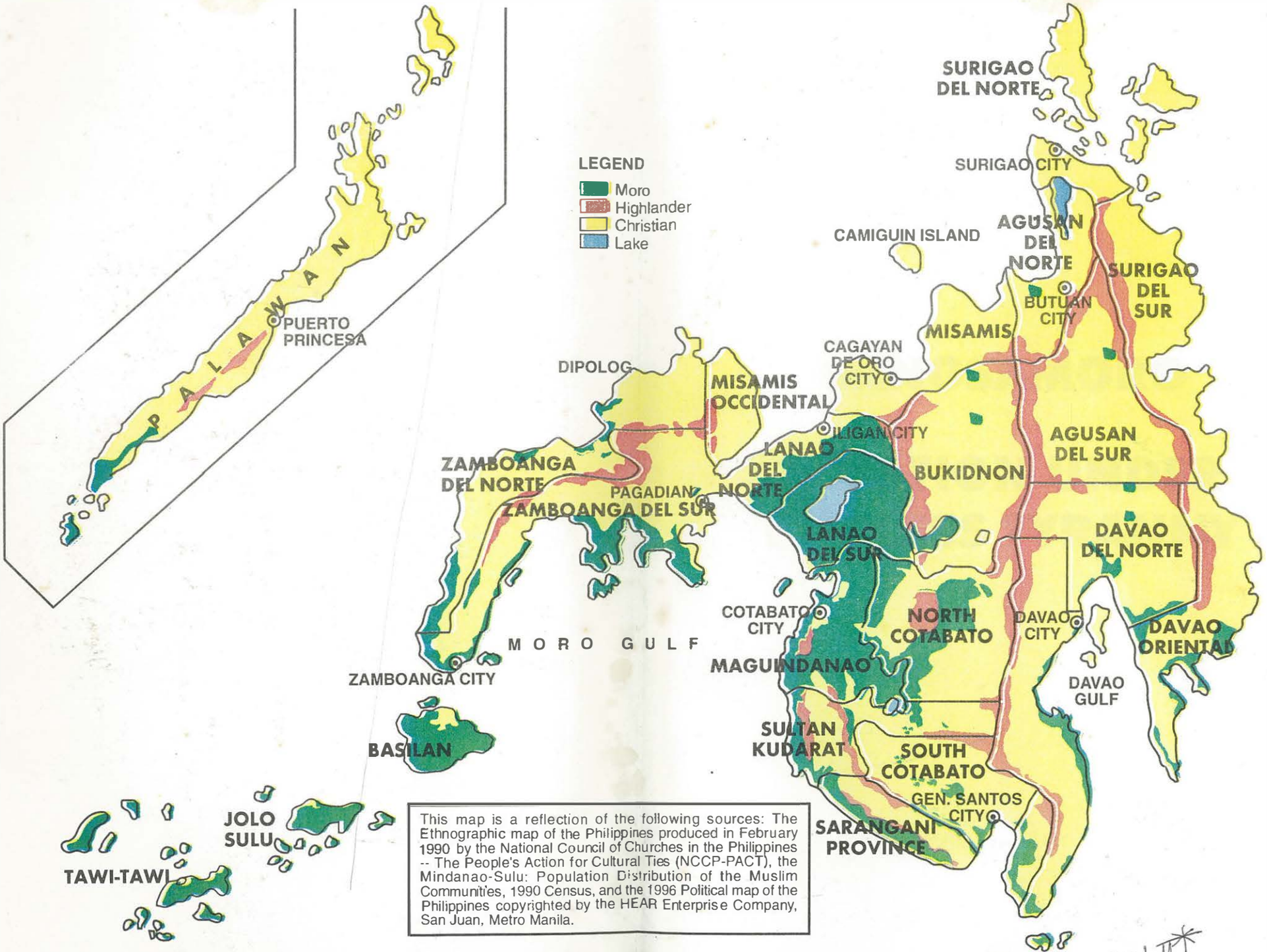


This map is a reflection of the following sources: The Ethnographic map of the Philippines produced in February 1990 by the National Council of Churches in the Philippines -- The People's Action for Cultural Ties (NCCP-PACT), the Mindanao-Sulu: Population Distribution of the Muslim Communities, 1990 Census, and the 1996 Political map of the Philippines copyrighted by the HEAR Enterprise Company, San Juan, Metro Manila.

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Dedication

To

the gallant and patriotic

Bangsamoro *mujahideen* of the Moro

Islamic Liberation Front,

living and departed,

this work is humbly dedicated.

PREFACE

This edition offers the readers some additional materials, although, in the main, it preserves the contents of the previous editions. Every word and paragraph has once again been reviewed and some changes have been made in several portions. Chapter 10 is split into two chapters to conform with the updated information and relevant developments from the on-going GRP-MILF peace talks. The bibliography has been thoroughly reviewed and brought up to date. However, since the work has fundamentally gained general acceptance, it remains little changed in scope and character from the second edition.

The original title of this book, "Bangsamoro: A Nation Under Endless Tyranny" as appearing in the first edition, is reinstated. This is in answer to several suggestions, both solicited and unsolicited, from readers and friends who wish this work to state in categorical terms which nation is referred to and, more importantly, to do a fine job of imparting some of the hard facts of the seemingly endless bloody human drama in Mindanao. Having found the suggestions very meritorious and well thought-out, the author has but to acquiesce.

Many persons, comrades-in-arms, professional colleagues and others have been helpful to the author over the years. Some contributed ideas, others have called his attention to errors or misconceptions which he has tried to rectify according to his best judgment. He wishes to express his indebtedness and gratitude to two distinguished personalities, namely, former Ambassador Alunan C. Glang, for providing some professional advice and research materials; and former Congressman Michael Mastura (1st District, Maguindanao) for his valuable suggestions. He is also particularly obliged to express his special indebtedness to the *Manila Times* columnist Marites Danguilan Vitug, for her professional help; to Atty. Soliman Santos Jr. of the Manila-based Institute of Politics and Governance, for suggesting to the author the reinstatement of the original title of this book; to Mr. Jess Y. Dalisay, III, for editing this book; and to Prof. Rufa Cagoco-Guiam of the Mindanao State University, General Santos City, for her valuable academic assistance. Further, this acknowledgment can never be complete until and unless mention has been made of Larry Mutawaddin, an editorial assistant; Jun Abdulmanaf, for providing ready-made reference on the GRP-MILF peace talks; Wahab Guialal, for assisting in the research works; and Abdulbasset Kamansa, Yusoph Abdula, and Haron Abdulkarim, for com-

puter assistance.

Finally, without the sincere prodding of friends and comrades -- considering the pressures of work, the lack of material time, and the absence of serene atmosphere -- the third edition of this book would not have been written and published at a time it is needed most. To all of them, my utmost admiration and thanks.

SALAH JUBAIR

October, 1999

FOREWORD

The author Salah Jubair was a young university graduate at the time he joined the Muslim revolutionary movement in Mindanao and Sulu in 1972. Once in the movement, he became a dedicated high ranking officer in the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). Currently, he sits in the Central Committee of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and chairs its information committee.

When Chairman Salamat Hashim moved the MILF base to Pakistan in 1981, the author started working on his manuscript upon sitting in the Central Committee. The first edition of the thin volume came out in 1984. Published by the Islamic Research Academy at Mansoorah, Lahore, it had only a limited circulation of 1,000 copies. A revised edition was published in 1997 with updated data complete with maps, footnotes and index.

I came to know the author through my brother Datu Tocao O. Mastura who was at that time the head of the Secretariat of the Kutawato Revolutionary Committee. Even then as a youthful revolutionary, Salah Jubair showed fascination with the works of Abul Ala Maududi and Mohammad Iqbal that helped to provide him with an ideological outlook.

Given the goal set forth in the original Preface, the author portrays the sentiments and aspirations of a "freedom fighter." In a manner of speaking, this expanded version tends to rectify the various politically incorrect perceptions associated with the *Bangsamoro* people's struggle. Thus, in proper context, the author provides the currents of backdrop needed to understand the events that are unfolding in today's headlines.

In an effort to render factual the direction of contemporary Islamic movement in Mindanao and Sulu, Jubair's narrative becomes impersonal in nature. This feature of his writing is a built-in constraint to an otherwise interesting treatment of the subject considering his conviction that "only someone involved body and spirit in the present struggle" can portray the aspirations. On the other hand, his approach serves to place from an "insider's perspective" the avoidance of what would merely be of descriptive propaganda value.

Yet, in real sense, the eyewitness historian who is an active participant to the march of events cannot be less than personally revealing. One makes up for personal involvement by filling in the narrative with factual quotations from others at the risk nonetheless of rendering the work tedious. In the final analysis, the narrative content can speak for itself.

I commend the author for restating the so-called "Moro Problem". The reference point for the author's thesis is that "the Moros are a wronged people". The Epilogue argues it: "After all, the Moros are not really the problem ... [for, they are] the ones invaded in their homeland, and deprived of their basic rights as a sovereign people." And it is undeniable that the age-old Moro struggle has turned out to be the longest active movement in the region of Southeast Asia.

Certain ideas of disparate nationhood within the Philippine nation-state are reflected in the pages of the present volume. Although Salah Jubair gives a story of the split between the Moro fronts, he has glossed over the bifurcated lines behind the breakaway between the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). To the best of my informed knowledge, the period covered by this book comes under the first twenty-year plan of the MILF. As is openly known, a fifty-year plan is just beginning in its appointment with destiny.

Mention is made also in the Epilogue of the "Bangsamoro People's Consultative Assembly" of 1996 wanting independence. The "Situation of Muslims in the Philippines" has been carried as a major item in the agenda of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) for decades. Yet the MNLF has but achieved an OIC "observer status". Though it used to be taken up together with Eritrea, the importance given to this question by OIC can be gauged from the creation of the quadripartite ministerial committee that is now expanded to six members. While the Eritrean question was resolved by conceding to it independent statehood, the border unrest with Ethiopia has resurfaced.

Yet a point has to be made that the "Bangsamoro" people's holding the right to secede is entirely a different question from getting to take a shot at statehood. Only recently the weekly ***Time Magazine*** ran an article that said: "No international support, no plan to govern and no time to plead your cause mean no state." Elsewhere, it noted that once you start tinkering with global cartography,

everyone wants his say: "For that matter, why not independent Kurdistan? Or Chechnya or East Timor or Quebec?" So, if a historic part of the Mindanao and Sulu region is one malleable border, why not? It boils down to the statecraft rule that it is hard to win at the bargaining table what you are unable or unwilling to win on the battlefield.

I cannot resist pointing out that this century is closing with the protracted quest of "freedom fighters" coming full circle in the borderlands. That events in the past few years in Eurasia and Asia have caught the author's attention at the tail end of his narrative, in no time, will encourage him to write the sequel to this present volume. What readers would not wish to see and feel the drama of events through a *mujahideen's* eyes?

This work is a demonstration of the changed situation particularly from the furtive way that the peace process in Muslim Mindanao was handled in the past. To me, the value of this book lies in the documentation of sentiments and aspirations that now invite open debates.

DATU MICHAEL O. MASTURA

September, 1999

PROLOGUE

"It's better to build two States and
Be friends, than build one and become
Enemies for the rest of our lives."

Simon Peres
(PDI, September 10, 1998)

What makes a Nation?

The "one nation, one state" concept, therefore, in the long term is not acceptable, and does not seem to approximate the realities of the Republic of the Philippines. This single nation concept for the Moros and the Filipinos is highly debatable, given the realities of the Republic of the Philippines. A nation is defined as a group of people who collectively feel that they belong together. **Nationality is formed by the desire to form a nation. In other words, a nation is a group of people who think they are a nation. It assumes a common conception of the identity, the purposes, and future prospects of the people. Kohn says that it is "living and active corporate will" which makes a nation. It is known to have the following essential elements: language, territory, ethnicity, religion and common culture** (Mark N. Hagopian," Ideal and Ideologies of Modern Politics (New York: The Alpine Press), pp. 64-77).

The Bangsamoro, who constituted a nationality distinct from, and very much older than, that of the Indios now converted to Christian Filipinos, throughout the centuries of Spanish conquest possessed a very strong sense of group consciousness or a "bangsa" (nation) and continued to assert their identity in that way, and in Islam only.

The term Filipino can only refer to a segment of our people who bowed in submission to the might of Spain. Certainly, the Muslims do not fall under the category of Filipino. Being a historic people, the Muslims therefore cannot but reject the generalization that the word Filipino applies to them as well. Because when the word Filipino is applied to a segment of our people, the implication is

Philippine Islands), and was derived from or at least named in honor of King Felipe II, for whom the Philippines was named after. The name or term Filipino can only be applied, therefore, to those who were once subjects of Spain. This is a historical fact which cannot be disputed. In so far as the Muslims are concerned, the appellation Filipino does not have any meaning for them. That is the reason why they resent the idea of being just called Filipinos (Alunan C. Glang, "Capsule History of the Muslim Filipinos," Muslim Secession or Integtration? (Quezon City: RP Garcia Publishing Co., 1969), p. 4).

The famous Muslim scholar on Muslim affairs, Cesar Adib Majul, of the University of the Philippines, likewise questions the time-honored concept of "one-nation" for the Philippines. In a major speech on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the Philippine Historical Society on August 7, 1966, he contended that:

> *Any modern Filipino historian, still following the principle voiced by some Spaniards of the last century that the Catholic religion is an essential element in the "national integrity" of the Philippines or that the Philippines is a Christian nation, will naturally look at the Muslims of the South as those 'other Filipinos' who have not played an important role in building our growing national community, a concept presently unacceptable on legal amd historical grounds (CF Michael Mastura, "Maguindanaon Hopes and Fears from the Constitutional Convention," in Understanding Islam and Muslims in the Philippines, ed. Peter Gowing (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1988), p. 1).*

Written with greater clarity and commanding attention is Salah Jubair's third edition of "BANGSAMORO: A NATION UNDER ENDLESS TYRANNY." When Salah Jubair talks of a nation, foremost in his mind is the ordeal the Moro people went through during the centuries of the Spanish conquest, decades of American so-called tutelage, and now nearly a century of the Indios' scheming and manipulation, which resulted in the destruction and mutilation of their homeland.

Twice in their centuries of struggle and martial history, the Moro people have endured misfortune from the hands of the Indios, now Filipinos. Twice in their history, too, the Moros were "sold," first by the Indios, when they were

included in the transaction between the Friars and Aguinaldo in 1896. The second instance was when the United States purchased from Spain, the Philippines, including the Moro Homeland, without their knowledge and consent for 20,000 Mexican dollars, following the signing of the Treaty of Paris of December 10, 1898. Likewise, in the first instance, the Moro Homeland was included without their knowledge and consent, when the Spanish Friars bought "Mother Filipinas" for 400,000 from Aguinaldo.

The Moro Nation in the Philippines has played and continues to play an assertive historical role, clearly intent on determining its own future. Those who hug the safety of the sidelines, are witnesses to the will of the Moro people to fight, suffer and sacrifice for freedom, both from foreign invaders and Filipino domination. Thereby, the Moro people uphold their historical legacy as the **UNCONQUERED.** Allah Almighty Himself said:

> *Ye are the best community that hath been raised up for mankind. Ye enjoined right conduct and forbid indecency; and ye believed in Allah.*
>
> (Surah III, v. 110)

Makati City
September, 1999

ALUNAN C. GLANG

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CHAPTER 1

ONCE UPON A TIME

Crossing the Bridge

It was widely believed forty years ago that people came to the Philippines in several migratory waves through land bridges that once linked the present islands of this country with mainland Asia. They walked dry-shod into this archipelago with their beasts of burden over these land bridges at a time which prehistorians refer to as the Pleistocene or Great Ice Age. During this period, the waters of the ocean stood 156 feet below the present levels, thereby allowing many necks of land to protrude above the surface and form land masses or bridges which enabled the first man to cross into what would later be called the Philippines.

Centuries after this period the great flood took place. The polar ice thaw increased the volume of ocean waters, causing them to rise to the present levels. Subsequently, all the land bridges were inundated and disappeared from view, and all succeeding migrations were made possible only by the use of boats.

The wave migration theory was first advanced by Spanish friars who speculated on the origins of the Filipinos and the Moros.[1] However, in some of their writings, they were inclined to consider the latter as a separate race.[2] In 1882, Ferdinand Blumentritt, an Austrian Filipinist, also subscribed to this theory that there were three waves of Malay migrants who came to our islands. But it was Prof. H. Otley Beyer, at one time head of the Anthropology Department at the University of the Philippines, who made this theory very popular and accepted for several decades. Beyer's long years of archaeological research dwelt on retrieving facts of past cultures in the islands, mainly from artifacts, bones and other remains. His findings shed light on the cultural, political, and economic existence, and even the beliefs, of peoples.

It was admitted, therefore, as a scholarly theory, that there were

three waves of migration of peoples towards the archipelago, including Mindanao and Sulu, each wave comprising several or scattered minor movements. The theory held that the first to arrive via the land bridges were the aborigines or first inhabitants. Estimated to have come as early as 21,000 or 22,000 years ago, they were dark-skinned, kinky-haired, short-statured, and primitive in styles. Among this group was the Java Man, who came first, followed by the "little people": Negritos or "Aetas," Australoid Sakai, and Proto-Malays.

Among the next group, after the Great Ice Age, from 3,000 BC onward, were people of the Indonesian stock, who came in two migratory waves by sea from South Asia and settled in the country. They came by dugout canoes or plank-built boats. These Indonesians, taller in height and lighter in skin, introduced bronze and the rice terraces.

The third migrants, who came centuries after the Indonesians, were the brown-skinned, medium-height Malays. They were expert navigators, potters, weavers, blacksmiths and bold adventurers. Most of the Filipinos and Moros today are descended from this group. However, in the case of the latter, it is believed that they first came to Mindanao and Sulu not later than the first century before Prophet Jesus Christ (Peace be upon him).

The Contrary View

Up to 1953, Beyer's Wave Migration Theory remained unquestioned. Subsequently, however, most prehistorians surmised that there were only two movements of peoples into the islands of Southeast Asia and the Pacific which explain the present populations. The first, occurring more than 6,000 years ago, was that of the Australoids, that included the Australian aborigines, the Ainus, the Dravidians – the population of the Vedda of Sri Lanka – and, debatably, the Melanesians, Negritos and Papuans. Generally, this group is characterized by dark skin pigmentation. The second wave, presumably from five or six thousand years ago, composed the Southern Mongoloids, commonly known as the "brown race."

They are also called Austronesians, because their descendants speak languages belonging to that group. The Austronesian language family, also known as Malayo-Polynesian, has a variety of more than six hundred languages that spread from Madagascar in the coast of Africa to Easter Island near South America.

Additional research on the subject in the last forty years casts doubt on Beyer's assumption. Geologists, archaeologists, linguists, and prehistorians, in their respective fields, all disagree with one or more aspects of his theory. The main objection to his work is that it was flawed by inadequate evidence, dubious methodology and pure speculation.

One of those who dissented was Dr. Fritjof Voss, a German scientist, who studied the geology of the Philippines. He said the Philippines was never a part of mainland Asia as proven in 1964-67 when a scientific study was made on the thickness of the earth's crust. It was discovered that the 35-kilometer thick crust below China does not stretch to the Philippines. On the contrary, the Philippines sits along a great earth fault line reaching downward to deep trenches.

In 1975, a young Filipino anthropologist, Landa Jocano, also criticized Beyer's theory, particularly on the issue of the Negritos as the first inhabitants of the Philippines. He argued that the fossil remains of ancient men whom Beyer tagged Negritos could in no way be conclusively identified as such. He even charged Western colonizers of deliberately fragmenting the population into ethnic groups to advance their colonial interests.[3]

Newer theories may arise in the future in the attempts to explain this Philippine phenomenon, but seen from the practical side of the lives of the people their value is negligible. For theories are largely speculative; they often arbitrarily correlate facts or even mere assumptions, drawing therefrom conclusions that may defy validation. What may be heretical today may be revered tomorrow, or vice versa.

Pre-Islamic Society

As mentioned earlier, the Moros belonged to the third wave of migrants in Beyer's Wave Migration Theory and second or last in the post-Beyer migration models. In either case, they were estimated to have arrived about two centuries before the birth of Prophet Jesus Christ (Peace be upon him) and they already exhibited a higher stage of development, especially in the art of warfare. They inhabited the plains, valleys, coastal lands, and riverine areas. They formed settlements or communities with political organizations along family or blood lines.

The pre-Islamic Moro social structure had three classes: the *datus* or chiefs, the commoners or citizens and the slaves. The title *datu* embodied both a political function and social status and extended to the incumbent ruler and all members of the ruling elite. Generally, the right to rule hinged on direct descent from the ruling class. In some instances, like exceptional bravery or victory in war, a commoner could become a *datu,* or in the case of the slave, could buy his liberty by paying a stipulated amount. The system was not as rigid as that of the caste system of India where no one was allowed to leave the caste into which he was born.

The realm of the *datu* was more or less equal to that of a contemporary village or the Spanish-type barrio. However, there was no common term for this political unit, for the Moros spoke at least thirteen languages or dialects, most of which were mutually unintelligible. Some say this political unit was called *banua*[4]. But this term is clearly Visayan, and therefore, leaves the claim in doubt. Among the Moro dialects and languages, only the Tausog exhibits a commonality with Visayan. Both belong to the central branch of the Australoid languages being spoken in this country. In its political connotation, *banua* means natural environment or a country, a homeland. The *banua* encompassed one or more islands, including the seas thereat, as well as the vegetation.[5] Sometimes one *datu* allied himself with another to form a confederation of settlements for purposes of constituting a more formidable alliance against a rival *datu* or *datus* or for commercial purposes. Generally, *datus*

were of equal status or footing. However, one could emerge superior to the other by force of arms, bravery in war or by physical prowess.

In the beginning, the prevalent method of settling conflicts was by use of force, but later on a code of laws evolved to provide for a more practical way of resolving disputes since warfare was a costly and losing enterprise, especially to the vanquished.

The economy was based primarily on agriculture, although weaving, pottery-making, blacksmithing and fishing were also prevalent. Lands were fertile and vast. However, cultivation was mainly along the rivers, lakes, coastal areas, plains and valleys. The use of irrigation ditches was extensive. "Slash-and-burn" or swidden farming was popular in the uplands, especially in the dry season. In commerce, the barter system was in use, for money was not yet invented.

The foregoing sketch should be regarded only as a fraction of the bigger picture. Part of it has basis in history; the rest results from hypotheses about the complex process whereby our ancestors were subjected to or interacted with various components, such as individuals, goods, ideas, and other factors.

Arrival of Islam

How Islam came to Mindanao and Sulu is a complex question that cannot be addressed by a single and simple answer. However, it is a fact of history that after the death of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) in 623 AC[6], a general expansion of Islam ensued. Either through missionary efforts or from military victories, the Islamic world expanded to dominate the Middle East, North Africa, Spain, Central Asia, and Eastern Europe. The spread continued towards the Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia and then to Mindanao and Sulu.

That Islam came to the Philippine islands via the trade route in a roundabout way is generally accepted by historians. It followed the route that originated from Arabia overland through Central Asia

and then overseas to India, China and thence to Southeast Asia and Africa.

Which single group -- traders, missionaries, crusaders, etc. -- was responsible for introducing Islam in Mindanao and Sulu, remains unclear. Presumably, no single operational factor can be credited with the distinction of having spread the religion to this place so far away from the cradle of Islam. Nonetheless, after considering all the various aspects of the issue, historians seem agree that the coming of Islam to Mindanao and Sulu was the result of the missionary activities of Arab traders and teachers or *sufis* who came along the trade routes. The participation of some Muslims from the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent is also admitted.

Be that as it may, there is yet no sufficient evidence to support the contention that Islam was introduced in Mindanao and Sulu much earlier than the closing years of the fourteenth century. But there is one piece of archaeological information that may support the theory that Islam may have arrived much earlier -- the discovery of a tombstone on the slope of Bud Datu bearing, among other entries, the year of the death of the deceased: 710 AH[7], which corresponds to 1310 AC in the Gregorian calendar. The deceased was someone bearing the name of Tuhan Muqbalu or Maqbalu. The title *Tuhan,* said the noted Muslim scholar Cesar Adib Majul of the University of the Philippines, implied that the dead was a chief or person of high authority.[8]

As in the Malayan peninsula, Indonesia and Borneo, the first to become Muslims in Mindanao and Sulu were those living in or near trading posts or along the trade routes. This is why most historians, if not all, believe that the early missionaries of Islam were traders. The more likely possibility, however, is that the introduction of Islam in this part of the globe, as pointed out earlier may have resulted from the combined efforts of traders, teachers or *sufis*, although a conscious and systematic plan of carrying out that task was evidently lacking.

In Sulu, an Arab known locally as Tuan Mashaika was credited

with having founded the first Muslim community. He married a local maiden and raised his children as Muslims. Later, in 1380, another Arab, Makhdum Karim, reverently called Sharif Awliya arrived and converted a large number of inhabitants to Islam. Makhdum was responsible for the founding of the first mosque in the Philippines at Tubig-Indangan on Simunul Island.

