo Espaldon on November 27, 1975 with 204 fully armed followers. He yielded because he desired peace so that he could educate his six children and live peacefully with his family. He is the Chief Security Officer of the Mayor of Siasi.

Although he believes that the Arabs' assistance to the MNLF cause continues, Ilaji thinks that the Tripoli Agreement is not the key solution to the conflict. He thinks that the government approach by way of the autonomous government can be the answer to the Muslim problem.

- d) *Apalal Julkanain* was born on January 15, 1952 in Lugus, Siasi, to Abbas Julkanain and Mastura Abdula. He joined the MNLF when he became a widower. He had six children. He only finished high school when he formally enlisted as a recruit on January 2, 1973. His reason for turning rebel was disappointment with the Marcos government which had given him no justice for the death of his two brothers and four cousins in the infamous Jabidah massacre on Corregidor. He became vulnerable to MNLF propaganda against the government and was sent for training for three months as a rebel fighter at Tambisan, Sabah.

After training, Apalal returned to Siasi and became assistant to Commander Bakkang Jaddil Sammah, sometimes also known as Commander Mohammad Essil Jaddil Sammah, of the Pandami Revolutionary Command. He fought twice under Commander Bakkang. The first was at Hambilan on April 13, 1973 against a combined government force of police, Integrated Civilian Home Defense Force and regular army elements. Two of his companions were wounded. Two weeks later, the MNLF suffered heavy casualties in an encounter with the 24th Army Battalion, with 10 killed, including Commander Bakkang and seven wounded. No casualty figures were available on the government side in the two battles.

After the death of Commander Bakkang, Apalal received a written order from Commander Hadji Isaac Tahir, Commander of the Tawi-Tawi Revolutionary Command, to move to Tawi-Tawi

to assume his new position as Commander of the municipalities of Basbas, South Ubian, Tandu Bas District, Bacbakan, Jakarta. Tumbagaan and Sugbay. After two years, he voluntarily returned to the “fold of the law” because of differences with some groups in the MNLF. He resumed his business and concentrated on sending his children to school.

Apalal believes that MNLF support from the Arab World was due to the convincing propaganda of the MNLF. He is also convinced that the Philippine government was anti-Muslim and that the Muslims were fighting for freedom and independence in the name of Islam. However, he thinks that the autonomous government can be the solution to the conflict.

e) *Samad Abdurahim* is a 48-year old farmer. He is married, with seven children. Like most recruits, he joined the MNLF in 1972 to fight for Muslim independence and, specifically, to defend his own barangay against military atrocities and abuses. He believed the MNLF claim that the Marcos soldiers were indiscriminately burning the mosques and shelling Muslim villages like his own barangay, Kungtad. After two years with the movement, he was compelled to surrender in 1974 to Col. Likub, pleading illness. He was brought to Espaldon and eventually granted amnesty. He recalled killing about 70 soldiers, excluding those who were wounded.

f) *Matlih Usnman*, 52 years old, is married with nine children. He was born in 1939 at Tanjung Siowing, Siasi to Usman Tadjirul and Tanjila Alih. He had not gone to school, but was a successful farmer-businessman when he joined the MNLF in 1972.

He joined the struggle because of Marcos’s oppression of the Muslims and the government’s suppression of Islam. He thought that the struggle against the government was a holy war (*jihad*) in which every true Muslim is expected to participate. He trained for four-and-a-half months at Kutah Bullud, Malaysia. Upon his return to Sulu, his initial battles against the government were at Bakal, Pandami, his area of responsibility. He claimed these

encounters killed 72 soldiers and wounded an unknown number of soldiers while his losses were only 11 killed and four wounded. Later, he was transferred to Tawi-Tawi as overall commander of the Tawi-Tawi Revolutionary Command. Here he fought at Katipunan, Busay and Tanjung where MNLF Command Cid lost one of his men and a member of his medical team. After 12 years with the movement, Matlih was captured by Philippine Naval Boat 31 while on his way from Jampiras, Sabah to Sulu. He was jailed at Calarian, Zamboanga City for several months before being given amnesty. He subsequently convinced 120 members of his command to surrender to the government at Siasi. But he continues to believe in the leadership of Nur Misuari. He thinks that being Muslims, the Arabs will continue to help the MNLF struggle for freedom and Islam with both money and materials.

- g) *Mudjahirin Arasain* was born on March 18, 1952 in Jambangan, Siasi to Imam Arasain Jumaani and Aridda Arasain. He finished a B.S. in Agriculture and was a successful farmer when he joined the MNLF in 1973 as Barrio Chairman of Barangay Jambagan. As told them by the MNLF, their objectives were to: (1) fight for Muslim freedom in Mindanao, the Bangsamoro homeland; (2) fight for the cause of Islam; and (3) check government military abuses against Muslim women and religion.

Mudjahirin fought in three battles as MNLF District Commander in Saisi after 15 days of training at Kambing, Luuk: (1) the Battle of Kungtad in 1974 where MNLF Commander Sahisa was wounded; (2) the Battle of Sipanding where some of his men were wounded; and (3) the Battle of Siburri where two women in his unit were killed. However, on November 25, 1975, he and 238 armed followers surrendered to Espaldon because of disillusionment with the movement. They were subsequently granted absolute amnesty by Marcos.

Although he still believes that Arab assistance to the struggle will continue, he had wanted the establishment of the autonomous government in Muslim Mindanao which he thinks will lead to (1)

the opening of Moro state colleges and universities; (2) the establishment of more *madaris* and Shariah Courts; (3) the grant of more rights and privileges to natives in employment and access to natural resources; (4) the strong representation of Mindanao in the national government; (5) a greater share of regional income; and (6) the integration of qualified Muslims into the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

- h) *Malinsa Hasim* was born at Duggo, Siasi to Hasim Isnain and Indang Adain more than 50 years ago. He had no formal schooling but is a successful farmer supporting a family of six children. Like both his parents, he was illiterate. He joined the MNLF after the declaration of martial law with only his courage to offer the movement. He feared losing his religion and so he joined the movement.

He was assigned to Duggo and had some 100 armed followers but their encounters with government forces took place all around Siowing where they lost about 50 men and several injured. They continued in the struggle for about 10 years, believing that Arab assistance would bring final victory. But he was forced to surrender after realizing that being illiterate meant that he would be left out by the MNLF leaders when they moved to Sandakan, Sabah. With no other motive to go on, he yielded to Col. Juhalim Hadjula with 100 of his men, 70 of whom were fully-armed. They were granted absolute amnesty.

He thinks the autonomous government of Muslim Mindanao will empower the Muslims.

- i) *Mrs. Kuraisiya Hussin* was born on March 6, 1959 in Duggo, Siasi to Annung Hassin and Hussin Sali. She only finished fourth year high school and was a single woman when she joined the MNLF as a member of its medical unit. She learned the ropes from the MNLF team that came from Jolo to Duggo.

Kuraisiya's reasons for joining the movement were the appointment of her uncle, Malinsa Hasim, as MNLF Commander and her belief that the government was carrying out the plan to

convert Muslims to Christianity. She remained active for six years but surrendered to the government along with her uncle. She believes that Arab support for the cause is crucial but thinks the Muslim Mindanao autonomous government can solve the problem and bring peace. She is a widow and currently a teacher at the Duggo Elementary School, having finally obtained a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education.

- j) *Mudjahirin Sarani* was born in 1963 in Tubigan, Sipanding, Siasi. He was only an elementary school graduate when he joined the MNLF as a training officer under Commander Nizam Abubakar. He was given the codename "M". Since 1973, his involvement had been with the Palawan Revolutionary Command, but was assigned as training officer at Siburi and Laminusa, Siasi MNLF training centers.

He joined the movement for three reason: (1) the defense of the Bangsamoro homeland seeking independence; (2) the defense of Muslims who were harassed by the military; and (3) the defense of Islam which was threatened by the Marcos government. He said that the Arab aid for the MNLF would go on not only as a matter of obligation between Muslims but also as a reciprocal gesture for MNLF's combat assistance to Arab countries fighting their enemies. Like Misuari, he believes that the government-sponsored autonomous government for Muslim Mindanao will not work and bring peace. Although living peacefully in Siasi, he is still an active member of the movement but has observed the cease-fire agreement with the government. But he remains ready to respond to duty in the movement because he is committed to the ultimate independence of the Bangsamoro people.

From Jolo

Of all the places in Sulu, Jolo is the most important. It enjoys the distinct honor of being the center of Sulu's history and culture. In a sense, it is Sulu itself, the hub of its political tradition and processes

through which the outside world can be perceived. Like the other island groups, Jolo consists of the biggest island bearing its name and a number of islets that form its satellites. But its essence really comes from the old settlement already known in the beginning of Spanish rule as “Jolo,” and “Xoloo” and “Sug” in the locality. But more relevant to this study is the fact that Jolo island is the main base, or heart, of the MNLF secessionist struggle. The Muslim view of the struggle from this island base is expressed by the following informants:

- a) *Hadji Alhabsi Bin Mutalib* is single and 32 years old. He was born in Indanan to Muslim parents, Hatib Salahuddin and Sahatul Muharram. He was in third year college when he joined the MNLF in 1973 as an information officer with the rank of colonel. His reasons for taking up arms were: (1) to fight for the freedom and dignity of the Muslims in Southern Philippines; and (2) to be part of the Muslim struggle for independence.

Alhabsi still considers himself active in the movement. He believes that the Bangsamoro struggle developed into a separatist movement because of the Aquino government's failure to implement the Tripoli Agreement. He revealed that not only the OIC is sympathetic to the MNLF; the non-aligned countries and to a certain extent, the United Nations, are also supportive of the MNLF. The autonomous government in Mindanao is not the solution. It is just a divide-and-rule strategy of the government to exploit the Muslims. He is convinced that only war can lead to peace and to the ultimate victory and independence of Moroland through the MNLF.

- b) *Hadji Bawang Estino* is 70 years old, married, with two wives and seven children. He is a Tausug Muslim and a son of Panglima Estino and Jaddariyah Estino. He joined the MNLF in 1972 when he was the Barangay Captain of Punay. His reason for joining was the rampant abuses committed by the military against many innocent Muslims.

Maas Bawang, as he is popularly known, served only for one year as MNLF Commander of Punay. He surrendered to the

government because of dissension in the movement and joined the government paramilitary forces. But he believes that the splits in the MNLF would not weaken Misuari's leadership nor lessen the OIC's support for the movement. Moreover, he thinks the autonomous government will not bring peace because it is not acceptable to the MNLF, which is aiming at full independence, and runs counter to the Tripoli Accord. Although still a believer in the Bangsamoro struggle, he is now preoccupied with his farming business.

- c) *Morofred Sangkula* is a native of Parang, Sulu. He is married, with seven children. Before joining the MNLF as an information officer and propagandist, he was a teacher in Lamitan, Basilan and, later, a scholar in Egypt taking premed. He joined the movement and served for seven years because of the government's "perennial neglect" of the Moros. His involvement was voluntary and there was no salary from the organization except allowances that were paid from foreign aid.

He returned to the "fold of the law" and was appointed Executive Assistant to the Administrator of the Southern Philippines Development Authority (SPDA). He resigned his post in 1987. Although he surrendered, he still regards himself as an active rebel. He has not abandoned his belief in the struggle. He believes that the MNLF has achieved international status and continues to receive OIC aid because of religious ties. Like the other Jolo informants, he thinks the rift within the MNLF is not caused by Misuari but is part of the Philippine government's "divide-and-rule" tactics to weaken Muslim leadership and as such will not affect the foreign support for the movement.

- d) *Hadji Alan Salabuddin* is still an active member of the MNLF operating in the municipality of Indanan, Sulu. He is known more as Commander Alan and is the elder brother of MNLF Information Officer, Hadji Alhabsi Bin Mutalib. He already had a Bachelor of Arts degree when he joined the movement in 1979. He is 35 years and married, with five children.

He joined the MNLF not only because of his brother, but also, because he felt it was the duty of all Muslims to help attain independence for Mindanao. He strongly believes in the triumph of the MNLF in its struggle for Bangsamoro independence, as well as in the crucial support of the OIC.

- e) *Professor Amirul Ahajul* is 34 years, single and Muslim. He is teaching at the Jolo branch of the Mindanao State University (MSU). Although not a member of the MNLF, he is a sympathizer, having been a member of the Muslim Youth of the Philippines which supported the aims of the MNLF. He believes that the MNLF has historical basis for fighting against the government and has been supported by the OIC and some European countries because of its struggle for the freedom of Filipino Muslims from oppression. He does not believe in the inevitability of war against the Aquino government because of the latter's failure to grant the Muslims complete freedom.

Ahajul believes that the OIC will continue to support the MNLF despite the apparent dissension in the movement because the MNLF is fighting for a Muslim cause and Misuari is still recognized as a leader who can be the rallying point for the Muslims in the Philippines. He is a firm believer in the final victory of the MNLF and in the steadfastness of OIC support, especially Libya.

- f) *Amil Jawari* is 48 years old and a Tausug Muslim. He is married, with four children. As a *Hadji*, he commands respect from the people. He only finished Grade 4 but was the top councilor of Indanan when he joined the MNLF as Commander of the Municipality of Indanan in 1971. His reason for joining was purely religious — the defense of Islam.

After about 10 years with the movement, he surrendered in 1981 in the interest of peace. But he says he has remained committed to the ideals and aims of the MNLF. He also says that Misuari was not angry at the returnees. He understood the circumstances of their "return" which did not necessarily mean a rejection of the MNLF goal of Bangsamoro independence. He still supports

the MNLF and hopes that with the OIC's continued support for freedom for the Bangsamoro will soon be realized.

- g) *Muksan Taguidid*, a Tausug Muslim, was born on April 8, 1950 at Sangkapa, Pata, Sulu. He is married, with four children. He is a member of the Paghambuuk and the Party Parhimpuanan Kabangsahan Anak Islam. He was a first-year college student when he voluntarily joined the MNLF as a student leader in 1969. His reason was the anti-Muslim attitude and activities of the government. He was active in the movement until 1975 when he returned to the "fold of the law" because he could not see the point of Filipinos fighting Filipinos or Muslims against Muslims. But he believes in continuing the revolutionary cause within the parameter of the law.

He believes the Muslim countries will continue to support Misuari as a matter of religious obligation to Muslims fighting for their freedom. No less than the Koran invokes this commitment and duty, according to Taguidid. As for the Aquino-engineered autonomous government, he says it is not the solution to the Mindanao problem because it fell short of Muslim expectations.

From Basilan

Historically, Basilan has served as a convenient link between mainland Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago. In a sense, it was a natural bridge for various contacts and encounters between people involved in the rich Southeast Asian trade that brought together the entire Philippine Archipelago from Luzon to Sulu into a lucrative politico-economic relation in precolonial times. Today, Basilan and its islets have assumed a complex geographic role, including that of lairs for all kinds of seafaring bands and pirates, whose activities in ancient times extended to the entire chain of Balangingi islands between Basilan and Jolo. The perception of Muslims from this island group is expressed by a number of informants.

- a) *Assi Diong* is a Tausug Muslim who was born in San Raymundo, Jolo on May 10, 1945. He was a former soldier of the Armed

Forces of the Philippines before joining the MNLF as an intelligence officer. He served in the same capacity under MNLF Commander Ustaj Kalbi Tupay before the latter became an assemblyman under the Marcos government. He joined the MNLF because he believed in its objectives. He eventually surrendered and became a member of the special military forces in Basilan. He now lives in Maluso, Basilan and has since become a successful businessman. He believes that the present government will eventually bring peace to Muslim Mindanao.

- b) *Habib Harun Aldam*, a Tausug Muslim, was born on March 17, 1951 at Kulasi, Maimbung, Jolo. He was in first year college when he joined the MNLF under his relative, Commander Ustaj Kalbi Tupay. He confirmed the fact that Muslim countries were giving material, financial, and moral assistance to the MNLF.

Although he believed that the defense of Islam was why he joined the MNLF, he surrendered after five years together with Commander Tupay. He was appointed as an officer in the AFP's paramilitary unit and became a supporter of the Aquino-sponsored plebiscite and the subsequent establishment of the Muslim autonomous government.

- c) *Hadja Maimona Karama Aldam* was born at Putulan, Maluso, Basilan. He is a Tausug Muslim devoted to the cause of Islam. As her name suggests, she had gone to Mecca on a pilgrimage. She was a typist in the Bureau of Posts in Basilan and an active member of various organizations when she joined the MNLF as a medical aide. As the daughter of Commander Kalbi, she also became a rebel and after three years (1972-1974), surrendered together with her father.

Upon returning to the "fold of the law", she was employed as a Records Officer in the Isabela office of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. She, too, supported the Aquino-designed autonomous government.

- d) *Habib Nabo Hasim* is a Tausug Muslim and a native of Lantawan, Basilan. He was a fugitive in Palahangan, Pilas, Lantawan when

he decided to join the MNLF as a mere activist and fighter because he was discontented with the government. He surrendered and, despite his low educational attainment (elementary graduate), served as Vice Mayor from 1981 to 1986. He left the MNLF because of disenchantment with Misuari's leadership and the lack of direction in the movement.

- e) *Yusop Aldam* was born on May 7, 1959 in Palahangan, Basilan. He finished third year, BS Biology, when he joined the MNLF as a mere follower. His reasons were disenchantment with the government and the influence of many relatives who had joined the movement, including his own father. He saw the government's neglect of the Muslims and incidents of oppression. Later, he joined the surrender under Ustaj Kalbi Tupay and became a barangay captain. No definite views on the MNLF ties with foreign interest and supporters were expressed.
- f) *Hadji Malik Alsad* is an MNLF Commander but inactive for the time being and engaged in a relatively prosperous business in Isabela, Basilan. He was born in Baluk Baluk, Basilan in 1940 and at the time he joined the MNLF as a Commander, he had nine children. As a Tausug religious leader, he believes that the movement will triumph because of the support of the Muslim world. He believes strongly in the freedom and independence of the Bangsamoro people.
- g) *Gerry Salapuddin* was formerly the Provincial Chairman of the MNLF in Basilan. His real name is Abdul Gani Arul Salapuddin. He was born in Buki Sama, Tuburan, Basilan on March 25, 1952. He is a Yakan Muslim, married with one child. At the time he joined the MNLF, he had only finished high school. He turned to radicalism because of what he perceived as discriminations against his Yakan tribe. He personally experienced this when he failed to get a CNI scholarship despite passing the qualifying examination as one of the top ten in Region 9. His involvement in the MNLF was a means of drawing attention to the plight of the Yakan people.

He was sent to Malaysia for training, and upon completion and return to the region, was appointed Chairman for Basilan. He was convinced that the MNLF objectives were just and noble and that the OIC would support it to victory. Although still committed to the Bangsamoro ideals of real freedom, he decided to return to the “fold of the law” after witnessing the defective MNLF leadership. He thought that the Muslim objectives and ideals could best be achieved through the democratic mechanism available in the political system. Consequently, he supported the government autonomy laws as an initial step. Although the “yes” lost in the plebiscite, his hope for Yakan progress has remained vibrant after getting for the Yakan the provincial political leadership, from governor to the board members.

The Bangsamoro Meetings and Congress

Perhaps, the more direct and effective method of the MNLF's efforts to draw international attention were the organized congress or mass gatherings of the front's armed followers and multisectoral supporters. The most impressive congregations after the Marcos era were those of MNLF followers in Maimbung, the movement's stronghold. No less than Misuari was the central figure in these occasions. The conference in 1986 was conducted to prove to both the Aquino government and the Muslim world that the MNLF was a force to reckon with and was still working for the freedom of the Bangsamoro people. This was followed by Misuari's and his group's dramatic swing through Zamboanga under the watchful eyes of the armed forces. His dramatic landing on the beach of the Al Makdum University was welcomed by proud Muslim residents and was promptly reported to the OIC by the MNLF propagandist.

Misuari's sorties to chosen areas of Mindanao, where the MNLF supporters were numerous and undisturbed by the government, gave the MNLF what government sources called “bloated importance” in the national media. The OIC's acknowledgment of the MNLF's show of force was expressed in the 17th OIC Annual Resolution of March

1988 which declared unequivocal support for the MNLF as the representative of the Bangsamoro people.

Different from the military-political demonstrations by MNLFs armed followers, but equally important, was the convening of the Bangsamoro National Congress by a multisectoral group in March 1989 at the Maharlika Village in Metro Manila. The congress was organized by former OIC Governor Almarin C. Tillah who was appointed chairman of the two-day congress. Apart from various Muslim sectoral representatives, particularly the youth, Christian leaders also attended. Among them were Reuben Canoy of MIM, former Assemblyman Homobono Adaza and Mrs. Celia Diaz H. Laurel, representing her husband, Vice President Salvador H. Laurel. There were also professionals, academicians and other leaders who attended, among them Odillon C. Mallari, chairman of the Movement for free Mindanao; Abdulgaffur S. Hajirul, chairman of the Bangsamoro Solidarity; Sultan Panangan S. Pangandaman of the Bangsamoro Lanao Professionals and Captain Manodel, a Tiboli leader.

While the congress gave the impression of popular support for the MNLF, its real value lies in the series of strongly-worded resolutions crafted by a hard-working secretariat that worked overtime in Tillah's Makati home. The resolutions were approved and passed by the congress and immediately transmitted to the OIC on March 10, 1989, in time for the organization's annual meeting on March 13-16. The resolutions were as follows:

Resolution No. 1 appealing to the OIC to grant membership to the MNLF

Resolution No. 2 calling for the resumption of peace talks between the MNLF and the Philippine Government.

Resolution No. 3 rejecting the Organic Act for Muslim Mindanao

Resolution No. 4 urging the Philippine government to implement the 1976 Tripoli Accord

Resolution No. 5 reiterating the congress's recognition of Nur Misuari's leadership

- Resolution No. 6 calling for the solidarity of Muslims, Christians and the highlanders who support the independence of the Bangsamoro homeland
- Resolution No. 7 calling for the demilitarization of Mindanao and other islands
- Resolution No. 8 desisting the continued exploitation of the Bangsamoro homeland by multinationals and their local counterparts
- Resolution No. 9 urging the just indemnification of all the victims of human rights violations
- Resolution No. 10 recognizing the sovereignty of the Palestinian state and the legitimacy of the Palestinian struggle
- Resolution No. 11 condemning Salman Rushdie and his novel, *Satanic Verses*
- Resolution No. 12 calling for the establishment of the Bangsamoro media

One of the results of the 18th meeting of the OIC's Foreign Ministers, held from March 13 to 16, 1991 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia was Draft Resolution No. 18-P on the issue of the Philippine Muslims. The resolution reaffirmed the "unflinching adherence" of the OIC to the Tripoli Agreement and its support for the full implementation of its provisions. In arriving at this statement, the OIC recalled all its past resolutions and considered the note of the General Secretariat and the report of the Quadripartite Committee. In effect, it sets aside the Philippine government's diplomatic offensive and rejected its version of the Muslim issue. After deploring the failure of the Philippine government to honor the Tripoli Accord as an international agreement, it urged the member states "to extend material, financial and humanitarian assistance to the MNLF... to defend the Muslim people and Islam and claim their rights." Part of the OIC resolution expressed an unusual concern of the OIC because it called for the adoption of "measures," if the Philippine government continued to maintain a "negative stand" on the implementation of the Tripoli Agreement. From



CHAPTER V

INTERNATIONALIZATION FROM WITHOUT

AFTER THE FORMAL and public inauguration of the Muslim Independence Movement in 1968, efforts to internationalize the Moro struggle were directed toward foreign diplomacy. Simultaneously given attention was the strengthening of the domestic front. Contributing initially to this was the growth of what started out as a purely Muslim independence movement into a broader and comprehensive struggle in southern Philippines. The MIM was the tangible evidence of this united Mindanao front. Its membership consisted of Muslims, Christians and Lumads who shared the common vision of a free, independent and prosperous Mindanao.

With the new organizational mechanism, the Moro struggle had become the struggle of a regional population not bound by a common religion, but by a common aspiration, a goal anchored on the conviction that the progress of the region lies in independence from, and not integration into, the Philippine state. But the burden of internationalization was on the Moro people, and several initiatives were taken after the Jabidah massacre.

The Lucman Initiatives

It appears from sources that Haroun al-Rasid Lucman, a prominent Maranao leader from Lanao del Sur, was the first to take steps towards the internationalization of the Moro struggle. He established contacts with Malaysian leaders especially Tun Mustapha of Sabah for the training of Moro youths and leaders in a movement toward Moro liberation. With help from Tun Mustapha, 90 Moro trainees, including Nur Misuari, were sent to Pulau Pangkor in 1969 for training and orientation. It was also here that the MNLF was organized with a Central Committee headed by Nur Misuari.

But the most important step taken by Lucman was to establish ties with Arab countries in the course of his visits to the Middle East in 1971. One of the results of these visits was the Libyan connection. Aside from the Muslim obligation to assist oppressed Muslims, Lucman utilized the likelihood of Zionist influence behind the Philippine government's treatment of the Moro people as an argument to get the unequivocal and passionate support of Libyan President Muammar Ghadafi for the MNLF. Libya's commitment was obtained and the Malaysian connection of the MNLF emerged as the natural conduit for Libyan aid. In June 1972, Libya's formal support for the MNLF was declared by President Ghadafi who pledged substantial military and other assistance to the Moro cause. As a result, the Bangsa Moro Army was organized and equipped with modern military weapons and hardware, including the Belgian KAL, Kalashnikov AK 47, B-40 anti-tank weapons and armalites. That the Libyan aid was substantial could be deduced from Misuari's own statement in an interview with J. Thierry Roland of Belgium for the European media, that Libya gave the MNLF "all kinds of support." Apparently, as subsequent events would bear out, the support Misuari meant included Libya's strategic and vital role in the MNLF's diplomatic efforts, especially in the OIC where all the heads of state of 46 Muslim countries were members. As a key element in the internationalization of the Moro struggle, the Moro problem was included in the agenda of the 1972 OIC Conference (Third) in Jeddah upon the suggestion of Libya. For the MNLF, and especially Misuari

whose star was beginning to rise, this attention to the Moro issue was no small thing. It was historic and elating because the most powerful Muslim body in the world had given formal recognition to the Moro issue which was deemed worthy of support by the OIC. Although not yet part of the OIC, Resolution 12 of the Conference emboldened the MNLF against the Marcos government which was exhausting all means to thwart the Moro struggle. The resolution called upon the Marcos government to guarantee the rights and security of the Moro people. Thereafter, the OIC became the formidable force behind the Moro struggle, as shown by subsequent developments.

The Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC)

With the Moro struggle becoming an OIC concern, the gradual growth of Misuari's importance here and abroad was inevitable. Without the OIC, the MNLF struggle would not have been as meaningful, and Misuari knew this only too well, which is why he spent most of his time in the Middle East and the Muslim world, shuttling between conferences and meetings with Muslim leaders whenever possible. In 1973, the OIC held its fourth conference in Bengazi, Libya. The MNLF, with the help of Libya, earned OIC Resolution No. 4 which expressed concern over the genocidal campaigns of the Philippine government against the Moro population. The resolution called for the formation of an OIC delegation to visit the Philippines and to report its findings. The team was composed of a representative each from Libya, Saudi Arabia, Senegal and Somalia. Indonesia and Malaysia, as OIC member-states, were also enjoined to use their good offices to help the Moro people. Then in 1974, the Fifth OIC Conference held in Kuala Lumpur allowed the MNLF to present its petition, resulting in Resolution No. 18 which reiterated previous OIC Commitment and support, while also noting the Philippine government's effort to address the problem and to improve on prospects for peace. The Conference urged the Philippine government to negotiate a political solution with the MNLF. By enjoining the Philippine government to dialogue with the MNLF, the OIC had actually given Misuari a fresh boost, while challenging the Philippine government's

ambiguous posture on the matter. As a concrete show of support, the conference also created the Filipino Muslim Welfare and Relief Agency — a plus factor in the MNLF struggle, since the agency would deal with the critical needs of the Moro people not effectively served by the Philippine government.

Subsequent developments proved encouraging for MNLF efforts to seek full membership in the OIC. In 1975, the Sixth OIC Conference was convened in Jeddah where MNLF demands were presented and approved for adoption in the conference's Resolution No. 10. The demands were: self-government for Mindanao, Basilan, Sulu and Palawan; an internal security force composed of MNLF and other minority groups; dismantling of all Philippine government armed forces in the Moro homeland; a system of Shariah courts; control of elementary and secondary education by the local government; control of all Muslim institutions by the Moro government; Moro control of all economic affairs of the region; and full and free participation of the Moro people in the central government. But it was not until the Seventh OIC Conference in Istanbul in 1976 that OIC support for the MNLF was strongly reaffirmed, putting real pressure on the Philippine government to grant meaningful autonomy to the Moro people. The result of subsequent negotiations, with Libya exercising a decisive intermediary role, was the conclusion of the historic Tripoli Agreement on December 23, 1976, an accord that sealed the basis for the ultimate solution to the Moro problem without sacrificing Philippine sovereignty.

Unfortunately, subsequent efforts from 1977 to 1980 to carry out the ambiguously general provisions of the Tripoli Agreement resulted in fundamental differences in interpretation. The series of charges and countercharges between the parties to the agreement led to a frosty conclusion when formal talks between the MNLF and the government ceased altogether. Meanwhile, the Marcos government went ahead with what it considered as the faithful carrying out of the Tripoli Accord, including the establishment of two Muslim autonomous regions in Mindanao — Region 9 (Western Mindanao) and Region 12 (Central Mindanao). But the MNLF dismissed all the measures and structures

as government manipulation of democratic processes and, therefore, unfaithful to the spirit of the Tripoli Agreement. The MNLF position was strengthened internationally when it acquired an observer's status from the OIC in 1977. This allowed the MNLF Chairman access to the OIC leadership. In 1981, at the 12th OIC Conference in Baghdad, Misuari lambasted the Philippine government for its genocidal campaigns in Pata island and called upon the OIC to take drastic and urgent measures. In subsequent conferences, short of giving the MNLF full-membership status, the OIC went on reiterating support for the MNLF as the sole official representative of the Moro people and rejecting measures taken by the Philippine government as not in keeping with the Tripoli Agreement. By 1985, the political situation in the Philippines had turned increasingly against the Marcos government and the MNLF expressed support for the opposition forces seeking Marcos' overthrow. The MNLF position was premised on the prospect of getting a better deal for the fulfillment of the Tripoli Accord, having obtained from chief oppositionist former Senator Benigno Aquino Jr., the promise to carry out the agreement in the event that Marcos would be unseated.

The position and status of the MNLF in the OIC has remained the most important leverage of the Moro struggle for self-determination or, at least, a meaningful autonomy. Psychologically, the OIC has given moral and political strength that military forces could not. In fact, whatever military threat the MNLF forces would present even in the self-declared MNLF-controlled areas could be readily neutralized by the AFP. Only the OIC factor has been a formidable third party in the conflict. Without the OIC's consistent support for the MNLF, the Moro struggle would have gone the way of all its frustrated struggles in the past.

Clearly, the OIC insistence on the Tripoli Agreement as the only basis of any settlement goes beyond the agreement's provisions. As an international accord, it has institutionalized the MNLF struggle's international character. It has given Misuari a semblance of sovereignty as MNLF chairman. The Agreement is so unique that the OIC and its member states are bound collectively and individually to uphold the

MNLF cause. Islamic principles dictate that the OIC commitment is a sacred responsibility. Conversely, the MNLF is bound to the Agreement and therefore cannot exceed the limits set by the accord. For instance, it cannot ask for more than a truly meaningful autonomy for the Moro homeland because the Agreement honors Philippine sovereignty. This particular provision has kept the OIC from granting the MNLF full membership status which the movement has been seeking since 1977. When the binding nature of the agreement ceases depends more on what the Philippine government does with the agreement and on how the MNLF can convince the OIC that the Philippine government violated the agreement.

For the OIC, to grant the MNLF full membership would be to negate the Tripoli Agreement. It would accord the MNLF the status of a sovereign Muslim state. By consistently denying the MNLF full membership, the OIC has given the Philippines the best guarantee of sovereignty and thus remains the only hope of the Philippine government to resolve the Moro issue without waging a costly decisive war against the MNLF. This means that the Tripoli Agreement should be the starting point of renewed talks, as the MNLF itself has often said. But the Aquino government did not give this point serious attention, insisting instead on treating the issue as an internal problem that could be adequately dealt with by the Philippine Constitution. This was the line pursued by the panel in the Jeddah Talks which led to the Jeddah Accord of January 3, 1987 with its ambiguous provisions. The same process was also evident in the manner in which the Pelaez Panel presented the government's point-by-point answer to the MNLF 26-point proposal of February 20, 1987.

Anticipating the government's move to force the MNLF to conform to its model of settlement, the MNLF opposed the ratification of the 1987 Constitution. As expected, the Aquino negotiators used the ratification of the constitution in the Muslim areas as an argument to ignore the Tripoli Agreement as the basis for peace talks.

Dr. Mohammed Mukhtar Awld Bah, OIC Deputy Political Secretary General, said during the meeting of the Quadripartite Ministerial

Committee on February 18, 1989, that the position of the Philippine government had further complicated the issue.