In 1390, Rajah Baguinda arrived and continued the works of Makhdum Karim. By this time, a flourishing Muslim community in Sulu evolved and by the middle of the following century the Sulu sultanate was established. The first crowned sultan was Syed Abubakar, an Arab from South Arabia, who was said to be a direct descendant of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). Upon his ascension to the throne, Abubakar used the regnal name Sharif Hashim.

In Mindanao, Sharif Muhammad Kabungsuan, also claiming to be of Hashimite descent, is credited as being the most instrumental in the propagation of the new faith in the island. He landed first at Malabang (now in Lanao del Sur) in the year 1475, by the account of one historian and 1515 by another[9], and subsequently proceeded to Cotabato, where he firmly planted the seed of the new creed. Out of his marital union with the local maidens, the Maguindanao sultanate and Buayan sultanate came into existence. Succeeding sultanates, though of lesser status and power, claimed lineage from him.

Antedating the coming of Sharif Kabungsuan, local genealogies or *tarsilas* of Maguindanao speak of a certain Sharif Awliya, also from Johore, who is said to have introduced Islam to the people of Mindanao around 1460. Some writers identify him as the same Makhdum Karim who set foot in Jolo earlier. His story, though appearing mythical, is quite consequential when related to the question of who first came to plant the seed of Islam in Mindanao. He was averred to have come to Mindanao in the air in search of "paradise" on the hill of Tantawan (now PC Hill or Colina Hill in Cotabato City). There on the hill he met an houri (celestial maiden), married her and they begot a daughter by the name of Paramisuli,

a name reserved to the royalty. Sharif Awliya, not long after, quit the place, leaving behind his wife and daughter. The Maguindanao genealogies continue to narrate that, soon after, another Arab, Sharif Maraja, also from Johore, arrived. He landed and stayed at a settlement called Slangan, in the vicinity of the present Post Office in Cotabato City and, soon afterward, married Paramisuli, the daughter of Sharif Awliya.

Another tradition, this time from Lanao, speaks of another Sharif Alawi who came possibly by way of Maguindanao to Lanao and up to the mouth of Tagoloan River in the present-day Misamis Oriental, later proceeding to Bukidnon. There is scant evidence to prove this journey, especially his missionary activities in Bukidnon, where there are pockets of Muslim communities today.

Before the advent of Islam, the people of Mindanao and Sulu were animists. There was no community ever reported orally or in writing to be monotheist. They worshipped stones, stars, moons and other inanimate objects. *Diwata* and *anito* were essential features of their belief system. Conversion to Islam was generally regarded as easy and unconstrained except in some isolated cases preceded by clashes. With a vastly superior knowledge, usually associated with "magical powers," the newcomers easily got past the local opposition. Rendering the task much easier was the Arabian blood running in their veins, which hastened rather than hindered acceptance not only by the masses of the people but even by the old ruling classes. And with Islam came a new world outlook and power structure, and the cleansing force in weeding out pagan rituals and ceremonies. These pagan practices gave way to the uncompromising belief in one single Supreme Being called *Allah*, in the equality and brotherhood of the faithful, and in the establishment of goodwill and prosperity for all. Islam revolutionized the lifestyles of the faithfuls in all spheres of existence. As proof of its persuasiveness, Islam gained new adherents who proved to be among its ablest and bravest defenders as shown in the succeeding three centuries of continuous warfare with colonizers.

In many instances, global politics affected directly or indirectly the turn of events even in faraway places. Had not the Moors been defeated by the Spaniards in 1492, the Spaniards could not have come in 1521 and conquered the Philippines. Or had the Spaniards delayed their coming to the Philippines for just half a century, there would be no such thing as the "only Christian country" in Asia. There could have been an entirely different story to tell regarding the spread of Islam in Luzon and the Visayas.

There is evidence that as early as the last years of the fifteenth century, Islam was already gaining headway in many places in the Philippines. It was carried directly from or via Sulu or Mindanao by preachers, traders or voyagers from Borneo who settled among the inhabitants of the islands. In the words of one popular writer:

> *... It is hard to believe that Manila was once firmly under Muslim heel, Muslims controlled the seat of government, the wealth and the trade up and down the Pasig and around Bai lake and Batangas as well as sea lanes to Mindanao and Borneo.*
>
> *The Muslims were the ruling class in Luzon, the rich traders, cultural leaders and missionaries, the ones with knowhow and the right connections, the literacy and what's more, the right religion.*[10]

Aside from Manila, then known as *Selurong*,[11] Islam had already gained ground in Batangas, Pampanga, Cagayan, Mindoro, Palawan, Catanduanes, Bonbon, Cebu, Oton, Laguna and other districts. Preachers of Islam, all reportedly coming from Borneo, came to teach the natives the rudiments of the new religion. Such Islamic practices as circumcision, reading the Qur'an, avoidance of pork, and the use of Muslim names, found early acceptance among the natives of these districts.

What is metropolitan Manila today was formerly the bastion of Islam. Manila was ruled by Rajah Sulaiman Mahmud, jointly with or assisted by Rajah Matanda, his uncle, and Tondo was under the

rule of Rajah Lakandula. Manila was not only the commercial center but a powerful fort (*cotta*) built near the mouth of the Pasig River in defense of the realm. And so were Cebu and Mactan of Rajah Humabon and Rajah Lapulapu, respectively. Although archrivals for power, many believed that the two chieftains were Muslims,[11] or at least were deeply influenced by Islam. In a paper, former Governor Carlos Fortich Jr. of Bukidnon ventured to contend that Lapulapu could have been an over-zealous tribute collector of the Sulu sultanate.[12]

CHAPTER 2

A NATION IS BORN

Nation Defined

The concept of "nation" is something recent in the history of mankind. Before the last century people were not aware of this chauvinistic term, as it is felt and understood today. Therefore, let us first endeavor to understand and define what a "nation" is, before we move on to ascertain whether the *Moro* constitutes a nation.

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines a nation as, among other related meanings: (1) a community of people composed of one or more nationalities and possessing a more or less defined territory and government; and (2) a territorial division containing a body of people of one or more nationalities and usually characterized by a relatively large size and independent status. Another authority has posited that a nation has several basic ingredients such as common or related blood, common language, common religion, common historical tradition, and, above all, common customs and habits.[1] And in its perfect form, it is a group of people having a common civilization, common customs and traits of character, a common literature, and common traditions.[2] There is, however, a very pragmatic view on this subject. Two noted Filipino authors, Jose Aruego and Gloria Aruego-Torres, father and daughter, said that a nation exists where its component atoms believe it to be a nation.[3] They concluded that despite the lack of a common religion or a common language a nation can exist.

With these definitions at our disposal, we hope to settle the question of Moro nationhood once and for all.

Concept of Nationalism

To repeat, nationhood is a modern concept which only came to ascendancy in the last century and a half. It is the product of the

chaos and political upheavals of the 18th century and a result of the French Revolution. It was spread to other lands by wars and commerce, and by colonialism itself.

In ancient times the state was either a city-state, such as Athens, Sparta, or early Rome, or a far-flung empire like Macedonia and Persia. Even in antiquity, people were already conscious of their racial or cultural differences, and each people sought to view itself as "superior," as the Jews had considered themselves the "chosen people" or the Greeks had regarded non-Greeks as "barbarians."

This sense of belonging to a unified or homogeneous group was the offshoot of many factors, such as the need to defend a common frontier, the development of a common tongue or language, a common belief, a common history and tradition, and even shared conviction to close ranks and to resist a common aggressor. Racial and cultural prejudice directed against a group or people could also provide impetus to the formation of a homogeneous grouping. There may be other reasons.

Filipino Nationhood

The definition of a nation given by Jose Aruego and Gloria Aruego-Torres is perhaps the most unrestrained and liberal. Obviously, the consent of a people, as a "clearly expressed desire of continuing the common life," is enough to constitute a nation. However, in the case of Filipino political life, the spirit of nationalism emerged only after the 19th century.[4] Before this time there was no Filipino nation or a sense of nationalism to speak of. Rather there were only ethnic groups who shared common racial and cultural features. During the Spanish Period, to call oneself *Filipino* was as good, or as bad, as admitting being a subject of King Philip of Spain and his progenies.

The term *Filipino* was originally applied to Spaniards born in the Philippines, but began to include the natives in 1898 when Gov Gen. Basilio Agustin sought their aid and loyalty against the United States. Before this time, the natives were derisively referred to as

Indios with all the most disparaging and hostile connotations. The Spaniards described the *Indio* as a "machine that walks, eats, sleeps and exists," "inferior race," "racial savages," and someone with "limited intelligence."

Several factors paved the way for the development of Filipino nationalism. Its formation was no doubt the consequence of centuries of misrule and exploitation and was hastened by political and economic developments in the Philippines and Europe. As noted earlier, the racial discrimination of the Spaniards against the natives proved to be one of the strongest unifying factors among the geographically separated and linguistically diverse natives. The rise of the middle class among the natives and their subsequent access to the liberal and revolutionary ideas of Europe and America, as well as the secularization controversy that led to the execution of Fathers Jose Burgos, Mariano Gomez and Jacinto Zamora, were some of the factors that gave birth to Filipino nationalism.

Thus, Filipino nationalism was a belated development. If there had been earlier revolts against Spain they were no more than pocket rebellions against unjust rule, their causes ranging from personal grievances, opposition to excessive impositions, and religious unrest, to agrarian complaints. None, except the 1896 Revolution, was staged in the name and pursuit of a separate nation. And almost all were undertaken by chiefs or religious leaders of the fragmented barangays of Luzon and the Visayas.

Evolution of Moro Nationalism

All the monickers assigned to the natives, *Indio, Moro and Filipino* were given by the Spaniards. History should credit them for giving us all these names, either out of hatred or by reasons of similarities, or by force of circumstances, or by all of the above.

As earlier mentioned, the word *Moro* is not a new name. It was derived from the ancient Mauri or Mauritania and was later on applied on the Berbers of North Africa and those who came and conquered Spain. The name, therefore, did not exclude the Arabs

themselves especially the Umayyad princes who founded the Umayyad kingdom of Spain. In a larger context, the name is not confined to a group of people, or a nationality, but applied rather to a religious affiliation, transcending the barriers of geography, race and time.

By a confluence of circumstances, the Spaniards were correct as far as the issue of religious identification is concerned. But on the aspect of nationality they probably erred, for there was no Moro nation to speak of at the time -- there were only people of the same racial group, the Indo-Malayan race, who happened to inhabit certain parts of the archipelago claimed for the King of Spain. The only distinction was that one group was Islamized and the other was still pagan. Had not the Spaniards come at that time there would have been at least three or four kingdoms, one in Manila, two in Mindanao and one in Sulu, and all or most of the inhabitants, like in nearby Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei, would have become Muslims.

But destiny had it – irreversibly – that the *Moro* had always been so called since he crossed paths with the Spaniards in 1578. It was a tag that was chosen for him by his enemy, not by himself. But unlike *Filipino* which signifies allegiance, nay subservience, to Spain, his name was the result of animosity and warfare – and resistance to foreign pressure. If *Filipino* was the child of colonialism, *Moro* was the offspring of anti-colonialism. Moreover, even before the arrival of the Spaniards, the *Moro* had already perfected the art of governance, a well-set code of laws, songs and poetry, such as the *Darangan, Indarapatra,* and *Solaiman* and the *adat* or customary laws. He already had trade and diplomatic relations with the other states of Southeast Asia, Arabia, India, Japan, and China. Sulu and Maguindanao[5] were already emporia while America[6] was still a wilderness.

However, nationalism, per se, was not an end itself among the *Moros,* but rather a cognition of what the Almighty Allah ordained for mankind in the Holy Qur'an, Chapter 49, Verse 13:

O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct.

It is very clear in this verse that the Almighty created tribes and nations distinctly to differentiate one from the other and not to boast of or claim superiority over others. Nationalism is only of value as far as it is considered merely as the bond which ties together a community of Muslims which raises the banner of Islam, conducts its life on its basis, and implements its teachings. There is no conflict in loyalty to Islam and loyalty to one's nation provided that the former is always given supremacy and prevails as the basis of right or wrong.

If the *Moros* fought for anything related to their perceived racial distinctness, it was no doubt a peripheral issue; the main point always was religion. In this era of alcoholism, materialism and worldliness, even a drunken *Moro* will react defiantly, either in deed or in words, once he is accused of being a heathen or an unbeliever. The distaste for unbelief is so internalized in the *Moro* psyche that even in his subconscious state he will react positively for his religion. A *Moro* has so developed in himself that defense mechanism for Islam that he freely, consciously or unconsciously, instinctively rushes forward whenever dared.

Some Issues Against

Points have been raised to assail the idea of the existence of a *Moro* nation. Some of them are as follows:

1. Lack of Common Language -- There is no denying that the *Moros* speak thirteen languages or dialects; often, the name of the language or dialect and the ethnic group are the same. Many of these languages are mutually unintelligible, such as the case of Maranao and Tausog, Samal and Maguindanao, Yakan and Iranun, etc. On the other hand, there are dialects that are so closely related that they are mutually intelligible. This is the case of Maguindanao,

Iranun and Maranao. Not only are they mutually intelligible, but they virtually constitute one Mindanao language.[7] The same is true with the dialects of the Badjao, Samal and Jama Mapun, which are intimately intertwined. And there is one language, Kalibugan or Kolibogan,[8] which, as its name connotes in Maguindanao, is an amalgamation of most of the major dialects of the Moros. It is said that when a Kalibugan speaks around 10-30 percent of the message can be delivered to a Tausog, Maguindanao, Yakan, Samal, Iranun or Maranao, each picking up only the words coming from or resembling his own tongue.

The lack of a single language mutually intelligible to the thirteen ethno-linguistic groups of *Moros* can be a minus factor to a group claiming to be a nation. A nation should speak only one common language, which is necessary to transmit shared values and norms. But if this is lacking among the *Moros,* it is more lacking from the so-called Filipino nation. The Filipinos possess and speak a much greater number of languages and dialects, 184 in all. Even today the Filipinos have miserably failed to truly develop a national language that is accepted by -- or at least acceptable to -- all the ethnic groups in the Philippines. The so-called *Pilipino,* deemed as the national language, is no more than modified Tagalog -- that it was so chosen was thanks to the late President Manuel L. Quezon, the first non-American chief of the archipelago and a Tagalog by ethnic affiliation who, by fair or foul means, secured for it a national role and prominence that eventually paved the way for its declaration as the national language in 1946. This declaration has been persistently opposed even to this day, especially by the Cebuano-speaking provinces of the Visayas, which constitute the largest ethno-linguistic group in the country. Speaking against the use of Pilipino, Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago, a Visayan, lashed out:

> *It would be impossible to use Filipino as the medium of instruction because it lacks vocabulary. We cannot teach mathematics, sciences. We cannot even teach law because there are no Filipino words to cover legal concepts.*[9]

Other writers remonstrated that it is premature to use Filipino because it lacks words that will encompass government functions and educational programs. The National Language Commission has not even issued a full vocabulary of the Filipino language.

2. Diversity in Customs and Traditions -- Like their counterparts in the northern islands, the *Moros* are racially Indo-Malayan. Distinctions there are between or among the thirteen sub-groupings range from negligible to pronounced --"almost as markedly as the Muslim people as a whole differs from the Christian Filipino groups."[10] The distinction between the Iranun and Maranao[11] and, to a certain extent, the Maguindanaon – the three groups constitute 61 percent of the entire Moro population – has not been clearly defined. In a sense, the Maranao and Iranun are "brothers" and the Maguindanaon and Maranao "cousins". The difference of Maranao or Maguindanaon from the Badjao or "sea gypsies" is sharp, because, except for a small portion of the Badjaos are still largely unislamized. This difference is one ground cited by some writers to show that the *Moros* have widely diverse customs and traditions.

This diversity, however, when seen in the context of their racial kinsmen in the North, is comparatively quite modest in proportion. Are not the Filipinos culturally and historically more divided and heterogeneous than their counterparts in Mindanao and Sulu? Are not the Tagalogs, the Cebuanos and Ilocanos as different from one another as the Scots, the English, and the Irish are? One writer, commenting on this, said:

> *It is difficult, if not impossible, to define what a Filipino is. All that can be done is to pick out some traits common to the average Filipinos and to separate those that are obviously Spanish or American.*[12]

This cultural ambiguity, or dilemma, is the reason why Filipinos are faced with no choice but to showcase the long-preserved Moro cultures in foreign cultural presentations, for there simply is no longer a distinct Filipino culture to speak of, only an adulterated

brew of Spanish, American and native ingredients.

In 1991 the Mexican Ambassador to the Philippines Jose Ibarra a career diplomat, speaking on Mexican-Filipino relations, made this revealing statement:

> *Both our roots belong to Western civilization. In our music and dance, in our folk arts, in our language, and in our peculiarities and natural tendencies live our lives in festive air, we enjoy similarities in culture and affinities in character.*[13]

One may not believe it, but *Pilipino*, the official Philippine national language, has 18,000 Spanish words in its lexicon compared to only 5,000 of Malay origin.[14] This is how extensive and deep-rooted the hispanization of the Filipinos is. The American contribution is yet to be quantified, but is patently dominant in Philippine political and educational systems.

On the other hand and by comparison, *Moro* culture remains so to this day, basically Malay despite the admixture of Hindu, Chinese, and later Arabian (or, rather, Islamized) influences. Add to these the effects of geography and other forces of history, and the results are customs and traditions peculiarly "Moroized". It is not "Arabized," it is not "Indianized" or "Sinified".

3. **Other Minor Variations** — There may be other variations or diversities in the socio-economic, cultural or political development of the *Moros*, but altogether these do not impair their "distinctness" as a separate group. Among these are their differences in historical development, livelihood patterns, social organizations, level of Islamic acculturation, manner of dressing, and even their arts.

Even if these observations are true for the *Moros*, they do not make the *Moro* experience exceptional. There are nations, even states, which are pervaded by a variety of differences in national origin, language, religion, and cultural patterns, and yet exhibit

strong sense of national unity. The heterogeneous elements in these states rather worked surprisingly to their advantage, particularly when confronted by external dangers. The United States and Switzerland are two of such states. The United States has often been called a "nation of immigrants." She has taken in more immigrants than any other nations in history; in fact, except for the pure-blooded Indians, every American citizen is either an immigrant or descended from immigrants.

Some Pro-Nationhood Arguments

If there are points raised which cast doubt on the existence of a Moro nation, there are points as well in support of the proposition. The following are some of these points:

1. Common Racial Origin -- As has been discussed earlier, except for the tiny minority Negritos, all the native inhabitants of the archipelago including the *Moros* belong to one racial stock, the Indo-Malayan. And all the indigenous dialects of the *Moros*, together with all those in Luzon and the Visayas, are related in varying degrees to one another and find common root in one parent-stock, the Austronesian or Malayo-Polynesian [15] language. Even up to the present, the lexicon of the various *Moro* dialects contain derivatives or roots that are, beyond doubt, of Malayan origin.

2. Common Religion -- Invariably the ethnic tribes of the Moros accepted Islam without reservation, an acceptance that came sometimes more from fanaticism rather than from conviction. If there is one factor that gave them direction, spirit and cohesiveness, hence securing for them their homeland, it was Islam. It was Islam which taught them that war with Spain was a sacred obligation, with an assured place in heaven as a reward.

Despite the differences in the degree of their Islamic acculturation, all the thirteen ethno-linguistic groups chose Islam as their religion. They tenaciously clung to it, for better or for worse, and they survived.

However, one crucial fact in the larger picture that should be considered is that the *Moros* and Filipinos tend to live in two different worlds, the former having maintained their roots more firmly in the Islamized Malay world and inherited much from the Islamic civilization of Arabia and the Middle East, while the latter looked to the West – to Spain, for their Catholic religion and much of their cultural models, and to America for their second language, English, and their political institutions. [16]

3. **Shared History** — All the best Spanish generals had been pitted against the *Moros* and all had to admit that these "obscure Malays" were far from "easy pickings." And the fight did not happen for a day or months but for 320 years, or to be exact, from 1578 to 1898 when America came in to impose a self-given "mandate in Moroland."

The history of the *Moros* neither began at the coming of Spain nor stopped at her exit. Her coming was merely an "accident in history" and an interlude in the long and colorful annals of this group of Malays. Before the Spaniards, they were already on their own and were already on the verge of claiming more territories and peoples, not through the force of arms and trickery but through the charms of the faith and the magic of love for brethren of a common race. Today, over a century after the Americans came in 1898, the *Moro* saga continues.

In all these long years, all the thirteen *Moro* groups have had a share, though in varying roles, in the defense of the faith, people and homeland. The Badjaos, though sometimes pejoratively tagged even by their Muslim neighbors as "Samal Palau" (House-boat Samal) or "Samal Luwan" (Outcast Samal), may not have actually participated in the wars, but the fact that they served the sultan of Sulu as subjects was nevertheless also a role in history. It is often said by many political writers that common predicaments, not only common race, language, religion or culture, make nations. [17]

4. **Organized Government** — Unlike the barangays of the North, fragmented as they had always been, the *Moros* had their

centralized government patterned after the Arabian model and, later, on the Turkish example. The realm was headed by the *sultan* (hence the political institution called *sultanate,* who inherited his position by direct descent in a royal bloodline of Hashimite root. Below the *sultan* was the heir-apparent or *rajahmuda* or crown prince, and in the lower tier of the hierarchy were the administrative officers or ministers, the judge or *qadi* as head of the judiciary or *agama* court, the naval commander or *rajah laut* or *kapitan laut,* and not the least, the council of elders or *Ruma Bichara* in Sulu or *Bichara Atas* in Maguindanao.

In describing the court of the sultan, one writer narrated:

> *The sultan's court was convoked with ostentation and ceremony. He himself sat enthroned on a raised dais with his full entourage seated on the floor; foreign emissaries remained on their feet to present official communications in lacquered boxes. Small brass swivel guns (lantakas) were conspicuously displayed, not so much as weapons but as symbols of power and authority. Gold ornaments were restricted to the royalty and those whom the sultan favored with handsome gifts like kris with jeweled gold hilts and gold-encrusted sheaths.* [18]

Other important sectors of the sultanate were the middle class or the nobility or *orangkayas* and the "learned" or wise men or *panditas* who were knowledgeable in both the Islamic and customary laws. Envoys or ambassadors were received or sent in accordance with established protocol. Decisions of the *agama* court were based on a special code of laws called *Luwaran* or *Paluwaran,* with derivatives from the Holy Qur'an and existing customs and traditions. However, the *sultan* had the prerogative to affirm or reverse decisions of the court. Raising of revenues was mainly by tribute. Both the Sulu and Maguindanao sultanates had their respective flags.

Two or at most three of the sultanates that sprung up in Mindanao and Sulu had the features described above. Without the slightest ill

intent on other sultanates elsewhere, the author would wish to state that only the Sulu and Maguindanao sultanates and, to a limited extent Buayan, had the power and prestige to command obedience from the people and the respect of outsiders. Most, if not all the others, came into being as a result of the decline in power of either of the above-named sultanates, or as a consequence of dynastic dissension among the various claimants to the throne. Not a few emerged out of intermarriages between or among the existing royal houses. And in some localities especially in the Maranao and Iranun regions, except the "Four Settlements," the office of the sultan was not hereditary but merely proclaimed after fulfilling simple requirements. Usually the sultanate in these regions was equivalent only to a village.

The oldest and probably the most developed was the Sulu sultanate. It was founded in 1450. The Maguindanao sultanate came next; conceivably it was established in the early 16th century. After some time, the Buayan sultanate emerged. The Kabuntalan sultanate existed only in the early 18th century out of an intermarriage between Maguindanao and Buayan. In the Lanao region, of note was the "Four Settlements" locally called the *Pat a Pangampong Ko Ranao.*

The institution of the sultanate system in Mindanao and Sulu bespoke the advanced political development of the *Moros.* Having an older history, unrivaled elsewhere in the archipelago, the *Moros* had the best of their lives ironically in the worst of times.

5. **Defined** Territory -- At the time of the defeat of Spain in the "Mock Battle" of Manila Bay and the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898 ceding the Philippines to the United States, Mindanao and Sulu were still considered "foreign territory". Notwithstanding the reasons given, whether tactical or strategical, the real premise for the subsequent signing of the Kiram-Bates Treaty on August 20, 1899 was because Mindanao and Sulu were still considered foreign territory, even by the Americans.

At the apex of its powers, the Sulu sultanate held sway over the

entire Sulu archipelago, Basilan, Mindoro, Palawan and Sabah. The sultanate had a well-defined state structure and functionaries superior to any other sultanate including the Brunei sultanate (now independent Brunei Darussalam).

Similarly, the Maguindanao sultanate at its finest moment had effective control over the whole of Cotabato, [19] Lanao, Davao, Misamis, Bukidnon and Zamboanga. It had the most extensive dominion ever held by a *Moro* sultan, a feat singularly reserved to Sultan Dipatuan Muhammad Qudarat, known in history as the "greatest *Moro* sultan of all time." During his reign, he was able to collect tributes in Basilan, parts of the Visayas, and as far as the coast of Borneo.

European powers -- and even the United States before she turned to colonize the Philippines -- dropped anchor at the ports of Sulu and Maguindanao. They also signed friendly or commercial treaties with the Moros. In 1842, a friendship treaty was entered into between the Sultan of Sulu and the United States through Admiral Charles Wilkes who headed a scientific expedition. Later, as a new colonial power, the Americans also signed the Kiram-Bates Treaty in 1898 and the Kiram-Carpenter Agreement in 1915. Spain also signed treaties with the *Moros*, not only once or twice but, in the case of the Maguindanao sultan, thirteen times and with Sulu twelve. The Qudarat-Lopez Treaty of 1645 and the Bongsu-Lopez Treaty of 1646 were more the historic as these delineated the boundaries between Maguindanao and Spain, on one hand, and Sulu and Spain, on the other.

In contemporary times, there are sovereign and independent states with tiny populations and land areas. The State or City of the Vatican, the capital and seat of Catholicism, had a population of barely 1,000 in 1994 and a total land area of just 0.44 square kilometer. Another tiny state is Monaco, also in Europe, with a population of about 30,000 and total land area of 1.95 square kilometers. Its principal source of income is gambling and tourism. A third, still in Europe, is Luxembourg, with a population of a little over 30,000 and area of 2.586 square kilometers. Perhaps more

interesting is Palau in the Pacific Ocean, just 530 miles or 901 kilometers east of Mindanao. It has a population of only 17,000 and an area just about a third of Camiguin, the smallest island province in Mindanao.[20] Despite of its tiny population and land area, Palau is a sovereign country, carrying the name the Republic of Palau.

In contrast, Mindanao alone is bigger than Greece and Portugal. It has a total land area of 117,000 square kilometers. It is very rich in natural resources, is outside the typhoon belt, and is blessed with excellent weather. Its *Moro* population numbers no fewer than five million.

6. Independence Intact — To cap it all, and without being redundant, there is nothing more convincing as proof that there is indeed a *Moro* nation, than to restate again and again that throughout the 377 years of Spanish presence in the Philippines the Moros remained unconquered. Whatever Spain might have said of her sovereignty over the *Moro* dominion was nothing but empty talk for, in truth and in fact, this sovereignty was only felt and enforced inside her fortifications and garrisons. One may argue that in the closing years of the Spanish regime -- on the eve of the entry of the United States as heir to the colony -- for the various sultanates, especially Sulu and Maguindanao, it was but a matter of time before they succumbed to force of arms. But this possibility did not materialize and cannot be argued to have actually taken place, in roughly the same way that it is pure historical speculation to say that had not Spain arrived at the time she did, all the people of the entire archipelago could have become Muslims.

7. New Emerging Concept -- There is a recent idea on nationalism, which is fast-gaining adherents among political writers. It states that a nation, as a concept, is not unchanging. It has a pattern of change or growth leading to new realities never before given consideration by previous political writers. Those who subscribe to this view believe that the concept of nation is not static but an evolving entity. It follows the process of evolution whereby new ideas or concepts when put forth become accepted later not as mere theory but as sets of principles. They do not discard the old theory

in the birth of nation, as discussed earlier in this chapter, but they underscore the need to investigate other factors, in the light of present-day struggles for determination of the peoples of Sri Lanka, Palestine, Kosovo, Thailand, Philippines, Myanmar, Chechnya, Iraq, and other states. They identify some of these factors to include identity, security, equality, and justice.

The proponents of this view also believe that people must transcend the divisive and parochial demands of isolation, tribalism, ethnicity, or class status in order to satisfy and work for the collective concerns and interests of all, say the need to preserve the ecological balance and culture of a tribe.[21] The resistance to the Chico River Dam was one of the reasons which hastened the unity of the Igorots and the formation of "Cordillera" as their national identity.

The Modern Rationale

The actual statehood of the sultanate, in the light of modern day contemplation, is timely and pertinent to this discussion. Of particular interest were the qualifications and capacity of these sultanates to enter into treaties -- an historical detail the value of which cannot be overstated. Still, even granting that the Moros already constituted a nation, in the days of the sultanates, it was not necessarily in the sense of a nation as primarily a racial or ethnic concept. A juridical or political entity that is clothed with authority and responsibility to rule -- as a state is imbued -- is one thing. Nation and state are two different things.

However, before expounding on this further, let us understand first what a *state* is. One American authority defines *state* as a "community of persons more or less numerous, permanently occupying a definite portion of territory, independent of external control, and possessing an organized government to which the great body of inhabitants render habitual obedience.[22] From this definition, *a state* has four requisites for existence, namely, people, territory, government and independence or sovereignty. There is a minority view which adds two more requisites: possession of a

sufficient degree of civilization and recognition by the family o nations.

Since this work is not a legal thesis and the subject under consideration, i.e., the sultanate, is an institution that only existed effectively until almost a century ago, a more casual approach o discussion should suffice.

Why discuss the sultanate at all? The answer is obvious and its importance cannot be overstated. The institution of the sultanate has profound relevance to, and is, in fact inseparable from, the formation of *Moro* nationalism and the survival of the *Moro* people through the centuries.

1. People -- The number of people-inhabitants must be sufficient to ensure survival irrespective of race, color, religion or culture. How many is "sufficient enough" is not measured according to modern standard, by specific number of population but by their capability "to make it [the state] live" and "to fulfill its international obligations." The decrease in the population by any causes, war, migration, deaths due to epidemics, etc., as long as it does not cripple the government completely, does not affect its existence as an international entity. The important thing is that they be able to perpetuate themselves for political ends. As aforecited the Vatican state has a population of only 1,000. There are many more states especially in the Pacific, Caribbean and Indian Ocean that have tiny populations. Nauru has 8,000; Tuvalu, 8,000; and the combined population of the 13 independent states in the Caribbean - Jamaica, Barbados, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Trinidad, Tobago Bahamas, St. Christopher, Nevia, Antigua, Dominica, Dominican Republic, and Haiti - is more or less 15,000,000, or an average o more than a million each. Even by present standards, the three sultanates could easily pass the population requirement.

2. Territory -- The space on which a state exists must be more or less permanent, big or small, in order "to settle eventual dispute on jurisdiction. So far there is no rule fixing the size required for geographical unit to qualify as a state. However, in order to survive

it is necessary that it possesses an area of territory sufficient to accommodate and maintain its population, in line with international requirement. Mindanao and Sulu where sultanates once ruled are three and a half times larger than the combined territory of oil-rich Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain; 15 times bigger than Singapore; and three times bigger than three European countries -- Monaco, Luxembourg, and Liechtenstein.

3. **Government** -- As an instrument of this political unity, the sultanate had an organized political machinery by which its powers were expressed and give substance to its will and functions. This is discussed earlier in this chapter on how the sultanate conducted its day-to-day state affairs and ruled.

4. **Independence or Sovereignty** -- The state must have freedom from external control in the conduct of its internal and external affairs. The fact that the sultanate had survived for more than three centuries, maintaining its supreme power to command and enforce obedience and had in the process earned the recognition of other states or powers at the time, is the best single testimony to its sovereignty or independence.

5. **Sufficient Degree of Civilization** -- Is it not a fact that the *Moros* have a longer history than any group in the Philippines, and does not it follow that they had a richer and more colorful civilization? Long before the appearance of the Westerners in Asia, the *Moros* were already civilized. They possessed a Malayan civilization enriched by Indian, Chinese, and Arabic influences. Perhaps, all that is necessary for the doubting Thomases to prove or disprove this is to scan the pages of history to verify for themselves the truth of this claim.

6. **Recognition by the Family of Nations** -- The United Nations was only organized in 1945. The League of Nations, though founded earlier in 1920, was practically an inutile organization. The United States was not even a formal member of the League. President Warren G. Harding, in his inaugural policy speech, declared that he wanted nothing to do with it. He ignored it and

did not sign the Versailles Treaty that set up the League of Nations.

What Others Say

The government and other writers will continue to close their eyes and deny the existence of a *Moro* nation. Their reasons may be varied and undisguised, and in the case of the former, compelling. The government wants to make sure that not a hint of doubt shall be cast upon the supposed indivisibility of the Filipino nation, for such an eventuality may undermine the unitary character of the Philippine state. However, as said earlier, the continued rhetoric or argument against this *Moro* aspiration would only add more resolve to those pushing for it. Moreover, the very argument that supposedly validated and gave rise to Filipino nationhood shall be shaken down under.

However, despite this antagonism, there are writers or persons who continue to expound on the subject of *Moro* nationhood, based on facts and fair play. They are the ones who emphasize or express the objective reality as distinguished from personal reflections or subjective feelings. They approach the subject at hand free from distortion by personal feelings or prejudices in contrast to many Filipino historians or writers who only see the dark side of the *Moros.*

Writing on this subject, a popular Catholic priest, Father Romeo Intengan, once linked to a socialist-democratic movement in the Philippines, had spoken of the existence of the *Moro* nation separate and distinct from the mainly Christian Filipinos. He argued that based on the Philippine setting nationhood is an analogous concept, because there exist two distinct nationalities with their particular patriotism, the mainly Christian Filipinos and the predominantly Muslim Moros. He argued further:

> *Between the two, Bangsa Moro nationality and patriotism are older. The Bangsamoro were ahead of the Filipinos in developing state structures and in acquiring a unifying ideology - Islam. They developed the capacity for resisting*

invasion by their control of international trade in Southeast Asia in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Indeed, the Bangsamoro people are a distinct nationality with a distinct history from us Christian Filipinos. They simply are not Filipinos who happen to be Muslims.

The second nationality is that of the Indios and mestizos, later called Filipinos, who become politically one because of the unitary political structure of the Spanish colonialist regime. Our ancestors also found a unifying ideology in their Catholic Christian faith. Finally, by the late 19th century our foreparents had acquired enough resources - the wealth of the native and the mestizo ilustrados and principales - to assert our nationhood and to struggle to throw off the colonial yoke when we launched the Revolution of 1896.

Historically then, the Bangsa Moro were ahead of us Filipinos in terms of becoming a nation because they had all these three factors earlier in their history whereas we acquired these only in the late 19th century.[23]

Interestingly, Samuel Tan, a Christian, albeit often mistaken for a Muslim because he hails from Sulu and his name sounds *Moro*, pursues a similar line of argument. In his book "The Internationalization of the Bangsamoro Struggle" published in 1993, he elaborated:

In short, 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 and his government oppose this ideology, believing that a Filipino 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 also shaped earlier than that of the Filipino.

As a nationalist, the Moro considers his nation no longer a matter of 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. [24]

An American prolific writer, Peter Gowing, stayed most of his life in the Philippines with the *Moros* and perhaps more likely qualifies as an "orientalist" rather than a man who is searching for truth for the sake of humanity. A Protestant by religion and an American by citizenship, he can only be expected, as most human beings, to be working for his country and in his case also for his church. But quite unexpected from him, came these comments on the issue:

Certainly, in one aspect this continuing and hardening distinction between "Moro" and "Filipino" is said. It symbolizes the fact that many Muslim Filipinos play down the concept that they are Filipinos, one people in one nation with Christian Filipinos. Moreover, there are also some Christian Filipinos who are convinced that the Muslims are not truly Filipinos. To turn these long-standing negative attitudes around so as to persuade both Muslims and Christians to accept each other fully and equally as Filipinos is possibly the single most serious problem in the achievement of Philippine national unity.[25]

In what he called "A Brief on Moro Historic Claims and Legal Rights" dated December 18, 1997, a memorandum addressed to Chairman Salamat Hashim of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, former Congressman Michael Mastura (1st District, Maguindanao) had an interesting discussion on the historical as well as legal parameter of the subject at bar. He said that the idea of nation and civil society is not more than half a millennium old and even the idea of "Europe" from which the notion of "nation-state" evolved does not go back in time more than four centuries ago. Yet, he

contended, the *Moro* had already achieved a level of existence beyond the supra-kinship system before the arrival of the first European civilization.

Unlike many other writers' works on this subject, Mastura's thesis neatly blends historical and legal arguments to prop up his idea of a two-nation theory in the Philippines. He emphasized that through documentary records informed even by European standards of the time, the *Moro* people's distinct, determinate, and separate identity was legally recognized in treaty relations, international protocols, and statutory provisions. He substantiated this by citing several facts of history.

1) Separate forms of governance were in fact worked out by the American colonial administration for Mindanao and Sulu up to 1913. The so-called abrogation of the Kiram-Bates Treaty was a unilateral act of the US government;

2) By municipal law, the "Filipinos" and the "Moros" were treated as separate bodies politic or entities even under American sovereignty. That the Moro Province was abolished to pave the way for the central government to take over governance of their territory even bolsters their historic claim for separate governance of the "Moro population" and was always considered as a factor in the grant of independence to the Philippines. The so-called referendum on "anti" and "pro" independence onward did not bind them as they were denied the right to be heard separately;

3) The representation of the "Moro population" in the Malolos Congress of 1898 was not only fictitious but farcical despite providing for political arrangements that envisaged the inclusion of Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan. The Jones Law of 1916 which extended the American Bill of Rights to the Philippines is a clear legal proof that strengthens rather than weakens the historic right of the Moro people to self-determination; and

4) There is contemporaneous evidence that the Philippine government has continually and particularly confronted the issue of the suzerainty of the Sulu sultanate. The dispute over Sabah in North Borneo is not based on the right of the Republic of the Philippines but on the legitimate rights that inhere in the Sulu sultanate and its successor-in-interests.

He capped his dissertation by arguing that the *Moro* people's claim as a distinct nation rests not on the concept of nation-states but on territorial claims - something even the American people had to earn by self-determination. Unlike the "Indios" of the northern areas, the Moros were never subjects of Spain, something she gave due recognition in various treaties with the historical Maguindanao sultanate and Sulu sultanate to the end of their colonial regime in the Philippines.

Dr. Alunan C. Glang, a historian and a diplomat, is now one of the outspoken proponents of the *Moro*'s claim of nationhood. However, in his earlier writings, he had never been an advocate of *Moro* nationalism in the manner that he is now fighting for with his pen. In his book "Muslim Secession or Integration?" published in 1969, he presented two alternatives for the Muslims to pursue to solve their problem: to carve out a separate republic for Mindanao and Sulu and secede from the Philippines or to join or incorporate into the larger Christian society or body politic. Outright he rejected both options and instead offered a win-win formula of "unity in diversity" in relation to the Christian majority: The republic must not be dismembered and the Muslims must live in accordance with their religion, culture and traditions.

Why he changed tune this time from reformism to an outspoken advocacy of *Moro* nationalism, no one can tell. As a writer and historian, necessarily he is also a researcher and, needless to say, perhaps, he has unearthed the truth that the *Moros* were never Filipinos. And it would be at the height of hypocrisy as a believing Muslim, first, and a man-of-letters, second, to ignore the truth and to be unstirred by the sufferings of his people if he were to continue espousing the old line. His people have already suffered a lot for

centuries and it is time that everyone shall contribute to their emancipation. This perhaps explains, why he is now a changed man, and considering his stature and credentials, he now becomes one of the most credible advocates of this nationalism. In fact this is the central theme of his serialized article in the *Maradika*, the official publication of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. The original title was "Thanks God we are not Filipinos" but he changed it later to "Alhamdulillah (Praise be to Allah) we are the Bangsamoro (Moro Nation)."

In the August 1998 issue of this newsletter, Glang made an enlightening exposition on this issue:

> *...The Moros could never accept the appellation that they were Filipinos, then and now. There are many reasons for these [sic]. Foremost of all, and maybe only, while we seem to be racially close to each other, we are however miles apart in culture and religion. Geographically, too, Mindanao is not contiguous to the islands of Luzon and the Visayas.*

In an interview with Sarimanok News Network (SNN) on August 4, 1998, Defense Secretary Orlando Mercado categorically admitted that the Philippines is a "nation of nations." This was in reply to a question regarding the move to change the form of government from unitary to federal in answer to the clamor of some groups especially the Muslims or *Moros* to live in accordance with their religion, customs and traditions. Such a change, the proponents argued, would remedy the age-old "despotism" exercised by the Manila government over the minorities particularly the *Moros.* The Estrada government had already decided to call for a Preparatory Constitutional Commission headed by ex-Chief Justice Andres Narvasa of the Supreme Court that will conduct a study on proposed amendments or changes to the Constitution and one of the most likely changes is in the form of government from unitary to federal.

Whichever is that dominant nation in the mind of Mercado is least doubted; surely it is Filipino. The rest may safely be inferred and limited to only two, namely, *Moros* and "Lumads,"[26] who are

still struggling for genuine self-rule in their respective regions. These are the only groups in the Philippines distinctly separate in history, belief, customs and traditions from the majority Christian population. Secretary Mercado is the first high government official to make this kind of admission in public.

One writer is quite explicit in asserting that the Philippines is not one nation-state but several nations or nationalities, it would be Rizal G. Buendia. He argued in his article "The Autonomy Struggle: A Question of Nationality" that the Moro Nation and the Cordilleran Nation are distinct from the Filipino Nation. Thus, he argues further, the two nations have every right to the struggle for liberation and self-rule. Buendia elucidates on this:

> *The dichotomy in Philippine history definitely cannot be a product of a single nation but a product of nations co-existing with one another under a single State which had superimposed its political will and power over all other nations. Under this context, the Philippines has never been one nation. Contrary to the beliefs of many, the Filipinos have lived together in an archipelago of nations and states defined by their own historical development.*[27]

The Philippine government continues to ignore the national character of the Moros in the Philippines. It persists to perceive the struggle of the Moros to be no less than a reflection of interlocking socio-political, ecological, economic problems, similarly confronted by the hungry and malnourished, the rural landless, the urban squatters, and the slum dwellers.

CHAPTER 3

INVADED HOMELAND

The Flashback

In retrospect, the landfall of Spain in the Philippines was an accident in history. Ferdinand Magellan,[1] leading an expedition of 250 men and five ships, was actually looking for the "Spice Islands,"[2] where the highly profitable spices grew in abundance. He thought that these islands were in the Pacific Ocean close to America. Commissioned by King Charles I of Spain, he proceeded with his idea that the East could be reached by sailing West and, on September 20, 1519 from San Lucar, Spain, he and his crew left, cruising around the Cape of Good Hope on the southern tip of Africa and then West around South America through a tortuous passage bearing his name, the Strait of Magellan. For more than four months of incredible hardships, marred sometimes by mutiny and no land in sight, his only orders were: "sail," "sail," and "sail." And at last, on March 17, 1521,[3] they sighted the island of Samar, which they named the "Archipelago of St. Lazarus"; stopped briefly at the islet of Homonhon, and then disembarked at Limasawa, another islet south of Leyte. At Limasawa, Magellan celebrated the first Catholic mass in the Philippines on March 31, 1521. From here, not long after, the conquest or conversion of the various islands was effected, except the island of Mactan under Rajah Lapulapu,[4] who chose fire and blood to abject submission. He flatly refused to give even an inch of his land or to compromise his freedom. The dispute was thus to be settled by force of arms. In the famous Battle of Mactan on April 27, 1521 the Spaniards, despite being armed with muskets, crossbows, swords and body armor, were utterly routed. With his own hands, Rajah Lapulapu slew Magellan.

Magellan was Portuguese by nationality. Portugal originally assigned him to India as a soldier. Accused of embezzlement during his army stint and later indicted, he left and enlisted in the Spanish navy as a mercenary. Soon enough he won the trust of his new masters and was sent to lead the expedition to locate the Spice

Islands.

After the debacle at Mactan, Charles I sent three more expeditions: in 1525, 1526 and 1527, but all ended in dismal failure. Disheartened and bankrupt, Charles I agreed to sign the Treaty of Zaragosa on April 22, 1529 with Portugal. The treaty provided, among other stipulations, that a demarcation line in the Pacific at 297.5 leagues east of the Moluccas be drawn: All lands west of the line belonged to Portugal and all those east went to Spain. With this definition, the Moluccas, which Spain sold to Portugal, and the Philippines, which Spain also claimed, both belonged to Portugal.

Again, despite this treaty, greed and faithlessness had their day in Charles I when, in 1542, he made a last-ditch effort to obtain a foothold in the East. He fitted an expedition under the command of Ruy de Villalobos with the specific order to establish permanent settlement in the *Islas del Poniente* or "Western Islands" or the Philippines. After a year of sea voyage, Villalobos, in the company of four Augustinian priests, landed on the island of Sarangani, south of Mindanao, and tried to establish a permanent footing. Because of the stiff hostility of the Moros, in addition to the poverty of the place – they were forced "to eat cats, dogs and rats, gray lizards and unknown plants" – the Spaniards hurriedly left. On the way home, Bernardo de la Torre, one of the crew, while passing by the islands of Samar-Leyte, gave to these islands the name *Filipinas* in honor of Philip, then the Spanish crown prince and later, King Philip II, who succeeded Charles I. The name was later applied to the entire archipelago, and was Anglicized by the Americans to its present form, *Philippines.*

In 1556, Philip II ascended the throne and made it an official policy to colonize the Philippines. In November 1564, the expedition under Miguel Lopez de Legazpi[5] left Mexico. Accompanying him as chief adviser and navigator was Fray Andres de Urdaneta, a scholar priest and veteran of the previous Loaysa Expedition. Appraised of the mission, Urdaneta objected because the Zaragosa Treaty was still in effect. But there was nothing he could do: first, they were already in the high seas, and second, Legazpi ignored

his advice anyway. The King ordered Legazpi to proceed to the Philippines and to make it a permanent colony of Spain. On April 27, 1565, the Spaniards landed in Panay, and from there they wrested all the islands, one after the other, from the various local chieftains. After securing all these areas, Legazpi sent Captain Martin de Goiti to Luzon where a fortified town called Manila was located.

The Moro-Spanish ***Intramural***

Before proceeding further with this section, it is necessary to clarify two important points in the history of the Moro-Spanish War. First, contrary to popular perception, the first group of people whom the Spaniards called *Moros* were those in Manila and environs in 1570, who were already Muslims, and not the Islamized natives in Mindanao and Sulu. It was only in the later years, more specifically in 1578 and after that the name was generally applied to the Muslims of Mindanao and Sulu. Second, the first Moro-Spanish War was not fought in the soils of Mindanao and Sulu but right in what is now metropolitan Manila. And still much earlier, if we give enough degree of credence to the claim that Rajah Lapulapu was a Muslim,[6] must be the skirmish in Mactan in 1521 when Magellan died in the hands of Rajah Lapulapu. This should have stood as the first encounter between the Moros and Spain.

As earlier noted, the town of Manila was ruled by Rajah Sulaiman Mahmud and Rajah Matanda (jointly with or assisted by the latter) and Tondo by Rajah Lakandula. All supremos were of Bornean origin and in fact were closely related to the Brunei sultan.

For the first time after the fall of Granada in 1492, the Spaniards and the Moros, nay Muslims, came face-to-face, each circling half the earth in opposite directions. Each was already seething with anger for the other. They had a big score to settle. The Spaniards hated the Muslims for they ruled Spain for about 800 years, while the Muslims could not forgive the Spaniards for the massacre of more than three million Muslims when the Christians recaptured Spain.

Now the hour of reckoning was at hand. Commanding the Spanish troops was Captain Martin de Goiti while Rajah Sulaiman was leading the native defenders. In a threatening voice, the fearless Sulaiman made his stand clear:

> *We wish to be the friends of all nations. But they must understand that we cannot tolerate any abuse. On the contrary, we will repay with death the least thing that touches our honor.*[7]

In effect, this represented the first expression of patriotic sentiments by a native chief against an alien power. Bold and piercing, this was a foreign policy declaration.

True to his words, reminiscent of the Islamic slogan of all ages, "Victory or Martyrdom," Rajah Sulaiman, the last Muslim ruler of Manila, preferred martyrdom, than to submit to the Spaniards. At the famous Battle of Bangkusay, off Tondo's shore, on June 3, 1571, Rajah Sulaiman perished – but his memory and example remained. Sulaiman died a martyr. This was the first recorded battle of Manila Bay.

After the fall of Manila, all resistance to Spanish rule, except those fought in Mindoro[8] in 1574 and the so-called aborted Magat Salamat Conspiracy in 1587, died down entirely in Luzon and the Visayas within a brief span of just eleven years. The Spaniards now became the new masters, not just for one barangay or confederation of barangays but for the entire islands of Luzon and Visayas. This was to last for 327 years.

After formally integrating all the conquered islands into the Spanish Empire with Manila as the colony's capital in 1571, now dubbed as "New Spain," the next tasks were to secure the new territory from external threat and to push further the Crown's colonial designs. Spain came to conquer and acquire gold – usually in the name of or with the aid of the Cross. She was prepared to move heaven and earth, so to speak, and to risk everything if only to monopolize the ultra-profitable spice trade. So huge an

rewarding was this trade that the survivors of the Mactan and later the Cebu carnages, who barely made their escape home, managed to procure spice along the way, sold the commodity and were still left with considerable gains even after defraying the cost of the four wrecked ships and paying for the 232 dead, including Magellan. And owing to the severe rivalries between the Dutch and the Portuguese for the control of the spice trade, Spain outfitted a large expedition in 1578 to attack the Brunei sultanate, believing that it was in alliance with the Portuguese, or that it lay within Spain's sphere of influence. Initial good luck was on the side of the Spaniards for they defeated the sultanate, albeit temporarily.