What stood in the way of the Philippine government's approach was the rejection by the OIC of what the government had done insofar as the Tripoli Agreement was concerned. The OIC scored the passage of the Autonomy Act of 1990 and the subsequent establishment of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. The OIC has consistently called upon the Philippines to carry out the provisions of the Tripoli Agreement, again boosting the MNLF's international posture. For as long as the Philippine government keeps ignoring the Agreement, the delay buys time for MNLF campaign for full membership in the OIC. In the event that it does, the MNLF may now pressure the OIC to nullify the Agreement and free the parties from all obligations therein. The abandonment of the Agreement works in favor of Moro secessionism or separatism, the MNLF's original goal, which has been effectively checked by the OIC.

Other Diplomatic Offensives

Although the MNLF's diplomatic focus was the OIC because of the organization's considerable clout, contacts with individual Muslim states and its leaders, as well as with influential non-Muslim countries, were pursued by Nur Misuari. The MNLF established an office in Pakistan, and its presence was also made visible through representatives in Sabah, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta and Darrusalam. But the biggest attention was given to contacts in Jeddah and Tripoli, since Saudi Arabia and Libya were the top supporters of the MNLF and of the Moro struggle.

Following the decline of Libyan assistance to revolutionary struggles in the world on account of its own troubles in the Middle East, the MNLF, while still nurturing the Libyan connection, entertained prospects of getting aid from Iran under the revolutionary and fundamentalist leadership of Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini. Although data on the Iranian aid are not available, indirect information confirms likely aid from Iran to the MNLF. I recall that in 1979, during the conference on Ghadafi's

Green Book in Benghazi which I attended on the invitation of the Libyan government, I was questioned by an Iranian revolutionary about whether the MNLF struggle deserved assistance. I avoided the issue since I was merely a guest observer together with Juan Perez of the Philippine Daily Express and Jose Luna Castro of the Philippine Journal. I thought the question was best addressed to Misuari who was also in the conference with his delegation. But I discerned from the query that some form of aid had been extended to the MNLF cause by Iran. In the same conference, I also saw Misuari busily talking to the various delegations, and at one instance, was in a huddle with Ghadafi. No doubt Misuari was establishing or strengthening ties with other revolutionary movements in the world to give the MNLF an international dimension. I learned that the various groups in the conference — except the three observers from the Philippines — were there precisely to get a slice of Ghadafi's revolutionary budget. How much the MNLF got from Libya was not known, but the smile on Misuari's face when I managed to talk to him was an indication of continuing Libyan aid.

I had the opportunity to ride with Misuari in a van that took us back to our dormitory. I talked to him in Tausug about the Moro struggle. He vehemently attacked the Philippine government using Tausug expletives to denounce not only Filipino colonialism but also the government's irreconcilable position. I asked him as one academic to another when he was going to write a book on the MNLF and his role in it. His answer was brief and revealing: "This is not the time to write a book." Indeed, this confirmed the fact that Misuari and the MNLF had adopted a separatist stance after the eighth OIC conference in Tripoli on May 20, 1977 where Misuari accused the Philippine government of violating the Tripoli Agreement and continuing its genocidal campaign against the Moro people.

Misuari's diplomatic activities were not confined to the Muslim world. He reportedly visited the former Soviet Union and China to seek assistance for the MNLF. Accordingly, the Soviet Union provided help through Vietnam on condition that the MNLF coordinate with the Soviet-influenced CPP-NPA. The same was true with China whose

willingness to help the Moro struggle was contingent on linkage with the NPA movement. There are no documentary sources to bear out this highly probable China connection. But Misuari's channel to Soviet and Chinese sources was possible through his academic and intellectual ties with leaders in the Philippine leftist movement, one that dates back to his activist years in the University of the Philippines.

The United Nations and other world organizations also became a convenient fora for the presentation of the MNLF position. The UN High Commission for Refugees, Amnesty International, Islamic Development Bank, Motamar A-Alam Al-Islami (World Muslim Congress), Rabitatul Alam Al-Islami (Islamic Call), World Assembly of Muslim Youth and World Forum of Muslim Minorities (WFMM) in London were among the MNLF's stages. The WFMM through its Secretary General, Dr. A. Abo Rasid, on March 24, 1988 sent an appeal to the OIC to admit the MNLF as a full member.

But the more effective tools in the internationalization process were Misuari's lecture circuit and talks with heads of state. On January 27-28, 1987 Misuari addressed the plenary session of the 5th Islamic Summit of Muslim Heads of States in Kuwait, wherein he again underscored the failure of the Philippine government to carry out the Tripoli Agreement and the urgency of admitting the MNLF as a full member in the OIC. Then he reported to the OIC Secretary General Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada at the OIC headquarters in Jeddah his consultative visits to Southern Philippines, showing the media coverage given such visits to various parts of Mindanao, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi. This was followed by Misuari's visit to the Foreign Minister of the Democratic Republic of Somalia, Dr. Mohammed Ali Hamud. In this meeting, Misuari stressed his "quest for peace in the Bangsamoro homeland" and Somalia's support for the MNLF full membership in the OIC as "the key to peace." Then, in his dialogue with Ibrahim Fall, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Senegal, Misuari discussed the Mindanao problem and "the MNLF struggle for peace and freedom." Again, Misuari sought Senegal's support for the MNLF bid for full OIC membership. There was little doubt that in all of Misuari's foreign visits,

he projected the confidence of a head of state and impressed his hosts with his knowledge and skill, especially with the use of titles of MNLF leaders.

But, perhaps, of greater impact were the two lectures Misuari delivered before the 7,000-member faculty of the famous Al-Azar University in Cairo. The second was particularly important because it dealt with the topic, "Jihad in the Bangsamoro Homeland, Its Roots, Ordeal and Future" wherein Misuari dramatized the Moro people's long and sanguinary struggle and the price they had to pay for their liberation. After the lecture, he had all the media exposure he desired when he was interviewed by the leading national papers. In this lecture, he was accompanied by his Foreign Affairs Secretary General Abdulkabi Abubakar.

Another important lecture Misuari delivered was during the Second Plenary Session of the 8th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers on February 18, 1989 wherein he revealed the probable secret collusion between the Aquino government and the Zionist Club International to train young Christian *Sababans* in the Hacienda Luisita with the blessings of Jaime Cardinal Sin. He suspected the scheme to be part of the government's anti-Moro design. Consequently, he appealed for the favorable consideration of the MNLF bid for full membership in the OIC, reminding the conference of the series of past endorsements to the same effect such as the Dakar Resolution of 1979, the Islamabad Final Communique of 1980, the Sana'a Resolution of 1984 and the Amman Resolution of 1985.

Not the least was Misuari's identification with the Palestinian *intifada*. He never missed the chance to demonstrate this connection whenever possible. In 1989, Misuari sent a warm greeting to PLO Chairman Yaser Arafat, which reads:

On behalf of the Bangsamoro people and the leadership of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), I join the world leaders in welcoming your declaration in Algiers of the State of Independent Palestine.

The world has long awaited the birth of independent Palestine. In truth, the heart of oppressed humanity bleeds for the just cause of the oppressed people of Palestine. Thus, your declaration has been hailed and re-echoed in many capitals of the world.

Such is a great augury for the struggle of Palestine and its people.

Allow me at this historic juncture to reiterate the solidarity and support of the MNLF Mujahideen and the Bangsamoro people behind the just and triumphant cause of the struggling people of Palestine.

May Allah bless the way for the final emancipation of Palestine and its people and Al-Quds Al-sharif Mosque from the oppression and tyranny of Zionism and its evil collaborators.

The Psychology of State Violence And Peaceful Bangsamoro Demonstrations

Since 1968, one of the effective means employed by the MNLF propaganda arm to attain the internationalization of the Moro struggle was the graphic and emotional portrayal of massacres, killings, rapes and such human rights violations in Muslim areas by government troops in the trimedia of the Middle East. Especially effective were Misuari's speeches before various fora, particularly the regular conferences of the OIC and the series of publications containing descriptions and pictures of the mangled bodies of Moro fighters, women and children. Of great psychological value in arousing Muslim rage at the Philippine government and sympathy for the Moro struggle was the pamphlet authored by Misuari entitled "The Unbroken Thread of Genocide in the Bangsamoro Homeland" (1989). First, it attacks the failure of the Aquino government to follow up the prospects of peace presented in the "Jolo Peace Dialogue." It notes "the colonial treachery and downright military oppression.." Then it enumerates and describes several of the incidents to prove the government's genocidal campaigns.

- 1) The Manili Massacre in 1970 in North Cotabato wherein the Philippine Constabulary ordered the Muslims to attend a peace conference in the Manili Mosque. Here, all the Muslims - men,

women, children, young and old - were shot and killed including Muslim pupils in a nearby school. Misuari called the place the Manili Graveyard.

- 2) The Malindog Massacre in September 1974. Misuari recounts that on September 25, nine naval boats landed on Malindog beach and rounded up the Muslim residents in a barbed-wire concentration area. Here, an estimated 1,500 Muslims of all ages and gender were ordered to dig their own graves and were massacred.
- 3) The Motong Massacre in 1976 in Zamboanga del Norte wherein 15 pregnant women, 14 children and old people were executed. Later, a French journalist uncovered from the scene the victims' skulls and photographed them.
- 4) The Naga Massacre in Zamboanga del Sur wherein hundreds of Muslims were surprised by Ilaga-PC troopers and killed. Those who escaped to the sea were rescued by a Japanese or South Korean boat.
- 5) The Basilan massacres Misuari noted the series of merciless killings in Tuburan, Sangbay, and Dasala islands by government troops.
- 6) The Merciless Killing of an *imam* in Palawan, whose body was hanged and left to rot in front of his mosque.
- 7) The Pata Massacre in 1981. An estimated 3,000 to 5,000 Muslim residents were massacred by avenging government soldiers. Children and orphans were thrown to the sea for the sharks and women were raped for weeks before they were killed and thrown to the sharks.

In another four-page tract, "The Bangsamoro Tribune," the cover shows Moro *mujabedens* with clenched fists and high-powered guns, under which is printed "*Allahu Akbar*" (God is great), a slogan popularly used in the *jihad*. The article is about the four-day encounter between 320 *mujabedens* and government troops in Maguing and Lumba-Bayabao wherein 186 soldiers were killed. The Arabic translation of the article is printed on one side. Photos of Moro children killed and Moro women

preparing themselves for *jihad* carry an emotional message to the Muslim world.

What makes these tales potent are the photographs of victims, starting with that of the five members of the Lomondot family who were massacred in Kalilangan, Bukidnon on June 3, 1976. This was followed by the pictures of Tukuran village which was razed to the ground in 1973; two bodies of infants killed in the massacre of 37 Muslims in Tikalaan, Lanao del Sur on August 5, 1975; 74 skulls of Muslims killed in Moron, Zamboanga del Norte on November 28, 1975; two naked Muslim men killed by the Alsa Masa in Davao; one mangled body of a child killed in the massacre of 48 Muslims in Siroman island in December 1987; the charred bodies of 17 Muslims killed in the Rizal Alih incident in Zamboanga City. The pictorial concludes with the photograph of the Sibuco mosque in utter ruins after bombardment by the Philippine Air Force in September 1987. The pamphlet is distributed by the MNLF Mahardika Press through the MNLF Commission on Information.

The portrayal of state violence in the Philippines against the Moro people was obviously meant to impress upon the OIC and the Muslim world that the Philippine government was not sincere in its quest for peace and that the Muslim countries must continue to support the MNLF not only in its difficult struggle against the government, but also, in its bid for full membership in the OIC.

In contrast, the MNLF in several issues of the *Mahardika*, particularly the January-February 1989 issue, portrayed in great detail the peaceful activities of the Moro people in the different parts of the Bangsamoro homeland. In Palawan, the Shatan Palawan Revolutionary Committee (SPRC) marked a two-day celebration with cultural activities in a liberated area together with the full military display of the *mujahedens* and *mujahidat* in the distinctive uniforms. Hoisting of the Bangsamoro and MNLF emblems was followed by the singing of their national anthem, *Kamabaldikaan* and pledge of allegiance to the Moro struggle. The day ended with the closing message of Vice Chairman Col. Sandal Sumandal of SPRC and Misuari's recorded remarks. In Kutawatu, Brig. General

Datus Muslimen Sema of the Utara Kutawatu Revolutionary Committee led about 100,000 people in the Freedom Day festivities. The raising of Bangsamoro emblems, a 21-gun salute, a pledge of loyalty, a military review, a cultural program and a parade in Cotabato City comprised the celebration. The same celebration was presented by Brig. General Al-Fattah Karim, Chairman of the Shatan Ranao Revolutionary Committee in Lanao del Sur. In Lanao del Norte, Utara Ranao Revolutionary Chairman Solitariuo led the celebration.

But, perhaps, more impressive was the Freedom Day in Zamboanga where Christians, Lumads and Muslims all joined in celebrating the occasion with a cultural program, *hajat* prayers, military review and displays of MNLF and Bangsamoro emblems- including the pictures of Misuari and Khomeini. Basilan, which is historically related to Zamboanga, also observed the day with similar activities. In Tawi-Tawi, Brig. General Damming led the solemn occasion marked by a cultural presentation, a public parade in Bongao and the public airing of Misuari's message. But, it was in Sulu or Lupah Sug that the most impressive part of the National Freedom Day was staged, with thousands of the Bangsamoro masses participating. Full military review by thousands of *mujahedeens* and *mujahidat* in full battle gear in Lampaki, Indanan was the focus of attention to underscore the MNLF's determination to achieve freedom for the Bangsamoro people. The occasion was also marked by the raising of the Bangsamoro flags, a 21-gun salute, singing of the *Kamahaldikaaan*, cultural programs, and the appearance of the key leaders of Sulu such as Ustadz Abdurakib Adjhari; Imam Yakob Isni; Sulu Vice Governor Kimar Tulawie; MNLF Deputy Secretary General Datu Sakiruddin Bahjin and Lupah Sug Revolutionary Committee Chairman, Brig. General Paai Sahijuan.

Outside the Bangsamoro homeland, the most important celebration was held in Metro Manila where professionals, students and other sectors of Bangsamoro supporters celebrated by peaceful demonstrations, rallies and a motorcade to Maharlika Village in Taguig, Rizal. There, a lengthy program was presented with various speakers representing both Muslim and non-Muslim sectors sympathetic to the Moro struggle. Those who

addressed the crowd were Abul Khayr Alonto, Former Governor Almarin Tillah and Ruben Canoy.

Obviously, this strategy of visibility was of great value to the MNLF's efforts to show the Muslim world that the MNLF enjoys a dependable base in the Philippines which includes the non-Muslim sector. The portrayal of support for the Moro struggle was not limited to the Moro masses; it was also demonstrated by the Christian and Lumad sectors, a particularly effective demonstration of the MNLF claim that the Bangsamoro struggle was one of all the people of Mindanao who share the common goal of independence. To dramatize this fact, the January-February 1989 issue of the *Mabadlika* carried a full-length article on the MIM resolution supporting the MNLF cause, including its full membership in the OIC. The multisectoral representatives identified in the report were Ruben Canoy, Fr. Halcyon Palcun, Rev. Absalom Cerveza, Rep. Baltazar Sator, Joseph Banghulot and Carlos Apostol. They were also presented as the individuals who would compose the MNLF peace panel in Mindanao.

Since President Fidel V. Ramos assumed the presidency in 1992, the impasse in the GRP- MNLF peace process received encouragement from what the government declared as confidence building measures. The objective was to convince the MNLF not only to resume peace negotiation, but also, to explore international goodwill, especially that of the OIC, to persuade the MNLF leadership to, at least, try a new autonomy for the Muslim South. With the use of former friends of Nur Misuari in the UP- based radical-nationalist movement, particularly Executive Secretary Ruben Torres, the MNLF finally accepted, with the help of Malaysia, an OIC member, the Peace Agreement of September 2, 1996. The accord formally established the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) whose structure ensured the dominant control of Misuari in the region with attractive budgetary support and political clout in the government. In effect, Ramos psychological approach paid off and Nur Misuari had become a co-opted government official while remaining Chairman of the MNLF.

But it was precisely this cooptation of the MNLF leadership that gave the MILF increasing importance in the Bangsamoro independence struggle and planted the internal seed of disunity within the MNLF. By the time Joseph Estrada became President in 1998, the MILF had replaced the MNLF as the main concern of the government and, subsequently, the process of emasculating the MNLF politically was achieved after Parouck Hussin succeeded Misuari as Chairman through the ARMM election in 2001 and Misuari was arrested and put behind bars with Malaysian support. Only the emergence of the Abu Sayyaf with the same ideological orientation and base as the MNLF has checked the MNLF drift into history, at least, in Western Mindanao.



Chairman Nur Misuari before a crowd in Jolo, Sulu.



CHAPTER VI

BEYOND FREEDOM: THE JUMA'A ABU SAYYAF

(Assessment of its Origins, Objectives,
Ideology and Method of Struggle)

IT APPEARS FROM hitherto untapped sources that after the break away of the faction of Ustadz Hashim Salamat from the MNLF which led to the rise of the MILF, no one anticipated that some radical elements would seek a way of bridging the gap between the MNLF and the MILF. The elements behind this mission had just come from a long period of incubation in the radical enclaves of the Middle East including Afghanistan. One of these new leaders was Ustadz Abdurajak Janjalani, founder of the movement known popularly in media as the “Abu Sayyaf.”

The internationalization of an otherwise small but extremist group was unavoidable, given an ideological orientation that fits into the wider international movement led by the Jama'a Islamiyah in Southeast Asia and the Bin Laden Al Qaeda network. It only required a series of dramatic demonstrations such as the several kidnappings for ransom of moderate Muslims and Christians in Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, especially the hostage taking of foreign tourists at Sipadan and Las

Palmas resorts to ensure its place in history. In effect, with the Abu Sayyaf gaining unprecedented international notoriety in world terrorism and immortalizing its name in world dictionaries, the Bangsamoro armed struggle had gone full circle beyond its recognition in the conservative corridors of the OIC.

Except for brief and often ambiguous references in external sources to the Abu Sayyaf (father of the sword) as a terrorist or brigand movement, there is no analysis of its etiological and ideological foundation and its method of struggle on the basis of its own oral and written literature. It is this aspect that this assessment hoped to deal with in a tentative way. There are at least four Abu Sayyaf sources that may be used:

1. For origin, we use “Surat Kasabunnalan” issued on November 18, 1994 by the Abu Sayyaf Secretary General, Abu Abdu Said and referred to as MS. PR V004, Semt. 794. This document claims to be “a voice of truth”, as the title suggests, and narrated briefly the origin of the Abu Sayyaf in a series of events. It denies categorically that it was a creation of the military as reported by media. It traces the beginning of the Juma’a Abu Sayyaf, as the movement is historically called, to August 1991 when a big foreign ship, the “MV Doulos” docked in Zamboanga City carrying Christian missionaries and literature for sale. In a convocation at Western Mindanao State University (WMSU) before faculty and students, Christians and Muslims, the missionaries spoke against Islam and called Allah a false God, Prophet Muhammad a liar, and the Qur’an a man-made book. The desire to avenge the insult against the sacred values of Islam started the motive force of the Abu Sayyaf. Rightly or wrongly, it only required subsequent incidents and recall of historical antecedents, involving what they called injustices committed against the Muslims, to finally shape the structure of the movement. The first of the incidents was in July 1992 when the *kafir*, referring to the Christians, in Zamboanga burned Muslim houses and business establishments and killed Muslims including a pregnant woman. The statement continued

to say that nobody answered the call for help and justice and that the Abu Sayyaf took the step by writing the Southcom in August 1992 to stop the oppression against Muslims in Zamboanga. The document refers to the incident as similar to the Pata Massacre in Sulu and the Malisbung Massacre in Sultan Kudarat which were marked not only by the killing of several Muslims, but also, by the rape and disappearance of Muslim women committed by the *Satruh* (army). Thus, the Abu Sayyaf struggle, according to the document, is to seek *kaadilan* (justice) for Muslims. It, therefore, calls the Muslims to unite and lay aside their differences and feuds.

2. The second document that can be used illustrates the quest for *kaadilan* by the Abu Sayyaf as a collectivity. It issued a statement on April 26, 1993 (04 Julhaji 1413) entitled "In the Name of Allah the Beneficent the Merciful" addressed to Southcom Chief Gen. Romeo Zulueta, copies of which were furnished President Fidel Ramos and several others including Actor Joseph E. Estrada, Mufti Abdulgani Yusop, Nuruladji Misuari, Hashim Salamat, the DZRHG, the Saudi, Libyan and Iranian embassies, the Supreme Court and the print media. The statement emphasized two things:
 - a. that Fr. Bernardo Blanco, who was seized by the Abu Sayyaf, was being tried by the Islamic Court which is considered the highest tribunal in Basilan for the charge of organizing the Christian Liberation Army. If found guilty by the court, the statement continued, he would be "slaughtered".
 - b. That the "Dominion of Allah is above" the authority and arrogance of General Zulueta who should one day embrace Islam and ensure justice for Muslims.
3. Then, for objectives, Ustadz Abdulrajaq Janjalani, as Abu Sayyaf leader, issued a public proclamation with no date entitled "In the Name of Allah the Rahman the Raheem" which is the opening line of Surah I-AI Fatiha- "Bismillah il Rahman, il Raheem." The statement, which is in English, is addressed, "To all the people of

Mindanao and those in the Republic of the Philippines” and opens with expression of hope for peace “after the liberation of Mindanao from the clutches of oppression, tyranny and injustice.” It categorically says that the aim is simply to tell the truth as told by Prophet Muhammad, however bitter it may be and not to refute or criticize “others’ beliefs”, especially those of the Muslims. Then, the document underlined four basic truths about the Abu Sayyaf.

- a. It is not to create another faction in the Muslim struggle which is against the teaching of Islam, especially the Qur’an, but to serve as a bridge and balance between the MILF and MNLF whose revolutionary roles and leadership cannot be ignored or usurped.
- b. Its ultimate goal is the establishment of a purely Islamic government whose “nature, meaning, emblem and objective” are basic to peace.
- c. Its advocacy of war is a necessity for as long as there exist oppression, injustice, capricious ambitions and arbitrary claims imposed on the Muslims, and
- d. It believes that “war disturbs peace only for the attainment of the true and real objective of humanity - the establishment of justice and righteousness for all under the law of the noble Qur’an and purified sunnah”.

Janjalani concludes his proclamation with a reference to himself as “plain Abdulrajak Abubakar no more, no less” and not as the leader or symbol of the Abu Sayyaf. This is intended to avoid disruption in the movement in case of death.

4. From the three foregoing Abu Sayyaf documentary sources, we get the impression of the beginnings and objectives of the movement. It is now necessary to examine its ideology from no less than the thoughts and work of Janjalani himself.

Since the founding of the movement, Janjalani had delivered eight (8) ideological *Khutbahs* (discourses) within a radical framework based on the Quranic theory of “*Jihad Fi-Sabil-lillah*” which, according to him, had been quite misunderstood. Necessarily, the discourses are criticisms and indictments of both Muslims and non-Muslims including the *ulama* who have superficial knowledge of the *Qur'an* and the *Hadith*. There is no mention of the venue or date of the discourses, but, most likely, they were presented as “lectures” to limited audiences in Santa Barbara *madrassah*, Zamboanga City where he taught for sometime before taking to the field to lead the movement.

There is no list showing who were in the audience or the membership linkage with the present Abu Sayyaf in Basilan except that of his brother Khadafi succeeding after his death.

Of the eight discourses, the first entitled “*Pagbangbug Sin Qur'an Ha Ummat Sin Akhir Jaman*”, which was delivered during Ramadhan and maybe translated, “upholding the Qur'an in present-day Muslim community” is undoubtedly the best and the longest. It is in itself a comprehensive Tausug dissertation covering 33 pages (single space) with extensive hadithic and Qur'anic passages supporting “*Jihad Fi-Sabil-lillah*” as interpreted and applied by Janjalani to the Muslim struggle in the Philippines. The other seven discourses are elaborations of certain points in the first discourse. The discourse begins with praise for the Qur'an as the sacred book of Allah created by divine will and not made by man. It refers to the Prophet Muhammad as Allah's chosen messenger to receive from the Angel Jibrail (Gabriel) the Sacred Book for all mankind. Then, the discourse identifies the enemies of the Qur'an: (1) the *satruh* referring to the Jews and Christians who will never accept the Qur'an; (2) the Muslims who do not read the Qur'an but other materials such as comics, books, magazines, etc.; and (3) the *ulama* who quarrel against the Qur'an.

After identifying the three enemies of the Qur'an, the discourse rejects the Philippine Constitution as a guide for Philippine society and argues for the Qur'an as the only worthy guide for human life since it is the perfect creation of Allah who cannot err and who knows everything.

Thus, if the enemy is willing to defend and die for the Constitution, much more so the Muslims for the Qur'an. After drawing lengthily from varied experiences, the discourse gives focus on *Jihad Fi-Sabil-lillah* as "struggle in the cause of Allah" and basically different from the revolution and other movements. It is governed by the rules of the Qur'an especially by the (1) the *Suratul Anfaal* and (2) *Suratul Taubah*. Revolution, which is *faurat* in Arabic, is not found in the Qur'an and only *jihad* is used when referring to all forms of struggle for justice or cause. Accordingly, revolution is the fruit of people's anger and hatred. Unlike in a revolution, whose end is the establishment of human ideological structures such as capitalism, communism, socialism, etc., the *jihad* has no other options or model except the Qur'anic.

Finally, the discourse touches on two fundamental truths of *jihad*. First, the different kinds of *jihad* distinguished in the Qur'an and Hadith do not suggest the idea of differences in the level of importance but rather, the appropriateness of the type demanded by specific context or situation. Thus, all types of *jihad* are to be observed by the true Muslim. The so-called *jihad al-akbar* (greater Jihad) and *jihad al-asgar* (lesser jihad) are the same in Divine assessment but are merely differentiated in human terms and conditions. Consequently, the second truth pertains to the pre-eminence of the *Jihad Fi-Sabil-lillah* (fighting and dying for the cause of Islam) in relation to contemporary conditions in Muslim Philippines which is suffering from oppression and injustice in addition to serious problems of lack of development and progress. In such a case, it is the Muslim who fights and dies for Islam that deserves paradise as a martyr. As *mujahideen*, his martyrdom, according to the Qur'an and Hadith, is unique because he dies and lives. His death opens the gate of Paradise unlike one who dies naturally and does not henceforth live until the Day of Judgment. The martyr is perfectly cleaned from the time he enters *Jihad Fi-Sabil-lillah* and does not need any ritual cleansing upon death, but is buried with the same clothes in which he dies. In Paradise, he is awaited by ready *houries* (angelic virgins of unparalleled beauty) reserved for him and his pleasure. This is part of his reward. Martyrdom is, therefore, to be welcomed and desired by the *mujahideen*. This is

further elaborated in the 7th and 8th discourses on the “*mujahideen*” just as the true meaning of *jihad* is explained further in the second discourse on “The Rules of Jihad in the Holy Qur’an” and in the 3rd on “*Jihad: the Misunderstood Doctrine*”. The appeal for unity of all Muslims regardless of human or material differences in the struggle for the cause of Islam is reinforced in the 5th discourse (“Brotherhood in Islam”) and the 6th (“Unity in Islam”). But of crucial importance in the struggle is the reform of the *ulama* being the learned in Islam because of his knowledge. This is the point of the 4th discourse on “The Sickness of the *Ulama*.”

After briefly going through the etiological and ideological sources of the Abu Sayyaf, it is now logical to draw the following generalizations and their contemporary applications and/or implications to recent Abu Sayyaf activities:

1. the missionary zeal and recklessness of Christian missions (Protestant or otherwise) that attack or insult Islam tend to provoke not fear but violent response.
2. the initial objectives for redress of grievances or attainment of justice ultimately ends in the demand for a purely Islamic state as the surest guarantee of justice and prosperity for Muslims.
3. the present state of Muslim Mindanao and the seeming inability of the state to sufficiently or satisfactorily deal with the nagging problem justifies from the Muslim view the elevation of “*Jihad Fi Sabil-lillah*” (the lesser *Jihad*) to the paramount duty of every Muslim, especially those who desire martyrdom and Paradise in the cause of Allah.

It is obvious from the conservative sector of Muslim society that the Abu Sayyaf seizure of 32 hostages consisting of Christian and Muslim teachers and students was a deviation from Janjalani’s interpretation of *jihad* and suggests that there is a serious lack in ideological continuity from Abdurajak to Khadafi (his brother). The fact that Muslim embassies and Muslims in general reject the hostage-taking and deplore the beheading of two male teachers (former soldiers)

is proof of the lack of ideological continuity or, even, inertia expected in the early literature of the movement.

The implication of such an ideological gap is the vulnerability of the movement to the undergrowths of Islamic social movements usually shown in various types of extremist behavior. The inscrutable or, to a great majority, irrational motivation of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the New York Twin Towers, Pentagon and outside Washington illustrates precisely the potential fall into outwardly senseless extremism that Muslim social movements might take unless effectively neutralized by pre-emptive measures, ideologically or otherwise. It is in this pre-emptive step that lasting peace and the resolution of conflict in Mindanao can be achieved. The measures must ultimately rest on non-military options or avenues in the resolution of conflict including but not limited to the fundamental reactions to colonial and neocolonial transformations in goals, theories, forms and strategies.

One of the best potentials for understanding deeply, if not ultimately, the etiological genesis of the Abu Sayyaf and other subsequent social movements lies in the basic materials that have provided the essence of the sociocultural orientation of the people. These materials are known collectively as the *Jawi* intellectual tradition in Tausug, Sama and Yakan cultures or the *Kirim* among the Maguindanao, Iranun, and Maranaw. The tradition is based on the use of the Arabic script to express and preserve in written form the discourses or treatises of the people, especially their leaders and learned men called in local language as Sultan, Datu, *Tuan*, *Hadji*, *Imam*, *Sakib*, *Nakib*, *Panglima*, *Maharaja*, *Hatib*, *Inchi*, *Putri*, *Pangiyen* etc. The *Jawi* and *Kirim* were also used by the Muslim leaders or elite to communicate formally with the colonial authorities from the Spanish to the American regimes. In contemporary times, numerous *kitab*s (books) in *Jawi* are found being used in *Kaum* (barangay) of the Muslim South in festivities, ceremonies or rituals and even in the *pangadji* and *madrasah* systems of the popular learning process. It is through such an education process that local orientation provides the values of society needed for living and survival in a changing and, especially, hostile world.

For instance, the nine *kitab*s collected in field work in 2000 by a team from the Mindanao Studies Program of the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies (CIDS) came from a barangay of Panglima Estino municipality in Sulu. They were accidentally discovered in the process of documenting the history and culture of Sulu as seen through “rituals and their economic requirements”. The barangay called Marsada is located within the area where the Abu Sayyaf moves around and which is readily accessible from Patikul, home base of the movement.

From the transliteration and translation of the nine *kitab*s annotated in the CIDS Jawi Documentary Series No. 3 (2003) by Samuel K. Tan and Munap H. Hairulla, it is obvious that non-formal education underlines the vital importance of Islam in the daily life of the people. The complete absence of any reference to Filipinism or nationalism is not only to be culturally expected, but also, reinforces the thematic thrust of the Abu Sayyaf information campaign, especially its ideology as seen thru Janjalani’s written and oral discourses. Besides the eight referred to earlier, more of the oral historical materials have been identified by Associate Professor Julkipli Wadi as part of his CIDS - funded research project thru the Mindanao Studies Program. At this point, it is relevant to quote the following paragraph in the “Preface” of An Annotation of the Marsada Kitabs written by the author:

“In publishing the *Kitabs* as a series of small volumes with great messages for their intended audience, the intention is to show the continuity of an ancient intellectual heritage that has inspired, motivated and unified a people behind a common idea, purpose and struggle which have kept them apart in basic orientation from the national community of which they are a part by law and historical orientation. For centuries, they have marked their struggle for social justice in crimson...”

A Radical Prospect

From the more recent events in Southern Philippines, especially related to armed conflict, the psychological trends in the sectoral communities (Christian, Muslim and Lumad) are clearly hardening, not

softening, on the mutual desire for freedom to live peacefully and independently according to their traditions and distinct aspirations. The peace processes, public and private, governmental or non-governmental, have, at best, attained impressive achievements in the rhetorics and vocabularies of peace, progress and unity for Mindanao and the nation. Beyond this symbolic and superficial level, one sees the government military, ideological and socio-economic wars against insurgency, separatism and poverty becoming more frustrating, costly and helpless. Is the prospect really that dim with the Abu Sayyaf silently but surely moving towards an irreconcilable position? Can something encouraging be done? Following is a possible plan for Mindanao and beyond. It is focused on the “political structure” of the region as seen from the Bangsamoro people’s perspective under the title:

“The Federated Islamic States of Southern Philippines”

The basic premise of this plan is the recognition by the State or Government of Bangsamoro independence as a valid and just right of the Filipino Muslims. The acceptance of this premise by the Filipino people is the only psychological tool the government and its implementing arms can use to, at least, tentatively halt the inertia of the armed separatist movement in the South towards independence. Consequently, from an expected psychological halt to the perceived trend, a new negotiation process can start with no agenda but the issue of “how to implement Bangsamoro independence”.