The Moro-Spanish War

Indeed, the defeat of Rajah Sulaiman in Manila represented the first chapter in the long years of Moro-Spanish confrontations in the Philippines. The next and final chapter is what we are now about to start.

After the Brunei expedition, Spanish eyes focused on the Sulu sultanate, which was suspected to be in alliance with Brunei. Such fear was not only well-founded, the fact was that the two royal houses were related by a series of intermarriage. In the same year, Spain put up a large expedition under the command of Capt. Esteban Rodriguez de Figueroa, who also commanded the Brunei campaign, to attack Sulu. Sultan Buddiman Pangiran, then the reigning sultan, resisted the invasion. Although the attack was only partly successful on the part of the Spaniards, its implication was far-reaching. This was the virtual declaration of war by Spain against the Moros of Mindanao and Sulu. As a matter of fact, this was the official beginning of the Moro-Spanish War which was to drag on and remain undecided for 320 long years or until the Spaniards were ejected from the Philippines by the Americans in 1898.

For the Spanish Crown, the war was to subdue a pagan people, to curb "piracy," to stop the Moros from sealing alliances with other European powers, and to forestall the entry of rivals into the field of the spice trade. Conversion to Catholicism was evidently not in

the priority list, knowing too well that the Moros would prefer death to conversion. For the Moros, the war was in defense of Islam, people and homeland. It was a sacred obligation, with an assured place in heaven as a recompense.

The instructions of Gov. Gen. Francisco de Sande to Capt. Esteban Rodriguez de Figueroa on the siege of Sulu in June 1578 and Mindanao in April 1596 were the following:

> *You shall order them {Moros} that there be not among them anymore preachers of the doctrines of Mahoma {Muhammad} since it is evil and false and that of the Christian alone is good.*
>
> *And because we have been in these islands so short a time, the lord of Bindanao [sic] has been deceived by the preachers of Borney, and the people have become Moros. You shall tell that our object is that he be converted to Christianity; and that he must allow us freely to preach the law of the Christian, and the natives must be allowed to go to hear the preaching and be converted, without receiving harm from the chiefs.*
>
> *And you shall try to ascertain who are the preachers of the sect of Mahoma, and shall burn or destroy the house where that accursed doctrine has been preached, and you shall see that it be not rebuilt.*[9]

Gov. Gen. Francisco de Sande gave similar instructions to Captain Gabriel de Rivera earlier on January 15, 1579.

Both the Figueroa and Rivera missions to Sulu and Maguindanao, respectively, did not accomplish significant successes. Figueroa merely made the Sulu sultan sue for temporary peace, while Rivera failed to establish contact with the chief of the *Pulangi* (River).

In the meantime, the Spanish government in Manila adopted an

official policy to colonize Mindanao. For the purpose, the colonial government and Capt. Esteban Rodriguez de Figueroa signed an agreement whereby the latter, in exchange for enormous material benefits and a position to be inherited by a son or heir, would pacify the island of Mindanao and establish a colony in the *Pulangi* at his own expense.

Accordingly, on April 1, 1596 Figueroa left for Mindanao with fifty war vessels, 214 Spaniards and 1,500 native allies. After three weeks of sea voyage, the fleet reached the mouth of the *Pulangi* or what the Spaniards called *Rio Grande de Mindanao* and they started cruising upstream which was tough and exhausting. The river current was swift. They landed at Tampakan[10] and immediately Figueroa lined up his troops in battle array and delivered a stirring speech:

> *Soldiers of Felipe! We stand upon the newest soil of Spain. To subdue this dark forest and rid the soil of the infidel Moslem is our aim. They submit as vassals and converts or fall before the Spanish blades. Forward to our duty for King and country.*[11]

Moments later, the jungle shook with the fierce battle that followed. Leading the Maguindanao warriors were the brothers, Rajah Silongan and Datu Ubal. On the Spanish side was Figueroa, aided by Juan de Lara. Clad in body armor, Figueroa sallied forth and barely had he taken a few steps when his head was cleft in two by a *kampilan*, a long and straight-edged Moro cutlass, wielded by Datu Ubal. The loss of their leader demoralized the Spaniards and more so when Juan de Lara, the next in command, hurriedly left for Manila "to report".

The news spread like a prairie fire in Manila. The Spaniards were furious over the death of Figueroa, but the Jesuits were the most aggrieved for they had varied interests in the conquest of Mindanao. They branded the Moros "traitors."

In 1599, the Moros, aware that defensive war was the beginning

of defeat, decided to bring the war over into the enemy territory and staged counterattacks. This was what hostile writers fondly called "Moro piracy." The reprisal scheme was to cripple the enemy power base, exact tribute, and to take advantage of the critical situation faced by Spain due to the threat posed by the Dutch.

Quite absurd was the charge of piracy. If there had been incidents of piracy against the natives prior to the start of the Moro-Spanish War in 1578, those were so small in number as to be negligible. However, whatever may have been said on this subject, the truth stands that it was Spain that started the confrontation and it was natural for the Moros to defend themselves and hit back, if and when possible. On the issue of piracy, the Spanish double-standard was bared: If she attacked the Moros she called it "holy war," but if the latter hit back it was "piracy."

The year-round raids conducted by the Moros engulfed the natives in the Spanish-held territories with fear, despair and anxiety. The raiders netted tens of thousand of prisoners, jewelry, precious ornaments, cannons, and other valuable materials. By this time, the Spaniards were already beginning to realize the high price of the bloody venture they had indulged in and if ever they thought of backing out, it was already too late. But the losses of the masters were easily dwarfed by those of the subjects, who were caught between oppression from their masters and attacks by their masters' foes. They were simply sandwiched between two evils.

In one of these raids, where a Jesuit priest, Melchor Hurtado, was captured in 1603 by Datu Buisan of Maguindanao, a very interesting dialogue took place between him and the datus of Leyte. Buisan asked the datus whether they and their people as well as those of Panay, Mindoro, and Batangas, all Spanish subjects, had been protected by the Spaniards. Of course, the Leyte datus did not need to confirm what was obvious. He urged them that if they joined hands with the Maguindanao, it would be easy to cast off the Spanish yoke. As a result, Buisan and the datus entered into a blood compact and they became "ritual brothers."

In another raid in 1627, a Sulu fleet of more than thirty boats of various sizes and about 2,000 men personally led by Sultan Bungsu attacked the Spanish shipyard in Camarines. The garrison was overrun and the raiders captured artillery, guns, ammunition, iron and brass pieces, and 300 prisoners, including a Spanish lady named Doña Lucia.[12] The raiders, after divesting the garrison of all valuables, burned the shipyard.

At this point, perhaps it is of great relevance to pause a while and say a few words why the Moros were able to penetrate and conduct punitive raids deep into their enemies' territories in Luzon and the Visayas resulting in the depopulation of many towns due to deaths and captivity. Why were they so successful? Needless to say, as the first factor, the Moros were reputedly not only master sailors, they can well fight in the land as well as in the high seas. Second, the Spanish policy of prohibiting the Christian natives from carrying or possessing any form of arms for fear of native uprising, which they can use to defend themselves, had as much counter-effects as its advantages. Finally, and by far the most important factor that facilitated the Moros' success was their establishment of various bases or *ranchierias* in many places or islands in Luzon and the Visayas which they used in attacking nearby coastal towns.[13] These settlements or rendezvous points were found in Mindoro, Marinduque, Panay, Albay, Sorsogon, Antique, Masbate, Samar, Leyte, Burias, Polillio, Palawan, and in many other islands. In Rio Daraga, Masbate alone, a Moro base of 200 huts had 5,000 warriors and some 113 big and small boats.[14]

Scourge of Spain

The crucial point in the history of the Moros came in 1619 when Sultan Dipatuan Muhammad Qudarat ascended the throne of the Maguindanao sultanate. During his reign, the sultanate achieved power and fame unparalleled in the entire history of Mindanao and Sulu. He was gifted with the exquisite qualities of a great leader. He was intelligent, religious, decisive, kind, and just. Holding Spain at bay for half a century and outlasting at least eight governor generals,[15] he was regarded as "providentially created to punish the

bad Spaniards." Because of widespread devastations wrought by him, the friars were led to describe him as the "thunderbolt of Lucifer", the scourge of Catholicism and the Atilla of the evangelical ministers.[16] The natives in the Spanish-held territories were ready to do whatever Spain wanted them except "to take up arms against Qudarat." Spain considered him as the single greatest obstacle in the efforts to subjugate the whole of Mindanao. Qudarat's sphere of power and influence, aside from his traditional dominion over the whole of Cotabato, Lanao, Davao, Misamis, Bukidnon and Zamboanga, was so extensive that he was able to collect tributes from the seafaring inhabitants of the coast of Borneo and some areas of Basilan and the Visayas. During his time, the Maguindanao sultanate achieved its golden age.

In view of this awesome situation in the northern islands caused by the Moros under Sultan Qudarat, the Spanish Crown decided to shift the battle arena to Mindanao. Mindanao was ordered to be pacified at all cost. This was in response to the series of victories inflicted by the Moro raiders. In fewer than thirty years, no less than 20,000 persons were taken captive by the Moro marauders and sold to the markets of Batavia, Ternate, Amboina, Makassar, Java and Madras.

The task of pacifying Mindanao fell on Gov. Gen. Hurtado de Corcuera in 1635. On March 13, 1637, Corcuera left Zamboanga and landed at Lamitan[17] and started the assault immediately. Initially he encountered minor oppositions, but as he and 800 soldiers kept pressing inland and towards the heavily fortified capital, fighting intensified, causing wanton sacrifice of lives. Qudarat himself was wounded and was on the verge of capture, but owing to some "magical powers" attributed to him he was able to slip past the ranks of the Spaniards. One of his wives, holding an infant, threw herself into a cliff to avoid becoming a captive. Lamitan was razed to the ground. Sultan Qudarat lost eight bronze cannons, 27 *lantaka* (small brass cannon) and 100 muskets, in addition to heavy casualties including 27 followers whose heads were propped up on spikes.

This brief victory of Spain over Qudarat became the origin of the *Moro-Moro*, a blood-and-thunder play in which the Christians always emerged victorious over the Moros. Since that time the play has become an integral part of all Filipino folk and religious festivals. Corcuera became an instant hero and his return to Manila, amidst pompous and colorful preparations, occasioned unending jubilations over the Spanish victory.

The defeat of Qudarat at Lamitan did not weaken his resolve to drive out the Spaniards. To him, this was only temporary and no more than "a year's harvest." In the meantime, he took refuge at the Lake Lanao region, and it was here that he delivered his most famous speech, exhorting the Maranao datus and sultans to carry on the fight:

You men of the lake, forgetting your ancient liberty, have submitted to the Castillians. Submission is sheer stupidity.

You cannot realize to what your surrender binds you. You are selling yourselves to toil for the benefit of these foreigners.

Look at the regions that have already submitted to them. Note how abject is the state to which their people are reduced. Behold the condition of the Tagalogs and of the Visayas whose chiefs are trampled upon by the meanest Castillians. If you are no better in spirit than them, then you must expect similar treatment. You, like them, will be obliged to row the galleys. Just as they do, you will have to toil at the ship-building and labor without ceasing on the other public works. You can see for yourselves that you will experience the hardest treatment thus employed.

Be men, let me aid you to resist. All the strength of my sultanate, I promise you, shall be in your defense.

What matters if the Castillians at first are successful? That means only the loss of a year's harvest. Do you think that is too dear a price to pay for liberty?[18]

The exhortation found its mark and the lake Moros were back into fighting form and, shortly after, they attacked and succeeded in capturing the Spanish fort and set it ablaze. The garrison was evacuated and the Spaniards did not return until after two centuries later.

Barely a year after his victory over Sultan Qudarat, Gov. Gen. Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera led the invasion of Sulu. On January 4,1638, some 500 Spaniards and 1,000 native allies landed in Sulu. Committed to defend Jolo, the Sulu capital, were warriors who numbered 4,000 including allies from Borneo and Makassar. The confrontation started immediately, and after more than three months of continued fighting, neither side could claim victory. Both suffered heavy losses. On the side of the attackers, five of their finest officers were slain, including an undetermined number of their men. In the end, the conclusion was a negotiated settlement. Sultan Bongsu agreed to the truce, considering the hopeless situation facing his defenders. They were struck by epidemics, possibly cholera or dysentery.

Qudarat, after a decade, succeeded in 1637 to extend his political sway to almost the whole of Mindanao. This time, even the northern part including Caraga was under his sphere of influence. Sultan Qudarat declared *jihad*[19] against Spain and invited the rulers of Brunei, Sulu, Ternate and Makassar to unite and join forces with his sultanate in defence of Islam. In response, all succeeding wars with Spain witnessed Borneans, Ternatans, Makassars, and Sulus rallying together for the cause. Thenceforth all expeditions against his sultanate ended in failure. Qudarat died of old age at 90 in 1671.

In the intervening years 50 years from 1663, first, in the face of the Dutch victories in the Moluccas and the resultant threat to Manila and, second, by the corsair Koxinga's impending invasion threat, the Spanish Crown found it most imperative to consolidate home defense. Spanish troops serving in the various Mindanao garrisons were recalled to Manila. The main fort in Zamboanga was also abandoned. And as a tactical move, they again negotiated treaties with the sultanates of Sulu and Maguindanao, obviously to

neutralize the Moros while the dangers were still there.

The Bloodiest Period

After the twin threats of the Dutch and the Chinese had passed, the Spanish Crown decided to refortify Zamboanga in 1718. Spain also reoccupied other garrisons in Mindanao and Sulu and, upon the insistence of the Recollects, Labo in Palawan was also fortified. Alarmed by this development, the Moros designed new power realignments to meet the renewed Spanish threat head on.

Initially, the Spaniards were cautious, adopting a friendly approach in dealing with the Moros. The new policy was especially felt in matter of religion. The Spaniards abandoned conversion to Christianity as an imposed requirement and to merely ask the Moros to allow missionaries in their areas in exchange for commercial partnership. As expected, the policy did not bear good fruit. The Moros refused to trust the Spaniards. Not long after, hostilities resumed with even more fury and bloodshed.

In 1751, Spain passed a Royal Decree known as the "Privateer System" which marked the beginning of the bloodiest period in the history of the Moro-Spanish War. The decree provided for the encouragement and enlistment of private individuals to organize expeditions against the Moros. The incentives were tempting and rewarding. It stipulated the total extermination of the Moros, burning of everything combustible that they owned, and the desolation of all crops and farmlands. Criminals who enlisted were granted unconditioned pardon and all enlistees were exempted from paying tribute and were entitled to four-fifth of the booty.

Thousands enlisted for the mercenary expeditions. As anticipated, the results were quick, telling and bloody.

In the face of this threat of liquidation, the natural reaction of the Moros was to meet fire with fire. Despite decades of lull in the fighting, the Moros had not failed to toughen their war machines, which were kept oiled and ever-ready to move into action.

Evidently, they had prepared for this day and had much in store for the Spaniards and their allies. Instead of waiting for the adversaries to invade their lands, they conducted foray after foray deep into enemy territory. No place, either in Luzon or in the Visayas, was exempt from the terrible attacks of these fearless raiders. Ilocos, Catanduanes, Batangas, Manila, Iloilo, Mindoro, and other points were frequently attacked. Consequently watch-towers and belfries began to dot the coastal lines of the Spanish-held areas to keep a round-the-clock watch for approaching Moro "pirates," whose approach brought that terrible cry: *Moros en la costa.* Mothers frightened their children to sleep by the mere mention of the word *Moro.* The name became so dreaded that it evoked such offensive meaning as "pirate," "traitor" or "heathen." For a span of a decade during this period, no fewer than 50,000 captives were taken and many coastal towns were totally destroyed, their population greatly reduced.

Roughly the same degree of destruction against the Moro also took place from both the offensives and counter-offensives of the Spaniards. There were many tales of decimation of lives and property. Sometimes a whole Moro settlement would be depopulated.

On February 27, 1851, Spain launched a massive assault on Jolo, employing of a fleet of one corvette, one brigantine, three steamboats, two gunboats, nine transports, 21 barangays, and other boats of different sizes. The attacking force was composed of 142 officers, 2,876 men and about a thousand native volunteers. On the defenders' side were about 10,000 Moro warriors. As usual, Jolo was bombarded first and then the ground assault followed. In the ensuing fighting, the Spaniards reported 34 dead and the Moros 300. Jolo was razed to the ground. However, the Sulu sultan disputed this by saying that only 100 Moros died.

Decline of the Sultanate

More than any factor, the introduction of the steamboat in the Spanish navy was the greatest plus factor that turned the tide against

the Moros. The Moro *caracoa*,[20] however swift, was no match to the Spanish steamship equipped with heavy artillery. Consequently, Spain was able to conduct bigger and more sustained operations against the Moros of Mindanao and Sulu. The period witnessed the defeat of the Moros in Basilan, Malabang, and Jolo. One such reversal was scored in Balangingi, Basilan in 1845, against the Balangingi Samals, sometimes referred to by the Spaniards as the "fiercest pirates" of the Sulu seas. After a gallant but futile stand, the Balangingi Samals were routed after seventeen days of bloody combat, and the survivors, mostly women and children, were exiled to Luzon. Many of their descendants are still found in the town of Tomauini, Isabela, but what is only left to them is their ability to recite the Islamic formula of faith: "There is no God except Allah and Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah."

In the meantime, the Sulu and Maguindanao sultanates were besieged by dynastic dissensions. In 1862, after the death of Pulalun, the Sulu throne was a toss-up between Jamalul Azam, son of Pulalun, and Datu Jamalul Kiram, a grandson of Sultan Shakirullah. Seeing the split, Spain, without the slightest of hesitation, issued a certificate of recognition to Kiram, though denominating him the "feudal governor of Sulu and a subject of Spain." This was repeated in 1884, when Spain interfered in the power struggle between Ali ud-Din and Amirul Kiram, both contestants to the throne. Initially, Spain favored Amirul Kiram but later on also began making deal with the former. In the Maguindanao sultanate, the dynastic quarrel was equally disastrous. About 1731, the reigning Sultan Bayan ul-Anwar was opposed by his younger brother, Jaafar Sadiq, who had earlier in 1710 fled to Tamontaka. Jaafar Sadiq had excellent relations with the Spaniards. He was credited with having allowed the Spaniards to build the first Catholic Church in Maguindanao which still stands today. The Sultan had a son, Malinug, who by all indications would succeed his father and therefore could frustrate the ambition of the uncle. To shorten the story, a series of clashes ensued which culminated in the second week of March 1733, when Malinug with 700 warriors attacked his uncle's capital at Tamontaka and slew him.

In a bid to break all forms of resistance and to settle once and for all the issue of sovereignty over the Moros, Spain launched on February 21, 1876 what became known as the final Jolo campaign. Gov. Gen. Jose Malcampo personally led the campaign involving 9,000 troops, ten steamboats, eleven gunboats, and eleven transports. Public approval, especially on the issue of religious enmity, was carefully sought to support the campaign. In the forefront of this campaign were the friars of the various denominations: Recollects, Jesuits, Dominicans and Augustinians.[21] Together, they heralded: "The war in Jolo is now a just war, a holy war in the name of religion," or "war and war without quarters or rest for the wicked sons of the Qur'an; war to the death with blood and fire."

As in the past, the action was preceded by intense bombardment and followed by infantry assaults from all directions. One *cotta* after another fell in intense and bloody fighting and was put to the torch. In the face of these assaults, the Sultan, warriors and retainers retired to the interior – to fight another day.

Onrush of Juramentados

The decline of the sultanate, its inability to provide centralized and effective defense of the state and religion, paved the way for the emergence of another form of resistance. The task became a matter of individual obligation. This practice was what hostile writers called the *juramentado.*

The term *juramentado* was derived from the Spanish verb *juramentar*, meaning "to swear an oath." It was sarcastically used by the Spaniards and their hirelings to refer to anyone committing suicide or running amuck. Others presented the image of a rushing Moro warrior with shaven hair, fiery eyes and plucked eyebrows, brandishing *kris* or *kampilan* to attack infidels until he was slain.

Actually this greatly maligned *juramentado* was a person who had chosen to fight in the Way of Allah in his individual capacity since, as stated above, the sultanate had ceased to put up an

organized resistance against the Spaniards. He was what in the Moro viewpoint was called *Sabilillah.* The *juramentado,* after some initiation rituals and proper prayers and manifesting the resolve to die for the cause, acted out his part as a sacred duty and when he died in the course, of his attack, he became *shahid* or "martyr" with paradise as his ultimate reward. As with any real Muslim warrior, the *juramentado* loved martyrdom more than life.

Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur'an, Chapter 111, Verse 103, to those who fight in His path:

Think not of those who are slain in God's way as dead. Nay, they live finding their sustenance in the presence of their Lord; they rejoice in the bounty of God.

Speaking on this matter, Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him!) said in one of his traditions:

In the last day wounds of those who have been wounded in the Way of Allah will be evident, and will drip with blood, but their smell will be perfume of musk.

The fire of Hell shall not touch the legs of him who shall be covered with the dust of battle in the road of God.

The *juramentado* was the exact opposite of running amuck or committing suicide. The *juramentado* was a volunteer of conscience, with a strong will to fight – and to die – and was rightly guided by the Islamic requirements to strive in the Way of Allah. It is a conscious undertaking and the one committing himself to the task had full certainty of the Almighty's promise of eternal bliss in paradise. In suicide or in running amuck, one becomes senseless and falls into a trance or into the trap of Satan. It is an almost unconscious action resulting from hopelessness. If hostile writers likened the *juramentado* to the second category, then they not only committed a grave offense against him and Islam but also against the rules of good scholarship.

Twilight of Spain

What must begin must end. In the closing years of the Spanish presence, there were radical changes in the state of affairs in Mindanao and Sulu. In 1861, the Spaniards garrisoned Cotabato, which became the capital of Mindanao in 1871. But after a fire and earthquake hit Cotabato the following year, the capital was returned to Zamboanga. This time Sultan Muhammad Makakua, the incumbent sultan, was on the throne with the blessing of the Spanish Crown, but he had lost much of his territory. In Sulu, although Sultan Jamalul Kiram II was ruling with many of the previous powers intact, the chiefs at the second level were beginning to assert themselves in the affairs of the realm. At times, the sultan had a hard time promulgating major decisions without the concurrence of his chiefs.

At the decline of the Maguindanao sultanate, various minor sultanates sprang up in the Iranun areas, as well as along the *Pulangi.* The Iranuns of Malabang, Balabagan, and nearby areas now looked up to the Sultan of Ganassi in the Lanao region as their new master. In the *Pulangi,* many of these sub-sultanates pledged loyalty to the Sultan of Buayan, Sultan Marajanuddin, who was in turn succeeded in 1865 by his brother, Sultan Bayao of Kudarangan. In 1875, Datu Utto or Sultan Anwaruddin Utto, son of Sultan Marajanuddin, took over as Sultan of Buayan. Datu Utto was married to Rajah Putri, daughter of Sultan Qudaratullah Muhammad Jamalul Azam or simply Sultan Untong. So married, Datu Utto also maneuvered to be declared jointly as Sultan of Maguindanao. Openly, he was supporting the bid of his brother-in-law, Datu Mamaku, brother of Rajah Putri, to become the new Sultan of Maguindanao. But the Spaniards opposed his inclination vehemently. They saw in Datu Utto the making of a "second Qudarat." Datu Utto was able to unite the minor sultanates along the *Pulangi,* including those of Talayan, Buluan and Kabuntalan. Although he suffered many reversals from the hands of the Spaniards, he remained unconquered up to the coming of the Americans.

In 1888, Gov. Gen. Valeriano Weyler succeeded Gov. Gen. Emilio Terrero. Instead of pursuing the military campaign against Datu Utto, the new Governor trained his attention on the Iranuns and Maranaos. In January 1889, Spanish troops landed in Parang and Malabang. In April 1891, Spanish troops reoccupied Parang, Baras and Malabang and, after fierce clashes especially in the latter, decided in August to resume the campaign against the Maranaos. Thrown into action in this two-prolonged attack were 1,242 officers and men. Fierce encounters followed, especially in the *cotta* commanded by Amai Pakpak. In September, the campaign was terminated without conquering the lake Moros.

In March 1894, even after Weyler had left for Manila, the Spaniards pursued the campaign without letup. Pantar, near Marahui, (Marawi), was occupied. The datus of Taraca, Ramain, Maciu and Rumayan threatened and, consequently, they cooperated in fortifying their positions around the Agus river. Ambushes of Spanish soldiers and native allies became frequent and, at one time, 65 Spanish soldiers were killed, including one captain. The Spaniards retaliated by killing 35 Maranaos, including five datus. On June 24, about 500 Maranaos attacked 200 Spaniards, losing, however, 200 of their own men.

On March 10, 1895, this time under Gov. Gen. Ramon Blanco, the Spaniards decided to bring the war back to Marahui and, again, they encountered the same Amai Pakpak. In one of the *cottas*, 175 Moros perished including Amai Pakpak, his son, and 23 datus. The Spaniards lost eighteen soldiers, including two officers, and the wounded reached 197 soldiers, including 21 officers. In this bit of action, about 3,000 Spanish troops and native allies were involved.

In Sulu, Sultan Jamalul Kiram II tried to honor the peace agreement with the Spaniards. This contributed largely to the lack of widespread fighting in his realm, although he kept on procuring arms from Borneo. However, in 1895, the celebrated brothers, Datu Kalbi and Julkarnain, who figured prominently during the American regime, led about a thousand Moros in the attack of Jolo. After some bitter fighting the attack was contained.

This was the state of affairs during the last years of the Spanish presence in Mindanao and Sulu. If Spain was unsuccessful in completely putting down the Moros, it was not the result of faulty planning or the lack of genuine interest. On the contrary, her entire firepower, resources and manpower were all utilized to subjugate Mindanao and Sulu – and the Moros were still on their feet, not on their knees. As a fitting tribute to their gallantry and determination to resist even against formidable odds, history has appropriately referred to the Moros as the "unconquered."

Spain came to the Philippines not much for the Cross. In most instances, as the facts of her actuations were gradually exposed, religion was merely used to justify what otherwise was a satanic lust for worldly gain and glory. If she had firmly planted the Cross in the Philippines, she was no less successful in sowing the seed of hatred and animosity between the Moros and the Indios. Even if the Christianized natives absorbed the greater part of the misfortune that befell the entire inhabitants of Luzon and the Visayas, this was the consequence of collaboration, even if they did this against their wishes. The long list of Spanish invasions in Mindanao and Sulu showed the participations of thousands of these natives, and their racial brothers – the Moros – found it almost impossible to distinguish the proselytized subjects from the colonial masters. Both were one in creating havoc in Mindanao and Sulu.

CHAPTER 4

THE SO-CALLED MANDATE IN MOROLAND

The Interregnum

When the Americans first appeared in the northern horizon in 1898, the Filipino revolution was in full swing. As a young and emerging world power, the United States had to find "excuses" to realize her vast interests in Cuba, which was then under Spain. The sinking of the American warship *Maine* at Havana Harbor on February 15, 1898 resulting in the death of 246 men provided the U.S. government the necessary pretext to declare war on Spain on February 25. In due course Admiral George Dewey was ordered to proceed to Manila to attack the Spanish squadron under Admiral Patricio Montojo. This was the May 1 Battle of Manila Bay, pitting a modern navy versus "veritable leaking tubs." With the Filipino revolutionaries allied with the Americans, the former won victory after victory against the Spanish forces, until on June 12, 1898, after the last Spanish soldier had surrendered, Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, unmindful of or notwithstanding the American mind set, proceeded to declare Philippine Independence at Kawit, Cavite.

If Aguinaldo did not really misread the American intention, but deliberately played a calculated game, then he had blundered. The Americans never had the slightest intention of recognizing his declaration of independence. As a matter of fact, American troops began to occupy strategic areas vacated or surrendered to them by the retreating Spaniards, to the exclusion of the Filipino revolutionaries. As soon as they had gained enough strategic grounds, the Americans intentionally provoked the Filipinos into a shooting war which set-off the start of the Filipino-American War.

At the outset, the Filipinos were made to believe that the Americans came to help to liberate their lands from the Spaniards, after which they would become an independent nation. Untrue to

their words, the Americans did not really come to liberate the Philippines for the Filipinos but to acquire a colony in the furtherance of their own imperialist scheme.

In the meantime, in the interval between the Spanish evacuation of the Philippines and the arrival of American troops in Mindanao and Sulu, anarchy ruled. Moro warriors began to attack the Spanish garrisons in Cotabato, Zamboanga, Sulu and Lanao and sometimes wiped out the defenders to the last man.

In Cotabato, Moro warriors began to assault the Spanish garrisons in Pikit, Reina Regente, Tumbao, Cotabato and Tamontaka. One by one, they captured these garrisons. Leading the Moros were Datu Utto, Datu Piang (Amai Mingka), former minister of Datu Utto; Datu Ali Bayao, Piang's son-in-law and *Rajahmuda* of Salunayan; Datu Ampatuan or Bapa ni Mangacop, and Datu Inok or Amani Giday.

These datus, all of the Buayan dynasty, were conspiring to reassert their supremacy over the region vacated by the Spaniards. The plot was to overthrow the Filipinos who had grabbed power to side with Katipuneros. Eventually this situation led to the fighting along Paseo de Villaeron in Cotabato on January 6, 1899, resulting in the killing of Roman Vilo, Esteban Ortuoste, and a few others.[1]

As in Cotabato, chaos also reigned in Zamboanga after the last Spaniards left. The organization of the council that handled the affairs of the district also disintegrated. The church at Zamboanga was ransacked. People complained of widespread robbery and destruction of property. Pro-Katipuneros and those who were not distrusted one another. A known Filipino revolutionary, Melanio Calixto, was murdered by a pro-American named Isidro Midel. Fighting soon flared up between the Filipino insurgents and followers of Datu Mandi, easily the most powerful chief in the district.

The upheaval in Sulu, although not as extensive, was even worse. The Spanish garrisons suffered terribly and many were

decimated to the last soldier, as in the case of the garrison in Tataan in Tawi-Tawi. Harassments were also severe in the other islands like Bongao and Siasi. The Moro warriors were clearing every island of Spanish troops. Only in Jolo did the Spaniards have a strong garrison.

In Lanao, a similar scenario was unfolding, although in a lesser scale. Spanish garrisons, especially in Marahui, were in a state of siege and sporadic attacks and ambuscades became the rule. As a matter of fact, these garrisons were among the first to be evacuated to escape the wrath of the lake Moros.

The American Mandate

The Americans claimed that they had a mandate in coming to Mindanao and Sulu. But who gave this mandate? Was this an offshoot of the so-called mandate that justified or made to justify their colonization of the Philippines? Again, who gave this right, to fight the Spaniards, rob the Filipinos of their right to self-rule - and consequently, dispossess the Moros of their homeland? From God, the ultimate source of morality, from the American people, in keeping with Western democracy the source of authority to rule, from the American capitalist politicians, the power that actually rules through all sorts of gimmickry and trickery, from the American capitalists, who actually control the "stomachs" of the majority and ergo their "heads" or simply from the naked greed and avarice of President William McKinley?

Pres. William McKinley, after contemplating what to do with the Philippines, told a group of Protestant clergymen at the White House in November 1899:

> *I walked the floor of the White House night after night until midnight; and I am not shamed to tell you, gentlemen, that I went down on my knees and prayed Almighty God for light and guidance more than one night.*
>
> *And one night late it came to me this way – don't know*

how it was but it came:... That we could not give them back to Spain – that would be cowardly and dishonourable... [2]

Was this the mandate – and was it from God? Why did President McKinley "kneel" before his God only after the destruction of the Spanish armada in Manila and not before he gave the order to Admiral Dewey to attack Manila?

In the early years of his life, President McKinley had attended seminary in a small town in his native Ohio and this might explain his "pietism" and afterward his "pious imperialism." It is a strange coincidence, however, that all colonizing powers rationalized their expansionist policies by calling to the "gods" or by citing "ethnocentric missions." France was also fulfilling her *mission civilisatrice* when she laid siege on her Indochinese colonies.

In his policy speech to the U.S. Congress in 1899, Pres. William McKinley succinctly expressed:

The Philippines are not ours to exploit, but to develop, to civilize to educate to train in the science of self-government. This is the path we must follow or be recreant to a mighty trust committed to us.[3]

Again, the cloak of "benevolence" and the "White man's burden" were central to this policy. But for twenty years or so, even after the grant of independence, the Americans still enjoyed the economic parity rights under the Laurel-Langley Agreement, which was only terminated on July 4, 1974.

Let us go back to what had transpired before the final decision to acquire the Philippines as a colony was made and examine how the maneuvering in the American capital progressed. It is said that for a full six months, debates on what to do with the Philippines had been going on in Washington. The choice was whether to grant it immediate self-rule or to make it a colony. In the end, a compromise was sealed. The imperialist Republicans and the so-called anti-imperialist Democrats met halfway, and the result

was to colonize the Philippines but grant her self-rule at the "earliest feasible time". This pledge took the United States forty eight years to fulfill on July 4, 1946 when Philippine independence was granted.

If there was indeed a mandate – from the god of President McKinley and from the politician-capitalists – this would have applied only to the *Filipinas*, then comprising only Luzon and the Visayas. The territory of the Moros or "Moroland" should have been excluded. As the facts of history showed, Mindanao and Sulu had always been a foreign territory, for Spain had never really acquired these islands either by conquest, purchase or any other means. Her sovereignty was never enforced, except inside the confines of her garrisons and fortifications. How on earth could a nation sell a territory she never owned or conquered? One renowned writer, Dr. Onofre Corpuz, had this to say on this point:

> *By the time treaty negotiators were parleying in Paris there was no longer any vestige of Spanish control, possession, or government in Filipinas (that is to say, the Christian part of the archipelago). And Spain never had control, government, nor possession of the Moro territory. It did not have any "suspended sovereignty" because its sovereignty had been terminated.*[4]

Signing of the Kiram-Bates Treaty

On the eve of the signing of the Kiram-Bates Agreement, there were three hard postulates that were molesting the minds of the Americans. First, there were still 34,000 armed Moros in the Moro country and the various islands were in such a dangerous condition that no place could be safe for outsiders. The swish of the *kris*, said an American author, Victor Hurley, was unrestrained. Second, the American occupation forces had a hard time containing the onslaught of the Filipino revolutionaries led by Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo when the Filipino-American War flared up in Luzon and some parts of the Visayas. The Americans feared any strategical or tactical tie-up between the northern insurgents and the southern (Moro) warriors. Such an eventuality would have been too hot to

handle, even for the best of the American generals. And third, even President McKinley had entertained serious skepticism over the sovereignty of Spain over the Moro country, particularly the Sulu sultanate.[5]

Under the given situation, the Americans had very limited leeway. To ignore the reality of the situation was to court new disasters, prolong and escalate the fighting not only in the northern islands but right in the Moro country. Finally, the Americans chose a political approach by sending Brig. Gen. John C. Bates to Sulu to negotiate a treaty with Sultan Jamalul Kiram II. On August 20, 1899, General John C. Bates, representing the United States, and Sultan Jamalul Kiram II signed the Kiram-Bates Treaty. Similar but informal agreements were also made with the Moros of Mindanao. Among the Mindanao leaders, who were provided with the same pledge, especially on due recognition of the Moro religion, customs and traditions, were Datu Mandi of Zamboanga, Datu Piang of Cotabato, and Sultan Mangigin of Maguindanao.

The negotiation with the Sulu sultan was no easy job for the Americans. Right from the start the sailing was delicate, fraught with risks. The American negotiators had to use earnest and tactful diplomacy in order not to antagonize the sultan, who was expecting the surrender of the Spanish garrisons, but not to the Americans. He never understood how the Americans had any claim over his realm which was never conquered by the Spaniards. After over a month of unnerving bargaining that included the use of "gunboat diplomacy", the Sultan finally submitted a proposal which expectedly did not fit well with the American wish. However, after some mutual refinements the document was signed in two versions, English and Moro (Tausog), containing thirteen articles. The provisions ranged from the issue of sovereignty, non-interference in religion, and the curbing of piracy to the grant of pension to the sultan and his top aides.

On April 9, 1900 General Bates informed the Sulu sultan that the agreement was confirmed by the President of the United States except for Article X regarding the practice of slavery.[6] For its part,

the U.S. Congress did not ratify the agreement on the irrelevant pretext that the Sulu monarch and his people were polygamous.

However, in the course of time, disputes arose over the interpretations of the provisions of the treaty especially on the aspect of "sovereignty". The English and Moro versions differed significantly with each other. The Americans insisted that sovereignty was recognized and established in Sulu but the native version did not clearly state so, except as an affirmation in vague generalities of close friendship with America for mutual benefit, with the grant of special privileges and rights by the sultan to the Americans.[6] On the side of the sultan, the use of the term "sovereignty" was not only alien to the Moro political terminology but was so "complex" and "intricate" that he failed to appreciate the far-reaching implications of its western connotation. On the other, the Americans may have deliberately left it that way as part of their ruse to buy time and enough reason to abrogate it later. It is so perplexing to note why there were no mutual efforts, by the Americans in particular, to the effect that in case the two versions are in conflict which shall prevail.

A comparison of the two versions will give us the impression that even granting that both the Americans and Moros were really sincere in their reciprocal efforts to abide by the terms of the agreement confrontation will always be inevitable. Article 1 in the English version states:

> *The sovereignty of the United States over the whole archipelago of Jolo, and its dependencies is declared and acknowledged.*

On the contrary, the Moro version (translated) runs:

> *The support, the aid, and the protection of the Sulu Island and archipelago are in the American nation.*

One can notice the discrepancies of the two versions. The native version does not mention any recognition of American sovereignty.

It merely establishes the obligation of the Americans to support, aid, and protect Sulu in reciprocation to the special privileges extended to them by the sultan.

In Article III of the English version, it says:

The rights and the dignities of His Highness the Sultan and datos shall be fully respected; the Moros shall not be interfered with on account of their religion; all their religious customs shall be respected, and no one shall be persecuted on account of his religion.

The same article in the Moro version is as follows:

The rank of the Sultan of Sulu and the Datus shall be fully respected by the Americans. They shall not interfere with the affairs of the Mohammedans, or with their customs; more especially the religion of the Sulus, they shall not change.

Take note of the technicality in the clause "no one shall be persecuted on account of his religion" in the American version. This is an implied authority of disguised sovereignty. In the native version, there is no implied sovereignty but, rather, it states clearly the intact rights and prestige of the sultan and datus.

On the issue of slavery, Article X of the English version states:

Any slave in the archipelago shall have the right to purchase his freedom by paying to the master the usual market value.

In the native version, it runs thus:

In case a slave refuses to return to his master and desires to purchase his freedom it would be right for him to pay the proper value.

The American version treats slavery as absolutely evil and made it

mandatory on the master to free his slave and the slave to demand, as a matter of right, his liberty after paying his value to the former. In the Moro version, both the practice of slavery and the automatic freedom of slaves are set in conditional construction.[7]

Now, after having examined some of the articles of this treaty, one can perfectly understand the position taken by the Moros vis-a-vis the treaty and their protest against the American occupation of Sulu.

Blueprint of Subjugation

Beyond any tint of doubt, the United States did not come to the Philippines in 1898 for the islands of Luzon and Visayas alone but to claim more territories.[8] Fired by imperialist agenda, her intention to include the Moro country was never suspect. However, the war with the Northerners was still raging and any mishandling of the Moros could be disastrous. Even a sort of *modus vivendi* was in order; and, therefore, as earlier said, the signing of the Kiram-Bates Treaty, more than for any other reasons, was a dilatory tactic to neutralize the Moros while the pacification campaign in the northern areas was still underway. Moreover, even before American troops landed in Moro country, the United States already had a comprehensive plan on to handle the Moros. This involved a wide-ranging strategy with military, political, social, economic, and educational components.

1. Military Occupation – The Americans did not act passively in the face of a possible alliance between the Filipino revolutionaries and the Moros. The decision to occupy Sulu and Mindanao and take over the Spanish garrisons were the first orders: "Relieve the Spanish forces; gradually extend American jurisdiction... and do this in such a manner as to cause a minimum of friction with the people, for no reinforcements could be expected for a long time."[9] In May 1899, American troops landed in Jolo, and on October 30 the Military District of Mindanao, Jolo and Palawan (until 1905 was still known as Paragua) was constituted. On November 16, Zamboanga was occupied, and from December 1899 to January 1900,

the southern coasts of Mindanao, including Cotabato, Davao, Mati, Polloc, Parang, and Banganga were garrisoned. In charge of this command was Brig. Gen. John C. Bates, but on March 20, 1900, Brig. Gen. William Kobbe took over. Afterwards, the status of the command was elevated to the Department of Mindanao and Jolo. In 1902, Brig. Gen. William Kobbe was replaced by Brig. Gen. George Davis, who on October 1, 1902 was succeeded, after a few adjustments in the structure which was renamed on July 10, 1902 the Department of Mindanao, by Brig. Gen. Samuel Summer. A year later, General Summer was followed by Maj. Gen. Leonard Wood, with the latter eventually becoming the first Governor of the Moro Province.

At this point, it is worthwhile to state that many of the military officers assigned in the Moro country were veterans of the Indian wars and reservations duty. It was, therefore, frequent that many of the methods in governing the Indians were also tried in the Department of Mindanao. Usually, the authority of the military commander assigned in Mindanao and Sulu was the same as that of the commander at the Indian reservation west of the Mississippi River. Under his command were some hundreds of Apaches, men, women and children, who were all restrained in their liberties and were virtually prisoners. Brig. Gen. George Davis, who succeeded Brig. Gen. William Kobbe, had earlier worked in the Indian territories before his stint here. One such approach resembling the treatment of the Indians was the attitude that "treaties" made with them, who were considered "savages," were not binding and could be easily abrogated or set aside by simple misconduct on the part of the "natives".

In the beginning, the Moros and the Americans were quite at ease with each other, in the way the Kiram-Bates Treaty defined their relations; i.e., there was no direct American interference in the affairs of the local population. There was no aggressive effort to carry on the so-called White Man's burden to develop, "civilize," educate or to train the Moros in the way toward a democratic government. The main concern of the occupation forces was to maintain peace and order in the Moro region. But as more troops

poured in, an offshoot of the end of the Filipino-American War in 1901,[10] frictions started to occur between the Moros and the Americans. Census was also conducted. Consequently, the shift from non-interference to direct rule shaped up with the creation of the Moro Province.

The military occupation of Mindanao and Sulu lasted from 1899 to 1903.

2. Direct Rule – The main reason given for the change of approach from non-interference to direct intervention with the creation of the Moro Province was to prepare the Moros for integration into the body politic of the colonial government. The insistence of the Filipino leaders and the American acquiescence was predicated on one point: the importance of the rich natural resources in the Moro country. The direct rule scheme, the Americans alleged, was also to protect the common people from the "tyranny" of the sultans and datus, from the depredations of bandits, to introduce the American concept of justice, to stop the unscrupulous practices of native traders, and finally to implement public projects such as schools, hospitals and wharves or ports. Slavery was also made illegal. In brief, the direct rule policy, overtly, was to implement the so-called American mandate in Moroland to develop, to civilize, to educate, and to train the Moros in the art of democratic governance. But covertly the main motivation was the immediate exploration and finally the exploitation of the vast natural resources in the Moro country.

The Kiram-Bates Treaty was singularly the main obstacle to the implementation of direct U.S. rule. The treaty clearly laid down the guiding principles of non-interference in the local affairs of the Moros. But the Americans had to get rid of this obstruction if they had to succeed in their grand plan for the Moro country. On March 2, 1904, they did exactly what they were expected to do. Pres. Theodore Roosevelt, without the slightest compunction or any moral or ethical consideration, unilaterally declared the treaty null and void. On March 21, Gov. Leonard Wood notified the Sultan of the decision and, naturally, the Sultan was displeased, especially

when the decision was relayed through someone (Wood) who for years had been teaching them that we must each do exactly what we promise to do. He could not imagine how a government claiming to have come on a "pious mission" could suddenly act so unscrupulously in abrogating the treaty contained in a formal agreement signed by both sides.

Thus, in essence, U.S. policy vis-a-vis the Moros was in line with the treatment of the American Indians whereby agreements made with them were set aside as convenience dictated, without the least hesitation or the slightest compunction. These agreements carried no weight and no binding effects on the Americans, on the malicious pretext that the Moros, like the Red Indians, were savages. With the "might is right" credo forming the guiding thrust of the U.S. colonial expansion, this supercilious attitude was more than expected.

However, even before this formal unilateral abrogation, the Kiram-Bates Treaty had practically ceased to exist already, when the Moro Province was created on June 1, 1903. If the Kiram-Bates Treaty was the instrument of indirect rule, the Moro Province was the nail to drive down and establish direct rule in Moro country.

The Moro Province was under the direct supervision of the Civil Governor of the Philippine Islands and the Philippine Commission. The Civil Governor, with the concurrence of the Philippine Commission, appointed the provincial governor, secretary, treasurer, attorney, engineer and superintendent for the Moro Province. These six officials constituted the legislative council, which, subject to certain limitations, was the legislative body of the province. The Moro Province was divided into five districts: Sulu, Zamboanga, Lanao, Cotabato and Davao, which in turn were subdivided into several subordinate local governments.

The creation of the Moro Province was deemed the transitional machinery for the shift from military to civil rule in the Moro territory. In actual operation, however, it was no less than what the Spaniards conceived earlier as the Politico-Military Province. All throughout

its existence, the Province was controlled and manned by military personnel. And this being a military government, such guidelines as "to cut the Moro foot to fit the American shoe" was central in the so-called "civilizing" mission of the military administrators of the Moro Province from 1903 to 1913.

TABLE I

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION OF THE MORO PROVINCE

Insular Government
(Governor General and Philippine Commission)

Moro Province
(Governor and Legislative Council)

Districts
(District Governors-District Board)

Davao	Cotabato	Lanao	Sulu	Zamboanga
5 Organized Municipalities:	2 Organized Municipalities:	2 Organized Municipalities:	3 Organized Municipalities:	2 Organized Municipalies:
Davao Mati Cateel Baganga Caraga	Cotabato Makar	Malabang Iligan	Jolo Siasi Cagayan de Sulu	Zamboanga Dapitan
6 Tribal Wards	18 Tribal Wards	13 Tribal Wards	9 Tribal Wards	5 Tribal War 56 Sub-districts

The first governor of the Moro Province was Maj. Gen. Leonard Wood. As governor of the province, he adopted a "mailed fist" policy or simply the use of brute force to quell even a minor military problem. His background either as military man or political leader was far from desirable. As an officer of the Rough Riders regiment,

he first saw action against the Indians and then against the Spaniards in Cuba in 1898. On both stints, there was much destruction, mass slaughter and brutality. After the Spanish-American War, he was appointed military governor of Cuba, and after his term ended in the Moro Province, he was made Governor General of the Philippine Islands. Throughout his career either as a military officer or politician, he was known to have had little regard for human life. He acted with a martial temperament, said to be the outcome of his ignominious defeat to Warren Harding in a presidential nomination.

As first governor of the Moro Province, Maj. Gen. Leonard Wood had the primary task of organizing the province along the rationale of direct interference in the affairs of the Moros. Already prejudiced to the absolute correctness of the American outlook and ways and the rightness of the mandate over the "good-for-nothing" Moro laws, General Wood proceeded to discharge his official responsibilities – though, in fairness, firmly and with enthusiasm – with much predilection against the general welfare of the Moros. He introduced laws which were not only unpopular but exacerbated resistance to the American presence in Mindanao and Sulu. In his characteristic "arrogant" ways, he bluntly told the Sulu Sultan on the eve of the abrogation of the treaty:

> *I am going to be frank with you. At present, your rights as a nation are nothing... I believe we are here forever, unless some greater country comes and drives us away; we do not know of any such country.*[11]

On April 16, 1906, General Wood was relieved of the post and Brig. Gen. Tasker Bliss succeeded him as governor of the Moro Province. General Bliss never fought in the Indian wars or in the Spanish-American War. He was more of a scholar rather than a soldier and, moreover, was as "peacemaker." It was his primary concern in war to end it rather than to prolong the agonies and sacrifices of its victims.

In November 1909, Brig. Gen. John C. Pershing took over as

governor of the Moro Province and lasted up to December 15, 1913, when the Department of Mindanao and Sulu was created. Like General Wood, he was a veteran of the Indian wars and the Spanish-American War, and later fought in Mexico against Pancho Villa. A year after his stint in Mindanao, he was appointed commander of the World War I American Expeditionary Force in Europe.

During his term as head of the Moro Province, he was responsible for the creation of the first Christian colony of settlers in Mindanao in 1912. He continued the educational programs of his predecessors and it was under him that the number of Moro children attending schools increased. However, the disarmament of the Moros was his major achievement. Under him, the Province greatly progressed, particularly in ways of the American system of governance which eventually led to the advent of the first civilian rule in Mindanao and Sulu.

On December 13, 1913, Frank C. Carpenter was appointed the first civilian governor of the Moro Province, which was named Department of Mindanao and Sulu on March 13, 1914. Aside from the five provinces already under the administrative jurisdiction of the Moro Province, two more provinces were added, namely, Agusan and Bukidnon. Both the Moros and the so-called "wild tribes" or "pagans," the inhabitants of the two provinces added, were now lumped together under this office.