It is in relation to the “how” of independence implementation that the government can suggest that the Muslim sector should assume the burden of conceptualization and preparation of the Islamic state model. At this point in the process of negotiation, the inevitable problems and realities of an independent Islamic state in the south will arise. These are: (1) the extreme difficulty of uniting all Muslim ethnic groups under one Bangsamoro State, (2) the limitation of the Islamic state models to only two along the old lines of the sultanate system, one in Cotabato where the Maguindanao Sultanate was based and the other in Western Mindanao where the Sulu Sultanate ruled. It is in this stage of a practical

dilemma in the discussion of the issue that the idea of a "virtual independence" model can be proposed and considered through a federal system or structure. Hopefully, the Muslim sector and the government mutually see and accept the option of "A Federated Islamic State" for the Muslims of mainland Mindanao possibly based in Maguindanao province and another in Sulu. In this option, Philippine sovereignty is reduced to a nominal and symbolic presence to give the Philippines a sense of constitutional integrity, however minimal it may be. It is, certainly, better than a lingering problem of continuing violent conflict with no prospect of peace except a temporary lull.

In anticipation of the anti-Muslim reactions in areas where the population ratio is either a bare majority or nearly equal representation, the establishment of a federated Islamic State, which at the same time serves as a pilot model, should begin with the area of the old Sulu Sultanate which has a dominant Muslim majority, numerically or otherwise. This strategy ensures the smooth pursuit of the Islamic model and provides a basis for the establishment of the second and last federated state in Maguindano. By this time, an appropriate structure for the Maguindanao - based Islamic state shall have been duly conceptualized and designed by the Maguindanao - Maranaw - Iranun etc. intellectual - religious sector to ensure effective implementation. In short, the role of the government is one that listens and reacts to the Muslim view of the federated model and not one that imposes its "non-negotiable" premise. What gives this radical plan a good chance of reinforcing the search for lasting solution to armed conflict is the direct effect it has on the Abu Sayyaf armed struggle which is rooted in Sulu. Being Tausug in leadership and ethnic ideology, the movement and its supporters can finally prove what its leadership, from Abdurajak Janjalani to the many personalities who have now assumed the tactics and strategy of struggle, has been saying - that it can create and govern a truly Islamic state in the Sulu archipelago.

Finally, it is practical for the government to assist, not dictate to those from the Muslim sector, with sincerity and honesty of efforts and more than sufficient resources, in the tedious work of crafting a model

Islamic State, starting with the geographic area of the old Sulu Sultanate. It may even be necessary to include Sabah as part of the Sulu State to give more meaning to the international dimension of Tausug aspirations forcefully expressed in contemporary terms by the Juma'a Abu Sayyaf. There is no doubt that the internationalization of the Filipino Muslim freedom struggle has reached its most radical level in the more recent metamorphosis of the Abu Sayyaf movement with strategies and ideological linkage associated or related to Jaama'a Islamiya and Al-Qaeda.



MNLF Chairman Nur Misuari and other local leaders attended the 8th Mixed Committee Meeting held at Insular Century Hotel, Davao City on June 21-23, 1996.



CHAPTER VII

MORO SECESSIONISM COMPARED

AS A LAST word on this study, it is necessary to compare the contemporary secessionist struggle with its antecedents and other similar movements in the archipelago's non-Muslim areas, as well as with Muslim secessionist movements outside the country. The comparative perspective is essential in further understanding the serious implications of the impasse to the renewed peace talks with the MNLF and, subsequently, with the MILF and Abu Sayyaf. For convenience, Moro secessionism may be compared in relation to three categories of movements:

The Pre-secessionist Muslim Struggle

From the almost five centuries of Muslim armed struggle against colonialism, it is quite clear that the cost in lives, possessions and territory was staggering, not to forget the more damaging impact the losses had on Muslim consciousness. By the middle of the twentieth century, it was difficult for the Muslims to accept that they had indeed lost their power and status to the colonizers from the West, and, eventually, even to the Christianized natives who had become allies of colonialism. But equally significant was the Muslim realization that the tragic losses to colonialism were attributable to the superior military technology of the

West and other modern advantages. It was this realization that would contribute toward the radical change in the subsequent, especially contemporary, period of the Muslim struggle.

The radical change was apparent after 1968, when the secessionist option gained more appeal and the *mujahedeen* or the *mujahidat* had emerged as the struggle's principal figures. This radical character of the movement involved the abandonment of the ancient value emphasis on the individual acts of heroism and the obsession with the ultimate glory in martyrdom. Instead, the MNLF adopted modern-day guerilla tactics and war strategies with greater emphasis on mobility and coordination in the movement. What became paramount to all was victory against the enemy, and at lesser cost the better it would be for the overall goals of the Muslim struggle. That this was the movement's new thrust was clear from the series of activities - including ideological - that the MNLF undertook in various ways, means and venues. Contemporary Moro secessionism has the same aspirations and goals as its predecessors, and the only thing that changed was the method of carrying them out. This reality has made the contemporary Muslim struggle quite difficult to control. The massacres of Muslim fighters would not be as simple as they were in the American period when artillery and machine guns effortlessly decimated ready martyrs.

Struggle of the Tribes

The Muslim struggle looks more promising in all respects in relation to the various tribal groups in the archipelago, which have also been fighting for survival and social justice. Tribal movements, except those in the Cordillera and Central Mindanao, are virtually nonexistent. In fact, if they are ever given token attention by society, especially the government, it is on account of the work of several nongovernment organizations, including those initiated by the Episcopal and Catholic churches.

In Mindanao, the tribal struggle had become more organized with the formation of the Highlanders Association through the initiative and leadership of Datu Joseph Sibug, a professional of Manobo-

Pampangueño ancestry from Kidapawan and, especially, through Lumad-Mindanao, a recently organized multisectoral group from the tribal communities in Mindanao, with support from both Christian and Muslim leaders in the region. There are hardly any differences between their goals and those of Moro secessionism. They are fighting for the recovery of their ancestral domains, the preservation of their way of life which is under constant threat from demographic movements, freedom from political interference, and their share of social progress. These are clearly the same objectives which the MNLF has been articulating in its information materials and in numerous fora here and abroad.

What differentiates Moro secessionism from tribal movements is its radical ideology and tactics. Like the ancient Moro warriors, the tribal fighters also adhere to the ancient concept of war which gave primacy to individual personalities rather than collective efficiency in battle. But unlike their Moro counterparts, tribal movements are more peaceful and dependent on the help of outsiders and organizations to realize their aims. Without this initiative and assistance from the outside, tribal movements often remain static. Consequently, they become vulnerable to exploitation and manipulation for either political or economic purposes. In effect, they are comparatively worse off than the poor in other areas of the country. Because of a lack of effective means of struggle, they do not constitute a real threat to the state or the immediate community. And so they can easily be neutralized with the minimum of military pressure.

Muslim Secessionism Abroad

Perhaps, no better comparative perspective can emphasize the gravity of Moro secessionism than the portrait of the various secessionist movements in Asia. For purposes of illustrating the point, focus will be on the Patanis in Thailand, the Tamils in Sri Lanka, the Kurds in West Asia, as well as the various internal rumblings in the once vast empire of the Soviet Union in which six of the 15 Soviet Republics are Muslim. The Institute of Policy Studies in Pakistan stated in 1980 that "The Soviet Union" is a country with the fifth largest Muslim population in

the world, with over 60 million Muslims expected to grow to 100 million by the turn of the century.

Before the 1917 Bolshevik October Revolution, Muslim rule was imposed on the border regions of Russia where Muslims lived. In the 17th century, Czar Alexei Mikhailovich (1645-1676) issued a decree which set the de-Islamization process underway in Russia and beyond, prescribing severe punishment for Islam converts. The first casualties of the imperial decree were the Khanates of Kazan and Astrakan. De-Islamization went on for 300 years until the fall of Merve in 1884. What followed the political conquest of the various Muslim states or principalities were the intensified activities of Christian missionaries, so that by the last quarter of the 19th century, Russia began subjugating the Muslim states in Central Asia. The Russian conquest was facilitated by the lack of a unified authority in the Muslim region and serious internal and inter-state conflicts among the Muslim leaders. This enabled Russia to seize Merve, Khiva, Zaravash, Fergana and Kokand between 1864 and 1884, marking the incorporation of Central Asia into Czarist Russia.

But, conquest was one thing and ruling was another. It was difficult to maintain Russian rule in the Muslim areas without the aid of formidable military forces, a fact that consumed a large portion of state resources and kept the Muslim areas relatively underdeveloped. But, the 1917 revolution, which led to the ouster of Czarist rule, presented prospects for improving Russian image and rule in the Muslim regions. Although still generally influenced by the Byzantine cultural tradition, the Soviet Union allowed the Muslim areas to enjoy some degree of autonomy. This enabled the Soviet Union to keep any movement for independence minimal, if not nonexistent. But, the breakup of the Soviet Union, following the political reforms started by Mikhail Gorbachev, led to the rise of several Muslim independent states such as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kirghizia, Daghestan, Tataria, Bashkirie, and Azerbaijan, all with nominal ties to the newly reconstituted Commonwealth of Independent Republics. However, what emerged as serious secessionist or independence

movements were in areas where there had been simmering conflicts between Muslim and Christian elements. The most tragic is the complicated Serbian-Bosnian-Muslim struggles in former Yugoslavia as well as in Azerbaijan and Armenia which have been internationalized through the involvement of the OIC and the United Nations. This entails a difficult and complex solution that will ultimately lead to self-determination through some kind of devolution or federation short of total independence.

The secessionist struggle in Sri Lanka involving the Tamils has also invited the intervention of India which has interests in the outcome of the Tamil independence movement. But, De Silva and Samarasinghe, two Sri Lankan specialists on the Tamil issue, have observed that there have been some inconsistencies in India's treatment of Tamil goals in relation to the Indian minority's – largely Tamil – encroachments into Kandyan Sinhalese interests. While supporting the Tamil secessionist movement against Sinhalese encroachments into the Tamil homeland in the Northern and Eastern provinces, India seems to favor Tamil encroachment into the Sinhalese homeland of Kandy and fails to recognize Sinhalese rights to their ancestral domain. Similarly, the Muslim independence movement in Kashmir, where a Muslim majority is ruled by a Hindu minority, has been the source of constant friction between Pakistan and India. Ironically, too, a Muslim minority has ruled a Hindu majority in Hyderabad. Unlike the Indian and Sri Lankan cases, Moro secessionism is firmly anchored on the international support of the OIC and enjoys favorable factors that will help it realize its aims.

In contrast, the secessionist movements in Pakistan that led to the independence of what is now Bangladesh (East Pakistan) and the Kurdish secessionist struggles in Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey had not been internationalized because they are not struggles against non-Muslim states. They are inter-Muslim conflicts requiring a different approach based on Islamic principles. Yet Bangladesh succeeded in obtaining independence simply because West Pakistan was unable to administer East Pakistan justly and effectively due to what Professor Harun-ar-Rashid of the University of Dacca called "differing social structures,

the regionally-based nature of the power elite of the state, the abnormal geography and the strategy of economic growth and development of the capitalist economy as adopted by the Pakistani rulers..." On the other hand, the Kurds have failed to obtain self-determination from Muslim states of which they have been a part. Comparatively, Moro secessionism is a Muslim minority struggle in a predominantly Christian state which the Muslims perceive to be as discriminatory and oppressive.

Finally, a comparison with the Patani secessionist movement in Thailand gives a more meaningful insight into Moro secessionism. Both movements are minority struggles in non-Muslim states. In Thailand, which is Buddhist, the Muslims in the Patani region have been demanding self-determination for the same reason that the Muslims in the Philippines have. And yet Thailand is still struggling to solve the problem despite the apparent measures to give better treatment to its Muslim minority and the absence of the international factor such as the OIC. The Patani Muslims' desire to have their own state is what has kept the movement alive. On the other hand, the Moro struggle enjoys the backing of the OIC, has a long, solid political history as a people resisting all foreign intrusions, and a cultural tradition that has given them a sense of belonging. With the comparative advantages of the Bangsamoro struggle as a minority movement, there is a greater possibility that it might succeed insofar as attaining the kind of autonomy it seeks under the Tripoli Agreement. Unlike most of the secessionist movements without international support, Moro secessionism profits from the state's dilatory tactics in the resolution of conflict. Time is on its side; it stands to gain from any impasse in renewed peace talks.



CHAPTER VIII

AN UNRESOLVED ISSUE OF STRUGGLE

IN CONTEMPORARY TIMES, there is no fundamental issue of great national consequence to the cultural communities and their aspirations as the issue of ancestral lands. It spans and unites the various ethno-linguistic groups and social movements from the Cordillera in Luzon to Lumad and Muslim Mindanao. It is co-existential with the armed struggle in the cultural communities.

But this essay is concerned with the issue as it relates to Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan (MINSUPALA) which were affected by the same historical process of colonial conquest, pacification and alienation as the Visayas and Luzon to which can be traced the roots of the problem of ancestral lands. There were, at least, three discernible historical landmarks that marked the alienation of ancestral lands in Philippine history and contributed to the internationalization of the Bangsamoro Struggle to strengthen support for a long and lasting struggle:

1. The Impact of Colonial Conquest and Rules

Before the advent of colonialism, the Philippine Archipelago was settled within an estimate of 3,000 years (Aram Yengoyan) by several ethno-linguistic groups occupying definite areas of territory and secured

by socio-political, cultural and economic systems and institutions. In the case of Southern Philippines, the geographic areas now comprehended by Western Mindanao including Palawan, were settled by the Sama, Tausug, Yakan, Subanon, Kalibugan, Tagbanua, Palawani, Melebugnon and Malbog. Central Mindanao represented today by North Cotabato, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, South Cotabato and the two Lanaos were inhabited by Maguindanao, Maranao, Iranuns, Manobo, B'laans, T'boli, Tiruray and Tasaday. The same is true of what is now Northern Mindanao which was settled by the Bukidnons, Manobo, Higaonon, Mamanuas and to a certain extent, by Maranaos and Maguindanaos; Eastern Mindanao was home to the Manobos, Mandayas, Bagobos, Kalagan, Giangans, Ata, Tagabili, Tagabawa and Mangulangan. The common socio-political system that determined the territorial boundaries of settlements was the datanship (or *tinuayship*) later unified and strengthened for external leverage by Islam in the case of Muslim Mindanao thru the Sultanate.

The impact of colonialism lies in the theoretical and practical effects of conquest and colonization. Theoretically, the premises of Spanish colonialism eliminated the sovereign and natural rights of the indigenous peoples as the point of reference in colonial rule. Thus, after the so-called Spanish discovery of the Philippines, under the Regalian Doctrine, the Philippines became a Spanish possession whether the inhabitants (1,000,000) liked it or not and subject to the absolute rule of the Spanish Crown. Since the world was deliberately divided by the Pope between Spain and Portugal through the treaties of Tordesillas (1493) and Zaragoza (1529) and, later, partitioned among the European powers by wars and treaties, the so-called international law crafted by the Western Powers recognized the Regalian Doctrine as the basis of colonial rule. From purely Western theory sanctified by Papal authority, the indigenous peoples no longer had sovereign rights over their lives and lands. Their role had been changed to mere tillers of their lands for the benefit of the colonizers.

The practical effects of the Regalian Doctrine were the land grants for individuals and institutions that helped in Spanish conquests and

pacifications. The Philippine Islands were simply divided into crown lands, individual and corporate properties called *encomiendas* for tribute purchases and *haciendas*. The royal decrees issued to govern land grants established the legal basis of landownership. Although the *encomienda* system was abolished in late 18th century, the landed properties called *haciendas* continued and individual and corporate ownership was secured by colonial laws, thus reinforcing in specific ways the Regalian Doctrine of land ownership through the centuries.

The establishment of American rule strengthened, not eliminated or weakened the Regalian mechanisms. The Philippine Bill of 1902 (Public Land Act 235) passed by the US Congress on July 1, 1902 established a civil government and state ownership of land and its disposition. It also recognized the validity of the Regalian Doctrine. Subsequently, the Philippine Commission passed an implementing law (Public Act No. 718) which voided the disposition of lands by Moro or tribal datus without government authority. This act deprived the cultural communities of their rights to ancestral lands. Then, on November 6, 1902, the Commission passed the Land Registration Act No. 496 establishing the Torrens Certificate of Title as the “ultimate proof” of land ownership. On October 3, 1903, the Commission enacted Public Land Act 926 allowing individual homesteads of not more than 16 hectares and corporate acquisitions of not more than 1,024 hectares. Public Land Act No. 2874 of November 29, 1919 amending PLA 926 increased the limit of individual homesteads to 24 hectares and allowed non-Christians a limit of 10 hectares. Then, Commonwealth Act. No. 41 of November 7, 1936 limited individual homesteads to only one and reduced the limit of non-Christian homesteads to only 4 hectares. In fact, American colonial laws did not only negate natives’ rights to ancestral lands, but also, discriminated against them in the disposition of lands.

2. The Impact of Demographic Process.

Through the years, encouraged by Spanish colonial policies, Christian settlers settled in strategic areas of Mindanao to help prepare the ground for colonization and christianization. By the end of the 18th century,

Christian settlements had risen in Zamboanga, Dapitan, Misamis, Surigao, Cotabato, Basilan, Davao and subsequently increased by *deportados*, *disciplinarios* and their families. By mid-19th century, several *pueblos* had been created in Northern and Eastern Mindanao. By the end of the Spanish rule, the Christian population had reached about 230,000 out of the total Mindanao population of 650,000. American liberal policies opened wide to both Americans and Filipinos the lands in Mindanao through agricultural colonies, individual and corporate plantations. The demographic transformation of Mindanao had also reduced the area of ancestral lands by purchase, pre-emptive application by individuals or corporations in Manila, and, in some cases, by forcible or fraudulent acquisition, especially those occupied or claimed by Lumads as ancestral lands. Thus, more numerical preponderance had been added to the Regalian basis of land alienation or justification of land acquisition against ancestral rights.

3. Recovery of Rights to Ancestral Lands

- a. Basis in Regalian Doctrine. In fairness to the Crown of Spain, the pre-existing rights of indigenous peoples before colonization were to a certain extent recognized according to the texts of royal decrees and colonial laws. But, this ideal was not realistically pursued by the colonial authorities and entities who were more concerned with their personal and vested interests, in addition to their racial prejudice. Even Pope Paul III reiterated this ideal in 1537 in his Bull entitled "*Sublimus Deus*"
- b. American laws as interpreted by the US Supreme Court recognized pre-existing ancestral rights in the case of Indians in the United States and in the 1903 *Carino V. Insular Government*. But as in the Spanish period, American and Filipino vested interests continued to exploit the indigenous peoples.
- c. In more recent times, world opinion has been moving along the recognition and guarantee of the ancestral rights of indigenous peoples. This attitude has been premised on the basic facts of ancestral rights.

1. The profound principle of communal ownership of ancestral lands not by individuals but by ancestral community, the lands being the gift of God or the Spirits to the people.
2. As a consequence of the first principle, the relation of the people to the land is a mystical one with the Spirit World. It is this mystical union with the land and nature that inevitably link the identity, survival, and dignity of the people to the land, unlike the landowners in the Regalian/Torrens Title doctrine whose links to the land is devoid of anything sublime or noble ideal except profits or material gains.

It is these profound principles of ancestral rights that have recently been upheld and recognized internationally such as:

- 1) The 1998 UN Universal Declaration of Indigenous Rights;
- 2) The Supreme Court of Canada recognition of aboriginal rights in *Calder v. Attorney General of British Columbia* in 1973;
- 3) The Australian Supreme Court recognition of aboriginal rights in *Maabo and Others v. The State of Queensland* in 1992;
- 4) The US Supreme Court recognition of Indian ancestral rights in *Worcester v. Georgia* in 1832;
- 5) The ILO convention 169 in 1989 recognition of indigenous people's rights and
- 6) The 1840 Treaty of Waitangi guarantee of Maori ancestral rights in New Zealand.

3. Conclusion

There is a need to balance the foregoing historical antecedents and democratic numbers in the resolution of the issue of ancestral lands. Following are in order:

- a. State recognition by law of the remaining ancestral lands not yet alienated by legal processes to be no longer alienable and to be preserved as communal lands for progressive development by indigenous people.
- b. The ancestral lands already alienated and long held and developed beyond restoration to its ancestral state may be recognized as such but whose farther development will be jointly shared by indigenous people and the present owners

in terms of management and benefit sharing, but the ownership of the land reverts theoretically to the indigenous people, not subject to further individual or corporate ownership by the people. The land shall remain as it was in communal possession given by God for His ultimate purpose.

While the foregoing measures are susceptible to adverse reactions, they undoubtedly contribute to a more lasting solutions to the problem of ancestral lands and, consequently, armed conflict in Southern Philippines.

Conclusion

From the preliminary and tentative findings, certain generalizations can be drawn. First, the Muslim's perception of Filipinism is ambiguous, the awareness being merely territorial or geographic in nature. The problematic essence of Filipinism reflects the serious ideological problem confronting the nation today. In other words, there is a serious failure in our efforts to promote Filipinism as a national ideology either through our educational system or other agents of public information and communication. While our budgetary allocations and bureaucratic structures and programs have increased considerably through the years, we have yet to see nationalism and Filipinism clarified in a language and action readily or easily understood by the common man, especially those who belong to the non-Christian or cultural communities.

Consequently, we can reasonably conclude that whatever thrust was given to nationalist education, which is supposed to build a foundation of Filipino consciousness, had been insufficient to neutralize or reverse the factional tendencies in our national society - particularly the more extreme ethnonationalistic tendency toward separatist and secessionist goals. This implies that we are facing, indeed, a serious and critical ideological problem in our effort to unify the nation. Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei and Indonesia have more or less succeeded in bringing their people together. Although South Korea and Thailand are experiencing some radical disturbances, they have been steadily moving toward more optimistic prospects. Of course, we can be thankful that our State

affairs have not gone the way of countries where wars have been raging in the name of national unity. Even the Soviet Union, with its sophisticated political structure, and despite *perestroika* and *glasnost*, is going through the pains of dealing with demands for democratic reforms from ethnic forces that have recently articulated the ethnonationalist ideal of independence from the Soviet Union. This only underlines the fact that unity based on the dominant exercise of power by the central government or by the national majorities cannot last in a pluralistic society such as ours. This should serve as an eye-opener for us to seriously think of dealing with the national minorities not as minorities per se but rather as important complements to national unity and growth.

Another generalization that can be made is the inevitable internationalization of the Moro secessionist movement. Consequently, our official regard for it as a purely internal problem has become untenable and can no longer provide sufficient solutions to the separatist problem in our midst. Muslim history is replete with accounts of the massacre of Muslim warriors in Mindanao and Sulu since colonial time, a bloody fact that has failed to dampen Muslim resistance to external domination and threat.

We must now ask the question, notwithstanding the irreconcilable positions of the government and the MNLF in the current issue of secessionism or autonomy: Are there prospects for the ultimate resolution of the issue without resorting to military might? The answer is *yes, but*. We still have the will and the means to realize this goal. There is still a substantial number of Muslims and Christians who adhere to autonomy and not independence as the most ideal setup for the Muslim South. But the number is decreasing in proportion to the specific and concrete measures taken by the government to achieve what the Muslims have regarded as just demands because they involve the recovery of historical losses, namely: political power, economic progress, social importance and cultural identity. To the Moro people, the option of secessionism or separatism is clear as to the cost, sacrifice and time it exacts. Are they willing and prepared to face the reality?

The closing words of Misuari in a 14-page speech before the Sixth Islamic Conference of Muslim Heads of State in Senegal, December 9-12, 1991 is the best answer to the question.

Whatever happens, Mr. President and august assembly, and considering the utmost urgency of this subject well known recognition and support of our people's right of self-determination as a veritable safeguard against the insidious attempts to liquidate our national identity as an Islamic nation, I would like to make known here before you our unalterable and steadfast decision to pursue this just and legitimate intention through to the end; until the Bangsamoro Islamic nation shall be able to finally assume its rightful place in this prime institution of the Islamic Ummab-büdzñillab!

Finally, peace and development in the Muslim South are inseparable. They are the basic components of human progress. Without peace, development is impossible, without development, peace is unattainable. Both remain problems in Mindanao. There is an unsettling calm, but there is no peace. There are motions of human activity but they do not indicate any real, meaningful development.

It is, therefore, necessary to view these two components vis-a-vis the contemporary conflict in Mindanao, especially in relation to such a movement as the Moro struggle for self-determination. There are only three points to consider in relation to this dichotomy of peace and development.

The Imperative of Peace

To understand the dichotomy is like trying to answer the question. Which came first, the chicken or the egg? This approach is unproductive; rather, it will be practical to focus analysis on the urgency of realizing peace as well as development. Both require top priority. This is particularly true in Mindanao where the seriousness of conflict, violence and crisis is quite obvious from the fact that not only is the government fighting the radical revolutionary elements seeking the complete overthrow of the capitalist system, but also, an equally

determined secessionist movement seeking to establish an independent Bangsamoro Republic on the basis of historical necessity and contemporary Islamic ideology. To understand the imperative of peace requires a treatment of its antithesis: conflict.

Conflict is best understood, in the case of Mindanao, in relation to five aspects of human radicalism: 1) between the State and radicalism; 2) between the State and secessionism; 3) between society and tribalism; 4) between society and criminalism; and 5) between various elements and factions that constitute the checkered fabric of the Mindanao conflict. These are the rugged pathways to peace that have to be trimmed and cleared. They have to be studied before peace in Mindanao can be truly understood.

What then is the conflict between the State and radicalism in Mindanao? Undoubtedly, it is a microcosm of a national and international conflict between two equally powerful ideas, one catering to the interests of the elite and the other one serving the interest of the masses. What makes the conflict extremely difficult to resolve is the solidifying element provided by radical ideology, the notion of class conflict that has now transformed the Mindanao conflict into an irreconcilable one, unless Philippine society is reconstructed into a classless society. In brief, this is the fundamental and ultimate aim of radicalism in Mindanao, as well as in the rest of the country. Those who are committed to this objective cannot simply be neutralized by massive military pressures because guns and bullets merely destroy the body, not the ideology that propels the struggle. There will be others to replace the ranks of those who perish in the battlefield for as long as the ideology remains valid and unneutralized by an equal or better ideology.

Therefore, the State is faced with a conflict that is not ultimately decided by force of arms but by the force of ideas. It may have the most devastating weapons in the arsenal, but if it lacks the persuasive argument against radical ideology, the conflict continues. Since the State is in form and essence an antithesis, being anchored on the capitalist ideology it has inherited from colonialism, it must be able to present

the merits or advantages of the capitalist system insofar as the aspirations of the lower classes are concerned.

Confounding the Mindanao conflict is the second issue between the State and secessionism. What in essence is this conflict? Clearly, it is different from the first because it aims at independence which involves the territorial separation of a part of the country, unlike radicalism which seeks to preserve the territorial integrity of the country and to overthrow the political status quo. Moro secessionism does not necessarily aim at the total destruction of the capitalist system but merely the desired level of social reformation in accordance with an ideological synthesis of Islamic and radical elements essential in the evolution of a Muslim modern identity. It is misleading to equate the Bangsamoro secessionist movement with purely the resurrection of a Moro nation in history. Nor is it realistic to associate it with the narrow goal of establishing a purely orthodox Islamic state in Southern Philippines, however this is expressed in some of the manifestos of Muslim movements in the country. It is best to view the secessionist phenomenon as a product of both historical and contemporary realities similar to a certain extent to the Libyan socialist experience or to international Muslim movements for self determination.

In fact, the ideological ferment in the Muslim movements, particularly in the MNLF, if historical documents are to be used, shows the presence of a kind of Bangsamoro ideology that considers all inhabitants of Mindanao, subscribing to the historical reality of Mindanao as a distinct homeland, as a part of the Bangsamoro identity regardless of race, religion, creed or status. In effect, Islam, while important, is not the only ingredient in the Bangsamoro ideology. Territoriality and a sense of independence from national dominance or control constitute the unifying dimensions of the ideology. Consequently, even the Christian secessionist movements are viewed as an integral part of Bangsamoro secessionism.

What this contemporary secessionist ideology suggests is the somewhat problematic approach of the State to the issue of Bangsamoro secessionism. There is a growing perception of the people that State policies and implementing mechanisms and programs to counteract the

secessionist movement are anchored on religious premises which categorize secessionism as a purely Islamic phenomenon. If so, it is difficult to see how the conflict between the State and secessionism can be really pursued without polarizing the people between Muslims and Christians, without consequently promoting a religious war from which nobody, including the State, can profit. The immediate and long-term consequences of the Holy crusades and *jihad* should be enough historical reminders for those in State decision making processes to reflect upon.

When we add to the two types of conflicts the three other categories, it is easy to see why peace in Mindanao has been elusive. Although somewhat localized, the conflicts between the State and tribalism, criminalism and factionalism have contributed to the complexity of the Mindanao problem, requiring entirely different approaches. For instance, the conflict between the State and tribalism revives the issue of ethnonationalism versus nationalism, ethnicity versus Filipinism. Once complacent and indifferent, tribal communities have joined the Muslim struggle for national attention, recognition and importance. They have been awakened to the increasing threats to their identities, resources and even existence brought about by the irreversible process of modernization and from outside forces serving interests other than their own.

How we deal with this fundamental issue of ethnocentrism or tribalism is not susceptible to the stereotype approaches of colonial times. It can only be realistically approached by an objective, scientific understanding of the multiethnic diversity of Mindanao society. It can only be truly comprehended from below, from the very core of the ethnic community or society itself, not from the macro perception of national priorities and interests which until now are still characterized by ambiguous meanings and uncertain directions. We have yet to tackle the issue of how nationalism or Filipinism can be promoted without destroying ethnic identities that have remained the only concrete source of tribal unity, strength and dignity. In effect, we have yet to define, clarify and declare in tangible, understandable terms the meanings of nationalism or Filipinism beyond vague generalities that escape even the national leadership.

Now, if tribalism or ethnocentrism has made the Mindanao conflict complex, criminalism has made it chaotic. Criminality referred to here is one that is organized or syndicated, not the individual acts of crimes or violence against persons or properties. It is common knowledge in Mindanao that organized crimes are led by people with resources, influence and daring. They are, therefore, the common problems affecting Christians, Muslims and other sectors in Mindanao. They complicate the peace and order in the region.

There are no ideological answers to criminalism. Only moral pressures through education and religion can get to the root of this conflict. The State has responded with penal institutions and military neutralizers.

Finally, another conflict that has contributed to the State's dilemma is the tension and even violent clashes between factions in both the radical and secessionist movements. Purging of suspected deep-penetration agents of the government, which is not an unreasonable assumption, has contributed to strife within the radical struggle. This has been worsened by the reorganization of the former radical elements into anti-insurgency units of the State. The same may be applied to the secessionist movement where factional problems are as serious as in the radical ranks. Rebel returnees have been organized into anti-secessionist units of the government. The three major factions in the Bangsamoro struggle continue to give problems to the State in dealing with Muslim demands.

The Imperative of Development

What is development? This is usually the first thing that we ask, and we can easily dispense with it by merely repeating the excellent definitions which are provided by the various disciplines. But development, for purposes of this study, refers to the progressive growth of the political, economic, social and cultural conditions of society brought about by the action of individual and/or collective freedom. If we are to apply this to Mindanao's development, it will provide an explanation for the conflict and lack of peace in the region.

In effect, why has development become the key issue in the resolution of conflict when it has been unfolding since colonial times, changing the land and the people? This requires an analysis of the historical aspect of development.

If we now look at Mindanao from the perspective of various periods of Philippine history, we cannot escape the following realities:

- a) The period before colonialism was generally marked by freedom and interdependence of various ethnic groups in relation to a vibrant internal and international trade involving what we conveniently call upland-lowland, upriver-downriver or interisland dichotomies. This was, therefore, a time of mutually beneficial, enriching and complementary relations between societies or communities.
- b) But the next period of colonialism which introduced into the archipelago, including Mindanao, a system of exploitation and oppression, dictated by racial factors and interests which were rationalized and moralized by the imperatives of the Christian religion, gradually and ultimately tipped the balance of development in favor of colonial and Christian preferences. By the last century of Spanish rule, political power had been concentrated in an alien group; economic resources especially lands, had become, by virtue of Spanish absolutist policies, the exclusive possession of colonialism; colonial social structure had reduced all native societies to subordinate and inferior levels in the colonial hierarchy; cultural importance and primacy had become the inherent prerogative of the colonial-Christian community. All of these drastic changes were brought about by conscious colonial policies to the prejudice of the various ethnic societies including the two Muslim sultanates in Mindanao.
- c) The third period of American imperialism accelerated the further alienation of the native societies from their traditions and identities except the Muslims and other cultural communities which succeeded either in initially resisting American colonial offensive in the first decade, or in accepting limited interaction through

American liberal democratic policies. While American rule allowed real but limited native participation in government, unlike Spanish rule, it was consistent with American imperialistic interest to promote the primacy of Christian and modern culture already achieved by Spain in the archipelago. In fact, by the end of the second decade of American rule, the migration of Christian settlers to Mindanao and the conversion of natives in the region to Christianity had altered the demographic balance. The rise of the Christian Filipinos as the dominant sector in Mindanao continued unhindered. Consequently, the status of the Muslims and other cultural communities was minimized, which also affected their share of resources and benefits.