Frank Carpenter, a Nebraskan, joined the army in 1888 and became Secretary of the Army in 1895. Four years later, he was appointed secretary to General H. W. Lawton in the Philippines and thereafter was appointed Assistant Executive Secretary and, later, as Executive Secretary of the Insular Government. He learned to speak Tagalog and Spanish very fluently and was endeared among the Filipinos. He was remembered for many highlights, among which were the signing of the Kiram-Carpenter Agreement in 1915, the Filipinization of the offices, the adoption of the "policy of attraction," and the sending of scholars or *pensionados* (including Moros) to the United States for higher studies.

TABLE 2

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MINDANAO AND SULU
January 1, 1915

Governor-General of the Philippine Islands
|
Department Government
|
Provincial Government

Agusan	Bukidnon	Cotabato	Davao	Lanao	Sulu	Zamboanga
3 om: Butuan, Kabadbaran, Talakogon	nom	2 om: Cotabato, Parang	7 om: Caraga, Cateel, Baganga, Davao, Manai, Moti, Santa Cruz	3 om: Dansalan, Malabang, Iligan	1 om: Jolo	5 om: Dapitan, Dipolog, Tubungen, Isabela, Zamboanga
53 Municipal Districts	18 Municipal Districts	23 Municipal Districts	8 Municipal Districts	38 Municipal Districts	24 Municipal Districts	4 Municipal Districts

Legend: om = organized municipalities; nom = no organized municipalities

In 1916, the legislative power over the Moro country was transferred to the Philippine Legislature as stipulated in the Jones Law. By 1920, the control of Moro affairs, except for a few positions held by Americans, was in the hands of the Filipinos.

On February 5, 1920, the Department of Mindanao and Sulu was formally abolished by Act No. 2878 of the Philippine Legislature and, in its stead, the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes was organized. Teopisto Guingona, a native Christian, succeeded Carpenter as Director of the new office. In 1936, a further change was effected

with the renaming of this office as the Commission on Mindanao and Sulu, with Dansalan, Lanao as its headquarters. The Commission was headed by a Commissioner with the rank of Undersecretary in the Department of Interior and Labor. The arrangement continued until the invasion by Japan in 1942.

The policy of direct rule, if one may gloss over the narration thus given, may well be seen that, as far as their viewpoint was concerned, the Americans had done the best they could under the circumstances. They did not and would not have satisfied the Moros, because they disagreed with the Moros in almost everything – except perhaps "to fight" – but as far as their self-styled mandate was concerned, they had delivered it well. Before 1920, the Americans had made all decisions in the affairs of the Moro country, but after this time the Moros and the pagans were left completely at the "mercy or tyranny" of the Christian Filipinos.

3. **Scorched-Earth Policy** – As discussed earlier, the American occupation forces had a clear policy on the Moros: neutralize them while the Filipino-American War was still raging in the northern provinces and, after that, extend American control and sovereignty over the Moro country by all means military and at all cost. This "scorched-earth" policy was shown in their military campaigns against recalcitrant datus and sultans all over Mindanao and Sulu.

In the 1903 official census, a distinction was made between the "civilized" and "uncivilized" and the Moros were placed under the latter category together with the wild tribes or pagans. In describing the Moros, General Wood, in a letter to Gov. William Taft on October 9, 1903, said:

> *The people of this island are Mohammedans. Their faith teaches them that it is no sin to kill Christians and they are taught by the priests to believe it is commendable. They are nothing more or less than an unimportant collection of pirates and highwaymen, living under laws which are intolerable...*[12]

Earlier in 1902, Brig. Gen. George Davis in his official report to

Gen. William Kobbe said, "It is useless to discuss a plan of government that is not based on force, might, and power."[13] In 1903, Capt. John Pershing also referred to the Moros as savage". Impressions like these had greatly helped shape the early policy of the United States in relation to the Moros.

We shall endeavor to discuss this policy in this section where brute force was used in what otherwise was a simple pocket military problem. The fights that constituted what we refer to as the Moro-American War will be discussed in another section.

There is nothing more bloody, if only to show how this policy of brute force was carried out to the hilt, than to recall what transpired in Bud Dajo in 1906, Bud Bagsak in 1913, and to the Alangkat Movement in Cotabato in 1926-1927. All three were essentially not military confrontations but simple cases of massacres.

Bud Dajo is an extinct volcano six miles from Jolo. It is covered by dense tropical jungle and is 2,100 feet above sea level. Ensconced in the crater were over a thousand Moro men, women, and children armed only with *krises*, spears, aging rifles, and a few cannons. Laksamana Usap, the leader, and his followers were up in arms on issues they believed wrongly imposed on them. One was the payment of the cedula tax, which resembled the "tribute" of yore and which the Moros were not accustomed to give. The defenders occupied a very strategic position, probably the "strongest" ever defended against the occupation forces in the Philippines. Most important of all, they were making a defense "unto death." The American assault forces, numbering 790, were under the command of Col. Joseph Duncan, and consisted of infantry and cavalry, an artillery battery, constabulary troops, sailors, and a gunboat anchored offshore. Before the actual combat, the Moros – women already dressed in men's clothes and in full battle gear – were asked to "surrender" or at least send down the non-combatants. The reply was a complete defiance. The Moros were seething with hatred and rearing to fight.

That early morning of March 6, 1906, General Wood was in Jolo

to get things done personally. He had no other plan to settle the issue than to use force against poorly-equipped but gallant warriors. The battles started. They continued on the following day where the major phase of the fighting was fought. There was bloody hand-to-hand fighting and after two days of combat, on March 8, the slaughter, as expected, was terrible. Of the more than 1,000 defenders, only six survived, while the Americans suffered 21 slain and 73 wounded, including Colonel Duncan.

General Wood was severely criticized for the carnage, where even women and children were not spared. Critics pictured him as a "blood-thirsty monster difficult to parallel in history." But as expected, his boss in Washington, Pres. Theodore Roosevelt, cabled his congratulations: "Upon the brilliant feat of arms wherein you and they [his men] so well upheld the honor of the American flag."[14]

The carnage could have been averted if only the American had observed restraints and paid due regard to the inviolability of human life enshrined in the United States Constitution. Several letters and pleas were addressed to Gov. Leonard Wood against a military solution, but he ignored all these pleas. His conscience, if any, did not bother him in the least.

Seven years after, American hands were again dripping with Moro blood in Bud Bagsak. The central issue was the disarmament policy of Brig. Gen. John Pershing, who succeeded General Wood as Governor of the Moro Province. The Moros resisted this vigorously. After some extended negotiations, the Moros led by Naqib Amil, Datu Jami and Datu Sahipa declared that they would never surrender their firearms. General Pershing would settle for no less and branded the Moros "outlaws" and "desperados."

Bud Bagsak is another extinct volcano not far from Jolo. Five hundred Moro warriors were encamped in the crater and swore to die rather than submit. Before the battle began, the crater was subjected to "murderous" bombardment, and soon on June 11, 1913, the action commenced. Five days of combat action, mostly hand-to-hand, ensued, and on the final day, June 15, the record of the

fighting was made and the result, again, as anticipated, was that nearly all of the 500 Moros were killed or wounded versus 14 killed and 13 wounded on the American side.[15] One report said 2,000 Moros were killed, including 196 women and 340 children.[16]

The defenders of Bud Bagsak were completely routed like their counterparts in Bud Dajo, but the spirit of the Moros to resist did not die with them.

It is noteworthy to relate here the introduction of two new ingredients in the fighting. First, the Moros devised a new weapon in their last-ditch desire to fight the Americans in every way. This was the use of logs fastened to the slope of the volcano and let loose on the advancing enemy. According to a local tradition attached to the alleged military exploits of Sansawi, a member of the Moro Company fighting on the side of the Americans, this caused many injuries, even deaths, to the attacking American soldiers. Another was the participation of this newly-formed 52nd Company of the Philippine Scouts, otherwise known as the "Moro Company." Members of the unit were required to wear the red fez (a Turkish cap) with either a gold or black tassel.

On March 23, 1927, the final assault was mounted against the members of the Alangkat Movement or what the Americans called "Dance craze." The movement was largely a Manobo affair under Datu Mampuroc of the Arumanon Manobo and crudely devised against the influx of Christian settlers into Mindanao. The contingent under the command of Major Gutierrez and Colonel Stevens came to the Manobo settlement (located at present-day Midsayap, North Cotabato) and started shooting indiscriminately. The result was a massacre. Datu Mampuroc, and 29 other Manobos, including women and children, were killed en masse.

Datu Mampuroc had many followers in Lebak, Talayan, Dulawan and other areas in Cotabato. According to their belief, Datu Mampuroc was Datu Ali reincarnated, who came back to earth to continue the war against outsiders who were out to drive out the natives. The ceremony was weird. Members underwent a state of

suspended animation or went into a deep trance, after which they engaged in wild sex orgies or went on the warpath to kill people, especially Americans or Christians.

4. Creation of Colonies – The next scheme to contain the Moros was the creation of colonies. The first formal plan to settle Mindanao with Christian settlers, as noted earlier, started in 1912 during the time of Brig. Gen. John C. Pershing as Governor of the Moro Province. The main reason for the resettlement plan was the alleged overpopulation in the northern areas. Another reason given was that the Cotabato Valley needed settlers if it was to produce rice in larger or commercial quantities.

In the same year, the first Christian rice colony, consisting of 100 families from Cebu, was relocated in Cotabato. They were promised ownership of the land eventually. Pershing emphasized that a well managed Filipino colony in the heart of the Moro country, as an example, should act as a stimulus to Moro agriculture.[17] They were practically provided with everything, free of charge, and there were other incentives to lure others.

However well-intentioned General Pershing was, all his theories, save the production of rice in a wider scale, were a farce. There was no over-population in Luzon and the Visayas and the Moros were not encouraged to be productive, at least not as it was supposed to be in Pershing's mind. On the contrary, with the influx of wave after wave of settlers, the Moros were forced back to the wall and, not long afterwards, violence erupted. Similar to the 1899 "holy mission," the arbitrary settlement of these "alien" people had a direct disastrous consequence on the native inhabitants whose priority rights were not considered or attended to. This policy was reminiscent of that unscrupulous and amoral political theorist of the 15th century, Nicollo Machiavelli (1469-1527). Machiavelli was an advocate of trickery, treachery, and dishonesty in statecraft, and at one time was "identified with Satan." He declared that a country can be effectively colonized by settling there people of the colonizing power. This bit of advice was apparently heeded by the Americans in Mindanao and Sulu as it was by the British in Ireland. The

Americans settled alien Filipino elements in Mindanao and Sulu just as the British Crown planted Protestant outsiders in Ireland.

Before 1913, the Americans had no fixed plan for creating settlements in Moro country. Although the lure of lands in the Moro country, tagged as another "Wild West" and inhabited by wild savages, was intense, there were many obstacles on the way. First, serious fighting was still going on and things were in a precarious condition. Second, there was no consensus as to which group of people, Italians, Negroes, Greeks or Filipinos to settle. Adding to this difficulty was the hot and humid climate prevailing in the region. And third, the free flow of the American dollars as capital for business ventures did not come to the Moro Province until the later part of the second decade of this century. B.F. Goodrich started operations only in 1919, Del Monte through a subsidiary in 1925, and Goodyear in 1929.

As a result of the explosive Negro Problem in the United States, the American blacks became the priority in the still nebulous settlement plan. By settling them somewhere, the Americans were actually defusing one of their serious racial problems at home. Moreover, the Negroes, having come originally from the usually arid African continent, would have little difficulty in adjusting themselves to the tropical climate in the Moro region.

In 1939, Pres. Manuel Quezon even had a special concept of settlement in mind in proposing to plant Jews who were running away from the gas chambers of Adolf Hitler. His Jewish contact suggested that after the settling of the Jewish refugees a law should be passed banning all other foreigners from the Commonwealth. The special target, without pinpointing it, were the Japanese who then posed the greatest problem to the state before World War II.[18] He had in mind Lake Lanao in Mindanao as the favored site. However, had his idea – some said a "misdirected magnanimity" – materialized, he could have created another Palestine in Mindanao. Quezon might have been moved by the savagery and horrors of the Nazis, which is natural to any rational human being. But the question is, why did he fail to consider the outcome of his

"generosity" right in his own backyard? No less than 10,000 Jews mostly from Germany and Austria were involved in the proposed settlement project.

There is no intention of listing all the ideas or proposals for settlement in the Moro country. Certainly there were many more. However, two such ideas bear mentioning. In 1899, there was a proposal from a certain C.A. Muir of Weatherford, Texas that a settlement of 1,000 Texas farmers and mechanics be established in Mindanao to induce others from depressed communities in the U.S. to follow. They were offered many incentives. In the same year, there was another plan from W.G. Douglas of Baltimore to parcel lands in the Philippines (including Mindanao and Sulu) into colonies. Each colonist would be extended help and easy loans.

The successful migration and settlement of outsiders in the Moro region resulted in the dislocation, dispossession, containment and "minoritization" of the Moros. They became virtual strangers in their own lands.

5. Policy of Attraction – There was one clear-cut aspect of the American policy vis-a-vis the Moros which contributed largely to the general atmosphere of peace in Mindanao and Sulu, i.e., the policy of attraction. History has proven that the Moro psyche would respond to love with love – and to force with force – which was not always natural to man. Other people would submit if force were applied. The Moro would not. His *amor propio*, his dignity, his *maratabat* would urge him to resist for it was dishonorable to surrender.

The policy was formally inaugurated after the termination of the period of military rule from 1899 to 1913. It was one of the cornerstones of the administration of Frank C. Carpenter when he became the Governor of the Department of Mindanao and Sulu. In essence, it was nothing but an appeal directly to people's natural interests or aesthetic sense. In practice, it involved the grant of scholarships, building of schools and hospitals, construction of roads, bridges, and artesian wells. The Americans also resorted to

"dollar diplomacy" or dole out, giving of posts in the government, arranging pleasure trips and the excessive use of praise or flattery.

In the end, this policy mesmerized the minds of the Moros, which were the final target; it gradually penetrated into their society as a whole, benumbing their sense of national identity. The hands that firmly grasped the deadly *krises* and spilled so much blood were now trained to seize the pens and write encomiums or eulogies to the enemies-turned masters. Exactly as it had been planned, those who were enamored of this policy or those who had availed of the *pensionado* program[19] and studied in American schools, by and large, became the foremost exponents of the American system and colonial interests. These elements, fawning on their masters, went to the length of despising their own people and institutions, and in many ways, religious zeal was snuffed out for worldly pleasures and other mundane matters. As a result, the epoch marked the fashion of naming Moro children after American monickers, such as Mcnutt, Pershing, Carpenter, etc. It also gave birth to the self-defeating attitude popularly referred to as "colonial mentality" of preferring everything of foreign, nay American, origin. For the sultans, datus and other chiefs, the power of praise and flattery, doles and donations was masterfully utilized to neutralize resistance and finally to win them over to the side of the Americans. In several instances, datus or groups of datus and other chiefs, particularly those fuming with deep-seated antipathy against the American rule, were brought to Manila and other provinces and in some instances even to America on "educational tour" or as guests of the government. The purpose of these trips was no less than to convert them into government spokesmen upon their return home. Two of those invited were Datu Alamada (Amani Boliok) and Datu Ampatuan of Cotabato, who both figured prominently in the early wars with the American occupation forces. The number of public schools increased and attendance was made compulsory. Sons and daughters of Moros were sent to Manila or Washington on scholarship grants or as *pensionados*. Upon their return, they carried with them new world outlooks based on the American values system and beliefs. Public works expanded and field dispensaries and hospitals were made available. Moros were appointed, though in a

small scale, to officers and their lands began to be titled in their names. Moros also "participated" in agricultural colonies.

In all these efforts, the net result was not "Moroizing" the Moros but "Filipinizing" them in order to pave the way for the integration of the various islands into one unified state once independence is granted.

Moro Actions and Responses

We have stated that the presence of the Americans in Mindanao and Sulu was a direct challenge to the independence and authority of the still "unconquered" Moros, numbering about 335,000 by modest estimate. They viewed the move toward integration as the White Man's renewed attempt to subjugate and Christianize them. This move they could not tolerate or allow to happen, even if they had to go to war, as their forebears had done for many centuries.

The Moros took the threat seriously. As the Moros were not trained to bow down in shame, it was now the American turn to decide whether to back off or squarely take the dare they had hurled forward. However, for the purpose of this discussion, let us classify into two the forms of struggle of the Moros during the American regime, namely, the armed and the parliamentary. In this section, let us deal with the armed struggle first. But before doing so, let us note that these two forms of struggle appeared to lack coordination by a central leadership in the pursuit of common formal political objectives. The main reason for this deficiency, perhaps, was the superior handling of the problem by the American colonial administrators, who had fully grasped the intricacies of the southern problem, as well as the various errors of the Spaniards, and then succeeded in adopting an almost flawless policy as far as their imperialist agenda in Mindanao and Sulu were concerned.

1. Armed Struggle – There were several factors which ignited the Moro-American War. First, the Moro's mental frame of struggle against foreign encroachment did not slacken at the disappearance of the Spaniards. The fighting itself merely had an impasse, thanks

to the superb diplomacy of the Americans, which they employed while their hands were full in their war with the Filipino insurgents in the northern areas. For their part, especially among the sultans and datus, the Moros were studying the situation closely and were not in the rush to make hasty decisions. Second, the American total disregard of the policy of non-interference in favor of direct handling made the prospects of war a matter of time. The Moros were not used to being commanded by outsiders and could not accept any infringement of this tradition. Third, the two conflicting world realities — for the Moros said that the Americans were "infidels," "secularists" and "invaders," and the Americans described the Moros as "fanatics" and "pirates" -- hastened early conflicts. One considered the other as a threat and, therefore, must be disposed off as soon as possible. And fourth, such activities of the American forces like land surveys, censuses, curtailment of slavery, and disarmament resulted in an early face-to-face contact with the Moros, especially those who hated outsiders. In summation – and this is the bottom line – the Moros wanted to preserve their independence and sovereignty over their lands from foreign interference.

As early as May 1899, despite the Kiram-Bates Treaty, trouble already erupted in Mindanao and Sulu. The main reason was that the next-level chiefs, after seeing that the sultans were giving in too much to the dictates of the Americans, started to assert themselves. Very soon, serious military confrontations flared up in various parts of the Moro country. These events led one American writer, J. Ralston Hayden, to comment that never during the entire continental expansion of the United States had armed encounters been so frequent and serious as that between the Moros and American troops.[20] The Moros' bold display of heroism, bravery and determination, even against formidable odds, spoke of their undying spirits to fight for their religion, people and land. The living legacy to this was the invention of the 1911 .45 caliber revolver, which was specially designed to stop the *juramentado* dead on his track. Earlier, American soldiers used the .38 caliber revolver as sidearm but, although it was effective against the Cubans, it was not sufficient against the Moro warriors who could still lunge at their adversaries with their *krises* and inflict casualties. The extent

of the ferocity of combat and the distraught condition of the American occupation forces was reflected by one of their most favorite expressions: "The only good Moro is a dead Moro." No less than 20,000 Moros were killed in action from 1899 to 1916. From 1904 to the end of General Wood's term as Governor of the Moro Province in 1906, the Moros suffered 3,000 dead as against 70 Americans.[21]

There is no attempt here to document all the engagements in the Moro-American War. The record would fill hundreds of pages. Consider that in just less than three years of General Wood's rule, there were already more than a hundred confrontations that took place, some hard-fought.[22] For this reason, the major confrontations would perhaps suffice for this narration.

As early as April 1902, a large-scale engagement occurred in Bayang, Lanao. About 1,200 American troops were thrown into action against the 600 warriors of Sultan of Bayang and of nearby settlements. The Moros were encamped in their cottas (forts) with brass cannons emplacements. For the first time, the Americans had a taste of the horrors of the on-rushing *juramentados* who simply refused to fall after being hit repeatedly. The fighting protracted until May 3. Report of the fighting showed that the U.S. troops suffered ten killed and 41 wounded as against 300 - 400 Moros slain, including the sultans of Bayang and Pandapatan. In honor of a fallen young American lieutenant, Camp Vicar was erected near the scene of the fighting. Capt. John Pershing was later appointed the new commanding officer of the camp. Upon assuming the post, Pershing, nicknamed "Black Jack," immediately started to implement plans for the eventual recognition of U.S. sovereignty over the lake Moros. The lake Moros interpreted this as no less than an act to subjugate them and to convert them to Christianity. They warned the Americans to leave immediately or face the dire consequences. A series of bitter engagements followed that lasted up to February 1908. So beleaguered were the Americans that in Dansalan (Marawi) they could not cross Keithley Road "without being shot at". At one time District Governor Allan Gard, the first civilian Governor of Lanao, was wounded in an ambush in Maciu in February 1908.

But because of the Americans' vast resources, superior weaponry and battle tactics, the final outcome of these engagements always favored the newcomers: 300 Moro casualties versus only about 30 Americans, dead or wounded.

Leading the Lanao resistance was the shrewd and brave Datu Ampuan Agaus who outwitted the Americans several times and, despite his many reversals, was still up in arms until the middle of 1916. Out of the deaths, havoc and destructions in these bloody encounters, Pershing was not only promoted from the rank of captain direct to general, thus bypassing 862 senior officers, but was also hailed as a "hero" and "military genius."

In Cotabato, the most celebrated anti-American resistance was spearheaded by Datu Ali Bayao, *Rajalmuda* of Salunayan and later of Buayan, and his brother, Jambangan. Datu Ali was supposed to succeed Sultan Anwaruddin Utto as chief of the Buayan sultanate, but for some reasons Datu Piang or Tuya Tan, his father-in-law, had become the most popular chieftain in Cotabato when the Americans arrived in December 1899. Mingka, the daughter of Datu Piang, was however married to Datu Ali, who was raising the flag of resistance against the cedula tax and anti-slavery campaign of the Americans. Datu Ali's bravery and determination became known far and wide. He did not only succeed raising the flag of resistance over the entire Cotabato Valley but also attempted to persuade the Lanao Moros to join hands with him in fighting the Americans.

In early March 1904, General Wood personally led the attack on Datu Ali's main *cotta* at Kudarangan which, according to one account, was the "largest ever constructed" and could garrison "four or five thousand men" and was defended by eighty-five pieces of artillery, including one of 3 to 5 1/2 inches caliber. After a bitter fight, the fort was captured and Datu Ali and 260 followers retreated to Salunayan. In May 1904, it was Datu Ali's turn to even the scores with the Americans, who were not familiar with the terrain of the marshland and the terrible bites of mosquitoes there. In his diary, Wood recorded their encounter with mosquitoes:

I don't think anywhere in the world have I ever seen mosquitoes as thick as they were at this place. The men were almost crazy. There were countless millions of mosquitoes so thick it was impossible to protect oneself against them, or sleep. Some wrapped their hands in blankets and others sat over the fire until the smoke so hurt their eyes and nostrils that they had to get away, and as soon as they left the fire the mosquitoes attacked them. I think two nights here would have destroyed the efficiency of the command and probably resulted in several cases of temporary madness.[23]

In a classic example of guerrilla tactics, Ali and his men succeeded in luring the American troops into the Liguasan Marsh where a well-laid ambush led to the massacre of nineteen soldiers, including two officers, and the capture of several others. The captives were later released.

Finally on October 22, 1905, Capt. Frank R. McCoy led an expedition of combined army and scouts of the 22nd Infantry and Philippine Scouts under cover of darkness and sneaked deep into Datu Ali's hideout near Malala River not far from Buluan to surprise him and his men. Datu Ali and scores of others perished in this attack. What made the mission easier was the "treachery" of Datu Inok or Amani Giday,[24] husband of Bagungan, who tipped off the Americans on Datu Ali's hideout. Earlier, Bagungan was abducted by Datu Ali, which enraged the husband and made him turn against his former companion in the resistance.

Even before 1903, a series of confrontations raged in the Sulu archipelago. The most serious were those led by Panglima Hassan in alliance with many minor datus in October of that year. Panglima Hassan was of humble origin but he was gifted with intelligence and determination. He was so influential that he could easily muster 500 warriors within hours' notice and many more within days. The Americans accused him of slavery and banditry, the normal crimes imputed to other anti-American campaigners elsewhere in Mindanao and Sulu. Eventually Panglima Hassan, already fed up with the Americans' hostile ways, decided to confront the Americans

anew. With about 400 followers, including women and children, he assaulted the American troops stationed in Jolo. The fighting lasted the whole day resulting in heavy casualties on both sides, especially to the attackers. By then reinforcements under the command of General Wood arrived in Sulu. Soon the Americans mounted counter-offensives. The main fort of Panglima Hassan near a lake was besieged from all directions and a gory hand-to-hand fight followed. After days of continuous fighting, the fort was overran, Hassan overwhelmed and captured. But after a masterly stroke of genius, Hassan escaped, leaving behind many casualties among his captors, including Maj. Hugh Scott, who was wounded.