- d) Naturally, the post-colonial period of history was marked by Christian Filipinos inheriting the mantle of leadership and privilege in Mindanao as a part of the transfer of sovereignty by the United States to the Philippines, wherein national leadership was automatically assumed by the political elite of Manila. The failure of the United States to decentralize political power to the local or sectoral level proved detrimental to the liberal democratic system established in the region. Thus, Muslims and other non-Christians were subjected to the dominant control of the Christian leadership.

While non-Christians were prepared to assume subordinate and inferior places in colonial times, they were not ready to accept the same under Christian Filipinos without prejudice to their sense of dignity and pride. It was difficult to see a social sector that was once under Muslim dominance emerging by the fiat of colonial policies to become the permanent power in the archipelago.

In brief, the broad history of Muslim-State relations tends to show the vital role played by historical experiences in the Muslim perception of their problems, aspirations and hopes. In effect, historical consciousness is a factor in the success or failure of the peace process and development efforts. This leads us to the last point.

Priority Areas of Development

It is essential to declare that while developments are necessary and even urgent in all aspects of regional life, some are comparatively more urgent than others. Considering the nature of conflict in Mindanao, the approach to the Mindanao problem is to give priority to the elimination of psychological problems that have either complicated or confused the issue of autonomy and self-determination. The successful resolution of the psychological issue allows the substantive aspects of the Mindanao problem to be dealt with nationally and objectively.

Consequently, the development process to deal with this psychological issue ought to first eliminate the perception that Muslims and non-Christians are discriminated against in the upper echelons of power and decision making. How can this be done? Visibly, there should be non-Christian, especially Muslim, participation in the highest level of national decision making. Representation may be advisory or substantial in nature. Such a representation will create the impression that the Muslim or non Christians are not secondary in national importance, that the national leadership trusts the cultural communities. If this measure is supplemented in other national government agencies, especially the military, the psychological barrier will eventually be eroded.

It is logical to say that with the elimination of the psychological problem, the rest of the development plans, including the establishment of an autonomous government for Mindanao, will receive a more sincere and meaningful response from the cultural communities. Perhaps, the next priority can begin on the regional level with the devolution of power through a federal system. Then, the economic and socio-cultural development plan can be formulated along federal concepts.

Undoubtedly, the development steps suggested here might have a very good prospect of minimizing, if not eliminating, the complexity of regional conflicts and lay the basic foundation of a more lasting peace in the region and the country. In brief, the general thesis is to theoretically establish that before meaningful peace and development can be expected in Mindanao, the psychological gap between national leadership and regional relations has to be bridged. Otherwise, peace will remain elusive

and development will continue to suffer from misguided policies and lack of popular support from the cultural communities, especially the Bangsamoro people.



MNLF Chairman Nur Misuari and Ambassador Yan with President Suharto and OIC Representatives in the Jakarta Peace Talks, August 29, 1996.



SUMMARY

UNDOUBTEDLY, ONE OF the difficulties in the research on secessionism is the gathering of pertinent data. While many have already written and published articles, theses and commentaries on the secessionist movement, both foreign and local, there are still serious gaps in information partly attributable to the lack of primary sources. Consequently, a great deal of information, whether fact or fiction, come mostly from one side of the conflict: the government or the State. But even these sources, as my own experience proves, are limited by the rule on classified and declassified information. One gets only what the State wishes to give, while the rest of the puzzle languishes away in the State's unreachable files. Then, the meager information one gets from the other protagonist —the rebel—is also restricted by access to the primary source of data on account of the risks to life and the highly suspicious attitude of the rebels toward outsiders researching on their most sensitive struggle.

Many times we have been suspected as foreign agents out to penetrate the secessionist movement. My field researcher, who is a respected professional in the locality, was not spared from these suspicions. But fortunately, our roots and connections with the local culture and people helped deflect such notions. Kinship ties with some rebel elements were positive factors in the daunting task of establishing research connections for oral history on Moro secessionism. The relatively successful preliminary inquiry into the hitherto unknown sources of history was achieved not through what we could offer financially or materially, but through certain psychological ties that have remained of

utmost importance to Muslim societies. The only promise we could offer them – and which moved them – was to recognize the justice of their struggle in the study.

This study clarifies certain fundamental issues that concern us as Filipinos, as a nation desiring earnestly to be one, as a united people hoping to finally take our place in the distinguished family of truly independent and developed nations. But, for as long as a part of us remains committed to the cause of a separate identity, notwithstanding the sacrifice and cost, our vision of the ideal will remain elusive and, perhaps, even be lost to us forever. Therefore, while some sectors of the Christian community have expressed separatist aims like Canoy's MIM, the Moro secessionist struggle is the most serious since it has become the synthesis of local and international elements, thus differentiating it from its historical antecedents.

The evolution of the Moro personality from a simple creature of the environment to a present-day *mujabeedeen* and *mujabidat* in the span of four centuries, provides the principal actor for the contemporary secessionist struggle. With this new image, he brings to the Bangsamoro consciousness the four historical motivations of secessionism, namely the desire to recover political power, economic well-being, social importance and cultural distinction.

The approaches to the Moro struggle have followed three historical options: integration, secession and separatism, with the government consistently pursuing the integrational alternative through the nationalization and Filipinization of Muslim life and society, and until recently, the advocacy of regional autonomy as a compromise. But failure to substantially implement real autonomy has encouraged the development of Moro secessionist or separatist tendencies.

One issue which concerns us today is best expressed by a prominent government official: Do the Muslims consider themselves truly Filipinos? The answer to that is: "Filipinos?" Yes. Truly "Filipinos?" We do not know. This perception has been confirmed by preliminary data from field research. Those who answered in the affirmative could only reason out that Sulu is part of the Philippines. Beyond this geographic reference,

which is based on Constitutional declaration, certain other aspects of Filipinism have remained vague. Those who answered in the negative refer to their neglect and treatment as second-class citizens even in their own homeland, and so they doubt if they are indeed part of the Filipino nation. Those who could not give any answer recounted certain recollections. This suggests a kind of dilemma among Muslims involved in a struggle that has been going on for years. There is also apparently a lot of ambiguity in what their goals are, although the desire for meaningful freedom is unmistakable.

But when interviewed on the basis of the autonomy being offered under the Autonomy Act passed by Congress, there was a general sense of hope that it might work. There remained a desire for peace, for liberation from the horrors of war. Those who gave this impression were those who had returned to the fold of the law. It appears that the desire for an end to the war is the dominant sentiment. Whether this suggests ultimate resignation or just a respite, as it was in colonial times, is still undetermined.

Another issue which concerns us is whether the involvement of external forces, like the OIC is welcomed by the Muslims. Yes, the



MBLF Chairman Nur Misuari and GRP Ambassador Manuel Yan during the OIC-witnessed Peace Talks in Jakarta, Indonesia, August 29, 1996.



MNLF Mujahadeen celebrating Bangsamoro Day, March 18, 1989, Jolo, Sulu

response is positive and unanimous. Nobody regards OIC involvement as an "interference." This means that the Muslim view is diametrically opposite that of the government which has continued to view OIC involvement as an interference. This follows the government's basic premise that the Moro secessionist movement is a local internal problem which can, and should, be settled internally.

While the government view idealizes the situation, the course of conflict has made isolation for the Moro problem increasingly difficult. It is both interesting and revealing to see how our informants justify the OIC involvement in the Muslim community to help the Moro struggle for justice because, as a part of the *ummab*, they are spiritually and morally entitled to such aid. It is an obligation required by the Holy Koran of all Muslims in times of crises. Presumably, the OIC shares a similar view, as shown by its consistent support for the Moro struggle. In fact, the commitment of support in the 1989 OIC resolution for the MNLF under Nur Misuari is firm. This has not changed, despite the series of government efforts to carry out the autonomy mandate of both the Tripoli Agreement and the 1987 Constitution.

From a lengthy exchange of views with high-ranking Muslim leaders in the government, there is the same positive perception of the OIC's role. One even categorically said that the OIC is supportive of the Philippines' desire to maintain its sovereignty over the Muslim south, that it has consistently favored not independence, but autonomy for the Moros so that it has continued to deny the MNLF regular membership. But the diplomatic source lamented the government's negative perception of the OIC's role, that State policy makers have failed to truly understand OIC sentiment.

In this regard, the question should be asked: if the OIC is indeed sympathetic to the government desire to uphold the integrity of its sovereignty, why has it adamantly supported the MNLF cause? The answer is at best the fact that, in a sense, the OIC is in a dilemma. It cannot ignore the just demands of a part of the *ummab* of which the OIC is the most important part. In fact, for all intents and purposes, it is the guardian and upholder of the *ummab* because of the politico-

economic power it wields in world politics. It cannot ignore the Moro struggle without hurting its own conscience, without, in effect, abandoning its sacred mandate from no less than God. Moreover, it is a signatory to the tripartite Tripoli Agreement which guarantees support for the Moro demand for real autonomy. To the OIC, therefore, the Tripoli Accord is a sacred document. Consequently, rejecting or belittling the significance and validity of the accord by public declaration insults both the MNLF and the OIC.

Any autonomy, however excellent its provisions or honorable its intent, if offered not on the basis of the Agreement, procedurally or otherwise, cannot satisfy the psychological dimension of the MNLF's and the OIC's expectations. For this reason, the government's insistence on the 1987 Constitution as the only valid basis of settlement tends to alienate the MNLF and the OIC. This is why the Autonomy Act and, consequently, the autonomous government, cannot possibly be accepted by the OIC and the MNLF. In brief, what is happening in the Muslim South is outside the process of the Tripoli Accord and, therefore, unacceptable.

Although this view is not expressed publicly by Muslims in the government for obvious reasons, it is nonetheless the core of their sentiments. This suggests that the solution to Moro secessionism will remain remote until the acceptable concepts and premises are clarified. The longer we fail to arrive at a compromise, the more difficult it becomes to bridge the gap, psychological and otherwise. This prospect is starting to crystallize in the Muslim South, despite the election of the autonomous government which has only raised more questions and doubts about peace in Mindanao.

Central to the Moro Issue is the MNLF simply because it is the one supported officially by the OIC as representing the Moro people. While the OIC empathizes with the other factions, it can only deal formally and diplomatically with the MNLF because the latter is the recognized representative under the Tripoli Agreement. In fact, the two tapes of Misuari's messages in late 1989 to the OIC and the Moro people are revealing, particularly the one in August 1989 delivered in Tausug, to

strengthen his call to arms and more sacrifices. What I consider important are certain words Nur used to remind the Moros, especially the Tausug world, of the basic rationale of the MNLF struggle. Nur referred to three Tausug words to summarize what the struggle seeks to preserve as the sacred, inalienable heritage of the Moro people. *Agama*, *Bangsa*, and *Hula*. These may be translated respectively as Faith, Race and Homeland.

Spoken in popular Tausug, Nur's message appeals like a lamentation, a plaintive echo of a long and arduous struggle. It is not given the usual fighting rhetoric one often hears from a revolutionary, but spoken in a casual and fraternal tone. It is like listening to a son or brother recounting a long and tiring battle with bleak prospects, but with the tone of conviction in the struggle. How the call for supreme sacrifice with no promise of glory is received by the people to whom it is addressed can only be judged by what this year brings to the Southern Islands.

There is no doubt that the output of the Bangsamoro National Congress in 1989, presented in a series of well-thought out resolutions on specific issues of the Muslim struggle, had reinforced the MNLF position in OIC. The efforts of the MILF to obtain a similar privilege had not succeeded in relegating the MNLF to the side.

But after the co-optation of the political leadership of the MNLF and the integration of part of its regular armed forces into the Philippine military establishment, the lost causes of the MNLF armed struggle had been taken over by a Misuari-inspired rebel faction whose *modus vivendi* with or integration into the more radical Abu Sayyaf has given new vigor to Misuari's old call to preserve and nourish the Muslim heritage of "*Agama*," "*Bangsa*," and "*Hula*." These three concepts of the Bangsamoro armed struggle led by the MNLF represent the basic ingredients of "faith," "race" and "homeland" that constitute the essence of Bangsamoro independence and, consequently, the unifying rationale of all the revolutionary factions in Muslim Mindanao. It is probable that the divided leadership of the MNLF, between Nur Misuari and Parouck Hussin, provides the MILF the basis for Hashim Salamat to

pursue his long cherished hope of seeing the MILF replace the MNLF as sole representative of the Bangsamoro people in the OIC.



A tribal leader of Davao gifting in OIC Secretary General Dr. Hamid Al-Gabid before ARMM Governor Nur Misuari during the August 28-30, 1996 MNLF-OIC-GRP Formal Peace Talks in Jakarta, Indonesia.



BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

THERE ARE NUMEROUS sources that deal with the Moro struggle in the Philippines, but there is still a dearth of materials on the specific issue of Moro secessionism. Those that have been written, not necessarily published, generally constitute only a part of general works on the Moro people. Not all are mentioned in this essay. Only those that were used more than once are described together with other standard sources.

First to be acknowledged for the background on Moro secessionism which is treated in Chapter 1, are the historical sources from colonial to contemporary times. The principal ones are the Spanish records, the most important of which are available in English translations in Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson's *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898* (Cleveland, 1903-1909), in 55 volumes, including the index and bibliography. Particularly useful in this monumental work are translations of Juan dela Concepcion's *Historia de la pirateria mohametana en Mindanao, Jolo y Borneo* (Madrid, 1888) which takes the events up to the last quarter of Spanish rule; Francisco Combes' *Historia de las islas de Mindanao, Jolo y sus adyacentes* (Madrid, 1667) which ends about the third decade of the 17th century; and Vicente Barrantes' *Guerras piraticas en Filipinas* (Madrid, 1878) which records, in more arresting details, the Moro raids.

The American sources that are used in the historical analysis are the reports of the governor-general, particularly those of the three governors

of the Moro Province: Leonard Wood (1903-1906), Tasker H. Bliss (1906-1909) and John J. Pershing (1909-1913). Of special value is the report of Civil Governor Frank W. Carpenter (1913-1920) of the Department of Mindanao and Sulu. These were made more meaningful with data from the private papers of the foregoing officials in the U.S. Library of Congress and the National Archives in Washington D.C. Also important in this regard are Najeeb M. Saleeby's *The History of Sulu* (Manila, 1963 reprint) and *Studies in Moro History, Law and Religion* (Manila, 1905); Vic Hurley's *Swish of the Kris* (New York, 1936); and Sydney A. Cloman's *Myself and a Few Moros*, (reprint) which give insight into the early years of American rule in Moroland.

The more contemporary sources, although secondary in nature, which have more or less synthesized and summarized the long period of colonial impact on the Moro people, are Cesar Majul's *Muslims in the Philippines* (Quezon City, 1973), Samuel K. Tan's *The Filipino Muslim Armed Struggle* (Makati, 1978), Alunan C. Glang's *Secession or Integration* (Manila, 1969), and T.S. George's *The Revolt in Mindanao* (London, 1980). Majul traces the Moro struggle up to 1898 and Tan continues the thread up to 1970. To a limited extent, Peter Gowing in *American Mandate in Moroland* (Quezon City, 1977) elaborates the dynamics of the first two decades of American rule in the Muslim south. Glang was one of the earliest to fully discuss the Moro secessionist problem from a Muslim perspective. The above sources are essential in understanding chapter 1 of this study.

Relevant to secessionism and very useful for the present perspective are Ron J. May's "The Moro Secessionist Movement", published by the International Center for Ethnic Studies, Sri Lanka in *The Ethnic Studies Report*, (July 1989) as well as his "The Wild West in the South: A Recent Political History of Mindanao" (Chapter 9, *Mindanao: Land of Unfulfilled Promise*, (Quezon City, 1992) and Samuel K. Tan's "Moro Secessionism in the Philippines," published also in the **Ethnic Studies Report** (July, 1988). While both deal with the same subject, May provides a more contemporary appraisal of the issue, and Tan traces the evolution of the Moro image in history from earliest times to the contemporary period. Both are used in Chapter II of the study. For the

discussion of the resolution of conflict in terms of the options of integration, secession and separation, which are treated in Chapter III, employed to a large extent are the various conference papers on Mindanao issues, particularly two sets of papers: (1) The Papers on the Tripoli Agreement published in 1986 by the UP International Studies Institute of the Philippines and (2) those presented in the UP-MSU sponsored conference in Makiling, (Los Baños, 1989). Also used for evaluation are the confidential communications of commanders such as the letter of Commander Romulo Espaldon of Southcom and Hadji Isahac Tahil to Amar El Akbar, the code name of Commander Julkanain Apalal.

On the more important question of internationalization, dealt with in chapter IV and V, and VI the most vital sources are the oral historical data which are stored in tapes and transcribed and translated by Mr. Jilhani Susulan. The data are the views of 35 informants in Region 9 on specific questions related to secession. The interviews of the informants were conducted from May 1989 to April 1990. The data are now in the S.K. Tan Collection. But the materials are only relevant to the internationalization process within Moroland. The process outside the Philippines, mainly in the Muslim world, is dependent on the published materials from the MNLF Information Bureau which has circulated numerous pamphlets and tracts which include the essays and speeches of Misuari. Among these are the ones listed in the appendices. The other document used is Protocol No. 1 between the representatives of the MNLF and Presidential candidate Eduardo M. Cojuangco of February 17, 1972, shortly before the last presidential election. The protocol reveals the importance of the MNLF issue during the election.

For the comparative perspective in Chapter VII, useful are W. K. Che Man's *Muslim Separatism: The Moros of Southern Philippines and the Malays of Southern Thailand* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1992) on the Patani Muslim secessionist movement in Thailand; K.M. de Silva's "Separatism in Sri Lanka: The Traditional Homelands of the Tamils" and S.W.R.A. de Samarasinghe's "The Dynamics of Separatism: The Case of Sri Lanka" in Ralph R. Premdas, *et al.* (editors), **Separatist Movements in Comparative Perspective**

(London: Printer Publishers, Ltd., 1990) on Tamil secessionism which has affected seriously the Muslim minority in Sri Lanka; and the **Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs**, Vol. IX, No. 1, January 1, 1988 in which the various Muslim movements in Central Asia are presented substantially. The comparison of Moro secessionism and the tribal movements in Southern Philippines is based on **Mindanao: Land of Unfulfilled Promise** (Quezon City, 1992), edited by Mark Turner, R.J. May and Lulu Respall Turner of Australian National University, as well as on the contemporary day to day reports, essays and commentaries of various national and local dailies. Useful mainly for the conclusive part of Chapter VIII is a paper entitled "Peace and Development in Mindanao," submitted by the author to then Director Carolina C. Hernandez of the Center for Integrative and Development Studies, for use in the University's evaluation of the Mindanao issue in national affairs.



MNLF Chairman Nur Misuari with OIC Representatives and Tribal Leaders of Mindanao in Jakarta, Indonesia



APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

University of the Philippines
Center for Integrative and Development Studies

Note: This questionnaire is designed to provide insights into vital issues involving secessionist movements and/or tendencies. Interviewees are requested to be as open, frank and accurate as possible in answering questions. Anything said will be strictly kept confidential except for purposes of evaluating issues which are the subject of this study. The concern of the University is mainly to provide empirical or scientific studies/research on vital areas of national concern. Answers may be in English, Filipino or local language (Tausug or Samal).

A. On Personal Background

1. Name

a. Full name _____

b. Pen name _____

c. Aliases _____

d. Wife _____

e. Children/grandchildren (if any) _____

2. Age _____ 3. Ethnic identity _____

3. Sex _____ 5. Status _____ 6. Province _____

7. Religion _____

8. Parents
 - a. Father _____
 - b. Mother _____
9. Brothers _____
10. Sisters _____
11. Grandparents _____
 - a. Grandfather _____
 - b. Grandmother _____
12. Uncles _____
13. Aunts _____
14. Past experiences before MNLF:
 - a. Educational Attainment (include *madrassah*, *pangadji*, etc., if any) _____
 - b. Positions held _____
 - c. Associations _____
 - d. Others (if any) _____
15. When did you join the MNLF and why? How long have you been a member? What was or is now your position? How much did or do you get for compensation? Are you happy and ever committed? Please explain.
16. Did someone influence you or did you join the movement on your own choice? Who or what do you admire in the struggle? Please be specific.
17. Do you consider yourself a Filipino? Explain your answer.

B. On Moro Secessionism

1. Why did the Muslim struggle develop into a separatist movement? Give specific reasons from what you know in the movement or as you perceive it?
2. Do you favor independence? Why? Give your own personal view.
3. Why has the Moro struggle acquired international character? Give reasons as you see it.

4. Is your consciousness of historical experience of political, economic, social and cultural injustices a causal factor in the internationalization of secessionism?
5. Do you favor the involvement of Muslim countries in the Moro struggle?
6. What specific foreign involvements do you favor in the Moro struggle? Give specific names of persons, countries or agencies if any.
7. What are the concrete and specific forms of foreign participation you see in the Moro struggle? Is it growing in magnitude or waning?
8. Do you know if or perceive that foreign involvement is for Moro independence or autonomy? Explain your answer. Cite specific circumstances, events, etc. of possible.
9. How do you assess the prospect of the Moro secessionist movement? Will it succeed and why?
10. Is Moro secessionism possible without war? Explain.
11. Do you perceive yourself being involved in larger or lesser responsibilities in the Movement? If yes, in what specific areas of activities?
12. Do you believe that the future of Moroland is brighter after independence? Why? Give specific reasons or elaborate if necessary.
13. Have you heard of the Organization of Islamic Conference of OIC? What do you know about this organization?

C. On the Government Response

1. Is the Autonomy Act passed by Congress the answer to Moro secessionism? For either answer, give reasons.
2. How will you rate the chances of acceptance of the Autonomy Act for Mindanao? Check your answer.
 - a. Very good []
 - b. Good []
 - c. Not so good []
 - d. Cannot determine []

3. Do you see any change of attitude in the OIC as far as the Autonomy Act is concerned? Do you see a softening or hardening of the OIC support for the MNLF as a result of the Autonomy Act? Please explain your answer.
4. Who in the government, Muslim or christian, are credible and acceptable to the MNLF as far as renewing talks is concerned? Or do you believe the talks are no longer necessary?
5. How do you regard those who left the Moro armed struggle and returned to the fold of the law?
 - a. with admiration []
 - b. with sympathy []
 - c. with contempt []
 - d. cannot decide []
6. At any time in your involvement, have you considered returning to the fold of the law? When and why?
7. How do you regard the government military build up in Moroland? Is it a deterrent or a provocation of war? Explain your answer.
8. Is federalism an acceptable alternative to secessionism? If so, how should the government pursue this alternative?

D. On Moro factionalism

1. Do you regard the existence of three Moro factions in the Muslim struggle as an indication of an ethnicization of the movement? Please explain fully.
2. Is Moro factionalism rooted in some ideological differences? Be specific in your reply.
3. Do you regard Nur Misuari as the cause of Moro factionalism as advanced by certain quarters? Explain your answer.
4. Is Moro factionalism more helpful to the government than to the Muslims? Explain your answer.
5. Is the expressed support of the OIC for Misuari's MNLF an indication that the other factions have lost relevance? Do you

see the OIC support as a means of pressuring Moro factions to rally behind Misuari?

6. Do you perceive the lack or absence of a unifying ideology as the fundamental problem of the Muslim movement? If so, why has Islam not been able to provide the ideological unity? Explain.

E. On Foreign Countries

1. Do you know whether Malaysia, Brunei, and Indonesia are helping the MNLF? If yes, in what forms: financial, diplomatic, moral, military? Please elaborate.
2. How far has the MNLF established its international connections? Is it limited to the Muslim countries? Be specific with your answer.
3. Has the Sabah issue brought changes in the Moro struggle? If yes, what are the these changes? If no, why has it not brought changes?
4. Do you see the revival of the Old Sulu Sultanate as a possible alternative to Moro secessionism? If yes, do you think it will create more problems for the Muslims or the government or both? Explain your answer.
5. How will the heirs to the Sultanate respond to the MNLF call for a united front? Explain your answer.
6. Is a secessionist war inevitable in Mindanao with foreign support as seen by the MNLF? Why?
7. Will foreign support be a decisive factor in the prospect of secessionism? Or is the popular base of the movement adequate? Explain your answer.
8. Do you perceive the trends in world opinion as favorable or unfavorable to the Muslim secessionist movement? Explain your answer.
9. Do you have direct access to information on secessionist activities abroad? Please elaborate.



APPENDIX B

LIST OF INFORMANTS

Total Number of Informants
(35 Informants)

Siasi Informants

- 1) *Hasinon Tingkaban* – former Commander and Vice Chairman, MNLF, now Vice Mayor of Siasi.
- 2) *Cesar Utam* – former Commander, MNLF, now a peaceful citizen and a businessman.
- 3) *Sali Ilaji* – former District Commander, MNLF, now Chief Security Officer of the Mayor of Siasi.
- 4) *Apalal Jukanain* – former Commander, MNLF, now President and Treasurer of the Siasi Stevedoring Company, Inc.
- 5) *Samad Abdurahim* – former Commander, MNLF, now engaged in farming.
- 6) *Mathlib Usman* – former Chairman of the MNLF Pandami Revolutionary Command, now a businessman-farmer.
- 7) *Madjabirin Arasain* – former MNLF District Commander, now a farmer.
- 8) *Malinsa Hasim* – former MNLF Commander, now a farmer.
- 9) *Mrs. Kuraisiya Hussin* – formerly with the first Aid team of the MNLF, now a public school teacher.
- 10) *Mudjabirim Sarani* – MNLF Staff Training Officer and still with the organization.

- 11) *Hadji Alhabsi Bin Mutalib* – former Information Officer and Colonel of the MNLF.
- 12) *Hadji Bawang Estino* – former MNLF Commander of Punay, Panamao District, Sulu, now a farmer and businessman.
- 13) *Morofred Sangkula* – former MNLF Information Officer and Propagandist, now a businessman.
- 14) *Hadji Alan Salahuddin* – MNLF Commander still with the organization and brother of MNLF Information Officer Hadji Alhabsi Bin Mutalib.
- 15) *Professor Amirul Abajul* – MNLF sympathizer; presently one of the professors at the Mindanao State University, Jolo Branch.
- 16) *Amir Jawari* – former MNLF Commander, now Vice-Mayor of Indanan, Sulu.
- 17) *Muksan Taguidid* – former MNLF Community Organizer of the Pata Revolutionary Command, Pata, Sulu; a former Mayor of Pata, now the President of the People's Economic Council (PEC) of the Province of Sulu.

Tawi-Tawi Informants:

- 18) *Mansur Sakili* – former civilian volunteer of the MNLF; as a returnee/surrenderee, he was appointed Commissioner to help draft the Organic Act for the Regional Autonomous Government for Muslim Mindanao; he is presently the head of the Philippine Information Agency Extension Office in Bongao, Tawi-Tawi.
- 19) *Mrs. Sylvia Jalil* – former medical aide of the MNLF.
- 20) *Professor Saidali Abdulla* – former MNLF Officer Trainee, now teaching at the Mindanao State University, Bongao Branch, Tawi-Tawi.

Basilan Informants:

- 21) *Ibnu Hasan* – former MNLF Trainor at the Satellite Camp in Buka-Buka, Parang, Sulu; presently employed at the Mindanao State University, Bongao Branch as a driver-mechanic.

- 22) *Panglima Abdula Sansawi* – former MNLF sympathizer and supplier of some MNLF needs, now a peaceful farmer-businessman.
- 23) *Hadji Hatab Yusop* – former MNLF member, now Deputy Governor for Bongao, Tawi-Tawi.
- 24) *Datu Amiril Maindan* – former MNLF sympathizer, now working as security Guard of the Mindanao State University in Bongao and a peaceful citizen.
- 25) *Augusto Herrera* – former MNLF Administration and Planning Officer assisting MNLF Commander Yusop Dais of Tawi-Tawi, now a retired Budget Officer of the Mindanao State University, Bongao Branch. He is a Catholic.
- 26) *Ibnu Unaid* – inactive member of the MNLF Striking Force, presently engaged in farming.
- 27) *Sawadjaan Atiulla* – MNLF Coordinator still in active duty; a former public school teacher before he joined the organization.
- 28) *Eliasin Jainal* – former MNLF (Activist) follower of Commander *Hadji Isahac Tabin* of Tawi-Tawi, before joining the MNLF, he was a policeman in Maimbong, Sulu; he is now engaged in “seaweed farming” in Isabela, Basilan.
- 29) *Assi Diong* – former MNLF Intelligence Officer, now a businessman at Maluso, Basilan.
- 30) *Habib Harun Aladam* – former MNLF Officer, now a businessman in Isabela, Basilan.
- 31) *Hadja Maimona Karama Aldam* – former Medical Aide of the MNLF, now Records Officer at the Bureau of Lands, Isabela and Cagayan.
- 32) *Habib Naho Hasim* – former MNLF activist, now a businessman at Lantawan, Basilan.
- 33) *Yusop Aldam* – former MNLF activist, now a Barangay Captain of Barangay Palahangaw in Lantawan, Basilan.
- 34) *Hadji Malikalsad* – an MNLF Commander, he has not surrendered but is inactive for the time being, engaged in business in Isabela, Basilan.
- 35) *Hon. Gerry Salapuddin* – former Provincial Chairman of the MNLF in Basilan Province; now the Governor of the Province of Basilan since winning the last local elections.



APPENDIX C

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT ON THE MINDANAO TALKS

A RECORD OF OUR HOPES

By PRESIDENT FERDINAND E. MARCOS

*(The President's Report on Southern Philippines, during the Special Session
of the Batasang Bayan, May 3, 1977)*

I have convened this special session of the Batasang Bayan with this wide representation of the country's political, economic and social leadership to discuss one crucial question: the status of our peace efforts in Southern Philippines.

I am specially gratified to see that, although on rather short notice, my call has been heeded across the nation.

The time has come, I believe, when you and I, and all our people, must gather together now to assess our search for peace in Mindanao. While nothing that we have done, or are doing, has been kept away from public view, while the mass media have been all too generous in discussing the initiatives that we have taken, I feel that our people have right to hold before them now the record of our effort, and to examine

for themselves how such effort is affecting events, and where it is finally leading the nation. You are well aware that we agreed on the holding of a referendum in the South, originally intended for February 21st postponed to March, and later on to April 17, in the 13 provinces of Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte, North Cotabato, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, Lanao Norte, Lanao Sur, Davao Sur, South Cotabato and Palawan. And our people in the 13 provinces voted in a referendum-plebiscite to affirm their faith in the peace and stability that we have long sought to establish in our Southern regions.

In the course of our deliberations, I shall ask the Secretary on Local Government and Community Development, who is at the same time the majority floorleader of our Batasang Bayan, as well as the provisional government of the area of autonomy of 13 provinces, and perhaps the Commission on Elections, to submit a formal report on the referendum-plebiscite. But in the meantime, let me say that our people risked possible reprisal from those who did not approve of their taking part in the referendum-plebiscite, and those who, worse than that, did not approve of the way they voted in the polls. For it is notoriously known to everyone that in some of the areas in the 13 provinces, some of our citizenry were threatened and directed not to vote, or if they voted, to vote one way or the other. But our people voted nonetheless to discharge their duty to the Republic and to their individual consciences, and to affirm their right to be consulted on the manner, and by whom, they shall be governed. And they voted in the belief that by so doing, they shall be hastening the steps by which permanent peace could settle in their communities and in their homes—by which a final reconciliation might be achieved between the soldiery of government and the peaceful citizenry on the one hand, and the armed rebels of the Moro National Liberation Front, on the other.

In the last few months, we have taken initiatives that brought to our people a *glimmer of the peace we desire in Mindanao*. Nothing has raised their hopes so much as the prospect of that peace becoming a permanent one. For while they have suffered and sacrificed much, they have not

counted the cost, and are willing to suffer and sacrifice some more, provided we attain a peace that will allow those who have been thrown in conflict with one another to live with each other as brothers.

Nothing less than peace, nothing less than unity and brotherhood, is our aim.

However, I regret to inform you that in the last few days, the gains we had made during the last few months have been set back by new demands which no self-respecting nation will allow herself to grant. In due time, I will dwell on these demands. However, let me state at once that these are demands made by the Moro National Liberation Front which are openly violative and contemptuous of our Constitution, and casually disregard the decision made by our people in a free, open and orderly referendum-plebiscite, and seek to nullify certain provisions of the Tripoli agreement as well as the agreement between President Ghaddafi and myself.

On 21 April of this year, you will recall, although our position had always been that the agreement between President Ghaddafi and myself was a final solution to the problem, at the insistence of the Quadripartite Commission of the Islamic Conference, and in order not to look as if we were bent on a quarrel, we allowed a panel of our government to sit down with the Quadripartite Ministerial Commission in Manila on what were referred to by them as details of the final settlement in Mindanao, supposedly based on two previous understandings reached in Tripoli, namely, the Tripoli Agreement of December 23, 1976, and the agreement between President Ghaddafi and myself, of March 18 and 19, embodied and documented by the cables exchanged between the two Presidents. I was at the time preparing to leave for Tokyo on a visit that was of crucial importance, for it pertained not only to the bilateral relations between Japan and the Philippines, but also to matters of security of our country, the Western Pacific, as well as the economic situation which often tended towards crisis especially since there has been a serious imbalance in our trade with Japan in the last two years. Yet such was the importance we placed on the Mindanao question that I immediately designated several cabinet members, including the Secretary of Foreign

Affairs, Secretary Carlos P. Romulo, the Secretary of National Defense, Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile, the Secretary of Justice, Secretary Vicente Abad Santos, the Secretary of Local Government and Community Development, Secretary Jose Roño, as well as the Solicitor-General, Estelito Mendoza, and a whole group of supporting technicians including Undersecretary Manuel Collantes of Foreign Affairs, Undersecretary Carmelo Barbero of Defense, to meet with the visiting Islamic delegation and whatever members of the MNLF were with that group.

Our panel for the next several days tried to impress upon the Islamic officials and the MNLF how the Philippine government had tried to implement every agreed step leading to a just and lasting settlement of the Mindanao conflict. We reviewed what had been done and the agreements which had been made between the Philippine government and its own nationals, for we consider the MNLF citizens of the Republic even if they are in rebellion, and reported to the delegation as well as to the MNLF every step that had been taken to comply with the two agreements.

But in the middle of my visit to Tokyo, I was informed by overseas telephone that the Moro National Liberation Front, taking positions different even from the Quadripartite Commission of the Islamic Conference, had interposed new demands that were altogether removed from what had until then formed the basis of the talks with its representatives in Tripoli, demands which, if granted, would give the Moro National Liberation Front a status not contemplated within our unitary constitutional state.

Added to these demands were certain threats, such as the threat to terminate the conversations and return to hostilities and to lay on the Philippine Government the blame for the collapse of the talks, to bring the matter up to the United Nations, to the Islamic Conference and various other hints of further retaliation.

We exerted every effort to persuade the Quadripartite Commission to remain in Manila at least until my return from Japan, in the meantime authorizing our panel to propose a compromise in the spirit of generosity

and accommodation with which we have conducted ourselves in the entire course of our negotiations.

If our purpose were to terminate the negotiations, this would have been the best time to terminate the negotiations, for the mere idea of threats being hurled at our government panel here in Manila while we were playing host to them was enough reason for the termination of such conversations. But the First Lady and I called up President Ghaddafi by long distance telephone in the early morning of Wednesday, the 27th of April. I asked President Ghaddafi to please instruct his representatives in Manila to await my arrival for I would cut short my visit in Japan in order that I may return and seek a solution to this impasse. So I returned on April 29, Friday, but even before my arrival, a message had arrived, as I was boarding the plane in Japan to return to Manila, that the unalterable position of the Moro National Liberation Front was reflected also by the Quadripartite Commission of the Islamic Conference and that they had rejected our compromise proposals. And so despite our last-minute efforts to save the talks, the Commission was adamant and the MNLF doubly so in its demands.

Now let us see what these demands were of the Moro National Liberation Front.

To begin with, the Moro National Liberation Front did not want to recognize the results of the April 17, 1977 referendum plebiscite, despite the unanimous view of diplomatic observers from 20 countries and foreign correspondents on the scene that it was free, open and orderly and an accurate expression of the people's will, without any incident to mar the free expression of adversary positions and without the physical presence anywhere near the voting precincts of any member of the soldiery who might have intimidated or coerced any citizen. On this particular matter, perhaps it should be said that the referendum was also in accordance with the agreement between President Ghaddafi and myself embodied in the cablegrams of March 18 and March 19. On the request of President Ghaddafi, I postponed the referendum. Although his request was a postponement only for two weeks, I considered it necessary in view of the difficulty of changing the date of the referendum

on a mere two weeks' notice, and also because of the fact that many of our people including the barangays, the *kabataans*, the *punong bayans*, and the governors requested the inclusion of other questions which required further study. It was postponed for one whole month up to April 17.

During this entire period, there was no opposition whatsoever from anyone as to the holding of any referendum in the Philippines. Neither the Quadripartite Commission nor the Moro National Liberation Front interposed any objection to the holding of the referendum. Three or four days before the holding of the referendum, sometime on the 13th or the 14th of April, we heard for the first time the opposition to the holding of the referendum, but by that time, it was impossible to either cancel or postpone the referendum. We also called attention to the fact that the holding of a referendum was a matter internal and domestic to the Philippines; that it was a part of our constitutional requirements that on important questions, our people must be consulted. We brought this to the attention of both the Quadripartite Commission and the MNLF. At the same time, President Ghaddafi suggested the inclusion of several questions, and these questions were embodied in the question as to what administrative arrangements should be made. These questions were included in the referendum-plebiscite. The Quadripartite Commission supported the request of President Ghaddafi for the inclusion of such questions. We, therefore, presumed with this action of the Quadripartite Commission that it had no objection whatsoever to the holding of the referendum, but merely wanted the inclusion of such questions.

The same thing was done by Mr. Nur Misuari, allegedly the chairman and leader of the Moro National Liberation Front. While objecting at that late date, three days before the holding of the referendum, to the referendum without him being in the Philippines, and without the Moro National Liberation Front coming to participate in the provisional government, he however said that he was in agreement with the questions being submitted by President Ghaddafi. We therefore presumed this to mean that he wanted these questions to be asked in

the referendum. These questions were therefore included in the referendum. And those questions were answered by our people. But after the referendum results came out, came these allegations and statements that the referendum was useless and a comedy.

At the same time, the Moro National Liberation Front, while remaining silent on my invitation to participate in the provisional government, indicated three days before the referendum that they did not recognize the provisional government which held the referendum-plebiscite. Instead, the Moro National Liberation Front insisted on forming its own provisional government. The central committee of the Moro National Liberation Front however did not indicate how it wanted to organize the provisional government. By their statements and acts, the spokesmen of the Moro National Liberation Front sought to cast aspersions on, to disregard and nullify the agreement between President Moammer Ghaddafi of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the President of the Philippines on March 18 and 19 respectively, which exchange of cables constituted an understanding recognized by the Quadripartite Commission and the President of the Islamic Conference as well as the secretariat, and originally by the MNLF itself, according to the note verbale received from the Libyan foreign ministry on March 22, 1977.

During the panel discussion held here in Manila, we received the demand that the provisional government already organized be now abolished and that the central committee of the Moro National Liberation Front take over this provisional government. They wanted a provisional government completely dominated by the central committee of the MNLF, to the exclusion of those who did not share the persuasion of the MNLF, even if they were also Muslims. Such a provisional government would replace the one already constituted in which the MNLF has been allotted a majority representation, and in which the chairmanship had been offered to Mr. Nur Misuari. They suggested that the provisional government be composed of 11 members, seven to be drawn from the MNLF, and four others, to be composed of

two Muslims and two non-Muslims, to be chosen also by the MNLF central committee.

This provisional government is provided for in two agreements — the Tripoli agreement of December 23, 1976 and the agreement between President Ghaddafi and myself. In both agreements, it was agreed that the President would appoint the members of the provisional government. Although this was augmented in the Ghaddafi-Marcos exchange of cables with the statement that the provisional government would be appointed by the President of the Republic of the Philippines, including the concerned parties representing the MNLF and the inhabitants of the area of autonomy, in none of these two agreements was there any indication that the majority of the provisional government would be coming from the MNLF, or that the appointments would be subject to the approval of the MNLF. In short, therefore, the MNLF, disregarding both the Tripoli agreement and the Ghaddafi-Marcos agreement, now wanted a new set of agreements.

At the same time, demanding that the provisional government be completely controlled by them, they wanted a transition period of six years before the elections in the area of autonomy during which they will be controlling the area.

The central committee of the MNLF, during that period of six years, would exercise the right to remove governors and mayors as well as employees of the government, thereby assuming the unlimited and unchecked power to remove elective as well as appointive government personnel from the service, presumably to include national officials as well.

There was some indication at the time that they were willing only to compromise on one thing, and that is, to reduce the six years to five years.

Finally, they demanded that if there is a final government to be established in the 13 provinces — again, contrary to the overwhelming vote of our people in the referendum-plebiscite — there should only be one region and that there should be only one legislative assembly and one executive council. Of the legislative assembly, there would be 26

elective members and 5 appointive members. And they would now establish religion as a qualification for public office, again in violation of our Constitution. They insisted that the only ones who should qualify for membership in the legislative assembly coming from the provinces of Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Basilan, Lanao Sur, Lanao Norte, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat and Zamboanga del Sur should be completely Muslim, notwithstanding the fact that in some of these provinces, the Christian population predominates. At the same time, they considered that there should be one Muslim and one non-Muslim coming from the provinces of North Cotabato, Zamboanga Norte, Davao Sur, Cotabato and Palawan.

They also insisted that the executive council for the 13 provinces—again, contrary to the vote in the referendum-plebiscite — must be composed of 11 members, seven including the chairman to be drawn from the MNLF, and the four others (two Muslims and two non-Muslims) again to be chosen by the MNLF.

A separate army is also to be raised. It should be a unit distinct and separate from the Armed Forces of the Philippines. It would be paid, armed, trained and equipped by the Philippine Government, but it would not be apart of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. It shall be 25 percent of the size of the actual strength of the Armed forces of the Philippines, which in the MNLF point of view should be about the size of a division, or 15,000 men, to be commanded by a Major General, directly under the central committee of the MNLF, and under no circumstance to be employed for any purpose outside the area controlled by the MNLF.

Talking to the Quadripartite Commission, there was the concession told me that perhaps it could be arranged so that this unit could be directly under the President of the Philippines. But when it was asked of the MNLF if this was the position of the MNLF, the indication was that this was only the position of the Quadripartite Commission and not of the MNLF. And thus your panel was met with often conflicting positions coming from the MNLF and the Quadripartite Commission of the Islamic Conference.

Finally, administration of national funds in the areas under the control of the MNLF are to be exempt from the general auditing procedures provided by our Constitution, and to be audited only by an appointee of the central committee of the MNLF.

We have been very considerate, solicitous of the welfare of our country and people. We have bent backwards knowing full well that perhaps these demands were made because of lack of acquaintance with the nature of our government as well as the provisions of our Constitution. We have therefore sought to bring to the attention of the MNLF the realities of our constitutional situation. But the efforts of the peace panel as well as of the President were unavailing. There was no wish to listen to reason. On the contrary, the tone of the negotiators was peremptory and demanding. Unless these demands, they said, were accepted, they would terminate the conversation and immediately seek the matter to be brought to the Islamic Conference with all the hints about the repercussions of the support of the members of the Islamic Conference for their position.

But these demands violate every principle we have stood for as a nation, and every principle upon which we have anchored our search for peace in the negotiations. For after the cover is blown, and these demands are shown for what they are, they reveal themselves as the same demands of the secessionist movement that wanted to carve out a separate state in Southern Philippines.

To grant them is to divide rather than unify the Republic; it is to sow the seed of greater misunderstanding rather than put an end to the present conflict. It is to weaken our Armed Forces and create a separate army with our territory which would be capable of far greater destruction than the MNLF has been capable of in the past.

It was to avoid the prolongation of this conflict that, despite the fact that our problem is an internal one, we chose to receive in our country the members of the Quadripartite Commission of the Islamic Conference. This first began, if you will remember, in 1973.

Until then, there had been four meetings of the Islamic Conference, in which concern was expressed over the plight of the Filipino Muslims.

At the fourth Islamic conference in Benghazi, Libya, the mild concern expressed at the earlier conferences had evolved into a serious one, over reported repression and so-called genocide. The Benghazi conference decided to send a mission to the Philippines, and the Philippines, confident about the truth, decided to invite the delegation in August, 1973.

In 1974, the fourth Islamic conference in Kuala Lumpur considered the report of the special mission to the Philippines and urged the Philippine Government to find a political and peaceful solution to the problem within the framework of national solidarity and national integrity of the Republic of the Philippines.

In 1975, at the initiative of the Secretary-General of the Islamic conference, Dr. Mohammad Al-Touhamy, talks were held in Jeddah after it was agreed upon that any conversations would not mean a grant of belligerency status to the MNLF but that these were to be conversations between the Republic of the Philippines and its nationals. These talks broke down because of the insistence of the MNLF on the creation of an autonomous region which would practically be a separate state, comprising the whole of Mindanao, Basilan, Sulu and Palawan, and that this should have a separate government and an army over which the national government of the Republic of the Philippines would have no control.

Efforts to resume these talks were aborted by the insistence of the Moro National Liberation Front that such resumption of talks should be pre-conditioned on the acceptance by the Philippine government of all the Moro National Liberation Front demands.

An all-Muslim government panel then began peace negotiations with commanders of the Moro National Liberation Front and other rebel groups in Mindanao who had by this time heard about the demands of the Moro National Liberation Front and had themselves met in Zamboanga in formal meeting and rejected the position of the Moro National Liberation Front. These peace negotiations resulted in 26,000 members of the Moro National Liberation Front, one half of which were armed, joining our Republic all over again.

But at the sixth and seventh Islamic Conferences in Jeddah and Istanbul, respectively, resolutions were passed approving a plan of action concerning the problem in Southern Philippines.

In May 1976, on my trip to Nairobi to present the Manila Declaration for the Group of 77 to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, I had lengthy discussions with the new Secretary-General of the Islamic Conference, the former minister from Senegal, Amadou Karim-Gaye. I invited him to visit the Philippines, and in answer to his request that I meet with the leaders of the Moro National Liberation Front, I informed him that the demands of the Moro National Liberation Front were to us outrageous and could not be entertained by our government. The invitation we sent him was honored by the Secretary-General immediately after the earthquake that affected Mindanao, especially the provinces around the Moro Gulf. And on August 22, 1976, in Malacañang Palace, at the insistence of the Quadripartite Commission that had come to visit the Philippines, we agreed to resume the talks of the Moro National Liberation Front, but only under the following conditions:

- (1) That there would be no pre-conditions, which meant that the demand of the Moro National Liberation Front that we now accept all their demands before we sit down to talk, be considered as never having been made.
- (2) That the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the Republic of the Philippines were not negotiable.
- (3) That these discussions would not in any way be interpreted to mean a grant of status of belligerency, whether under the law or not, to the Moro National Liberation Front, nor would it prevent us from dealing with other rebel groups in the area.
- (4) That the discussions were to be between the Republic of the Philippines and its nationals and therefore, the final agreement should be signed in Manila as befits the fact that it involved an internal and domestic question. It was finally decided that the first negotiations would be held in Tripoli.

During these conversations, it was also agreed that the First Lady would be invited to Libya because I could not go to Tripoli. The invitation was issued by Dr. Abdussalam Ali-Treki, the Libyan Foreign Secretary, for the President and the First Lady. The First Lady finally went. She was authorized to represent the President, and her visit resulted in the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, with the signing of the joint *communiqué* and an exchange of notes on cultural agreement and an economic agreement. It was also decided that the meeting or negotiations with the MNLF would be in Tripoli.

So a panel was sent headed by Undersecretary of National Defense Carmelo Barbero, which began talks with the MNLF in Tripoli, ending in an understanding which provided for the granting of autonomy in Southern Philippines “within the realm of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of the Philippines.” Article 16 of this Tripoli agreement provides that full compliance with the constitutional processes of the Republic of the Philippines shall be followed.

I wish to explain the inclusion of the term “constitutional processes.” On December 22, I received a call from Secretary Ali-Treki representing the Quadripartite Commission informing me that there was a deadlock and that they were about to terminate the negotiations with failure. There was a request formally made that I submit a compromise agreement. After talking to Undersecretary Barbero and to President Ghaddafi, I submitted the proposal that all provisions embodied in any agreement should be subject to the provisions and processes of the Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines.

When this matter was submitted and the term “constitutional processes” was embodied in a proposed amendment to the Tripoli agreement, I suggested to Secretary Ali Al-Treki that this be included in all the provisions requiring action on the part of the Philippine government. But he insisted that it be put in a single provision, with the agreement that this would apply to all provisions of the Tripoli agreement.

At the same time, President Ghaddafi and the members of the Quadripartite Commission asked the question: What is included in the

term “constitutional processes?” Undersecretary Barbero then wrote down a memorandum, copies of which were distributed to the members of the Quadripartite Commission, and at the same time, I directed him to immediately explain to President Ghaddafi that this included a referendum and elections for such public offices as governor, mayor and any other officers for the government that may be organized in the area of the autonomy.

And thus it is that in the agreement between President Ghaddafi and myself of March 18 and March 19, President Ghaddafi himself initiated the inclusion of a referendum in order to determine the administrative arrangements in the area of the autonomy. In short, therefore, in both the Tripoli agreement, and the agreement between the two Presidents, a referendum is definitely and specifically provided for. For anyone now to come before us and tell us to our faces that the referendum is a comedy, useless and a nullity, is to disregard not only our dignity as a people but also the formal agreements entered into by the two Presidents of Libya and the Philippines, as well as the Tripoli agreement.

Anyway, disregarding all of this, what was the most concrete achievement of the December 23 Tripoli agreement? You and I have always been seeking a ceasefire in Southern Mindanao, and this was the most concrete result of the Tripoli agreement of December 23. We immediately implemented the ceasefire on December 24, when I issued the order that all our government troops should desist from any initiatives that would provoke any hostilities. A *status quo* as to position and as to the strength of our forces was therefore maintained. I understand that there are now allegations to the effect that we have strengthened our Armed Forces in the South. I decry this as a blatant and very obvious falsity.

For we are well aware that on the contrary, we have reduced the number of our troops in the South. We did not want to say this because the military is averse to revealing any matter that involves their strength and their capabilities in the South. But I must say that on the declaration of ceasefire, I ordered the phasing out of several units from the South and for them to return to their permanent stations in Luzon.

It is possible, however, that some of those who were on rest and recreation from their combat stations have been moving back and forth. But the total strength of our Armed Forces in the South has been reduced.

In February 1977, the Barbero panel was ordered to return to Tripoli to discuss on a second round of conversations the details of the contemplated agreement, based on the general principles embodied in the Tripoli agreement. In early March, more specifically, March 3rd, Undersecretary Barbero called me up by telephone to tell me that he had to return to Manila, for they had terminated their conversations in accordance with the Tripoli agreement which provided that this conversation would last from February 5 and not later than March 3rd, and that it had ended in failure. And he recommended that there be an intervention on the highest possible level, which meant the intervention of the President and/or the First Lady.

It was at this point that, after conversations with President Ghaddafi and an exchange of cables wherein President Ghaddafi indicated his willingness once again to meet with the First Lady, we sent her as our representative. On March 18, after days of lengthy exchanges, President Ghaddafi, in his role as mediator, cabled the President of the Philippines for a proposal to solve the impasse and bring about a just solution to the conflict. And for this, of course, we are very thankful to President Ghaddafi. I have said so in the past, and we will continue to say so, that the intervention of President Ghaddafi has resulted in the ceasefire in the South and has resulted in this proposal embodied in the March 18 cable.

Let me read out to you the proposal of President Ghaddafi. He said: It was now necessary that:

- a) A decision be issued by the President of the Philippines declaring autonomy in the 13 areas defined by the Tripoli agreement;
- b) A provisional government be formed by a decision issued by the President of the Republic in which the concerned parties from the MNLF and other inhabitants of the area of autonomy shall take part;
- c) A referendum be held in the areas of autonomy concerning administrative arrangements within the areas of autonomy.

And President Ghaddafi then expressed confidence that “this solution shall put an end to this question and end to the war and leaves no chance to those who are opposing the reaching of a solution, and it will open on the other hand a new page in the relations between the Philippines and the Islamic States.”

On March 19, after consultation with advisers including the National Security Council, I accepted the proposed solution. And on March 22, 1977, a note *verbale* from the Socialist People’s Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah confirmed this exchange of cables as constituting a formal understanding between the two heads of state, with which the two countries would comply.

On March 24, I proclaimed autonomy for the 13 provinces and created a provisional government to supervise the referendum in the said areas. Fifteen seats were offered to the MNLF as against the 14 seats for non-MNLF inhabitants of the area. Chairmanship was offered to Mr. Nur Misuari. No answers were made to these offers.

On April 17, we had the referendum, and on May 1, announced the breakdown of the conversations between our two panels.

Because of our refusal to consider the new demand the talks have been terminated and we have been served with all sorts of hints subtle and otherwise that we must bear the responsibility for this. Of course, we must reject this. But while we do so, maturity and wisdom require that we continue to find a way of elevating the standard of disagreement with the MNLF. I must say that the Quadripartite Commission has certainly sought to bring about some kind of an agreement. But the principal blame must fall upon the shoulders of the representatives of the MNLF who had refused to listen to reason, coming from both the Quadripartite Commission and the panel for the Philippine government. It is necessary that we do not allow ourselves to be provoked into answering heated and unworthy allegations with equally heated and unworthy allegations; that we take every possible initiative to convince the MNLF that the attitude it has taken is unworthy of the ends it has so solemnly proclaimed for itself and its members.

Much will depend on the imagination, the breadth of wisdom and the self-possession of our people to face up to this crisis in the days ahead. It will not be easy to give expression to disappointment or anger, for we have been disappointed, and there is a feeling that we have reached the point when we must be angry and give full expression to it. It is not easy to find a decent Filipino today who is not outraged by the turn of events and it will not be easy for those who advise equanimity and calmness to speak with confidence to those who feel that the limit of patience has been reached. Yet it would be fatal catastrophe if we were today to abandon the policy of accommodation and conciliation which we have so long pursued, only to oblige the call for blood. The Muslim Filipinos are our brothers, and they shall remain so, irrespective of the emotions that have been displayed in these negotiations, and despite any alleged perfidy or bad faith on the part of anyone, and the obstacles that may obstruct our path. They remain Filipinos and they must be treated as such. While so much wrong has been committed by those who mistake our compassion for weakness, none of this can be righted by using violence to demonstrate our strength.

We have long renounced war as an instrument of national policy; we shall continue to renounce it. In the unhappy record of the Mindanao conflict, there has been no occasion for us to honor this policy in the breach; let us not begin impugning it now.

This does not mean that we shall expose the lives of our armed forces or innocent civilian lives, to the imprudence of those who would not hesitate to waste human lives; on the contrary, we shall be prepared to defend ourselves and our homes at all times —let there be no wrong notions about that. But precisely because there will be provocations for us to react, we must exert greater effort to show to the world that we can involve a greater number of our people in building the peace. Our objective will not be to make war on those who wish to deny to us the peace, but to make every other man, woman or child an active participant in the effort to construct the peace.

Our immediate concern should be how to keep the ceasefire which remains in force until now, how to keep it in force even after this setback

at the discussion table, and even after the Islamic observers shall have been recalled. It will take the two parties to keep it, but much will depend on the policy that we, on our side, adopt.

Despite the strong temptation to criticize the other side for presenting new conditions that have temporarily withheld from us a settlement of the conflict, we might reflect on it as proof indeed of how difficult is the task ahead, and how so much more is needed so that we may succeed.

On our part, we should, as a mature and responsible government, take this as a challenge, not to make war, as some would strongly suggest, but by systematic and deliberate ways to enlarge the domains of peace, by investing more of our available resources so that we may quicken the pace of progress, and make more equitable the sharing of its fruits, among a greater number of beneficiaries.

Accordingly, I hereby announce that it shall be the policy of this government not only to maintain the present reconstruction and development program in Mindanao, but to strengthen it, to the limit that can be supported by our available resources. As I invite you therefore to join your government in the search for a new approach to the discussions that have been adjourned, I also ask you to lend to this policy your fullest support.

By voting as they did in the last referendum, our people have reaffirmed their allegiance to their government and their faith in its policies. If that be their decision, let us show them that they have made the correct choice and that they have no reason to regret it.

In all my years in the presidency, I have been privileged to enjoy your support, and above all, your trust and confidence, in times of crisis. Today, I ask of you an equal measure of faith—not only in the capacity of the presidency or of your Government to get our country out of this conflict, but faith in our people to bear the burdens of building the peace.

I thank you.



APPENDIX D

BANGSAMORO CONGRESS AND RESOLUTIONS

Bangsamoro National Congress

“In approaches, diversity; in purpose, unity.”

March 2 & 3, 1989 / Maharlika Village

Taguig, Metro Manila

THE BANGSMORO STRUGGLE

The Bangsamoro struggle, like all the struggles of nations in history, is deeply rooted in history and culture. From the introduction of Islam in late 13th century to the rise of the Sultanate in mid- 15th century, the *ummah* had established the foundation of a Moro Community that marked its rendezvous with destiny in the archipelago. It had brought into the Philippine historical ecumene a sense of unity that was slowly and gradually bringing a direction to over seven thousand islands that is the Southeast Asian World. Political, economic and cultural processes radiated from the center of this ancient nation in Mindanao northward to the bustling Kingdom of Rajah Sulayman in Manila and southward to the Indo-Malay world.

But the powerful onslaughts of colonial conquests and pacification from 1521 to 1946 had challenged the will and capacity of the

Bangsamoro nation to resist and survive. After over four hundred years of costly wars and suffering, it had emerged by 1946 a new community of people still held steadfastly by the *ummab*, constantly remembering those who had fallen in battle, and learning the art of modern diplomacy and war. Since 1946, the Bangsamoro struggle has never failed to draw inspiration, sustenance and strength from its historical legacy written in sweats, tears and blood of Bangsamoro men, women and children.

Today, the Bangsamoro struggle has opened a new world of reality for the Bangsamoro people not in the neocolonial sphere of Filipinism but in the wider realm of Islam and the family of nations. It is only in the Bangsamoro liberation from existing neocolonial relations that the true meaning of liberty can be really found. Guided by the ideological imperative of *gaosbaugbug* and *kaadilan*, the Bangsamoro struggle cannot fail to bring the Bangsamoro people to the place destiny had reserved for them. This is the ultimate of the struggle because from it begins a new history of identity and progress for the Bangsamoro people. No greater honor and pleasure can one give than to be a part of the struggle according to the measure God had given to him.

The Bangsamoro National Congress is a part of the recent effort to bring history to life and to remind the Filipino people that the Bangsamoro nation cannot be denied its right to exist. It is in view of this fact that the subsequent program of activities is dedicated to the cause of the Bangsamoro struggle.

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Third Bangsamoro National Congress

10 March 1989

Your Excellency: Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

On behalf of the Bangsamoro National Congress and its Governing Council, please allow me the liberty, pleasure and distinct honor of presenting to you this set of documents, papers and other instruments which represent the sentiments, views and longings of the Bangsamoro

People. It is our fervent prayer to Allah that you and our Muslim brothers in the world will find our cause not only worthy of your attention but also of your full support in all aspects of our struggle.

May Allah continue to grant grace and strength to Your Excellency and your people. With our highest esteem. Insha Allah.

Very sincerely yours,

(Sgd.) HADJI ALMARIM C. TILLAH

Chairman, Bangsamoro National Congress

Former Governor, Tawi-Tawi Province, Mindanao, Philippines

*Former Vice-President for Mindanao, National League of Governors
and City Mayors of the Philippines*

Former Executive Director, Region IX Commission

(Forerunner of the Autonomous Government)

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Bangsamoro National Congress

RESOLUTION ADOPTING A 12-POINT AGENDA AS PROPOSED BY THE DELEGATES TO THE BANGSAMORO NATIONAL CONGRESS

WHEREAS, it is a historical fact that the Bangsamoro people have for four centuries remained steadfast and resilient in the defense of their fundamental right to self-determination;

WHEREAS, in the articulation and demonstration of this right, incalculable and unspeakable loss in lives and properties have wrought havoc upon the Bangsamoro people and their National Homeland of Mindanao, Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and Palawan;

WHEREAS, in the face of current developments and sinister designs and machinations of the Philippine Government, aimed at depriving the Bangsamoro people of their just and legitimate vision for peace, dignity, justice and freedom, the need to define and ascertain the

collective will of the Bangsamoro people becomes highly compelling and indispensable;

WHEREAS, in the pursuit of this lofty ideal, the Bangsamoro National Congress participated in by delegations representing all in the Bangsamoro Homeland, was convened from Rajab 25 to 26, 1409 corresponding to March 2-3, 1989 at Maharlika Village, Taguig, Metro Manila, Philippines.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved by the delegates to the Bangsamoro National Congress, to adopt the following resolutions as submitted:

RESOLUTION NO. 1 – RESOLUTION REITERATING AND APPEALING OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE (OIC) TO GRANT FULL MEMBERSHIP TO THE MORO NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (MNLF)

RESOLUTION NO. 2 – RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE IMMEDIATE RESUMPTION OF PEACE TALKS BETWEEN THE MNLF AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE O.I.C.

RESOLUTION NO. 3 – RESOLUTION REJECTING THE ENACTMENT OF THE PROPOSED ORGANIC ACT FOR MUSLIM MINDANAO AS PROVIDED FOR IN THE 1987 PHILIPPINE CONSTITUTION AND OTHER MATTERS.

RESOLUTION NO. 4 – RESOLUTION URGING THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT TO IMPLEMENT THE TRIPOLI AGREEMENT WITH THE FULL PARTICIPATION OF THE MORO NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (MNLF) AND THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE (OIC)

RESOLUTION NO. 5 – RESOLUTION REITERATING OUR RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT TO THE LEADERSHIP OF HADJI NUR MISUARI CHAIRMAN OF THE MORO NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (MNLF)

RESOLUTION NO. 6 – RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF THE UNITY AND SOLIDARITY OF THE BANGSAMORO PEOPLE COMPRISING THE MUSLIMS,

THE CHRISTIANS AND THE HIGHLANDERS AND THE INDIVISIBILITY OF THEIR NATIONAL HOMELAND OF MINDANAO, SULU, BASILAN, TAWI-TAWI AND PALAWAN
RESOLUTION NO. 7 – RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE DEMILITARIZATION OF MINDANAO AND ITS SATELLITE ISLANDS

RESOLUTION NO. 8 – RESOLUTION DESISTING THE CONTINUED EXPLOITATIVE OPERATIONS OF MULTI-NATIONALS AND LOCAL STRUCTURES AND ENTITIES IN MINDANAO

RESOLUTION NO. 9 – RESOLUTION URGING FOR THE IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATION AND INDEMNIFICATION OF ALL VICTIMS OF WAR AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 10 – RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE SOVEREIGNTY AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE PALESTINIAN STATE AND THE LEGITIMACY OF THE STRUGGLE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

RESOLUTION NO. 11 – RESOLUTION EXPRESSING STRONG CONDEMNATION AGAINST SALMAN RUSHDIE, HIS NOVEL ENTITLED “SATANIC VERSES” AND HIS SUPPORTERS

RESOLUTION NO. 12 – RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BANGSAMORO MEDIA

RESOLVED FURTHER, to humbly request his Excellency, the Chairman of the 18th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM), that this Resolution be read during the Plenary Session and entered into the records and minutes of the Conference for the information and support of all concerned;

RESOLVED FINALLY, that copies of this Resolution be furnished His Excellency, The Chairman, 18th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM); His Excellency, The Secretary General, Organization of Islamic Conference; His Excellency, The Chairman of the Quadripartite Commission of the Organization of Islamic Conference; and His Excellency, The Chairman, Central Committee

of the Moro National Liberation Front, through the good offices of the Chief Coordinator, 18th ICFM, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY at Maharlika Village, Taguig, Metro Manila, Philippines, this 26th Day of Rajab 1409 corresponding to the 3rd Day of March 1989.

(Sgd.) HADJI ALMARIM C. TILLAH
Chairman

Attested:
(Sgd.) IBRAHIM S. IRIBANI
Secretary

Resolution Adopting
A 12-Point Agenda

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**STATEMENT OF SUPPORT TO THE
12-POINT AGENDA OF THE BANGSAMORO
NATIONAL CONGRESS**

WE, the undersigned official representatives of our respective organizations in Mindanao, hereby declare our support to the 12-Point Agenda as adopted by the delegates to the Bangsamoro National Congress held at Maharlika Village, Taguig, Metro Manila, Philippines, on the 26th Day of Rajab 1409 corresponding to the 3rd Day of March 1989.

(Sgd.) ATTY. ODILLON C. MALLARI
Chairman
Movement For Free Mindanao

(Sgd.) ATTY. REUBEN R. CANOY
Chairman
Mindanao Independence Movement

(Sgd.) ABDULGAFFUR S. HADJIRUL
Chairman
Bangsamoro Solidarity
General Santos City and South Cotabato

(Sgd.) SULTAN PANANGAN T. PANGANDAMAN
Bangsamoro Lanao Professionals

(Sgd.) CAPITAN MANODEL
T'boli Tribal Leader

: : : :

Third Bangsamoro National Congress

RESOLUTION NO. 1

RESOLUTION REITERATING AND APPEALING TO THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE (OIC) TO GRANT FULL REGULAR MEMBERSHIP TO THE MORO NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (MNLF)

WHEREAS, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) has demonstrated and proven beyond reproach its commitment and determination to serve and defend the fundamental and inalienable right of the Bangsamoro people to self-determination;

WHEREAS, for almost two decades, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) has waged political, military and diplomatic campaigns to emancipate the Bangsamoro people from the yoke of Philippine colonialism;

WHEREAS, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) has for more than a decade been accepted in the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) as a member with observer status;

WHEREAS, the elevation of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) into a full regular member as the sole and legitimate representative of the Bangsamoro people in the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) will greatly enhance the final victory of the Bangsamoro people's JIHAD FI SABILILLAH against Philippine colonialism;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved by delegates to the Bangsamoro National Congress to reiterate and appeal to the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to grant full regular membership status to the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

RESOLVED FURTHER, to humbly request His Excellency, The Chairman of the 18th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) OIC, that this Resolution be read during the Plenary Session and entered into the records and minutes of the Conference for the information of all concerned.