The struggle of Panglima Hassan was short-lived. On March 4, 1904, he was martyred at his hideout atop Bud Bagsak. But the Americans found in him a ferocious fighter who never hesitated to throw himself into battle, even against a superior enemy. After his martyrdom, his followers led by Datu Pala continued the resistance until November 1905 and declared a *jihad* to drive out the infidel Americans.[25]

Many more resistance fighters came forward. One was the famous Jikiri, known as the "Terror of the Sulu Sea." Branded by the Americans as a "bandit," he was, to the Moros, a kind of "Robin Hood." He slashed the throats of the Americans and their local lackeys, got their properties and distributed them to the people and his men.

Like Panglima Hassan, Jikiri had a lowly beginning. He once served the Sulu sultan as a betel-nut bearer. Early in his rebel life, he had a small band of followers of just seven, but in due time this grew in size. In 1907, his fame as a "pirate" began to cause much trouble to the Americans in Sulu, then under Governor Alexander Rogers, who soon raised the reward money to P4,000 to get him "dead or alive." Jikiri was not only brave; he was elusive to his pursuers and lusted to hit back at them with rage and impunity. He was particularly a terror to the pearling rights grabbers; in fact, they were the main reason for his resistance. No less than Sultan Jamalul Kiram II, on his visit to Washington in September 1910, told Pres.

William Taft that Jikiri's banditry was due to the violation of the traditional rights of the people over the pearl beds of Sulu.[26]

After two years of hit-and-run confrontations, the end of the road for Jikiri came on July 4, 1909. A combined American cavalry, infantry and artillery force assaulted his cave at Patian Island, ten miles from Jolo, where he and his men perished after a fierce hand-to-hand fight.

In August 1913, the Moros of Talipao on Jolo Island refused to pay the road tax imposed on them by the Americans. Led by Datu Sabtal, they fortified themselves around the slopes of Mount Talipao. Their refusal led to a series of engagements between the group of Datu Sabtal and the Philippine Scouts.

In 1914, Datu Alamada Macog or Amani Boliok of Pedatan, near Parang, defied the Americans. With a following of 3,000 men, women and children, and possibly even more, the slippery Moro chieftain fought many engagements with the Philippine Scouts and Constabulary troops. In his many skirmishes with Capt. Allen Fletcher, the commanding officer of the American outfit, Alamada was always on his feet and on the run. His feats were very colorful in the beginning, but Moro culture would not give credit to those who bowed down in shame by surrendering to the enemy. Datu Alamada Macog surrendered to the Americans on May 19, 1914.

As can be noted, serious armed confrontations with the Americans continued after 1914. Datu Ampuan Agaus was still fighting the Americans up to 1916. Military operations failed to break up his determined effort to fight colonial rule.

In 1923, armed confrontation exploded in Tugaya, Lanao when a group of Moros revolted against forced education imposed upon their children, who were compelled to attend American schools, which they suspected to be an instrument of conversion to Christianity. The resistance was cut short upon the death of the leader and 54 of his followers in the series of armed engagements that followed.

The same year, Datu Santiago and some Constabulary deserters who joined him created much unrest in the Parang region of Cotabato. Resorting to hit-and-run fighting, Datu Santiago and his men were able to inflict considerable casualties on pursuing government troops, now already under Filipino leadership. Like any resistance leader, Datu Santiago could not understand why he had to pay the cedula tax for staying in his own ancestral place. He was also bitter about forced education and the excesses of the Constabulary troops. Fighting in very favorable terrain, he was able to hold out until 1925, when a fierce encounter took place resulting in the loss of several hundreds of his followers. Unable to sustain the resistance indefinitely, he finally surrendered to the government.

Again, trouble erupted in Sulu in 1927. Datu Tahil, a veteran of the Bud Bagsak incident, where he lost his wife and child, refortified the hills of Patikul. After many encounters that started in January and claimed the lives of forty of his men and after a brief escape, he decided to make peace with the government even against the wishes of his clan. This angered even his own sister "who wished him death."

In the meantime, the Philippine Commonwealth Government was established on November 15, 1935 with Manuel L. Quezon as the first President. Barely six months after, in June 1936, the most serious armed rebellion took place in Lanao. It was spearheaded by Hadji Abdulhamid Bongabong, a religious leader of Unayan, Lanao. The fighting lasted for many years and took place around the lake, where a chain of Moro *cottas* was erected in defiance. This is recorded in history as the great "cotta fights." The grievances were contained in a petition letter addressed to the President of the United States. Succinctly put, the issues raised were:

1. Moros had become second class citizens;

2. The Moro Province be segregated once independence is given to the Filipinos;

3. Acquisition of lands in the Moro Province be reserved for the Moros; and

4. Islam must not be curtailed in any manner.

The uprising lasted up to 1941, just a few months before the invasion by the Japanese Imperial Army.

The listing of the names of Moro resistance leaders and their engagements with the occupation forces, first against the Americans and then against the Filipinos, cannot be made complete here. What we have is just the tip of the iceberg, so to speak. One fact of history is that even after the exit of Spain, hardly months or a year passed without one Moro leader or another taking the field to resist whoever was in power. But a great many passed into oblivion and their exploits have not been properly recorded, if they were not, in fact, systematically omitted or ignored. Even the greatest, like Panglima Hassan, Datu Ali Bayao, Datu Ampuan Agaus, and Jikiri, whose names are classics in Moro history, had been villainously blackened by the Americans and their puppets, because these Moro heroes had been regarded as the villains. They have ceased to exist now, yes!--- as for their legacy of struggle, it is still very much within us; and certainly, others will pick up the flag of resistance exactly where they had halted, as thousands upon thousands now are marching forward, following their footsteps, until final victory shall be achieved!

2. Parliamentary Struggle – The U.S. colonial government and the succeeding Filipino neo-colonial power have utterly failed to stamp out Moro resistance. But they have succeeded in rendering the Moro traditional power structure effete and almost obsolete. The main casualties have been the sultans and datus, whose authority has been squelched to the extent that they have become mere symbols of the past and mute relics of history. The sultan-people direct dealing has been almost severed and, to get rid of the evils of dual rule, meaning sultan and government ruling simultaneously, the Commonwealth Government directed all state-installed officials in 1936 to take over the roles so far exercised by

the sultans and datus.

The disintegration of the traditional socio-political order and the ever-tightening imposition of the secular-materialistic concept of life bequeathed by the Americans have created an extremely difficult situation for the Moros. Consequently, those who were won over to the American side, freely or under duress, were the ones who with their pens, slogans and orations adopted and pursued the parliamentary or unarmed way of struggle. They asked the United States Government to separate the Moro Province, either as a colony or as an independent state. Singly or in chorus, they unanimously refused to join the Filipinos in their demand for independence. It is true that they did not succeed; neither did they achieve anything of consequence in terms of the real liberation of the Moros – that, obviously, was already foredoomed from the start. But there is no gainsaying the fact that they did their best in their own way. Yet, on the other hand, by following the unarmed way of struggle, they were deeply entangled in the American cobweb and continued to become subservient to the whims and caprices of the new colonial masters.

The agitation for a separate state did not die, even among those who considered it pragmatic to cooperate with the Americans. As a matter of fact, as early as August 10, 1910, on the occasion of the official visit of the U.S. Secretary of War, Jacobson M. Dickenson, to investigate the real condition of the Philippines vis-a-vis the grant of independence, they already made known their deep commitment to the separation of the Moro country from Luzon and the Visayas once independence is granted. A large meeting was held and many Moros and Filipinos attended. The first to speak were two Filipinos who said that the 70,000 Christians in the Moro Province, who were "civilized," "educated" and "property-owners" were ready and willing to govern the Moros then numbering 335,000. Then some of the Moro leaders took the floor. Datu Mandi spoke first; a portion of his speech reads:

As I look about, I see far more Moros than [the] Filipinos' contingent, and if that is so, that is the reason it is called the

Moro Province... If the American government does not want the Moro Province any more they should give it back to us. It is a Moro Province. It belongs to us.[27]

Next to speak was Datu Sacaluran:

I am an old man now. I do not want any more trouble. But if it should come to that, we shall be given over to the Filipinos, I would still fight.[28]

The third to come forward was Hadji Abdullah Nuño who declared:

We are a different race; we are Mohammedans. And if we should be given over to the Filipinos, how much more would they treat us badly, when they treated even the Spanish badly who were their own mothers and fathers for generations. How did they treat them? Think about it! Think twice! We prefer to be in the hands of the Americans, who are father and mother to us now, than to be turned over to another people.[29]

Between the Americans and the Filipinos, the Moros, after decades of bitter-sweet interactions, learned to accept the former and retained hatred for the latter. This was the legacy of Spanish colonialism in the Philippines. But battling for political favors and attention from the Americans, the Moros were the underdog in the unfavorable terrain of an alien Western system. The non-acceptability of a separate Moroland was a foregone conclusion. That concept of separation never for a moment became part of the official policy of the United States Government.

In the meantime, the policy of putting Filipinos into offices or "Filipinization" that was started very early in Luzon and the Visayas in 1901 by Pres. William Mckinley had been extended to the Moro country. This was pushed forward rapidly when Francis Burton Harrison became Governor General of the Philippines in 1913 - 1921.

On September 1, 1914, the newly organized Department of

Mindanao and Sulu, including seven provinces as part of its territorial jurisdiction, was inaugurated in Zamboanga. Of these provinces, four had Filipinos appointed as governors and only three -- Lanao, Sulu and Cotabato -- had Americans retained as governors. The four provinces already under Filipino governors were Zamboanga, Davao, Agusan and Surigao. In this Filipinization scheme, the role of the Moros was very negligible. At most it was a consolation -- *a consuelo de bobo,* almost token. A Moro was appointed third member of the Provincial Board of Zamboanga, and later in 1915, a Moro was made the third member of the Board of Cotabato. After the passage of the Jones Law in 1916, which provided formal commitment of independence to the Philippines, Gov. Gen. Francis Burton Harrison appointed Hadji Butu Abdul Bagui of Sulu, Datu Piang of Cotabato and Datu Benito of Lanao to the Philippine Legislature.

Meanwhile, World War I commenced in Europe in 1914. This global conflict had direct repercussions on the Moro country. Turkey entered the war in October 1914, on the side of the Central Powers, and in April 1917, the United States joined the Allies. The Moros still looked up to Turkey both as capital of the Islamic world and to the Sultan of Turkey as the political head of the Muslim *ummah.* This attitude created some apprehension among the American administration officials in Mindanao and Sulu. They feared a Moro backlash favoring Turkey. But contrary to alarmist expectations, even after the conclusion of the war in 1918, nothing untoward happened in Mindanao and Sulu that was related to this global conflict. The Moros remained generally unconcerned with the war.

In 1920, the Department of Mindanao and Sulu was governed entirely by Filipinos. American governors in the predominantly Moro provinces like Sulu, Cotabato and Lanao were replaced by Filipinos. This led to the conclusion that Filipinization actually meant "Christianization" of the civil service in Moro country.

On June 9, 1921, a petition from the Moros of Sulu was forwarded to the United States Government. Along with an earnest desire to remain under American rule, they stated clearly:

We are independent for 500 years. Even Spain failed to conquer us. If the U.S. quits the Philippines and the Filipinos attempt to govern us, we will fight.[31]

On February 1, 1924, another petition containing a declaration of rights and purposes was forwarded to the U.S. Congress from more than 500,000 Moros of Mindanao and Sulu. More than one hundred signed the petition for the Moros. Among the signatories worth mentioning were Sultan Mangigin of Maguindanao, Hadji Panglima Nuño, Datu Sacaluran, Maharaja Habing, Abdula Piang and Datu Benito. A portion runs thus:

... In the event that the United States grants independence to the Philippine Islands without provision for our retention under the American flag, it is our firm intention and resolve to declare ourselves an independent Constitutional sultanate to be known to the world as Moro Nation. It is the duty of the Congress of the United States to make provision at once for the security and protection promised to us when we surrendered our arms to the United States Army. This promise is just as sacred as any alleged promises you have made to the Christian Filipinos. You have left us defenseless, and is your duty to protect us or return to us the weapons you took from us and which we freely gave you, relying on your promises.[31]

A keen American analyst of Philippine affairs, the Honorable Clarence B. Miller, who had extensive tours of the islands, made a startling but categorical conclusion that the Moros would immediately resort to arms if compelled to live under the rule of the Filipinos. This observation was corroborated by the findings of the Wood-Forbes investigation at a meeting held in Lanao. One of the Moros present pointed to a building over which were flying side by side the American flag and the Filipino flag and said: "What is that strange [Filipino] flag flying beside ours? Take it down."[32] In Cotabato, Amai Binaning spoke for the Maguindanao Moros and said: "We Moros wish the protection of America. We wish to stay

under the American flag."[33]

At the conclusion of the Wood-Forbes Investigation of the Philippine Islands, one of its findings was:

> *The Moros are a unit against independence and, are united for continuance of American control, and, in case of separation of the Philippines from the United States, desire their portion of the islands to be retained as American territory under American control. The Pagans and non-Christians, constituting about 10 per cent of the population of the islands, are for continued control. They want peace and security.*[34]

What almost turned the tide of history in favor of the Moros were three important events in the year 1926.

The first was the visit of Harvey Firestone Jr. in March to Mindanao looking for 1,000,000 acres of lands for rubber plantation. Firestone got a lift when no less than Gov. Gen. Leonard Wood appeared very supportive. This prospect, however, did not prosper for several reasons, one of which being the stiff opposition of the Filipino nationalists who wanted the Moro country to become an integral part of the Philippine Islands.

The second event was the filing of four bills for the segregation or retention of Mindanao and Sulu either as an American colony or a federal state. On May 6, 1926, Cong. Robert L. Bacon of New York filed House Bill No. 12772 in the United States Congress which sought to retain Mindanao and Sulu as an American colony, even as the rest of the islands would be granted independence. Though mainly motivated by economic reasons, Bacon's rhetoric stunned his critics and heartened his supporters. In his privilege speech, he said:

> *Their so-called representation in the Philippine Legislature is a farce and a mockery. They are deliberately denied any share or participation in the government. They have no elective representatives... They have no magistrates,*

no judges, no public prosecutor drawn from their own people. And the guardians of law and order in their region – constabulary – are practically drawn from the ranks of their hereditary enemies – the Filipinos. The Filipinos are their lawmakers, their governors, their judges, their prosecutors and their policemen. To these conditions the Moros respond by giving nothing but hate and unwilling submission.[35]

He continued his rhetoric by saying:

The Philippine Islands are divided into two very distinct areas – the Christian provinces... and the Mohammedan territory.... These two regions belong to different and opposed civilizations – the Christian world and Islam.[36]

Bacon was not alone. Apart from his supporters in the U.S. Congress, there was tremendous popular endorsement from the Moros of Mindanao and Sulu. During the deliberation of the bill, Datu Piang of Cotabato, one of the most popular pro-American leaders, felicitated the New York Congressman and cabled this message:

Allow me to congratulate you on a bill for the separation of Mindanao from the government in Manila. Long have we hoped and long have we prayed that the people of the U.S., after conquering us would not turn us over to those who do not understand us. We have written the President, asking him for the support of your bill. I am not talking for myself, because I am an old man. I am talking for my people and for the Moros of these vast islands. [37]

In the interlude, the Filipino politicians, who were sharply divided at the moment, decided to come to terms to form the Supreme National Council. The Council was headed by Manuel Quezon and its avowed objective was to present a more unified front against the Bacon Bill. A powerful lobby was organized to counter the efforts of Bacon and his colleagues in the U.S. Congress. The Council bitterly denounced the bill and criticized the movers.

Three other bills were introduced in the United States Congress, namely, the Roger, Copper and Kies bills. The first was similar to the Bacon Bill while the Copper Bill provided for the retention of the islands of Mindanao and Sulu for eventual federation with the United States. The third bill was obscure but was believed similar to the rest.

The third momentous circumstance was when Pres. John Calvin Coolidge, unable to ascertain the real situation in the Philippine Islands in relation to the grant of independence, sent Col. Carmi Thompson to investigate. The situation of the Moros was one of the main concerns. The mission reported that the Philippines lacked social homogeneity and solidarity. It also took note of the approval of the Bacon Bill by the Moros.[38]

This prevailing sentiment was reiterated to Gov. Gen. Dwight D. Davis two years after in one of his visits to the Islands in 1929.[39] One prominent Moro leader, Gumbay Piang, son of Datu Piang, spoke of this universal desire of the Moros to dissociate themselves from the independence movement of the Filipinos. He remarked that the Filipinos, after having been influenced by Spain for many centuries, had an innate motive to eradicate Moro identity and traditions in addition to having territorial ambitions in Mindanao.

In 1927, an American observer in the *New York Post* wrote the following:

> *The outstanding mistake of the U.S. in its Philippine dealings has been their assumption that the native inhabitants constitute a homogeneous Filipino people; instead there are numerous peoples, the widely scattered population of the archipelago... speaking many dialects and radically of different character, in development and government needs. This is particularly true of the Mohammedan people inhabiting the great southern islands of the Philippines, who are altogether distinct in religion, physical type and mental outlook.*[40]

Legalized Landgrabbing

Before the turn of the 20th century, ninety-eight percent of the lands in Mindanao and Sulu belonged to the Moros.[41] Except in areas garrisoned by Spain particularly in the northern part of Mindanao, the Moros lorded over these vast islands and the various indigenous natives like the Manobos, Bagobos, Tagakaolos, and others numbering about 23 ethnic tribes were largely under their sphere of influence. But as soon as the Americans stepped into the Moro country, even before the indirect rule system was discarded, they decreed a law called the Land Registration Act, also known as Act No. 496, requiring the registration of all lands occupied by any person, group or corporation in writing, signed and sworn to by the claimant. In such an early stage, when fighting was still widespread in the various islands, the Moro may not have heard of this law or, if they had, they would not have been willing to comply, for apparent reasons. The payment for staying in one's land or the cedula tax was one of the reasons why many Moros resisted the American occupation.

On April 4, 1903, the Philippine Commission enacted Public Land Act No. 718. The law declared null and void all land grants made by Moro sultans and datus, or chiefs of any of the non-Christian tribes, without authority of the state. This law dispossessed the Moros of their landholdings which, in most instances, they had occupied since time immemorial. The Moro sultans were not excluded from the operation of this law and their failure to comply with it meant they would be squatters and face automatic ejection.

On October 7, 1903, Public Act 926 was enacted into law; it provided, among other stipulations, that all lands not registered under Act No. 496 were deemed public lands, and therefore available for homesteading, sale or lease by individuals or corporations. One can imagine that in less than a year, by reasons of opposition to, default or ignorance of the American bureaucratic system, the Moros could be deprived of their lands. These were shallow alibis leading to the systematic dispossession of the Moros

of their landholdings.

The Mining Law of 1905 further confiscated Moro lands. The law declared all public lands as free, open for exploration, occupation and purchase even by Americans. Such a law opened the gates for American dollars to come, particularly into Mindanao, where wide tracts of lands were still available. The influx of American capitalists led to several conflicts which at one time caused the death of Lt. Edward C. Bolton, District Governor of Davao, on June 6, 1906.

The Cadastral Act of 1907 facilitated the acquisition of new landholdings. The law virtually favored the educated natives, moneyed bureaucrats and American speculators who were more familiar with the bureaucratic process to legalize claims usurped through fraudulent surveys.[42]

In 1913, the Philippine Commission passed Acts 2254 and 2280 creating agricultural colonies. The two laws aimed at encouraging Filipino migrants from the northern areas to settle in the so-called "public lands" in Mindanao and Sulu. The purposes of the colonies were: 1) to increase food production, especially of rice; 2) to equalize the distribution of population in the Philippines; 3) to bring under cultivation extensive wild public lands; and 4) to afford an opportunity for the colonists to become land proprietors. [43] The earliest colonies were planted right in the middle of Moro communities with the aim of integrating Moros and the Christian native population into a "homogeneous Filipino people."[44] Of the colonies created between 1913 and 1917 in the entire Philippines, seven were established in Cotabato, one in Lanao and one in Basilan. The sites selected in Cotabato were Silik, Peidu Pulangi, Ginatilan, Pagalungan, Pikit, Talitay and Glan, all populated by Moros.

Of special interest was Philippine Commission Act No. 2254. It institutionalized a glaring instance of injustice. While this law awarded each Filipino settler with a 16 hectare lot, the Moro was permitted to own only eight hectares, despite his prior birthright to the place. Such was the consequence of the previous enactment that

already deprived him of his ancestral landholdings.

In 1919, Public Land Act No. 2874 was enacted which provided for the manner of acquiring land ownership, especially in the Moro country. Under this law, a Filipino was entitled to apply for and possess a 24-hectare parcel of land, while a Moro could hope for only ten hectares. The discrimination did not end there. In many instances, even before the Christian could come to Mindanao, his land had been titled already, while that of the Moro remained untitled for years. Or the Moro may not have moved to title his at all. He may have been personally responsible for some of the reasons for this failure, but that certainly was not sufficient moral ground to deprive him of his landholdings. One noted American writer had this to say on this predicament:

> *The government officials they turned to for counsel were often 'too busy' to help. And when some did manage to file their registration papers, they were disheartened by the uncertainty and delay in getting them approved.*[45]

Aside from the inherent discriminations in such laws, there were at least two or more reasons for this pathetic situation. Firstly, the Moros continued to resist the registration of the lands they have owned, occupied and tilled since ancient times, under a government that they considered to be a "foreign authority." The second cause was the specious pretext raised apologetically that the Moros were not only poor but ignorant, little realizing that it was one of the fundamental duties of government to attend to the needs particularly of the marginalized and depressed sections of the population.

CHAPTER 5

PUPPETRY IN THE MAKING

1934 Constitutional Convention

On March 24, 1934, the Tydings-McDuffie Bill was signed into law by Pres. Theodore Roosevelt of the United States. The law contained provisions which specified the various steps as preconditions to the establishment of the Commonwealth. The first step was the holding of a constitutional convention not later than October 1, 1934 to draft a Constitution which would be forwarded to the U.S. President for approval. After the approval, the Filipino people were to elect the officials of the Commonwealth government. After the ten-year transition, the United States would grant independence to the Philippines.

On July 10, 1934, 202 delegates to the constitutional convention were elected. Of this number, only four Moros were elected, namely, Datu Blah Sinsuat and Minandang Piang of Cotabato, Arolas Tulawie of Sulu and Alauya Alonto of Lanao. The other Moroland delegates, Tomas Cabili of Lanao and Jose Montano of Sulu, were Christians. The election of delegates was the first time Moros participated in a nationwide voting exercise.

On July 30, the Convention started to work under the presidency of Claro M. Recto. The Moro delegates participated in the deliberations to represent the interests of their constituents but against the tyranny of numbers they, numbering only four or five, were practically u heard. The fact that they already belonged to the second generation of Moros since the arrival of the Americans might be enough to suspect that in all likelihood they could no longer represent the legitimate aspirations and sentiments of their people. They were not only pro-Americans in every respect but were generally friendly to the Filipinos, who were pushing for Philippine independence.[1] The truth that they ran and won as delegates to this Convention which would make formal self-rule a step nearer singularly attested to this assertion. However, in fairness

to them, they discharged their responsibilities to what they thought was their level best, but they never equalled the exceptionally pro-Moro exploits of Tomas Cabili who, though a Christian, voted against the Draft Constitution. It is on record that Delegate Cabili made the following objections to the Draft Constitution:

1. It did not provide for the direct election of representatives for the provinces of Lanao, Cotabato and Sulu but left the matter for the Legislature to decide – including, especially, the manner by which the representatives of said provinces may be chosen; and

2. It did not have any special provisions for the backward and non-Christian population of the Philippines. He wanted the Constitution to recognize and hold in trusteeship the welfare and progress of our backward population.[2]

As a sign of protest, he did not sign the 1935 Constitution. In contrast, all the blue-blooded Moro delegates signed the new charter.

The Constitution miserably failed to specify or imply due consideration for the Moro traditions, customs and laws, which in Islam still fell within the ambit of religion. Many Moro leaders openly campaigned against the ratification of the Constitution denouncing it as an abridgment of their religion, rights and customs.[3] Despite the opposition, the Constitution got ratified. The Christian populace, not thinking of the problem of the Moros, heavily voted for its approval. However, in the succeeding elections for the delegates in September 1935, Moro candidates who were closely associated with the Filipino leaders of self-rule were badly routed in the polls. Hadji Gulamu Rasul of Sulu and Minandang Piang of Cotabato were defeated by Datu Ombra Amilbangsa and Datu Sinsuat Balabaran, respectively. In Lanao, Sultan Alauya Alonto was rejected by the Moros in favor of Tomas Cabili.

Inauguration of the Commonwealth

I swore to myself and the God of my ancestors that as long

as I lived I would stand by America regardless of the consequences to my people or to myself.[4]

This was the statement of the man who would become the undisputed leader of the Filipinos during the inauguration of the Commonwealth Government of the Philippines on November 15, 1935. Pres. Manuel Quezon was the son of a Spanish mestizo sergeant in the Spanish Army in the Philippines. He was born in Manila, but later emigrated to Baler, Tayabas where he married also a Spanish mestiza schoolteacher. During the Philippine Revolution, he was a lieutenant in the Bataan sector, especially during the general retreat of the Filipino forces. Like all his comrades, he surrendered to the Americans in April 1901, thus both in his thoughts and actions he was a captive of the Americans.