RESOLVED FINALLY, that copies of this Resolution be furnished His Excellency, The Chairman, 18th ICFM-OIC; His Excellency, the Secretary General, Organization of Islamic Conference; Her Excellency, The President, Government of the Republic of the Philippines; His Excellency, The Chairman, Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY, at Maharlika Village, Taguig, Metro Manila, Philippines, this 26th Day of Rajab 1409 corresponding to the 3rd Day of March 1989.

(Sgd.) HADJI ALMARIM C. TILLAH
Chairman

Attested:
(Sgd.) IBRAHIM S. IRIBANI
Secretary

Resolution No. 1

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Third Bangsamoro National Congress

RESOLUTION NO. 2

RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE IMMEDIATE RESUMPTION OF PEACE
TALKS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE
PHILIPPINES AND THE MORO NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (MNLF)
UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC
CONFERENCE

WHEREAS, the hostilities between the Armed Forces of the Philippine Government and the Muslim Revolutionary Forces have already dragged on for years causing destruction in human lives and properties;

WHEREAS, such destruction have caused incalculable harm, miseries and sufferings upon the Bangsamoro people and their national homeland;

WHEREAS, the settlement of conflict through peaceful means is a more accepted and effective means for achieving solutions to problems in civilized societies;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, that the Bangsamoro National Congress urge the Government of the Republic of the Philippines to:

1. resume PEACE TALKS with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) under the auspices of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC);
2. take the initiative in the resumption of such peace talks as it is incumbent upon the Government to take all necessary avenues in order to attain peace in Mindanao;
3. continue such talks until an agreement satisfactory to all concerned shall have been reached and all implementing guidelines shall have been officially enacted;

RESOLVED FURTHER, that copies of this Resolution be furnished H.E., The President, Government of the Republic of the Philippines;

H.E., The Secretary General, OIC; H.E., The Chairman, 18th ICFM-OIC; H.E., The Chairman, Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY, at Maharlika Village, Taguig, Metro Manila Philippines this 26th Day of Rajab 1409 corresponding to the 3rd Day of March 1989.

(Sgd.) HADJI ALMARIM C. TILLAH
Chairman

Attested:
(Sgd.) IBRAHIM S. IRIBANI
Secretary

: : : :

Third Bangsamoro National Congress

RESOLUTION NO. 3

**RESOLUTION REJECTING THE PROPOSED ORGANIC ACT
FOR MUSLIM MINDANAO AS PROVIDED FOR
IN THE 1987 PHILIPPINE CONSTITUTION AND OTHER MATTERS**

WHEREAS, the proposed Organic Act for Muslim Mindanao, bereft of historical and moral bases, is utterly repugnant to the cherished ideals and aspirations of the Bangsamoro people for genuine and full autonomy.

WHEREAS, the enactment of such Organic Act is a serious abridgement of the rights of the Bangsamoro people under the Tripoli Agreement of 1976 and unduly undermines the integrity and shortchanges the involvement of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Moro National Liberation Front in the settlement of the Bangsamoro Issue;

WHEREAS, such proposed Organic Act perpetuates the existing exploitative and oppressive colonial relationship between the Philippine

Government and the Bangsamoro people, thereby depriving the latter of their just and legitimate vision for national self-determination;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, by the delegates to the Bangsamoro National Congress, to reject the proposed Organic Act for Muslim Mindanao as provided for in the 1987 Philippine Constitution and to resist individually and collectively the passage thereof.

RESOLVED FURTHER, that copies of this Resolution be furnished Her Excellency, The President, Republic of the Philippines; His Excellency, The Chairman, 18th ICFM of the OIC; His Excellency, The Secretary General, Organization of the Islamic Conference; His Excellency, The Chairman, Moro National Liberation Front; The Honorable President, Senate, Republic of the Philippines; and the Honorable Speaker, House of Representatives, Republic of the Philippines.

ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY, at Maharlika Village, Taguig, Metro Manila, Philippines, this 26th Day of Rajab 1409 corresponding to the 3rd Day of March 1989.

(Sgd.) HADJI ALMARIM C. TILLAH
Chairman

Attested:

(Sgd.) IBRAHIM S. IRIBANI
Secretary

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Third Bangsamoro National Congress.

RESOLUTION NO. 4

RESOLUTION URGING THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT TO IMPLEMENT THE TRIPOLI AGREEMENT WITH THE FULL PARTICIPATION OF THE MORO NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (MNLF) AND THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE (OIC)

WHEREAS, the Tripoli Agreement was formulated and formally entered into by and between the Philippine Government and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) with the active participation of the Organization of Islamic Conference through its Secretary General on December 23, 1976 at Tripoli, Libya;

WHEREAS, the continued disregard and non-implementation by the Philippine Government of the Tripoli Agreement, the formulation of which was mediated by the OIC constitutes an affront to the OIC member countries;

WHEREAS, the Tripoli Agreement is an International Agreement duly recognized and upheld by the OIC and its member countries and the rest of the World Community including the Philippine Government, the latter being one of its signatories;

WHEREAS, the continued non-implementation of this International Agreement will leave the Bangsamoro people as represented by the MNLF without any recourse but to pursue the struggle for Independence which is a legitimate exercise of their birth-right to their national homeland of Mindanao, Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and Palawan;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, that the Bangsamoro National Congress strongly urges the Philippine Government to:

1. fully implement the Tripoli Agreement, its letter and spirit without any reservation and with the active participation of the MNLF and the OIC;
2. desist from and abandon its own plan of autonomy through an Organic Act in Congress as it is already rejected by the Bangsamoro people, some sectors in Philippine society dedicated to peace, the

MNLF and the OIC through its Resolution as passed in the 17th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) in Jordan in 1988.

RESOLVED FINALLY, that copies of this Resolution be furnished Her Excellency, The President, Government of the Republic of the Philippines; His Excellency, The Chairman, Quadripartite Ministerial Commission-OIC; His Excellency, The Chairman, Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY, at Maharlika Village, Taguig, Metro Manila, Philippines, this 26th Day of Rajab 1409 corresponding to the 3rd Day of March 1989.

(Sgd.) HADJI ALMARIM C. TILLAH
Chairman

Attested:

(Sgd.) IBRAHIM S. IRIBANI
Secretary

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Third Bangsamoro National Congress

RESOLUTION NO. 5

RESOLUTION REITERATING OUR RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT
TO THE LEADERSHIP OF HADJI NUR MISUARI, CHAIRMAN, MORO
NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (MNLF)

WHEREAS, Hadji Nur Misuari, as Chairman of the MNLF, epitomizes the true and dedicated leadership for the Bangsamoro struggle;

WHEREAS, Chairman Nur Misuari has demonstrated in almost two decades of struggle his unswerving loyalty to the cause of the Bangsamoro people;

WHEREAS, the international recognition of Chairman Misuari's leadership has been firmly established in the historic declarations of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and other international and local organizations; and

WHEREAS, the unqualified support for Chairman Misuari's leadership is vital to the ultimate triumph of the Bangsamoro struggle JIHAD FI SABILILLAH;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, that the Bangsamoro National Congress reiterates its support for, confidence in and recognition of Chairman Misuari's leadership and that the Bangsamoro National Congress conveys this sentiment to the Organization of Islamic Conference.

RESOLVED FURTHER, that copies of this Resolution be furnished His Excellency, The Chairman, 18th ICFM-OIC; His Excellency, The Secretary General, Organization of the Islamic Conference; His Excellency, The Chairman, Quadripartite Ministerial Commission, OIC; and His Excellency, The Chairman, Central Committee, Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY, at Maharlika Village, Taguig, Metro Manila, Philippines, this 26th Day of Rajab 1409 corresponding to the 3rd Day of March 1989.

(Sgd.) HADJI ALMARIM C. TILLAH
Chairman

Attested:

(Sgd.) IBRAHIM S. IRIBANI
Secretary

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Third Bangsamoro National Congress

RESOLUTION NO. 6

RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF THE UNITY AND SOLIDARITY OF THE BANGSAMORO PEOPLE COMPRISING THE MUSLIMS, THE CHRISTIANS AND THE HIGHLANDERS AND THE INDIVISIBILITY OF THEIR NATIONAL HOMELAND OF MINDANAO, SULU, BASILAN, TAWI-TAWI AND PALAWAN

WHEREAS, the Bangsamoro people comprising of the Muslims, the Christians and the Highlanders have been united in their quest to chart their own destiny as an expression of their collective will to assert their right to self-determination;

WHEREAS, the Bangsamoro people of Mindanao are one in their conviction that their problems arise from the continuous exploitation of their natural resources, non-recognition of their socioeconomic, political and cultural rights, and deprivation of their ideals for peace, justice and dignity;

WHEREAS, the common destiny of the Bangsamoro people lies in the establishment of a new order ensuring their freedom, peace and prosperity and general well-being;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, that the Bangsamoro National Congress calls for the strengthening of the unity and solidarity of the Bangsamoro people comprising of the Muslims, the Christians and the Highlanders and jointly work to preserve the sanctity and indivisibility of their National Homeland of Mindanao, Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and Palawan.

RESOLVED FURTHER, that appropriate measures and strategies be devised to ensure a continuing interaction and consultations among the three groups;

RESOLVED FINALLY, that copies of this Resolution be furnished H.E., The Chairman, 18th ICFM-OIC; H.E., The Secretary General, OIC; H.E., The President, Government of the Republic of the

Philippines; and H.E., The Chairman, Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY, at Maharlika Village, Taguig, Metro Manila, Philippines, this 26th Day of Rajab 1409 corresponding to the 3rd Day of March 1989.

(Sgd.) HADJI ALMARIM C. TILLAH
Chairman

Attested:
(Sgd.) IBRAHIM S. IRIBANI
Secretary

Resolution No. 6

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Third Bangsamoro National Congress

RESOLUTION NO. 7 RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE DEMILITARIZATION OF MINDANAO

WHEREAS, the military presence in Mindanao, Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and Palawan has caused widespread disillusionment, apprehension and sufferings for the Bangsamoro people;

WHEREAS, past experience have shown how the presence of the military in Mindanao aggravated the tremendous loss in lives and resources of the people of Mindanao;

WHEREAS, the maintenance of peace and order can be effectively undertaken by the local authorities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, that the Bangsamoro National Congress and the people of Mindanao

call for the immediate demilitarization of Mindanao as a prerequisite to the attainment of a more lasting and genuine peace.

RESOLVED FURTHER, that copies of this Resolution be furnished Her Excellency, The President, Government of the Republic of the Philippines; His Excellency, The Chairman, 18th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers; His Excellency, The Secretary General, Organization of Islamic Conference; and His Excellency, The Chairman, Moro National Liberation Front.

ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY, at Maharlika Village, Taguig, Metro Manila, Philippines, this 26th Day of Rajab 1409 corresponding to the 3rd Day of March 1989.

(Sgd.) HADJI ALMARIM C. TILLAH
Chairman

Attested:
(Sgd.) IBRAHIM S. IRIBANI
Secretary

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Third Bangsamoro National Congress

RESOLUTION NO. 8

**RESOLUTION DESISTING THE CONTINUED EXPLOITATIVE
OPERATIONS OF MULTINATIONALS; AND LOCAL STRUCTURES
AND ENTITIES IN MINDANAO**

WHEREAS, the Multinationals and other local entities have been one of the principal instruments of exploitation and oppression of the people of Mindanao and their rich natural resources;

WHEREAS, their years of operations have resulted in the unmistakable disenfranchisement of the people, the denudation of the forests and the depletion of their resources;

WHEREAS, their continued presence in Mindanao will deprive the future generations of the Bangsamoro people their rights and benefits from their resources.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, that the Bangsamoro National Congress denounces the continued exploitation of Mindanao by the Multinationals and local structures and entities and calls for the cessation of all their exploitative activities.

RESOLVED FURTHER, that copies of this Resolution be furnished Her Excellency, The President, Government of the Republic of the Philippines; His Excellency, The Chairman, 18th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers; His Excellency, The Secretary General, Organization of Islamic Conference; and His Excellency, The Chairman, Moro National Liberation Front.

ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY, at Maharlika Village, Taguig, Metro Manila, Philippines, this 26th Day of Rajab 1409 corresponding to the 3rd Day of March 1989.

(Sgd.) HADJI ALMARIM C. TILLAH
Chairman

Attested:

(Sgd.) IBRAHIM S. IRIBANI
Secretary

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Third Bangsamoro National Congress

RESOLUTION NO. 9

RESOLUTION URGING FOR THE IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATION AND INDEMNIFICATION OF ALL VICTIMS OF WAR AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

WHEREAS, records show the alarming increase in human rights violations by the government particularly in the Bangsamoro Homeland of Mindanao, Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and Palawan;

WHEREAS, such violations had been documented by international agencies and institutions; and

WHEREAS, there are clear indications of people growing alienated from the present government and gravitating to those who can guarantee protection and security;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, that the Bangsamoro National Congress condemns all kinds of human rights violations and demands impartial investigation at the soonest possible time and that sufficient indemnifications be made to all such victims.

RESOLVED FURTHER, that copies of this Resolution be furnished Her Excellency, The President, Government of the Republic of the Philippines; His Excellency, The Chairman, 18th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers; His Excellency, The Secretary General, Organization of Islamic Conference; His Excellency, The Commissioner, United National Commission on Human Rights; His Excellency, The Chairman, Central Committee, Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF); and the Philippine Commission on Human Rights, Manila.

ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY, at Maharlika Village, Taguig, Metro Manila, Philippines, this 26th Day of Rajab 1409 corresponding to the 3rd Day of March 1989.

(Sgd.) HADJI ALMARIM C. TILLAH
Chairman

Attested:

(Sgd.) IBRAHIM S. IRIBANI

Secretary

Resolution No. 9

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Third Bangsamoro National Congress

RESOLUTION NO. 10

RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE SOVEREIGNTY AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE STATE OF PALESTINE AND THE LEGITIMACY OF THE STRUGGLE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

WHEREAS, it is undeniable that the Palestinian people have been deprived of their birthright to their sacred Homeland of Palestine;

WHEREAS, in the course of such deprivation brought about by the expansionist and colonial policies of Zionism in conspiracy with the imperialist enemies of Islam in both the East and the West, and of the concerted desire of the Palestinian people to liberate their homeland and regain their national dignity in the family of nations, a series of wars were fought and enormous destruction in both lives and properties of the Palestinian people ensued;

WHEREAS, despite these sufferings, miseries and atrocities committed against them, the Palestinian people have preserved the indomitability of their national spirit and noble conviction to dismantle all vestiges of Zionist domination over their affairs and the continued illegal usurpation of their national homeland of Palestine;

WHEREAS, in the furtherance of the just and legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people for Nationhood and Freedom, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) through the Palestine National Council

(PNC) has formally and officially declared the Independence of the State of Palestine; national homeland of Palestine;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved by the delegates to the Bangsamoro National Congress, to recognize the Sovereignty and Independence of the State of Palestine and the legitimacy of the struggle of the Palestinian people.

RESOLVED FURTHER, to humbly request His Excellency, The Chairman of the 18th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM), Organization of Islamic Conference, that this Resolution be read during the Plenary Session and entered into the records and minutes of the Conference for the information of all concerned.

RESOLVED FINALLY, that copies of this Resolution be furnished His Excellency, The Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO); His Excellency, The Chairman, 18th ICFM-OIC; His Excellency, The Secretary General, Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC); and His Excellency, The Chairman, Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), through the good offices of the Chief Coordinator, 18th, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY, at Maharlika Village, Taguig, Metro Manila, Philippines, this 26th Day of Rajab 1409 corresponding to the 3rd Day of March 1989.

(Sgd.) HADJI ALMARIM C. TILLAH
Chairman

Attested:
(Sgd.) IBRAHIM S. IRIBANI
Secretary

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Third Bangsamoro National Congress

RESOLUTION NO. 11

RESOLUTION EXPRESSING STRONG CONDEMNATION AGAINST SALMAN RUSHDIE, HIS NOVEL ENTITLED SATANIC VERSES AND HIS SUPPORTERS

WHEREAS, the Holy Qur'an is most sacred to every Muslim faithful and provides the only source of meaning to life, including the proper conduct thereof, both for the individual Muslim and his society;

WHEREAS, any blasphemous or sacrilegious reference to it, its tenets and teachings, in any form or manner, undermines the very essence of Islam itself as a Divine Message to Mankind and subverts the integrity of every Muslim, his society, life and being;

WHEREAS, it is a religious duty of every Muslim and a moral obligation of all members of civilized societies to denounce such blasphemy and unpardonable affront to an established Religion professed by over One Billion Muslims in the world;

WHEREAS, the Muslim World or UMMAH is one in denouncing Salman Rushdie's Satanic Verses as a malicious revilement and blasphemy against Islam, the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) and the Faithful;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, that the delegates to the Bangsamoro National Congress strongly condemn Salman Rushdie and his cohorts in the writing and printing of the novel entitled "Satanic Verses."

RESOLVED FURTHER, to urge the Government of the Republic of the Philippines to ban the printing, publication and sale or distribution, in any form or manner, of said novel in the Philippines.

RESOLVED FINALLY, that copies of this Resolution be furnished H.E., The President, Government of the Republic of the Philippines; H.E., The Chairman, 18th ICFM-OIC; H.E., The Secretary General, OIC; and H.E., The Chairman, MNLF.

ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY, at Maharlika Village, Taguig, Metro Manila, Philippines, this 26th Day of Rajab 1409 corresponding to the 3rd Day of March 1989.

(Sgd.) HADJI ALMARIM C. TILLAH
Chairman

Attested:
(Sgd.) IBRAHIM S. IRIBANI
Secretary

Resolution No. 11

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Third Bangsamoro National Congress

RESOLUTION NO. 12

RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BANGSAMORO ISLAMIC MEDIA

WHEREAS, distortions and vicious use of negative journalism in media reports against the Muslims have alienated the Muslims and Christians against each other;

WHEREAS, the present media establishments exhibit a prejudicial bias against anything related to the Muslims, be they local or foreign;

WHEREAS, information about the Muslims in Southern Philippines as well as in foreign countries are often false, distorted or inaccurate;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, that the Bangsamoro National Congress:

1. move for the establishment of the Bangsamoro Islamic media to check errors, distortions and inaccuracies and to stop vicious use of negative journalism against Muslims in media reports;
2. move that the Bangsamoro Islamic media be given the task of protecting and defending Islamic from unwarranted attacks in the media, of providing a channel for full exposure of the Bangsamoro Muslim perceptions, views and ideas;

3. move that the Bangsamoro Islamic media should come to the assistance of Muslim Brothers throughout the world through the enlightenment of world opinion regarding their struggles and problems;
4. move that the Bangsamoro Islamic media in the Philippines shall have its own channels of communication by putting up a publication house, a printing press, radio and television stations, just as the major religions in the country like the Catholic Church which has its own Radio Veritas and the Iglesia Ni Kristo which has its own Radio Station DZEC.

RESOLVED FURTHER, that copies of this Resolution be furnished His Excellency, The Chairman, 18th ICFM-OIC; His Excellency, The Secretary General, Organization of Islamic Conference; and His Excellency, The Chairman, Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF),

ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY, at Maharlika Village, Taguig, Metro Manila, Philippines, this 26th Day of Rajab 1409 corresponding to the 3rd Day of March 1989.

(Sgd.) HADJI ALMARIM C. TILLAH
Chairman

Attested:
(Sgd.) IBRAHIM S. IRIBANI
Secretary

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APPENDIX E

SPEECH OF NUR MISUARI

Before the Plenary Session
of the 18th ICFM, March 14, 1989

BISMILLAHIR RAHMANIR RAHIM
SPEECH

His Royal Highness, the Chairman
Your Highness and Your Excellencies:

BROTHERS:

ASSALAMU ALIAKUM WA RAHMATULLAHIWA
BARAKATUH!

To begin with, let me congratulate His Excellency the new OIC Secretary General, Dr. Hamid Al-Gabid, and His Royal Highness, Prince Saudi Al-Faisal for His Highness' election to the Chairmanship of this 18th annual session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers.

Our people convey their prayers for the continued success of this Organization, which is fast emerging as a force to reckon with in the shaping of the future of the world community.

And let me join the distinguished leaders of delegation in welcoming the message of solidarity expressed by the Khadinul Haramain Wa Sharifain King Fahad bin Abdul-Aziz, as well as the new Secretary General. The solidarity of the Islamic Ummah is the most pressing and urgent need of the hour in view of the grave challenges we face today.

And let me express our thanks to all those who have genuinely extended all forms of moral, political, financial and humanitarian assistance to the MNLF Mujahideen. May Allah multiply their fortune many-fold.

Our special thanks to the World Muslim League, the Daawatul Islamic International, the Muslim World Congress and a host of other Islamic movements in various parts of Islamic Ummah. And our profound gratitude to the Islamic Development Bank for extending financial assistance for our people's humanitarian projects, the latest being the Sarangangon Welfare and Orphanage Organization intended for children of Bangsamoro Shuhadah.

And finally, our thanks for the invitation to this Conference and for the opportunity to address this august Assembly.

With your kind indulgence, let me invite your attention to the latest developments in our people's *Jihad fi Sabilillah*.

ONE YEAR AGO TODAY, in Amman, the historic capital of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, I was fortunate to have addressed your august Assembly during its final plenary session. Just the night before my speech, I came from a lengthy meeting with the honourable members of the Quadripartite Ministerial Committee, convened by the former Secretary General H.E. Syed Sharipuddin Pirzada. To us, that meeting was like a watershed. While we discussed the broad spectrum of the Bangsamoro struggle and the variety of causations that thwarted our widely hailed peace process with the new government in Manila, yet we did not rush to any conclusion. Instead, we emerged with common understanding that we should give ourselves one more chance to ascertain once and for all what was the real and unalterable intention of the Manila government with respect to its solemn pledges and commitments to the MNLF and the Islamic Conference Organization.

The distinguished representatives of the Quadripartite Ministerial Committee were as usual farsighted and considerate. Reflecting the democratic spirit of the OIC and guided undoubtedly by their unflagging commitment to Islamic solidarity and the legitimate aspirations of oppressed Islamic common ties in the world, they kept the MNLF option open, for which the MNLF and the Bangsamoro people are grateful. Nonetheless, the MNLF leadership saw the wisdom in not forcing the issue.

The MNLF delegation was given the liberty to request the presidency of the Conference to discreetly canvass the prevailing sentiment to accurately determine whether there was indeed sufficient support to ensure smooth passage of a formal move for our membership. The MNLF delegation had noted a definite groundswell of support. In fact, we were fully convinced that the commitments of support already obtained by the MNLF delegation, following a series of hectic consultations and meetings with the various heads of delegations, were more than enough to meet the two-thirds votes required for the purpose. For we had made a silent conversing of our own before the March 23, 1988, QMC meeting, and the trend was clearly positive, barring any change of heart on the part of those whom we had talked to.

But considering the shortage of time and the many unresolved business on the last day of the Conference, and more importantly, in deference to the wise counsel of the distinguished members of the Quadripartite Ministerial Committee, we decided to refrain from exercising this option. Thus we gave President Corazon Aquino and her government one last chance to search and plumb the depth of their conscience so as to demonstrate their sincerity to abide by their solemn pledges and commitments to “implement in full” the Tripoli Agreement, which the OIC considers as the most honourable solution to the problem.

This is not to mention the Jeddah Accord of January 3, 1987, solemnly signed by the representative of President Aquino, on the one hand, and the MNLF representative, on the other, with the formal blessing of the Secretary General of the Islamic Conference Organization. Former OIC Secretary General Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada blessed the Accord and signed it as a witness.

The Jeddah Accord, as you all know, called for the restoration of the entire Bangsamoro homeland back to the political jurisdiction of the Bangsamoro people under the aegis of a full autonomous government whose structure, functions and other details were to be finalized within ninety days in a follow-up negotiation alternately in Manila and in the capital city of the Bangsamoro Homeland. The negotiation met its debacle owing to the insincerity of the Philippine government and its unreasonable demand of subjecting the peace agreement to its newly created constitution which the MNLF Chairman had openly condemned as the greatest obstacle to both the Jeddah Accord and the Tripoli Agreement. The provisions on autonomy in the new constitution are the end-result of the conspiracy of all the powerful pressure groups and individuals who are flagrantly opposed to genuine Muslim or Bangsamoro autonomy. These pressure groups range from the fascist elements within the Cabinet and the Advisory Council of President Aquino down to the entire armed forces generals, the Catholic Church, the local and multi-national business sectors, the Zionist Shaloom Club International, and certain powerful politicians, specifically the current president of the Philippine Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives respectively. We have dwelt at some length on these pressure groups in the past and we have added new revelations in the position papers that we have distributed in the Conference. Suffice it to say that for as long as the present constitution remains enforced and these pressure groups and individuals continue to wield such an enormous influence on President Aquino and her policies on the Bangsamoro people and their Homeland, it is impossible to expect any real and meaningful Muslim autonomy nor any end to the colonial war of genocide and the suffering of our oppressed people.

We therefore fully subscribe to the conclusion of H.E. Dr. Mohammed Mukhtar Awld Bah, the OIC Deputy Political Secretary General, who presided over the February 18, 1989 meeting of the Quadripartite Ministerial Committee, that the position of the Philippine government has increased the complexity of the issue. Consequently, it has made the problem all the more difficult to overcome and resolve.

At any rate, shortly after my speech in the Final Plenary Session where I formally decided to defer our membership application, a very important piece of resolution was unanimously adopted to give added impetus to the peace initiative and create suitable conditions for the final verification of the truth of the matter.

The resolution, labeled “Resolution 41\17-P,” contained the following provisions:

- “1. That (the Conference) expressed deep regret over the failure of the Government of the Philippines to honour its commitment to implement the Tripoli Agreement of 1976;
- “2. That it affirmed that the so-called steps taken by the Government of the Republic of the Philippines, including the formation of the so-called (regional) consultative council, are in no way in conformity with the provisions of the Tripoli Agreement, which CLEARLY PROVIDES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AUTONOMY TO THE THIRTEEN PROVINCES, SPECIFIED THEREIN, AND WHICH CONSTITUTES A BINDING INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT. (Emphasis supplied.)
- “3. That it condemned all forms of repression inflicted upon the Bangsamoro people and the denial of their fundamental rights.
- “4. That IT CALLED UPON THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PHILIPPINES TO HONOUR THE COMMITMENT TO THE TRIPOLI AGREEMENT MADE TO THE MNLF AND THE OIC REPRESENTING THE COLLECTIVE WILL OF THE MUSLIM NATION. (Emphasis supplied.)
- “5. That it strongly urged member states to extend material, financial and humanitarian assistance to the MNLF to defend the Muslim people and Islam and to pursue its just and legitimate rights. And, finally:
- “6. That it requested the Quadripartite Ministerial Committee and the Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Conference to INTENSIFY EFFORTS FOR THE FULL AND URGENT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TRIPOLI AGREEMENT...”

The MNLF Chairman, on various occasions, had informed the OIC Secretary General of the readiness, as usual, of the MNLF to comply with the said resolution. We thought that one year, while precious, would neither be too long nor too short a time within which to undertake this task.

Certainly, our people are a little bit impatient, despite their legacy of long-drawn out struggle against the relentless aggression of Western and Asian colonialism and imperialism. Besides, they thought that they had correctly grasped the real intention of Philippine colonialism and its local and foreign collaborators. That they were definitely opposed to genuine rapprochement between the Aquino government and the MNLF. Indeed, it turned out rather clearly that even the "Peace Dialogue" between the MNLF Chairman and Philippine President Corazon Aquino, as well as the cessation of hostilities and the peace accord that followed, were nothing more than a mere stratagem to hoodwink the MNLF and the Bangsamoro people and the Islamic World.

The MNLF leadership was ensnared by its good faith and its own presumption that the new regime was in dire need of peace with the MNLF Mujahideen, considering the gravity of the internal dissension within the Philippine Armed Forces and the ever growing challenge posed by the New People's Army, the military arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front.

Under the circumstances and considering the popular demand for peace, to seek confrontation and war with the MNLF Mujahideen would be the height of madness. Obviously, nobody, least still President Aquino and her fractious regime, would profit from a new crisis or war. Besides, Mrs. Aquino should have known better that without peace in the Bangsamoro Homeland, it is well-nigh impossible to have durable and lasting peace and stability in Luzon or in the Visayas.

The longer the Bangsamoro problem persists, the more dangerous and catastrophic it will be not only for the people but as well for any government in Manila, if not for the future of the Philippines itself. As a matter of fact, the MNLF and the Bangsamoro struggle have already influenced the tribal people of Northern Luzon who have organized

their own liberation movement with the avowed intention of seeking political emancipation from Philippine colonialism. Likewise, the people of the Visayas, the central region of the "Philippines" have openly declared their intention to liquidate Philippine colonialism in their homeland and to establish a separate nation of their own even through the arbitrament of armed struggle. Indeed, they have defiantly declared their intention to purchase weapons and to prepare for any future eventualities, should the Aquino government fail to recognize and respect their legitimate demands.

It is noteworthy to mention here that they also are seeking some kind of political accommodation with the MNLF for the creation of a "Federal" or "Confederal" Republic of the Visayas and Mindanao. On the other hand, the Christian population of Mindanao, in collaboration with some Muslim and non-Muslim tribal leaders, have organized their own "Federal Republic of Mindanao," with the declared objective of liquidating what they call Philippine "colonialism" in Mindanao and establishing a sovereign and independent nation for themselves. At the moment, they are seeking common cause and solidarity with the MNLF and are consistently supporting the MNLF application for OIC membership on the premise that it is good not only for the Muslims but also for the rest of the people of Mindanao and its islands.

To concretize their resolve to forge ahead with their political goals, their leaders had attended the Third Bangsamoro Congress held from 2-3 this month in Manila and decided in principle to jointly hold a "Summit" of Mindanao and Visayan leaders.

At this juncture, I would like to inform this august Assembly of my premonition that once that Summit is held, a new dimension would be likely introduced and any further initiative for autonomy would then become counter-productive, if not altogether futile. The honourable Chairman of the recently concluded Bangsamoro Congress is here with us, bringing a number of vital resolutions to be formally forwarded to this Conference. He told me in confidence that none of those Christian leaders from Mindanao and the Visayas is willing to accept autonomy. Therefore, unless we are able to consolidate our position in this historic

Conference, through your sagacious and forward-looking decision, the MNLF and the Bangsamoro Jihad Fi-Sabilillah may yet lose their pre-eminent role in the struggle for peace and freedom for the people of the Bangsamoro Homeland.

It was ironical that Mrs. Aquino, who so desperately needed MNLF cooperation at such a critical moment, had chosen to betray the MNLF and the Islamic Conference Organization and condemned the people, both Filipinos and Bangsamoro, to another period of uncertainty.

One wonders why it was so easy for President Aquino to have forgotten the legacy of her husband, the popular clamor for peace, the untold suffering of the people as a consequence of the nearly two-decades of colonial war of genocide, and last but not the least, her sense of obligation to the MNLF leadership and the whole Bangsamoro people for supporting her to come to power and helping her to remain in power.

It will be recalled that at one stage during her desperate moment in November, 1986, when signs of military coup d'etat were so imminent, President Aquino, through her emissary even sought MNLF assistance to help protect Malacañang Palace and to request the MNLF Chairman's presence in Manila. But the MNLF leadership refused to be drawn directly into the crisis and insisted that certain conditions had to be met first by Malacañang before they would agree to the request for security assistance and for the MNLF leader to make the return visit to Manila. It was during the Peace Dialogue and upon the suggestion of erstwhile Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and the former AFP Chief of Staff General Fidel Ramos that Mrs. Aquino asked the MNLF Chairman to repay her visit. "I came to visit you in your homeland," she said, "and so you must visit me in Malacañang Palace in return."

The MNLF Chairman could not categorically accept such a request because the peace agreement had not yet been reached; and besides, he could not afford to gamble his integrity and expose his life and those of his men to unnecessary danger. Furthermore, Malacañang refused to comply with the pre-conditions demanded by the MNLF leadership. Which gave the later valid excuses not to get themselves directly involved in the internal conflict of the new regime.

Nevertheless, to minimize interruption in the peace process and hopefully enhance the chances of peace, the MNLF had openly threatened to declare war on whoever would unjustly seize power in Manila and overthrow the Aquino government. The MNLF and the Bangsamoro people had invested a great deal, including precious lives, to weaken the Marcos' government politically, economically and militarily and consequently sow the seeds of its eventual downfall. And the MNLF leadership was confident that new leadership in Manila could muster enough wit to understand the supreme advantages of peace in the Bangsamoro Homeland through genuine cooperation and partnership with the MNLF.

Unfortunately, the MNLF was deceived. Its trust in the sincerity of President Corazon Aquino became its pitfall. Mrs. Aquino's government brazenly betrayed the MNLF and the Bangsamoro people as well as the Islamic Conference Organization. In so doing, she ended up betraying the peace and embroiling her government in a new colonial war that her government, like its predecessor, cannot expect to win, *biidzmillah*.

Besides, the MNLF leadership, considering their keen understanding of the Filipino mentality and their sad experiences under Philippine colonial rule, knew what Manila was up to.

The MNLF leadership and Bangsamoro people believe that after the series of abortive coup attempts, President Aquino has become so weakened morally that she has virtually become a puppet in the crafty hands of the Defense Minister Fidel Ramos, her so called "saviour" from the failed coups. Her inexperience and inherent weakness have contributed to her misery and caused her to fall under the evil influence of her political and military advisers as well as the powerful sectarian, economic, military and foreign pressure groups. None of her advisers and pressure groups are happy to see a genuine rapprochement between Malacañang and the MNLF for fear lest the Muslim people and Islam may resume their paramount position in their sacred Homeland of Mindanao and its component islands.

Apart from the danger posed to the MNLF and the Bangsamoro people, the situation can bedevil the peace and security of Southeast Asia and the emerging industrial nations in the Far East. The

Bangsamoro Homeland and its territorial waters are a host to two vital waterways through which the maritime commerce of Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and other countries are passing. On normal days, over a hundred commercial boats, including at least ten to twelve giant tankers, ferrying commodities and fuel to and from Middle East, ply these routes. In time of war, these passages could be extremely dangerous to pass through, as past experiences would show.

Besides, a new element has entered the picture of late. The Philippine government, as part of its colonial policy of encirclement, is harboring some dissident elements from the neighboring State of Sabah and are reportedly training them with the Yellow Army of President Aquino at Santa Luisita Hacienda in Tarlac. Young Christian Sabahans are being patronized by the powerful head of the Catholic Church, Cardinal Jimmy Sin, who is the Filipino version of Cardinal Richelieu of King Louis XIII of France. The younger brother of the Chief Minister of Sabah is liaising with Manila and allegedly even with Tel Aviv.

The Philippine government and the Zionist movement are collaborating in an effort to weaken the Islamic countries in Southeast Asia. They are even conniving to bring about the fragmentation of Malaysia by assisting the underground movements in the Malaysian States of Sabah and Sarawak.

According to our information, the headquarters of the MOSSAD in Singapore is being transferred to Manila to bolster the extent of collaboration between Manila and Tel Aviv. While the president of the Zionist Shaloom Club International has been appointed by President Aquino as the "policy adviser" in the Department of Foreign Affairs and at the same time is in control of the Information Bureau, not to say of his influence over the passport division.

You will get a wealth of vital information and up-to-date analysis of the complex situation in our region should you find time to glide your eyes through our progress report and other vital documents which we have made available to you in this Conference.

What we only want to emphasize to you is the fact that there are too much conspiracies against our people, our Homeland and Islam, and

unless you do something to strengthen our position in this Conference like you have correctly done to our heroic Palestinian and Afghan brothers, chances would be that you might lose your Bangsamoro brothers to the enemies of Islam and the Islamic Ummah, Allah in His infinite mercy forbid. And when that tragic episode comes, the fate and destiny of Islamic Southeast Asia, and its nearly two-hundred million Muslims will be jeopardized. Anyone who understands the waves of history of 20th century Asia and, specifically Southeast Asia will tell you that what I am saying makes sense. I am not a prophet of doom. I am a Mujahid, engaged in the most glorious and noble endeavor that Allah had mandated for oppressed humanity. I cannot lead such a long and arduous struggle if I am not an optimist. But I have to tell you my honest impression about our future. Modesty aside, the Bangsamoro people and Mujahiden are among the staunchest defenders of the Islamic faith, at least in our region of Southeast Asia. By helping the MNLF, you will be helping also the Muslims in the region, considering our geopolitical importance as the “backdoor of Asia.” By strengthening the MNLF, you strengthen the Muslims and Islam in the region as well. And the best way to strengthen the MNLF being the vanguard of the Bangsamoro Jihad Fi-Sabilillah in our Homeland and the sole legitimate representative of the Bangsamoro people, is by accepting its application for membership. That way, you render justice where justice is due, considering the fact that the Bangsamoro people through the MNLF, has every right to become a member of the OIC and be an integral and inseparable part of the Islamic Ummah which this Organization represents.

Before we came to this Conference, we had studied your Charter and we pondered on your actual practices. Besides, we had made extensive consultation with legal experts of the Organization. To our delight, there is no legal nor moral impediment that can be successfully invoked to deny us admission. It is only a matter of mustering your political will in favor of your oppressed brothers and Islam in the Bangsamoro Homeland and in Southeast Asia who are facing such a great peril to their existence.

We were advised by your legal experts that to be admitted as a member, the applicant should have received the formal recognition of the OIC and its member-states as “a people” or “nation.”

In our documents, you will find very plausible arguments that leave no doubt about the fact that you have already formally recognized us both as a people and as a nation. Independence is not a pre-requisite, unlike in the case of the U.N. Charter. At any rate, I would like to assure you that the greater parts of the Bangsamoro Homeland are already firmly under the control and administration of the MNLF and its revolutionary provisional government. As a matter of fact, in Amman last year, some brotherly delegations had informed us that the main reasons that prompted them to decide to support our proposed application for membership were their recognition of the MNLF success in putting vast areas of the Bangsamoro Homeland under theory political and military jurisdiction, in addition to the fact that the membership of the brotherly Palestinian Liberation Organization may well serve as an ideal precedent.

There is no substantial difference between these two organizations, except for the fact the PLO is a full member while the MNLF is only an observer. While the PLO is recognized as the “sole legitimate representative” of Palestine, the MNLF is also recognized by this Organization as the “sole legitimate representative “ of the the Bangsamoro people or nation. Go back to your historic Dakar resolution in 1979; your Islamabad Final Communique in 1980; your Sana’a Resolution in 1984, and your Amman Resolution last year. You will see how far you have gone in bestowing your formal recognition of our status as a Muslim people or nation, which to our understanding is the only essential requirement for membership.

In Islamabad, you declared formally in your Final Communique, saying:

“We reaffirm our support for the struggle of the Bangsamoro people under the leadership of the Moro National Liberation Front with the view to achieving self-determination.

Your reference to our people as “Bangsamoro people,” not just a mere tribe; and to our people’s right to self-determination are clear and indisputable.

And your formula recognition of the MNLF as the “sole legitimate representative of the Bangsamoro people” adds further depth and dimension to the way you now regard the status of our people and their problem, which is one of the longest single problems weighing heavily on the conscience of this Conference almost since its birth.

In so doing, you have correctly realigned your understanding of our people and their glorious past, for we are an heir to a once powerful state, whose government commanded the respect of many countries in the world. As a testimony to our existence as a state, our government have entered into a series of peace treaties with such powerful European nations like Spain and the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland as well as the United States of America, recognizing the sovereignty and independence of our Islamic nation.

Frankly, the main cause of our debacle in solving the problem has been our mistaken assumption about the underlying character of the problem. Our strategic formula has not been in consonance with the colonial character of the problem. Perhaps the medicine we prescribed is not commensurate to the disease. In truth, the only correct solution to the problem is out-right decolonization, otherwise, we may revolve within a vicious cycle, with Philippine colonialism continuing to keep the problem at the twirl of its fingertips.

Since the passage of the Amman Resolution last March which called upon the Philippine Government to comply with its solemn pledges and commitment to implement the Tripoli Agreement, our eyes have been focused with great anticipation on the goodwill and sense of obligation of Manila.

The Philippine government, from Marcos down to the present regime, has been repeatedly pledging to honour its commitment for the full implementation of the Tripoli Agreement.

In view, therefore of the Amman Resolution, we expected with optimism the prospect of a new peace talks with the Aquino government.

To our disappointment, there was neither peace negotiation nor the promised implementation of the Tripoli Agreement.

Regrettably, Manila has been emboldened to the point that it stubbornly refused to respond to the Amman Resolution. Indeed, it did not even bother to acknowledge with elementary courtesy the formal communication of the OIC Secretary General sent to President Aquino through the Philippine Embassy in Jeddah in May last year.

Actually, we are perplexed at the negative attitude of Manila. Instead of adding its weight to the relaunching of the failed peace process, the Philippine government committed more combat-ready forces to create tension and drag the MNLF Mujahideen into actual military confrontation and war.

Thus small-scale fighting has commenced since the beginning of this year and is continuing up to the present day. Unless a decisive step is taken here in the Plenary, I can only contemplate the escalation of the war, as in the past. I can only see dark foreboding, especially so if we look into the present step now being recklessly pursued in the Philippine Congress.

Last night, Mr. Angelo Palmones of Radio Mindanao Network informed me that several Congressmen from Mindanao who had earlier sponsored the so-called Organic Act for Muslim autonomy had withdrawn their sponsorship because they resented Malacañang Palace's interference. The Congressmen charged President Aquino of tinkering with the original version and substituting it literally with its own draft.

As it stands now, the draft organic act, as President Aquino's emissary had told the OIC Secretary General and the Quadripartite Ministerial Committee in 1987, does not entail the transfer of political power. Rather, it merely calls for administrative autonomy – without substantive power. There was no internal security force specified in the Tripoli Agreement. Without internal security force, it is impossible to exact obedience from the people. The Philippines is notorious for the existence of private armies. The Philippine Armed Forces had declared that at least half a million firearms are on the loose. Can one imagine the MNLF Mujahideen surrendering their weapons and entrusting their lives

and the lives of their children to the enemy that had killed through mass murder at least 135,000 Bangsamoro children, women and innocent civilians?

Thirdly, the new organic act calls for the holding of a so-called “referendum” or plebiscite to determine the number of those voting either in favor or not.

Referendum or plebiscite was never envisaged by the Tripoli Agreement. The size of the territorial jurisdiction was final, namely, thirteen provinces including the cities and villages situated therein. Besides, all what is needed to implement the agreement is the issuance of an Executive Decree by the Philippine head of state.

This was the basic reason why both the MNLF and the Quadripartite Ministerial Committee, as well as the OIC Secretary General Dr. Amadou Karim Gaye, had vigorously opposed the 17th April, 1977 referendum conducted by the Marcos government.

Furthermore, there are other important features of the Tripoli Agreement that are totally absent in the said Organic Act.

So I can understand why at least 9 Congressmen who had earlier sponsored the bill had reconsidered their position. Besides, they said that the present Organic Act will only trigger a new war in the Bangsamoro Homeland of Mindanao which they do not like to happen at all to avoid repetition of the past tragedy.

I was also informed that the Mindanao Congressmen had learned of the existence of a secret document containing the actual position of the strategic policy platform of the Aquino government vis-à-vis the problem of Mindanao.

Here with me is a xerox copy of that controversial document. Among other things, it says that the Aquino government, using the press media and other disinformation devices, will “discredit” Nur Misuari before the OIC and exert every effort to convince the OIC that the grant of autonomy to the Muslims in South Philippines through the context of the (1987) Constitution is “in effect an implementation of the Tripoli Agreement.” This is a grave act of deception against an honourable Islamic Organization.

Besides, it will do everything in its capacity to convince the OIC to cut its support for the MNLF and to remove the Muslim problem from the agenda of the OIC. Furthermore, this document says conclusively that the Philippine government has decided to “de-internationalize the MNLF issue” by treating it as a domestic local issue. Apparently, this is to counter-act the declaration in Amman recognizing the Tripoli Agreement as a “binding international Agreement.” In fact, it says that it will treat the problem solely as a “regional” and not even a national problem.

The demand for autonomy will henceforth be met through the Regional Consultative Commission mandated by the 1987 Constitution. This is the same Commission repudiated by the Amman Resolution. Furthermore, the Aquino government will discourage negotiations while a political settlement is being worked out by Congress through the Organic Act for Autonomy.

It added that should there be a resumption of peace talks with the MNLF, then it should be on MNLF’s request to resume and without any precondition. Such peace talks, it emphasized, ‘SHOULD BE WITHIN PHILIPPINE TERRITORY AND WITHOUT ANY PARTICIPATION BY FOREIGNERS.’

Your Royal Highness: I think we have reached the high point in our search for the truth. We have pampered the enemy too much by our tolerance and by our procrastination with our action.

It is our duty to protect the integrity of the Islamic Ummah and this Organization. Forgive me for saying this: That what we have done so far is already too much. To give the enemy another chance will make us look unreasonable. Largely owing to our wrong decision, forty percent of our Islamic land has been compromised and our freedom has been lost to colonialism. Yesterday, Your Royal Highness had declared accurately that colonialism in any form has no place in this world. Allah by His Infinite Mercy and Infallible Guidance has redeemed us by causing the enemy to commit mistakes. Why should we then insist?

I would like to urgently appeal to this august body to examine the wisdom of our proposition, with the assurance that we will never force

the issue of membership without the endorsement of the Quadripartite Ministerial Committee.

But I would like to tell you honestly that once we become a member, the Philippine government will insha' Allah come to the Conference table and grant full and genuine autonomy in six month's time. Otherwise, the Bangsamoro people, in collaboration with their Christian and indigenous tribal brothers will insha' Allah surge forward, liquidate colonialism and assert their independence in a matter of one year's time. The Philippines will disintegrate, with Visayas emerging as another sovereign and independent state.

For your information, Your Royal Highness, the leader of the liberation movement of the Visayas has sent a message to me through one of our delegates who is present here in the Plenary Session saying that once we establish our provisional government in Mindanao, they will immediately declare their own republic in the Visayas.

Once again, I leave the final decision to you.

But before I conclude, let me formally submit to your Royal Highness these resolutions of the Bangsamoro congresses which are all expressive of the unanimous support of the Bangsamoro people for our membership in this conference.

In the series of resolutions passed during the Third Bangsamoro Congress held in Manila early this month, the representatives of the Muslim, Christian and indigenous people throughout the Bangsamoro Homeland, including Palawan, have declared that they support our quest for OIC membership, and that they are unanimous in accepting the MNLF and its leadership as the legitimate voice of the people of Mindanao and its islands.

Over a billion Muslims all over the world hail this historic conference, while fifteen million Bangsamoro people are awaiting your wise decision on their problem and ultimately on their future and the future of their Islamic land and Islam.

Allow me Mr. Chairman, to join the nations of the world in extending our formal recognition of the brotherly State of Palestine as well as the

Interim Government of the Afghanistan and to reiterate our unbreakable solidarity with their just and triumphant cause.

My thanks for the declaration of support of my brother H.E. Foreign Minister Gulbudin-Hekmatyar behind our people's JIHAD FI SABILILLAH.

And finally, my debt of gratitude to my Brother His Excellency, Dr. KENAN ATAKOL, the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Turkish Cypriot for his reiteration of support and concern.

Inshallah, the oppressed Muslim people and Islam everywhere will continue to march triumphantly and irresistibly against the forces of oppression and tyranny and establish the supremacy of the Almighty Allah and Islam in the world.

Thank you and Wassalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuh!

(Sgd.) NUR MISUARI

Chairman

Moro National Liberation Front



APPENDIX F

TEXT OF THE 1996 GRP-MNLF PEACE AGREEMENT

Peace Agreement

In the Name of God, the Omnipotent, the Merciful

Peace Agreement

The Final Agreement on the Implementation of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement Between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) with the Participation of the Organization of Islamic Conference Ministerial Committee of the Six and the Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Conference.

WHEREAS, the President of the Republic of the Philippines, His Excellency Fidel V. Ramos, has pursued a peaceful settlement of the armed conflict under the principle of peace with honor and to serve the paramount ends of national unity, solidarity and progress for all Filipinos;

WHEREAS, the MNLF, led by Prof. Nur Misuari, inspired by their quest for peace and prosperity, had in the past asserted the right of the

Moro people to freely determine their political status and pursue their religious, social, economic and cultural development;

WHEREAS, the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), upon the request of the GRP initiated the First Formal Peace Talks between the GRP and the MNLF during its Third Ministerial Conference in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which resulted in the signing of the Tripoli Agreement on December 23, 1976, the document which served as a basis for a just, lasting, honorable and comprehensive solution to the problem in Southern Philippines within the framework of the Philippine Constitution;

WHEREAS, by the Grace of the Almighty God and owing to the bold and innovative leadership of the Philippine Government, under H.E. President Fidel V. Ramos, and the dedication and perseverance of his duly appointed representatives, headed by Presidential Adviser to the peace process Manuel T. Yan, coupled with the highly positive and laudable response of the MNLF leadership under its founding Chairman, H.E. Professor Nur Misuari, a peace process has been conducted and pursued successfully for the last four (4) years with the most constructive and beneficial participation of the OIC Ministerial Committee of the Six, headed by its distinguished Chairman, H.E. Ali Alatas, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, and his four (4) able assistants as facilitators of the talks, namely: H.E. Ambassador S. Wiryono, H.E. Dr. Hassan Wirajuda, H.E. Ambassador Pieter Damanik, and H.E. Ambassador Abu Hartono, and the OIC Secretary General, H.E. Hamid Algabid, and his deputy, H.E. Ambassador Mohammed Mohsin, and with special mention to Libyan Ambassador, H.E. Rajab Azzarouq;

WHEREAS, the parties acknowledge the valuable role of the Organization of Islamic Conference OIC in promoting and upholding the rights, welfare and well-being of Muslims all over the world;

WHEREAS, the parties likewise, acknowledge the role of the OIC Ministerial Committee of the Six comprising the nations of Indonesia as Chair, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Senegal and Somalia in the search of a just, comprehensive and durable peace in the Southern Philippines;

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Statement of Understanding signed in Tripoli, Libya on October 3, 1992 and the subsequent Statement of Understanding signed in Cipanas, West Java on April 14, 1993, the parties agreed, through the good offices of the Great Libyan Arab Jamahiriyyah, inspired and guided by its great leader, H.E. Colonel Muammar Khadaffy, the Government of the Republic of Indonesia under the wise and able leadership of H.E. Bapah President Soeharto, and H.E. OIC Secretary General, Dr. Hamid Algabid, to hold formal peace talks to discuss the modalities for the full implementation of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement in letter and spirit; to include those portions of the Agreement left for further discussion and the transitional implementing structure and mechanism;

WHEREAS, the parties affirm their solemn commitment to the aforementioned Statements of Understanding as well as the Memorandum of Agreement signed in the 1st Round of Formal Peace Talks held in Jakarta, Indonesia on October 25- November 7, 1994; the Interim Agreement signed in the 4th Round of Formal Peace talks held in Jakarta on August 29, 1996; and in the nine (9) meetings of the Mixed Committee held in various places and dates in the Philippines and Indonesia;

WHEREAS, all these agreements resulted from the consensus points reached by the Mixed Committee and the Support Committees (Support Committee No. 1 – National Defense Security; Support Committee No. 2 Education; Support Committee No. 3 – Economic and Financial System, Mines and Minerals; Support Committee No. 4 – Administrative System, Right of Representation and Participation in the National Government, and in all Organs of the State; Support Committee No. 5 – *Shari'ah* and the Judiciary; and the Ad Hoc working Group on the Transitional Implementing Structure and Mechanism in meetings held in various places in the Philippines and Indonesia;

WHEREAS, the parties have rationalized and consolidated all the agreements and consensus points reached, with the assistance of the Mixed Committee and the various support committees established for the purpose, into a final peace agreements;

WHEREAS, the parties affirm the sovereignty, territorial integrity and the Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines; and

WHEREAS, this final peace agreement constitutes the full implementation of the Tripoli Agreement.

NOW THEREFORE, THE PARTIES DO HEREBY AGREE ON THE FOLLOWING:

I. Implementing Structure and Mechanism of this Agreement

- (1) Phase 1 shall cover a three (3) year period starting with the signing of the peace agreement with the issuance of an Executive Order establishing the Special Zone of Peace and Development (SZOPAD), the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD), and the Consultative Assembly.

During this phase, the process of the joining in of MNLF elements with the Armed Forces of the Philippines will start. The joining in of MNLF elements with the PNP as part of the regular police recruitment programme will also take place in this phase.

- (2) Phase 2 shall involve an amendment to or repeal of the Organic Act (RA 6734) of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) through Congressional action, after which the amendatory law shall be submitted to the people of the concerned areas in a plebiscite to determine the establishment of a new autonomous government and the specific area of autonomy thereof. (a) While peace and development program being implemented in the SZOPAD, a bill to amend or repeal the RA 6734 shall be initiated within Phase 1 (1996-1997). The bill shall include the pertinent provisions of the Final Peace Agreement and the expansion of the present ARMM area of autonomy. After a law shall have been passed by Congress and approved by the President, it shall be submitted to the people for approval in a plebiscite in the affected areas, within two (2) years from the establishment of the SPCD (1998). (b) The new area

of autonomy shall then be determined by the provinces and cities that will vote/choose to join the said autonomy 1998). It may be provided by the Congress in a law that clusters of contiguous-Muslim-dominated municipalities voting in favor of autonomy be merged and constituted into a new province(s) which shall become part of the new Autonomous Region.

II. The Transitional Period (Phase 1)

Phase 1 shall be implemented as follows:

- (3) There shall be established a Special Zone of Peace and Development in Southern Philippines (SZOPAD) covering the provinces of Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte, North Cotabato, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Davao del Sur, South Cotabato, Sarangani, and Palawan and the cities of Cotabato, Dapitan, Dipolog, General Santos, Iligan, Marawi, Pagadian, Zamboanga and Puerto Princesa. Within the next three (3) years, these areas shall be the focus of intensive peace and development efforts. Public and private investments shall be channeled to these areas to spur economic activities and uplift the conditions of the people therein.
- (4) There shall be established a Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD), composed of one (1) Chairman, one (1) Vice- Chairman and three (3) Deputies, one each representing the Muslims, the Christians and the Cultural Communities. They shall be appointed by the President.
- (5) The SPCPD shall be assisted by the *Darul Iftah* (advisory council) which shall be created by the Chairman of the SPCPD.
- (6) The local government units in the area, including the ARMM, shall continue to exist and exercise their functions in accordance with existing laws.
- (7) Appropriate agencies of the government that are engaged in peace and development activities in the area, such as but not limited to

the Southern Philippines Development Authority (SPDA), shall be placed under the control and/or supervision of the Council as its implementing agencies to ensure that peace and development projects and programs are effectively accomplished.

Based on the foregoing, the following agencies or entities will be placed under the control and/or supervision, to wit:

- (a) The Southern Philippines Development Authority (SPDA) may be attached to the SPCPD and be placed under the latter's supervision insofar as SPDA offices and projects in the SZOPAD are concerned. The SPCPD can exercise a further degree of control over SPDA by allowing the council to submit recommendees to the President for appointment as officials of SPDA;
- (b) The Regional and Field Offices of the Office of Muslim Affairs (OMA) which are situated and operating within the Special Zone of Peace and Development (SZOPAD), shall be placed under the direct supervision of SPCPD, provided that the coordination, linkages and complementation between the central OMA and SPCPD shall defined by a Presidential issuance;
- (c) The Regional and Field Offices of the Office of Southern Cultural Communities (OSCC) which are situated and operating within the SZOPAD, shall be placed under the direct supervision of SPCPD, provided that the coordination, linkages and complementation between the central OSCC and SPCPD shall be defined by a Presidential issuance;
- (d) Task Force Basilan, which shall be reorganized into the Basilan Development Task Force, to undertake development activities in Basilan shall be placed under the control and supervision of SPCPD;
- (e) Task Force MALMAR, to be reorganized into the Central Mindanao Development Task Force, to undertake

development activities in Central Mindanao shall be placed under the control and supervision of SPCPD;

- (f) Sulu Development Task Force— an inter-agency task force that shall be organized to undertake development projects in Sulu – shall be placed under the control and supervision of SPCPD; and
- (g) Special Development Planning Group – this is an ad hoc body composed of staff officers and planning experts from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and other concerned agencies which could be organized to directly support the staff planning requirements, shall be placed under SPCPD.

The foregoing enumeration of agencies or entities shall not preclude the President from exercising his power or discretion to delegate, subject to existing laws, certain powers or functions to the SPCPD, or to place other agencies or entities under the control and/or supervision of the latter.

- (8) The SPCPD, in consultation with the Consultative Assembly, utilizing the funds from the National Government, shall monitor, promote and coordinate the development efforts in the area, including the attraction of foreign investment, specially from OIC member countries and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).
- (9) The powers and functions of the SPCPD and the Consultative Assembly are derivative and extension of the powers of the President. The powers referred to here are only those powers of the President that could be delegated under the Constitution and existing laws.
- (10) There shall established a Consultative Assembly with 81 members composed of the following:

- (a) The Chairman of the SPCPD shall be the head and presiding officer of the Assembly;
 - (b) The Governor and the Vice Governor of the ARMM, the 14 Governors of the provinces and the nine City mayors in the SZOPAD;
 - (c) 44 members from the MNLF; and
 - (d) 11 members from various sectors recommended by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and people's organizations (POs).
- (11) The Consultative Assembly shall exercise the following functions and powers:
- (a) To serve as forum for consultation and ventilation of issues and concerns;
 - (b) To conduct public hearings as may be necessary and to provide appropriate advice to the SPCPD; and
 - (c) To formulate and recommend policies to the President through the Chairman of the SPCPD and make rules and regulations to the extent necessary for the effective and efficient administration of the affairs of the area.
- (12) The OIC shall be requested to continue to extend its assistance and good offices in monitoring the full implementation of this agreement during the transitional period until the regular autonomous government is firmly established and for this purpose, help generate broad international support for the Zone of Peace and Development.
- (13) A Joint Monitoring Committee composed of members coming from the GRP and MNLF, with the help of the OIC, shall continue to meet to review and identify agreements that can be immediately implemented and monitor the implementation of this Agreement during Phase 1.
- (14) The provisions of the 1994 and 1995 Interim Agreements and subsequent agreements entered into by the GRP and the MNLF

that would not require legislative action shall be implemented during Phase 1.

- (15) The funds for the operations of the Council and the Assembly shall be initially sourced from the funds of the Office of the President. Funding for development programs and projects shall come from the appropriations of Congress may be drawn from the General Appropriations Act. A supplementary budget for the year 1996 will be recommended to Congress for the Purpose.
- (16) The term of the SPCPD and the Consultative Assembly shall be a period of three years and may be extended by the President upon recommendation of the council itself.
- (17) The term of office of the SPCPD and the Assembly shall coincide with the three-year term of office of the officials of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) elected in 1996.
- (18) The powers and functions of the Council shall be as follows:
 - (a) To take charge in promoting, monitoring and coordinating the improvement of peace and order in the area;
 - (b) To focus on peace and development efforts more particularly in the depressed areas and cause the implementation of peace and development projects;
 - (c) To provide support to local government units as necessary;
 - (d) To exercise such other powers and functions necessary for the effective implementation of its mandate as may be delegated by the President;
 - (e) To assist in the preparation for the holding of elections, referenda or plebiscite and peoples initiative in the area as may be duly deputized by the Commission on Elections (COMELEC);
 - (f) To cause the creation of such offices or instrumentalities as shall be necessary for the effective and efficient administration of the affairs of the areas. There shall be approval from the Office of the President for budgetary purposes.

(19)Joining of the MNLF elements with the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the provision of Security Protection for Certain Officials of the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development:

- (a) During the transitional (Phase 1), there shall be a program or process to allow the joining of MNLF elements into the PNP and to be part of the PNP Command in accordance with guidelines and procedures under existing laws. The Philippine Government shall allocate one thousand five hundred (1,500) PNP vacancies for this purpose to be filled up by MNLF elements during the transition period, and another two hundred fifty (250) items for special or auxiliary services.
- (b) The processing of MNLF elements will start upon the establishment of the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD). The police training programs to be undergone by the joining MNLF elements shall be as prescribed by existing laws and rules and regulations, and shall be conducted by the PNP.
- (c) The concerned officials of the Council (e.g. the Chairman and his Deputies) shall be provided security and protective assistance by the national government, as the security situation warrants and as part of confidence-building measures. An AFP/PNP security detail shall be immediately and particularly assigned to the Council. This special AFP/PNP security detail shall be composed of former MNLF regulars who shall have been granted AFP or PNP appointments and duly integrated into the AFP or PNP. This security detail shall be of appropriate size in accordance with the needs of the situation without prejudice to augmentation by regular AFP or PNP units as the need arises and in coordination with AFP and PNP commanders concerned. This security detail which shall not be utilized for law enforcement, but solely for the security and protection of SPCPD officials concerned, shall conduct themselves in accordance with existing policies and

regulations in order to prevent undue alarm to the population during movements of concerned officials.

- (d) To have good coordination between the AFP and PNP on the one hand and the SPCPD on the other, a liaison system will be set up composed of the AFP, PNP and SPCPD senior officials.

(20) The joining of the MNLF forces with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP):

- (a) Five thousand seven hundred fifty (5,750) MNLF members shall be integrated into the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), 250 of whom shall be absorbed into the auxiliary services. The government shall exert utmost efforts to establish the necessary conditions that would ensure the eventual integration of the maximum number of the remaining MNLF forces into the Special Regional Security Force (SRSF) and other agencies and instrumentalities of the government. There shall be a special socioeconomic, cultural and educational program to cater to MNLF forces not absorbed into the AFP, PNP and the SRSF to prepare them and their families for productive endeavors, provide for educational, technical skills and livelihood training and give them priority for hiring in development projects.
- (b) In the beginning, the MNLF forces will join as units distinct from AFP units. They will be initially organized into separate units within a transition period, until such time that mutual confidence is developed as the members of these separate units will be gradually integrated into regular AFP units deployed in the area of the autonomy. Subject to existing laws, policies, rules and regulations, the appropriate authorities shall waive the requirements and qualifications for entry of MNLF forces into the AFP.
- (c) One from among the MNLF will assume the functions and responsibilities of a Deputy Commander of the Southern

Command, AFP, for separate units that will be organized out of the MNLF forces joining the AFP. The Deputy Commander will assist the Commander of the Southern Command, AFP in the command, administration and control of such separate units throughout the aforementioned transition period. The Deputy Commander will be given an appointment commensurate to his position and shall be addressed as such.

- (d) The government recognizes the skills, capabilities and achievements of the MNLF and its capacity to develop its members for the highest echelons of military and civilian leadership. The ranks and grades of MNLF forces joining the AFP shall be subject to the decision of the President in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief of the AFP along the principles of universality, nondiscrimination, equity and preferential treatment for the poor and underprivileged.
- (e) The government shall take affirmative measures to continually improve the capabilities of those MNLF forces joining the AFP to enhance their opportunities for professional advancement in the military service. It shall undertake initiatives to provide professional training and military schooling in foreign countries to former MNLF members absorbed into the AFP in consonance with the education and training programmes with the AFP.
- (f) All other matters regarding the joining of MNLF forces into the AFP not expressly covered by this Agreement shall be prescribed by the President in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief of the AFP.

III. The New Regional Autonomous Government (Phase 2)

The following provisions shall be implemented after a law amending or repealing the Organic Act of ARMM shall have been enacted by Congress and approved by the people in the concerned areas in a

plebiscite therefore. Accordingly, these provisions shall be recommended by the GRP to Congress for incorporation in the amendatory or repealing law.

(A) EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,
ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM AND REPRESENTATION IN THE
NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Executive Council

- (21) Executive power shall be vested in the Head of the regular Autonomous Government duly elected at large by direct vote of the people of the Autonomous Region. There shall also be a Vice Head of the Regional Autonomous Government also elected in the same manner. The Head of the Regional Autonomous Government may appoint three (3) Deputies. The Head, the Vice-Head and the three (3) Deputies shall comprise the Executive Council of the area of Autonomy.
- (22) The President shall exercise general supervision over the Regional Autonomous Government and all local government units in the area of Autonomy through the Head of the Regional Autonomous Government to ensure that laws are faithfully executed.

The head of the Autonomous Government shall exercise general supervision over all local government units in the area of Autonomy through the Head of the Regional Autonomous Government to ensure that laws are faithfully executed.

The head of the Autonomous Government shall exercise general supervision over all local government units in the area of autonomy to ensure that national and regional laws are faithfully executed, and see to it that they act within their assigned powers and functions.

Legislative Assembly

- (23) Legislative power shall be vested in the Regional Legislative Assembly.

- (24) The Legislative Assembly shall be composed of members elected by popular vote, with three (3) members elected from each of the Congressional Districts.
- (25) There shall be sectoral representatives in the Legislative Assembly whose number shall not exceed fifteen percent 15% of the total number of elected Members of the Legislative Assembly coming from the labor, disabled, industrial, indigenous cultural communities, youth, women, non-government organizations, agricultural and such other sectors as may be provided by Regional Law to be appointed by the Head of the Autonomous Government from among the nominees of the different sectoral groups; Provided, however that the youth representative shall not be less than 18 years of age nor more than 21 years of age at the time of his appointment.
- (26) The people's initiative, by way of a plebiscite or referendum, is recognized.
- (27) The Regional Legislative Assembly shall exercise legislative power for application in the area of autonomy except on the following matters, to wit:
- (a) Foreign Affairs;
 - (b) National Defense and Security;
 - (c) Postal Service;
 - (d) Coinage, and Fiscal and Monetary Policies;
 - (e) Administration of Justice except on matters pertaining to *Shari'ah*;
 - (f) Quarantine;
 - (g) Customs and Tariff;
 - (h) Citizenship;
 - (i) Naturalization, Immigration and Deportation;
 - (j) General Auditing, Civil Service and Elections,
 - (k) Foreign Trade
 - (l) Maritime, Land and Air Transportation and Communications that affect areas outside the autonomous region; and
 - (m) Patents, Trademarks, Tradenames and Copyrights

- (28) The Legislative Assembly may create, divide, merge, abolish or substantially alter boundaries of local government units in the area of autonomy in accordance with the criteria laid down by law subject to approval by a majority of votes cast in a plebiscite called for the purpose in the political units affected. It may also change the names of such local government units, public places and institutions.
- (29) Any member of the Legislative Assembly who accepts an appointment and qualifies for any position in the government, including government-owned-and-controlled corporations or institutions and their subsidiaries, shall automatically forfeit his seat in the Legislative Assembly.
- (30) No member of the Legislative Assembly may personally appear as counsel before courts of justice or quasi-judicial and other administrative bodies. Neither shall he, directly or indirectly, be interested financially in any contract with, or in any franchise or privilege granted by, the Government, or any subdivision, agency for instrumentality thereof, including any government-owned-and-controlled corporation or its subsidiary, during his term of office. He shall not intervene in any matter before any office of the government for his pecuniary benefit or where he may be called upon to act on account of his office.
- (31) In case of vacancy in the Legislative Assembly occurring at least one year before the expiration of the term of office, a special election shall be called to fill the vacancy in the manner prescribed by law; provided, that the member elected shall serve for the unexpired term.
- (32) The Legislative Assembly shall elect from among its Members a Speaker and such other officers as the rules may provide. The Speaker shall appoint the personnel of the administrative organization of the Legislative Assembly.
- (33) The powers, functions, responsibilities and structure of the different Departments, agencies, bureaus, offices and instrumentalities of regional government including regional

government-owned-and-controlled corporations in the areas of the autonomy shall be prescribed and defined by the Regional legislative Assembly.

- (34) No person shall be elected member of the Legislative Assembly unless he/she is:
- (a) A natural-born citizen of the Philippines;
 - (b) At least 21 years of age on the day of election;
 - (c) Able to read and write;
 - (d) A registered voter of the district in which he/she shall be elected on the day he/she files his/her certificate of candidacy; and
 - (e) A resident thereof for a period of no less than five years immediately preceding the day of election.
- (35) Every member of the Legislative Assembly shall take an oath or affirmation of allegiance to the Republic of the Philippines before taking his/her seat.
- (36) The Legislative Assembly shall adopt its own rules of procedure by a majority vote of all its Members including the selection of members of its standing committees and the suspension or expulsion of its Members.
- (37) A majority of all the Members of the Assembly shall constitute a quorum to do business, but a smaller number may adjourn from day-to-day and may compel the attendance of absent members in such manner and under such penalties, as the Assembly may provide.
- (38) The Legislative Assembly or any of its committees may conduct inquiries or public consultations in aid of legislation in accordance with its rules. The rights of persons appearing in or affected by such inquiries shall be respected.
- (39) The Legislative Assembly shall keep a Journal of its proceedings and a record of its caucuses and meetings. The records and books of account of the Assembly shall be preserved and be open to public scrutiny. The Commission on Audit shall publish an annual

report of the itemized list of expenditures incurred by the Members of the Assembly within sixty (60) days from the end of every regular session.

- (40) The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly shall, within ten working days from approval thereof, submit to the President and to both Houses of Congress a certified true copy of all laws and resolutions approved by the Legislative Assembly.
- (41) No member shall be questioned or be held liable in any other place for any speech or debate in the Assembly or in any committee thereof.
- (42) The Chief Executive of the Autonomous Government shall approve the budget of the Autonomous Region. If, by the end of any fiscal year, the Legislative Assembly shall have failed to pass the regional appropriations bill for the ensuing fiscal year, the regional Appropriations Act for the preceding fiscal year shall be deemed automatically reenacted and shall remain in force and effect until the regional appropriations bill is passed by the Legislative Assembly.
- (43) No provision or enactment shall be embraced in the regional appropriations bill unless it relates specifically to some particular appropriation therein. Any such provision or enactment shall be limited in its operation to the appropriation to which it relates.
- (44) The procedure in approving appropriations for the Legislative Assembly shall strictly follow the procedure for approving appropriations for other departments and agencies of the Regional Government.
- (45) A special appropriations bill shall specify the purpose for which it is intended and shall be supported by funds actually available as certified by the Regional Treasurer, or to be raised by a corresponding revenue proposal therein.
- (46) Discretionary funds appropriated for particular offices shall be disbursed only for public purposes to be supported by appropriate vouchers and subject to such guidelines as may be prescribed by regional law.

- (47) All money collected on any regional tax levied for a special purpose shall be treated as a special fund and paid out for such special purpose only. If the purpose for which a special fund was created has been fulfilled or abandoned, the balance, if any, shall accrue to the general funds of the regional government.
- (48) Trust funds shall only be paid out of the regional treasury upon fulfillment of the specific purpose for which said funds were created or received.
- (49) Except as provided by its rules, the Legislative Assembly shall meet in open session. Regular session shall commence on the 4th Monday of April and shall continue to be in session for such number of days as may be determined by the Assembly until thirty (30) days before the opening of its next regular session.
- (50) The Legislative Assembly shall meet in special sessions at the request of one-third (1/3) of all its Members or by call of the Chief Executive. Such special sessions must be convened with specific agenda.
- (51) No bill shall become a law unless it has passed three (3) readings on separate days and printed copies thereof in its final form have been distributed to its Members three (3) days before its passage, except when the Chief Executive certifies to the necessity of its immediate enactment to meet a public calamity or emergency.
- (52) Every bill passed by the Legislative Assembly shall, before it becomes a law, be presented to the Chief Executive. If he approves the same, he shall sign it; otherwise, he shall veto it and return it with his objections to the Legislative Assembly, which shall enter the objections at large in its journal and proceed to consider it. If after such consideration, two-thirds (2/3) of all the Members of the Legislative Assembly shall agree to pass the bill, it shall become a law. In all such cases, the veto shall be determined by yeas and nays, and the names of the members voting for or against shall be entered in the journal. The Chief Executive shall communicate his veto of any bill to the Legislative

- Assembly within thirty (30) days after the receipt thereof; otherwise, it shall become a law as if he had signed it.
- (53) The Legislative Assembly may request the presence of the chief Executive, Vice-Chief Executive, Cabinet members or their deputies, as the rules shall provide, for questioning on matters falling within the scope of their assigned powers and functions.
- (54) Subject to the rules of the Legislative Assembly, the legislative power to inquire on matters relating to the exercise of administrative functions by an agency of government within the Autonomous Region shall be in the form of written questions.
- (55) The Chief Executive shall submit to the Legislative Assembly not later than two (2) months before the beginning of every regular session, as the basis of the regional appropriations bill, a budget of expenditures and sources of financing, including receipts from existing and proposed revenue measures.
- (56) The fiscal year of the Autonomous Region shall cover the period January 1 to December 31 of the same year.
- (57) The Legislative Assembly may not increase the appropriations recommended by the Chief Executive for the operation of the Autonomous Government as specified in the budget. The form, content and manner of preparation of the budget shall be prescribed by regional law, the budgeting process shall be governed by existing national laws and rules and regulations prescribed by the Department of Budget and Management.
- (58) The Chief Executive shall have the power to veto any particular item or items in an appropriation or revenue bill, but his veto shall not affect the item or items to which he does not object. The veto may be reconsidered by the Assembly by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of all its members.
- (59) The financial accounts of the expenditures and revenues of the Autonomous Region shall be paid out of the Regional Treasury except in pursuance of an appropriation made by regional law.
- (60) No money shall be paid out of the Regional Treasury except in pursuance of an appropriation made by regional law.

- (61) No regional law shall be passed authorizing any transfer of appropriations; however, the Chief Executive, the Speaker of the Assembly and the Presiding Justice of the highest *Shari'ah* Court may, by law, be authorized to augment any item in the Regional General Appropriations law for their respective offices from savings in other items of their respective appropriations.

Administrative System

- (62) The Regional Autonomous Government shall have the power to enact its own Regional Administrative Code and Regional Local Government Code consistent with national laws and the Constitution, provided that it shall not in any way diminish the powers and functions already enjoyed by Local Government Units.

Right of Representation and Participation in the National Government and in all Organs of the State

General Principles

- (63) Representation in the National Government by the inhabitants of the Autonomous Region may be effected through appointment or elections and must be subject to standards and guidelines prescribed for the position. When representation is done by appointment, the inhabitants of the Autonomous Region will be appointed by the President of the Philippines to herein specified positions which are policy determining, highly technical, primarily confidential and supervisory upon recommendation by the Head of the Autonomous Government.
- (64) Right or representation shall not be construed in such a way that applicants from the Autonomous Region, especially Muslims and Cultural Communities, for lower positions in the above organs of the government cannot be appointed anymore thereto.

*Manner of Representation and Participation*Executive

- (65) It shall be the policy of the National Government that there shall be at least one (1) member of the Cabinet (with a rank of Department Secretary) who is an inhabitant of the Autonomous Region to be recommended by the head of the Autonomous Government.
- (66) It shall likewise be a policy that there shall be at least one (1) official in each of the departments and the constitutional bodies of the national government who shall be appointed in executive, primarily confidential, highly technical or policy-determining positions, from among the inhabitants of the Autonomous Region upon the recommendation by the Head of the Regional Government. The Head of the Autonomous Government shall participate as ex-officio member of the National Security Council on all matters concerning the Autonomous Region and such other matters as may be determined by the President.
- (67) Government-owned-and-controlled-corporations (GOCCs) or institutions and their subsidiaries in the area of autonomy:
 Where government-owned-and-controlled-corporations (GOCCs) are operating mainly or with a subsidiary in the area of autonomy, as policy, the Regional Autonomous Government shall be given some representation in the Board of Directors or in the policy-making body of said (GOCCs) or their subsidiaries consistent with their respective charters.

Legislative

- (68) It shall be the policy of the National Government that the Regional Autonomous Government shall have one (1) representative in Congress as a Sectoral Representative. This is aside from the representatives/congressmen elected from the congressional districts located in the autonomous region.

Judicial

(69) It shall be a policy of the national government that at least one (1) justice in the Supreme Court and at least two (2) in the Court of Appeals shall come from the Autonomous Region. For this purpose, the Head of the Autonomous Government may submit the names of his recommendees to the Judicial and Bar Council for consideration. This is without prejudice to the appointment of qualified inhabitants of the Autonomous Region to other positions in the judiciary in accordance with their merits and qualifications.

(70) The GRP shall endeavor to cause the appointment, as a member of the Judicial and Bar Council, of a qualified person to be recommended by the Head of the Regional Autonomous Government.

(71) The GRP shall request the Supreme Court to create the Office of the Deputy Court Administrator for the Area of Autonomy, and to appoint thereto a qualified person recommended by the Head of the Regional Autonomous Government.

Civil Service Eligibilities

(72) The civil service eligibility requirements for appointment to government positions shall be applicable in the Autonomous Government. As necessary, the Civil Service Commission shall hold special civil service examinations in the region to further increase the number of eligibles therein. For a period not longer than (5) years from the establishment of the Regional Autonomous Government, the GRP will endeavor to provide for appropriate civil service eligibility to applicants in the Autonomous Region provided the minimum educational qualifications for the position are met.

(B THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SPECIAL REGIONAL SECURITY FORCES FOR THE AUTONOMOUS REGION (PHASE 2 OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TRIPOLI AGREEMENT)

General Principles

- (73) When the new regular Autonomous Regional Government shall have been, there shall be created or constituted a PNP Regional Command for the new Autonomous Region which shall be the Special Regional Security Forces (SRSF) as referred to in Paragraph 8, Article III of the Tripoli Agreement.
- (74) The Regional Legislative Assembly may enact laws governing the PNP Regional Command for the Autonomous Region/SRSF consistent with the constitutional provision that there shall be one police force in the country which is national in scope and civilian in character.
- (75) The PNP Regional Command for the Autonomous Region/SRSF shall be composed of the existing PNP units in the area of autonomy, the MNLF elements and other residents of the area who may later on be recruited into the force.
- (76) The powers and functions of the PNP Regional Command for the Autonomous Region/SRSF, which shall be exercised within the territories covered by the Regional Autonomous Government (RAG), shall be the following:
- (a) Enforce all laws and ordinances relative to the protection of lives and properties;
 - (b) Maintain peace and order and take all necessary steps to ensure public safety;
 - (c) Investigate and prevent crimes, effect the arrest of criminal offenders, bring offenders to justice and assist in their prosecution;
 - (d) Exercise the general powers to make arrest, search and seize in accordance with the Constitution and pertinent laws;
 - (e) Detain and arrest a person for a period not beyond what is prescribed by law, informing the person so detained of all his rights under the Constitution and observing the inherent human rights of the citizen; and
 - (f) Perform such other duties and exercise all other functions as may be provided by law.

- (77) The PNP Regional Command for the Autonomous Region shall be charged with the maintenance and preservation of peace, law and order, and protection of life, liberty and property in the region in consonance with the Constitution.

Organization of the PNP Regional Command for the Autonomous Region/SRSF

- (78) It shall be civilian in nature or character.
 (79) It shall be regional in scope of operations.
 (80) It shall be headed by a Regional Director
 (81) It shall have regional, provincial and city or municipal offices.
 (82) At the provincial level, there shall be a provincial office headed by a Provincial Director.
 (83) At the city or municipal level, there shall be an office/station which shall be headed by a Chief of Police.

Powers of the Head of the Regional Autonomous Government over the PNP Regional Command for the Autonomous Region/SRSF

- (84) Act as the Deputy of the National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) in the region and shall be the ex-officio Chairman of the Regional Police Commission (REPOLCOM).
 (85) Exercise operational control and general supervision and disciplinary powers.
 (86) Employ/deploy the elements of the Regional Command through the Regional Director.
 (87) Assign/reassign officers and other personnel through the Regional Director.
 (88) Recommend to the President the appointment of the Regional Director and his two (2) Deputies.
 (89) Oversee the preparation and implementation of the integrated regional public safety plan.
 (90) Impose, after due notice and summary hearings of citizen's complaints, administrative penalties on personnel of the Regional Command except Presidential Appointees.

Creation of the Regional Police Commission

- (91) There shall be created a Regional Police Commission (REPOLCOM) by the Regional Legislative consistent with the Constitution.
- (92) The REPOLCOM shall be under the supervision of the NAPOLCOM.
- (93) The Chairman of REPOLCOM shall be an ex-officio Commissioner of the NAPOLCOM.

(C) EDUCATION

The Integrated System of Education

- (94) The Regional Autonomous Government shall have an educational component comprising of existing schools, colleges and universities in the present area of autonomy and such other schools and institutions in the future expanded area of autonomy, with the possible inclusion of state universities and colleges (SUCs) to be decided later on. The relationship of the Regional Autonomous Government educational body with the national educational system shall be that of a system and subsystem with emphasis on the autonomy of the subsystem. In the event that SUCs should be included as part of the educational component of the Regional Autonomous Government, the autonomous government recognizes the fiscal autonomy and academic freedom of the SUCs as mandated by their respective charters.
- (95) The Regional Autonomous Government educational system shall, among others, perpetuate Filipino and Islamic ideals and aspirations, Islamic values and orientations of the Bangsamoro people. It shall develop the total spiritual, intellectual, social, cultural, scientific and physical aspects of the Bangsamoro people to make them God-fearing, productive, patriotic citizens, conscious of their Filipino and Islamic values and Islamic cultural heritage under the aegis of a just and equitable society.

The Structure of Educational System

- (96)The elementary level shall follow the basic national structure and shall primarily be concerned with providing basic education; the secondary level will correspond to four (4) years of high school, and the tertiary level shall be one year to (3) years for non-degree courses and four (4) to eight (8) years for degree courses, as the case may be in accordance with existing laws.
- (97)The Regional Autonomous Government educational system will adopt the basic core courses for all Filipino children as well as the minimum required learnings and orientations provided by the national government, including the subject areas and their daily allotment. Teaching materials and curriculum contents shall promote solidarity, unity in diversity, Filipino and Islamic values.
- (98)The addition of more required learnings and instructional materials shall be the prerogative and responsibility of the Autonomous Government.
- (99)The minimum requirements and standards prescribed by Department of Education Culture and Sports (DECS), Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) will be followed by the Autonomous Region.
- (100)The same textbooks of the National Government will be used by schools in the Autonomous Region. The formulation, shaping and revision of textbooks are the responsibilities of the Regional Autonomous Government and the National Government and within agreed norms, academic freedom and relevant legal limits, the formulation and revisions shall emphasize Islamic values or orientation, in addition to Filipino values which include Christian values and values of indigenous people, modern sciences and technology as well as the latest educational thrusts. Having adopted the core curriculum of the national government in consideration of achieving the highest quality of education, students and graduates of the education system of the

Autonomous Region shall be fully accredited when they transfer to non-autonomous regions.

- (101) The integration of Islamic Values in the curriculum should be done gradually after the researches and studies are conducted.
- (102) The teaching of Islamic Values, as well as Filipino values, shall be incorporated in Good Manners and Right Conduct in appropriate grade levels including the tertiary level, subject to agreed norms, academic freedom, and legal limitations.
- (103) Muslim culture, mores, customs and traditions which are mainly based on Islam, as well as the cultures, mores, customs and traditions of Christians and indigenous people, shall be preserved through the regular public and special schools in the Autonomous Region, considering that schools are perpetuating vehicles of the values of the people.

Administration of Educational System

- (104) The management and control, supervision of the entire educational system in the area of autonomy shall be the primary concern of the Regional Autonomous Government, consistent with the declared policies of the national educational system with national educational policies, standards and regulations in collaboration with the educational authorities of the autonomous region. The head of the educational system of the Regional Autonomous Government shall have the right to participate in policy and decision-making activities of the national educational bodies.
- (105) The Regional Autonomous Government shall be represented in the Board of SUCs in the region as co-chairman or at least, co-vice-chairman, as may be provided by law. Appointment to SUC Boards shall be made by the President of the Philippines.
- (106) The Regional Autonomous Government will be responsible for specific administrative, management functions and powers, educational supervision and school administration, and regulation over private schools.

- (107)The organizational structure of the educational system in the autonomous region shall follow the basic structure of the national educational system. The Regional Legislative Assembly may add special structures, if necessary. It shall follow whatever organizations of the curricular years as found in the national set-up.
- (108)Locally funded programs will be the responsibility of the Regional Autonomous Government.
- (109)The selection, recruitment, appointment and promotion of teachers and employees shall be the responsibility of the Regional Autonomous Government in accordance with general qualification standards prescribed by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) provided that the Regional Autonomous Government can initiate regionally-defined standards which are not below national standards.
- (110)The selection, recruitment, appointment and promotion of elementary, secondary and tertiary education employees shall be the responsibility of the Regional Autonomous Government in accordance with general standards of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) and other existing recognized bodies.
- (111)Primary disciplinary authority over officials and employees of the Regional Autonomous Government will be the area of concern of the Regional Autonomous Government in accordance with Civil Service Commission (CSC) rules and regulations. Administrative sanctions deemed appropriate and reasonable as determined by the Civil Service Commission will be the area of concern of the Regional Autonomous Government.

Religious Instruction

- (112)Religious instruction in public schools should be optional, with the written consent of the parent/guardian, taught by the authorities of the religion to which the student belongs, and should not involve additional costs to the government in accordance with national policies.

- (113) Filipino and English shall be the medium of instruction in the areas of Autonomy; provided that Arabic shall be an auxiliary medium of instruction.
- (114) Regional languages may be used as auxiliary official languages in the region as well as the auxiliary medium of instruction and communication.
- (115) Arabic shall be recognized as a medium of instruction in *Madaris* (schools) and other Islamic institutions.
- (116) Arabic shall be taught as a subject in all appropriate grade levels as presently required in the existing laws for Muslims, and optional for non-Muslims.

Madrasah Education

- (117) Existing *Madaris*, including *Madaris Ulya*, shall be included under the Regional Autonomous Government educational system as presently organized in the area of autonomy.
- (118) *Madaris* teachers shall receive compensation out of the funds of the Regional Autonomous Government provided they are employed in the public schools.

Nonformal Education and Specialized Education

- (119) The Regional Autonomous Government educational system shall develop the full potentials of its human resources, respond positively to changing needs and conditions and needs of the environment, and institutionalize nonformal education.

Scholarship and Grants Assistance

- (120) The educational system shall respond positively and effectively to the changing needs and conditions of the times as well as regional and national needs of the environment through the proper use of the latest educational technology, development planning, monitoring, evaluation and appropriate and timely educational intervention as well as linkages with national and international institutions.

- (121)The Regional Autonomous Government educational system shall institutionalize nonformal education in scope and methodology, to include literacy, numeracy and intensive skills training of the youth and adults, to allow them to participate actively and productively in the mainstream of regional and national life.

Scholarship and Grants Assistance

- (122)Universities and colleges in the areas of autonomy may seek and receive overseas donations for educational purposes.
- (123)The Regional Autonomous Government educational system will handle, by administrative arrangement with the national DECS, CHED and TESDA, scholarship programs, both local and foreign, including those provided by the autonomous region pursuant to the provision of existing laws.
- (124)Disadvantaged but deserving students will be given financial assistance by the Regional Autonomous Government out of funds given by the national government for the purpose and from other sources of funds.

Funds for Education

- (125)Funds for education constituting the share of the Regional Autonomous Government as contained in the General Appropriations Act should be given directly to the Autonomous Government.

(D)THE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL SYSTEM, MINES AND MINERALS

- (126)The Regional Autonomous Government in the area of autonomy shall establish its own Regional Economic and Development Planning Board chaired by the head of Government in the area of autonomy. The Board shall prepare the economic development plans and programs of the Autonomous Government.

- (127)The pivotal role of banks and other financial institutions for development in the area of autonomy is recognized.
- (128)The Regional Autonomous Government in the area of autonomy has the power to promote tourism as a positive instrument for development, provided that the diverse cultural heritage, moral and spiritual values of the people in the area of autonomy shall be strengthened and respected.
- (129)The Regional Autonomous Government in the area of autonomy shall have the power to grant incentives, including tax holidays, within the power and resources in the area of autonomy.
- (130)The Regional Autonomous Government in the area of autonomy advocates equal opportunities for all the inhabitants of the autonomy regardless of ethnic origin, culture, sex, creed and religion.
- (131)In enacting tax measures, the Regional Legislative Assembly shall observe the principle of uniformity and equity in taxation and shall not impose confiscatory taxes or fees of any kind.
- (132)The Regional Autonomous Government in the area of autonomy shall have the power to enact a Regional Tax Code and a Regional Local Tax Code applicable to all local government units within the area of autonomy.
- (133)All corporations, partnerships or business entities directly engaged in business in the area of autonomy shall pay their corresponding taxes, fees and charges in the province, city or municipality in the area of autonomy where the establishment is doing business.
- (134)All corporations, partnerships or business entities whose head offices are located outside the area of autonomy, but doing business within its territorial jurisdiction, either by using, exploiting and utilizing the land, aquatic and all natural resources therein, shall pay their income taxes corresponding to their income realized from their business operation in the area of autonomy through the province, city or municipality where their branch offices are located. In case the business establishment has no

branch in the area of autonomy, such business establishment shall pay through the city or municipality where its operation is located.

(135) The Regional Autonomous Government in the area of autonomy as a body of corporate, may contract domestic loans.

(136) The Regional Autonomous Government recognizes the pivotal role played by banks and other financial institutions in the economic development of the area of autonomy. Toward this end, the Autonomous Government shall:

- (a) Encourage the establishment of banks and bank branches in the area of autonomy;
- (b) Encourage the entry and establishment of off-shore banking units of foreign banks in the area of autonomy.

(137) The Regional Autonomous Government may accept foreign financial and economic grants for the development and welfare of the people in the region.

(138) The Regional Autonomous Government may issue its own treasury bills, bonds, promisory notes and other debt papers in consultation and coordination with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

(139) The Regional Autonomous Government may contract foreign loans within the purview of national laws and pertinent monetary and fiscal policies.

(140) In the pursuit of the region's economic growth, development and welfare, the autonomous government shall have the right to formulate economic and financial policies and implement economic and financial programs, taking into account national laws and policies.

(141) The Regional Autonomous Government in the area of autonomy shall encourage, promote and support the establishment of economic zones, industrial centers and ports in strategic areas and growth centers to attract local and foreign investments and business enterprises.

- (142) The Regional Autonomous Government in the area of autonomy shall undertake, encourage, promote and support the establishment of economic zones and industrial centers. And in order to attract local and foreign investments within the area of the zone and outside but within the area of autonomy, the government in the area of autonomy may grant incentives to investors as may be defined in an Autonomous Investment Act to be formulated by the Regional Legislative Assembly within one year from its organization.
- (143) The residents in the area of the autonomy shall have preferential rights over the exploration, development and utilization of natural resources in the area of autonomy, respecting existing rights on the exploitation, exploration, development and utilization of natural resources.
- (144) The Regional Autonomous Government in the area of autonomy shall enjoy fiscal autonomy in budgeting its own revenue resources and block subsidies granted to it by the National Government and foreign donors. Budgeting includes planning, programming and disbursing of funds.
- (145) The National Government shall appropriate for the area of autonomy a sufficient amount and for a period (both to be determined later) for infrastructure projects which shall be based on a development plan duly approved by the Regional Autonomous Government taking into account national policies.
- (146) Except strategic minerals which will be defined later, the control and supervision over the exploration, exploitation, development, utilization and protection of mines and minerals in the area of autonomy shall be vested in the Regional Autonomous Government.
- (147) In the regulation of the exploitation, utilization, development, protection of the natural resources inclusive of mines and minerals, except strategic minerals which will be defined later, the government in the area of autonomy shall enact rules and

regulations and shall impose regulatory fees, taking into account national policies.

- (148) An Islamic Banking Unit shall be established in the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas which shall be staffed by qualified Islamic banking experts nominated by the Governor of the Regional Autonomous Government. The Governor of the Regional Autonomous Government shall nominate at least three (3) qualified persons from the area of the autonomy from which nomination the appointing authority shall appoint the Head of the Unit. The same procedure shall be observed as regards the rest of the positions in the Unit.
- (149) Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas shall have a Regional Office with full banking service in the capital of the government of the Autonomous Region to respond to the growing needs of the banking community in the area of autonomy which shall be established within one (1) year from the establishment of the Autonomous Government. The Governor of the Autonomous Government shall submit a list of qualified recommendees to the appointing authority from which the staff of the regional office may be chosen; provided that those staff who are now occupying and already appointed to positions in the regional office are considered as recommended by the Governor of the Regional Autonomous Government.
- (150) The Regional Autonomous Government shall establish a body in the area of autonomy with the same powers as the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) consistent with the Special Economic Zone Act of 1995.
- (151) All current year collections of internal revenue taxes within the area of autonomy shall, for a period of five (5) years, be allotted for the Regional Autonomous Government (RAG) in the Annual Appropriations Act; Provided that:
- (a) The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) shall continue to collect such taxes and the BIR Collection Districts/Offices concerned shall retain such collections and remit the same to the RAG

through an approved depository bank within thirty (30) days from the end of each quarter of the current year;

- (b) Out of said internal revenue tax collections, fifty percent (50%) of the tax collected under Section 100 (Value-added tax on sale of goods), 102 (Value-added tax on sale of services), Section 112 (Tax on persons exempt from value-added tax), Section 113 (Hotels, motels and others), and Section 114 (Caterers) of the National Internal Revenue Code (NIRC), as amended, in excess of the increase in collections for the immediately preceding years shall be shared by the RAG and the local government units (LGUs) within the area of autonomy as follows:

- (i) Twenty percent (20%) shall accrue to the city or municipality where such taxes are collected; and
- (ii) Eighty percent (80%) shall accrue to the RAG. In all cases, the RAG shall remit to the LGUs their respective shares within sixty (60) days from the end of each quarter of current year.

Provided, however, that provinces, cities, municipalities and *barangays* within the area of autonomy shall continue to receive their respective shares in the internal revenue allotment (IRA), as provided for in Section 284 of the Local Government Code of 1991.

Provided, finally, that the five-year (5) period hereinabove mentioned may be extended upon mutual agreement of the National and Regional Autonomous Governments

(E) SHARI'AH AND JUDICIARY

- (152) The Regional Legislative Assembly of the area of autonomy shall establish Shari'ah Courts in accordance with the existing laws.

(F) TOTALITY CLAUSE

- (153) This Peace Agreement, which is the full implementation of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement, embodies and constitutes the totality

of all agreements, covenants and understandings between the GRP and the MNLF respecting all the subject matters embodied herein. This Agreement supersedes and modifies all agreements, consensus, covenants, documents and communications not referred to or embodied in this Agreement or whose terms and conditions are otherwise inconsistent herewith. Any conflict in the interpretation of this Agreement shall be resolved in the light of the Philippine Constitution and existing laws.

(G) EFFECTIVITY CLAUSES (ASEAN).

(154) This Agreement shall take effect immediately upon the signing hereof by the parties, unless otherwise provided herein.

Done in the City of Manila on the 2nd day of September 1996.

For the GRP For the MNLF

H.E. Ambassador Manuel T. Yan

H.E. Professor Nur Misuari

Chairman of the GRP Peace Panel Chairman of the MNLF Panel

With the participation of the OIC Ministerial Committee of the

Six and the Secretary-General of the OIC

H.E. Mr. Ali Alatas

Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia

Chairman of the OIC Ministerial Committee of the Six

H.E. Dr. Hamid Al-Gabid

Secretary-General of the OIC

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



DR. SAMUEL K. TAN is a native of Mindanao and Sulu. He was born in Siasi, Sulu on December 30, 1933 of Chinese-Tausug-Sama parentage, finished his elementary education valedictorian at the Jolo Tong Jin School in 1949, and graduated from the Zamboanga City High School valedictorian in 1953. Pursuing further studies beyond secondary school, he obtained two years of Business Administration at Silliman University as a consistent university scholar in 1953-1955; BTh at Ebenezer Bible College in 1960; AB History at the Zamboanga A.E. Colleges summa cum laude in 1963; MA History at the University of the Philippines, Diliman in 1967; and Ph.D. in Social Science at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University, New York in 1973.

As educator, academician, and scholar, Dr. Tan held several important positions in government service for which he received distinction and awards. He served for about thirty years in the Faculty of History of the University of the Philippines at Diliman (1963-1994) and became Department Chairman (1977-1982). He also served as a Research Fellow and Consultant of the Tadhana Special Research Project, Office of the President, Malacañang Palace (1974-1985); Consultant, Region IX Commission in 1976 and of Senator Santanina T. Rasul (1987-1992), SPDA Administrator Almarin C. Tillah (1999), and Congressman Nur G. Jaafar (2001-2002); Director-Convenor of the Mindanao Studies Program of the University of the Philippines (1994-2002); Chairman-Executive Director of the National Historical Institute (1997-1998); Commissioner of the National Commission For Culture and the Arts (1997-1998) and the National Centennial Commission (1997-1999); Research Fellow, Coordinator, and Consultant of the Regional Histories Project of the National Library, Manila (1981-1983); and lecturer in various institutions such as the National Defense College of the Philippines, Development Academy of the Philippines, Sophia University, Silsila Dialogue Institute, De la Salle University, UP Mindanao, Mindanao State University, etc.

Beyond his roles in government service, Dr. Tan also served in various non-governmental capacities in both national and international level such as Coordinator of UNESCO's research project on "Civilization Related to Rice Cultivation" (1979-1980), Member of the UNESCO Advisory Committee For the Study of the Southeast Asian Cultures (1982-1984), Member of the Fulbright-Hays Selection Committee of the Philippine American Educational Foundation (1988-1989), Chairman of the Board of Sunnyside Learning Center (Zamboanga City, 2000) and Organizer, Director, and Paper Presenter in numerous local, national, and international conferences since 1963.

From national and international institutions and agencies, Dr. Tan received recognition and awards such as the Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship Grant (1970-1973), Chairman's Award of Region IX Commission for outstanding achievements and service (1980), UP Professorial Chair for History (1988), Fulbright-Hays Research Grant (1984), Ford-Rockefeller Grant (Summer 1993), Chiang Ching Kuo Foundation Research Grant (1995), UP Alumni Association Outstanding Award for History (1998), National Historical Institute Distinguished Service Award (1998),

National Commission For Culture and the Arts Distinguished Commissioner Award (1999), and the Toyota Foundation Research Grant (2002).