In his inaugural speech, President Quezon had firmly emphasized that the government he sought to establish must satisfy not only the passing needs of the hour but also the exacting demand of the future. In doing so, he identified three major problems, namely, the need for political stability, national security, and a poor economy that was too dependent on the United States. From these main national concerns emerged minor problems that also commanded equal attention and consideration.

The Commonwealth was envisioned as a transition period before the final grant of independence ten years thereafter. During this interlude the government should make necessary adjustments on political, economic, social and cultural aspects. The task was not an easy one considering the fact that problems inherited from the Spanish and American times were seemingly insurmountable. One such delicate problem was policy formulation concerning the Moros of Mindanao and Sulu who, except for a few "collaborators," overwhelmingly opposed political agglomeration with the Filipinos. And without doubt, considering his background, President Quezon was not prepared – as his succeeding actuations, pronouncements and policies showed – to shed his "Spanish and American feathers." He went further, vis-a-vis the Moros, by refusing to accord official recognition to the sultans and datus. In one of his

meetings with them, he had these blunt words:

> *...The sultans have no more rights than the humblest Moro and that under my administration the humblest Moro will be given as much protection as any datu under the law, and that his rights will be recognized exactly as the rights of a datu will be, and that every datu will have to comply with his duties as citizen to same extent and in the same manner that the humblest Moro is obligated.*[5]

Definitely the bottomline was not equality before the law; rather it was the radical reversal of the traditional system and the replacement of the chiefs with leaders to whom the people were made to bow down against their will. Reacting to this situation, Sultan Alauya Alonto had this observation:

> *This is indeed a tragedy. Those of you who are accustomed to witness the native son of the province conducting the affairs of your own people will surely understand what it meant to be governed by "Outsiders" who do not have even the command of the dialect of the people to be governed.*[6]

Thus with President Quezon ended the policy of "special treatment" accorded to the Moros, although this did not mean the birth of equal consideration and protection for the Moros. As a matter of fact, the Moros were not only reduced to second class citizens, but as far as Mindanao and Sulu were concerned, the development of the Moros was a poor third priority in the national agenda.[7] On the contrary, the Moros, along with the burgeoning Japanese colonists in Davao numbering 13,857 in 1934, were perceived as threats to the security of the Commowealth state. This was precisely the main reason why the 30,000-man Moro Battalion was not issued firearms by the United States Armed Forces in the Far East (USAFFE) during the war with Japan because some pointed out the danger of arming the Moros to the peace and order situation in Mindanao and Sulu.[8] Despite the pleadings of Lt. Salipada Pendatun (later conferred the rank of brigadier general), the Moros were permitted to arm themselves only with bolos, hence the outfit earned its label

as the "Moro Battalion." It was also the hard logic behind the high gear migration to Mindanao particularly in the Moro-dominated provinces of Cotabato and Lanao.[9]

Legalized Landgrabbing Continues

On February 12, 1935, the government enacted Legislative Act No. 4197, otherwise known as the "Quirino-Recto Colonization Act." This was the turning point of the land settlement phenomenon, when the government declared settlement as the "only lasting solution" to the problem in Mindanao and Sulu, thus shelving all other long-range solutions as secondary and of less importance. The choice of the term "colonization" in the very title of this enactment obviously bespoke Manila's sinister designs. It had no scruples in openly calling the Moro country its colony.

This Act envisaged land settlement, with Mindanao as the special target. The mealy-mouthed preamble spoke of the great national advantage in carrying out the work in that part of the country because land settlement was seen as the only government activity that will furnish an effective solution to the Mindanao problem.[10] The Act opened the floodgates to the massive influx of settlers into Mindanao under the full sponsorship of the government. "Go South, young men!" became the slogan of the day. Mindanao became the "Promised Land." News that the program had the full backing of the government, in addition to the construction of roads and other infrastructure, spread like wildfire. Unknown numbers of individuals rushed south to join the mad scramble for the choicest parcels of land, especially along the highways. But the sad part of this was that instead of addressing past complaints of the Moros, the government pushed too far in abetting and inciting homestead-seekers in the unjust process of landgrabbing. Newcomers just squatted on lands and began cultivation before they could get around to subdivide the areas.

On November 7, 1936, Pres. Manuel Quezon signed into law Commonwealth Act No. 141 which declared all Moro ancestral landholdings as public lands. Section 84 of this law provides:

That all grants, deeds, patents, and other instruments of conveyances of land or purporting to convey or transfer rights of property, privileges, or easements appertaining to or growing out of lands granted by sultans, datus, or other chiefs of the so-called non-Christian tribes, without the authority of the Spanish Government while the Philippines were under the sovereignty of Spain, or without the consent of the United States Government or of the Philippine Government since the sovereignty over the Archipelago was transferred from Spain to the United States, and all deeds and other documents executed or issued or based upon the deeds, patents, and documents mentioned are hereby declared to be illegal, void, and of no effect.[11]

By a simple piece of legislation, the Moros became landless and were deprived of their ancestral holdings. Under this Act, a Moro was allowed only to apply for a piece of land, not exceeding four hectares, while a Christian was entitled to own up to 24 hectares, and a corporation, wholly owned by non-Moros, was permitted to get 1,024 hectares.

In June 1939, Pres. Manuel Quezon signed Commonwealth Act No. 441 creating the National Land Settlement Administration (NLSA). This was another settlement law. Given the priority slots in this program were those who had completed military training in preparation, as the proponents put it, to meet the impending Japanese invasion. But the Moros viewed it from a different angle. Their suspicions were not really unfounded because a similar condition was required to be fulfilled by those who made up the first batch of fifty settlers in 1912. The colonial government saw to it that the members of this batch were required to be experts in *arnis* or sword-play.[12] This was obviously in anticipation of encounters with the *kris*-wielding Moros of Mindanao. NLSA opened up three major settlement projects and two of these were in the Cotabato Valley. That in Koronadal Valley in Cotabato was spearheaded by Gen. Paulino Santos, one-time Governor of Lanao and who in 1944 was appointed Commissioner for Mindanao and Sulu. In this

project, 200 Christian families were given each twelve hectares o farmland and financial assistance reaching up to P7.5 million. The first batch of settlers, when they arrived in the vast Cotabato plain cried unashamedly and kissed the ground which was theirs to own at last.[13]

In the meantime, the settlement projects had been temporarily slowed down, principally due to the war with Japan. All state attention, activities and resources were focused on the war efforts. In addition, the mass movement of people, especially from one far-flung area to another in the archipelago would not only entail huge expenses but was dangerous.

Over-population Scare

Before proceeding further, we should not fail to note carefully the mendacious rhetoric of politicians who spearheaded the wholesale colonization of Mindanao and Sulu by raising a hue and cry over the alleged population explosion in Luzon and the Visayas. They argued that this over-population problem was causing untold miseries and sufferings to the people. They wanted a place where this excess population could be relocated. To arouse public sympathy, they particularly referred to the so-called pauperized peasants and workers, in the haciendas in Central Luzon and Negros in the Visayas, who had been exploited and persecuted since the Spanish regime. They were never given the chance to own a piece of land, let alone the ones they had been tilling, where they could work outside and away from the cruel hands of landlords and hacienderos.

In his address to the first session of the First National Assembl in 1936, President Quezon took the lead in sounding this alarm Part of his speech was as follows:

> *There are provinces in Luzon and the Visayas that are already over populated. There are localities in some of these provinces where the people live on large estates without opportunity to earn a livelihood sufficient to meet the*

necessities of civilized life, much less to own the land wherein they live and which they cultivate. It is inconceivable that such a situation should exist in a country with extensive areas of fertile uncultivated lands.[14]

The fact that no less than the President himself of the Commonwealth Government was involved in this ballyhoo to get the nod of the National Assembly was more than enough reason to extrapolate on the issue. President Quezon was not the first to raise the over-population issue. As early as 1912, Gen. John C. Pershing was already pushing for the importation of homesteaders from the over-populated Luzon and the Visayas to frontiers on Mindanao.[15] The same line of argument can be noticed in almost all rationales behind the creation of settlement projects, as well as in the opening up of frontier lands to new applicants. In 1913, the Philippine Commission enacted Acts 2254 and 2280 creating "colonies" in Mindanao, and one of the objectives was to equalize the distribution of population in the Philippines.[16]

TABLE 3

ESTIMATED POPULATION OF THE MORO PROVINCE BY GROUPS, 1913

Moros	324,816
Pagans	103,358
Christian Filipinos	85,148
Chinese	3,186
Americans and Europeans	1,161
Japanese	1,029
Total	**518,698**

Source: Peter G. Gowing (1977)

In order to find out whether or not the population pressure rationale was founded on fact or fiction, let us refer to the three successive population censuses in 1903, 1918, and 1939. The 1939

census is specially important because the holding of this population count was well within the period when the issue was very much alive. In the 1903 census, the population of the entire country was 7,635,426 including 647,740 non-Christians; in 1918, it was 10,314,310 including 932,935 non-Christians; and in 1939, it was 16,000,303. Of this last number, around 13,000,000 were in Luzon and the Visayas, and the rest in Mindanao and Sulu.

TABLE 4

ESTIMATED POPULATION OF THE MORO PROVINCE BY DISTRICT, 1913

District:	Total	Moro	Pagan
Cotabato	98,308	90,000	8,308
Davao	68,350	8,350	60,000
Lanao	78,333	78,333	---
Sulu	102,133	102,133	---
Zamboanga	81,050	46,000	35,050
Total:	**428,174**	**324,816**	**103,358**

Source: Peter G. Gowing (1977)

After having this concrete data, let us proceed to determine the density of population based on the 1939 census which listed the national population as 16,000,303. The Philippines has a total land area of 115,800 square miles; divide the population by this area, and the result is 138 persons per square mile. Since this density applied to the entire Philippine Islands including the Moro territory, then let us focus our attention on Luzon and the Visayas, where the congestion was allegedly serious. Based on the same 1939 census, the people of the two island groups numbered 13,000,000. Divide that number by the total land area of the two island groups -- 78,420 square miles (Luzon 40,420 and Visayas: 37,380) -- and the ratio or density is 165 persons per square mile.

Now, after considering the data aforecited, does the logic of the over-population scare still hold? Was President Quezon really speaking of facts or merely masking the government's real intentions on Mindanao?

TABLE 5

POPULATION ESTIMATES OF MINDANAO AND SULU BY RELIGION, 1918

Province	Christian	Mohammedan	Pagan	Total
Agusan	30,000	---	35,000	65,000
Bukidnon	21,500	3,000	41,800	66,300
Cotabato	6,837	107,205	35,402	149,444
Davao	33,194	7,803	61,803	102,800
Lanao	6,201	75,960	1,550	83,711
Sulu	2,750	120,000	---	122,750
Zamboanga	58,650	45,000	30,000	133,650
Total	**159,132**	**358,968**	**205,555**	**723,655**

Source: Peter G. Gowing (1977)

For whatever it was -- an economic, social or political issue -- Quezon and the government critically depended on the support of the Christianized natives.[17] The irony of it all was that when legions after legions of settlers arrived in Mindanao it became clear that, contrary to official government bulletins, these people were not the poor peasants and workers of Central Luzon and Negros, but people from the more affluent areas of the Ilocos region, Cebu and Iloilo, who later became the carpetbaggers, loggers, ranchers and bankers of Mindanao. [18]

What happened afterward was just the reverse of the hoped-for results of resettlement as the lasting solution to the Mindanao

problem. Endless bloodshed and destruction became the order of the day because the situation seemed so skillfully woven to neutralize the Moros right in their own backyard. Why did the government establish, particularly the early settlement projects, right in the middle of Moro communities, when other places elsewhere were easily available? When people's fundamental rights and needs are not properly addressed but are, instead, suppressed or even ignored, conflicts will inevitably follow. In the past we witnessed the upsurge of violence as soon as the newcomers reached the shores of Mindanao. The Alangkat Movement in 1926-27 in Cotabato Valley, a mainly Manobo initiative, was actually a protest against foreign rule and the settling of an alien people.[19] In 1942, at the height of the war with Japan, a series of massacres took place between rival guerrilla groups, fueled by or rooted in social and agrarian frictions. One group was led by Capt. Mantil Dilangalen and another by Capt. Froilan Matas. In Cotabato alone, about 1,000 people on both sides were brutally hacked to pieces in the towns of Buluan, Tacurong, Midsayap and Pigkawayan. The bloodbath in Pigkawayan was exceptionally terrible. The marketplace was enclosed in barbed wire and the Moros inside were sorted out and slaughtered en masse. About 200 men, women and children perished in this slaughter. Some were buried alive. The ring leaders were Capt. Froilan Matas, Capt. Jose Escribano and Capt. Sebastian Javelosa, who collaborated with the Japanese occupation forces or stayed away as separate guerrilla units from the Moro units. No justice was meted out and the culprits remained scot-free even after the war. Capt. Froilan Matas became the mayor of Magpet and so did Capt. Jose Escribano in Tacurong.

Moro Appeals and Rebellions

During the height of the deliberations of the Constitutional Convention, Hadji Abdulhamid Bongabong, chief religious leader of Unayan, and 189 Lanao Moros sent a letter of appeal – or a virtual warning – to the United States through the Governor General on March 18, 1935. The petition, popularly referred to as the historic Dansalan Declaration, speaks well of the undying sentiments and aspirations of the Moros for a separate homeland. The following is

the full text of the petition:

In the agreement that we have arrived at (i.e., the Declaration) our people gave their unanimous approval. We would like to inform you (i.e. U.S. Congress) that because we have learned that the U.S. is going to give the Philippines independence through the efforts of Hon. Quezon and others, we want to tell you that the Philippines, as it is known to the American people, is populated by two peoples with two different religious practices and traditions. The Christian Filipinos occupy the islands of Luzon and the Visayas. The Moros predominate in the islands of Mindanao and Sulu. With regard to the forthcoming Philippine Independence, we foresee that the condition will be characterized by unrest, suffering and misery...

Our Christian associates have for ... many years their desires to be the only ones blessed with leadership and well progressive towns and cities. One proof of this is that, those among us who were capable of participating in managing and administering the government have not been given the chance to demonstrate their ability. Another proof is that Christian Filipinos have taken control of our insular funds in which by right we must have equal share. Most of those funds are annually appropriated for the provinces of Luzon and the Visayas, and little are appropriated for the so-called Moro Province in the islands of Mindanao and Sulu. As a result their provinces progressed by leaps and bounds and ours lagged behind. Another result is that we have been and are still behind in modern civilization and education.

One more discriminatory act of our Christian Filipino Associates is shown in the recent constitution of the Philippine Commonwealth. In that constitution, no provision whatsoever is made that would operate for the welfare of the Moros... the (provisions of the) constitution are all for the welfare of the Christian Filipinos and nothing for the Moros. As a proof of this, our delegate did not sign the

constitution.

We do not want to be included in the Philippine Independence (for) once an independent Philippine is launched there will be trouble between us and the Christian Filipinos because from time immemorial these two peoples have not lived harmoniously... It is not ... proper to have two antagonizing peoples live together under the Philippine Independence. One proof of this (is) that when Lanao had its Filipino Governor many leading Moro datus were killed for non apparent reasons. This has not ended up to the present time because our people can't and will never forget the bitterness of this incident...

Should the American people grant the Philippine Independence, the islands of Mindanao and Sulu should not be included in such independence. Our public land must not be given to other people other than the Moros. We should be given time to acquire them, because most of us have no lands. Our people do not yet realize the value of acquiring those lands by the process of law. Where shall we obtain the support of our family if our lands are taken from us. It will be safe to us that a law should be created restricting (the acquisition) of our lands by other people. This will avoid future trouble.

Our practices, laws and decisions of our Moro leaders should be respected... Our religion should not be curtailed in anyway... All our practices which are incidental to our religion of Islam should be respected because these things are what a Muslim desires to live for ... Our religion is no more, our lives are no more.[20]

As expected, the petition was never given due consideration. It was not even read in the Convention and, most probably, only the Moro delegates were the ones privy to the content of the petition. All the rest obviously swallowed the official government line that the Moro Problem ceased to be synonymous with Mindanao, but

rather assumed the status of an economic problem of national concern and development. [21] The basic issues and concerns raised in the declaration, especially over lands, were never addressed, as clearly shown in our earlier discussion of the Commonwealth policy to formally colonize Mindanao and Sulu.

After having ascertained that there was no legal remedy forthcoming from the Commonwealth and the United States Government, Hadji Abdulhamid Bongabong launched a rebellion in Lanao beginning in June 1936. This only simmered down in 1941. The firefights were referred to as "cotta fights" in Philippine history. The government had a hard time putting down the rebellion of Hadji Bongabong, who built a chain of *cottas* in and around Lake Lanao.

On October 8, 1936, a major disturbance also occurred in Sulu. The leader was Imam Saccam. One of the issues raised by the rebels was the report that the Philippines was granted independence. [22] It started with the ambush of 20 Constabulary soldiers by 50 armed followers of Imam Saccam at Kulay-Kulay. All initial negotiations to make him surrender failed, although one by one his followers perished. Though his uprising did not succeed, it had a direct effect on the neighboring town of Talipao, where another armed resistance erupted in 1937.

The Japanese Invasion

On December 8, 1941, the Japanese Imperial Army landed in the Philippines. Davao and Sulu were occupied immediately and in April 1942, Cotabato and Lanao were garrisoned. The Moros, approximately 700,000 in population, saw the newcomers as another group of invaders and therefore had to be fought. Numbering by tens of thousands, the Moros enlisted in the United States Armed Forces in the Far East (USAFFE) in fighting off the Japanese invasion. Those who were not accommodated in the regular USAFFE units joined the guerrilla battalions just to become involved in the war endeavors. Among those who figured prominently in the war were Lt. Salipada Pendatun, Datu Udtog Matalam, Gumbay Piang and Manalao Mindalano. The guerrillas inflicted heavy casualties on

the Japanese troops through hit-and-run tactics. At one time, the guerrillas under Manalao Mindalano inflicted 129 casualties on the Japanese soldiers during an ambush in Tamparan along Lake Lanao. The Japanese retaliated by subjecting the guerrillas to intense bombings that lasted for almost a month.

However, if there were many Moro leaders who fought in the side of the Americans, those who cooperated with the Japanese were equally many. They thought it would be better to take part in the Japanese war efforts. Others tried to exonerate this cooperation by saying that it was making the best out of a bad situation.[23] Still others cited the cooperation as serving the best interest of the people.[24] Those who went the way of cooperation were Sultan Alauya Alonto of Lanao, Datu Sinsuat Balabaran, and Datu Minandang Piang of Cotabato, and Datu Ombra Amilbangsa, Datu Gulamu Rasul and Datu Salih Utulalum of Sulu. Some of these leaders accepted positions in the Japanese Puppet Government, and actually benefited from this cooperation, especially in terms of material and educational rewards. Right after the war, some pro-Japanese leaders were charged with treason before the People's Court for collaboration. One such case was that filed against Datu Sinsuat Balabaran, Datu Odin Sinsuat and Datu Duma Sinsuat. The investigation lasted up to 1948.[25]

In these cases, the men who were charged with collaboration with the Japanese were called "traitors" and those who sided with the Americans were hailed as "heroes". Seen from the reverse side, the question would bring out the same answer in reverse. Those who were identified with Japan would have been "heroes" and those with America would have been "traitors." Thus, whichever side they chose, they would always be the villains to the opposite side, which only reveals the ugly facet of nationalism when viewed through the prism of other countries, especially of the colonialists or invaders.

Both the Americans and the Japanese came to the Philippines in quest of more lands, glory and gold at the expense of the Filipinos and Moros in this country. Therefore, whichever side one chose or fought for during the war, the fact remained that one fought for the

wrong cause and had done the immoral thing. Author Onofre D. Corpuz made this observation:

> *A lively issue for some time was that of collaboration with the Japanese occupation regime. In the verdicts of the tribunals that tried the collaboration cases, the men who were declared to have collaborated with the Japanese were called traitors, as if those who were loyal to the United States, and fought the guerrilla war so that the Americans would return, were any less betrayers of the nation's integrity. The meaning of the nation had been lost; the Filipinos could only view themselves in terms of other countries.*[26]

The truth of this otherwise comical scenario was rendered more revealing after the war. Both the so-called heroes and traitors were equally catapulted into high-ranked positions, elected or appointed, to serve the government after the war. Although there were some who were found guilty of collaboration by the People's Court, this verdict was shortlived. When Pres. Manuel Roxas assumed the presidency in 1946, he solved the collaboration issue by proclaiming amnesty for all the political prisoners. He himself was a "collaborator," for he served well in the Philippine Puppet Government under Pres. Jose P. Laurel. The Americans themselves, through the maneuvers of Gen. Douglas MacArthur, chose Manuel Roxas, the "collaborator," over Sergio Osmeña, a hardliner on the collaboration issue, to become the protege of the Americans in the election of 1946.[27]

During the war there were times that animosities between the Moros and Christians degenerated into open hostility. This was particularly true with opposing guerrilla units, one group fighting on the side of the Americans and the other with the Japanese. The guerrillas were the former, while the Japanese-backed Bureau of Constabulary were the latter. The Bureau was renamed the Philippine Constabulary when the so-called Philippine independence was granted by Japan on October 15, 1944. On the guerrilla side were Salipada Pendatun, Datu Udtog Matalam, Datu Mantil Dilangalen and Gumbay Piang and, on the side of the Japanese, were no less than Gen. Paulino Santos, Froilan Matas and

Sebastian Javelosa. Actually, Pendatun was not involved in the conflict, but being the most prominent guerrilla leader, he was inevitably dragged into it. On July 1, 1944, a unit of the Japanese - BC Patrol led by Capt. Sebastian Javelosa attacked a guerrilla base in Buluan and captured two prominent Moro leaders, Datu Butu Mangudadatu and Datu Daongtan. The guerrillas retaliated by laying a siege on the BC garrison at Tacurong, which resulted in the slaying of Lt. Gregorio Jayme and the capture of 40 BC soldiers. The Japanese conducted a reprisal by sending 37 planes to bomb the guerrilla positions. Twenty two persons, including two guerrillas were killed.

On August 1, 1944, Pres. Manuel Quezon died in Saranak Lake, New York. Sergio Osmeña, then the vice president of the Commonwealth Government, was sworn in immediately as President. He pledged to continue the fight until the Philippines was finally liberated. On September 2, 1945, Japan signed the terms of surrender on board the battleship *Missouri* at Tokyo Bay. This ended the war. Immediately, Pres. Sergio Osmeña appointed Moros to the government. Salipada Pendatun was appointed Governor of Cotabato and Datu Manalao Mindalano to the Executive Committee of the Philippine Veterans' Legion in Manila. In the 1946 elections, three Moro leaders were elected. Salipada Pendatun won a senate seat, Datu Ombra Amilbangsa of Sulu and Manalao Mindalano of Lanao were elected congressmen.

CHAPTER 6

ANNEXATION OF MINDANAO AND SULU

Grant of Self-rule

After the defeat of Japan in World War II, the United States officially annexed Mindanao and Sulu into the territory of the Philippines with the grant of independence on July 4, 1946.[1] This was a very painful decision. The Moros were never given the right to free choice and to national self-determination and to vote on the issue through a referendum. The hard fact was that they, after having been disarmed and rendered defenseless, were forcibly incorporated. Thousands of them resisted and died fighting in the process. But this decision had already been sealed as early as 1935 when the Commonwealth regime was inaugurated. Wider American interests were seen better served in an undivided territory under Filipino rulers.

The Moros, now faced with a situation never before experienced, slipped into "independence" with almost a closed mind. Those still with revolting hearts were rendered practically helpless. The many decades of bloody confrontations had practically sapped their energies, too much for them to be able again to go into the field and fight. Those who by chance or by choice tasted power with the new political order were busy picking up the spoils of their collaboration.

As a whole, the Moros were caught at the crossroads. Either they go on fighting aimlessly or they must learn to accept the situation they had no chance to change. There was no clear distinction made. Everything rested in the hands of the new Filipino rulers, who inherited the Moro country on a silver platter. The Americans freely handed to them the "Promised Land" but not, of course, without inheriting the so-called Moro Problem. It was up to them to "put the house in order." The trouble was that they had already concluded that all would be well with the Moros after

independence. This was the premise from which they started.

Together under one flag with the Moro, the Filipino must make good his pledge that he could govern the Moro well. The Moros had been outstanding in their opposition to Filipino rule, but the Filipinos were persistent in their desire to govern the Moros. This was the situation when the Moros were turned over to the Filipinos for governance.

Mere Change of Face

For over four decades since the arrival of the Americans in 1898, the cream of the Filipino leadership, descendants of the *maharlikas* of the pre-Spanish days, had been taking a tutorial course from their new masters. These officials, who now spoke English, were spoon-fed on the ways to interpret and implement American maxims in subjects as wide-ranging as administrative structure, legal system, national economy and lifestyle. When they took over the mantle of power of the new state, after this thorough grounding, they merely became the "alter egos" of their American colonial masters. The system of government and the institutions were the continuation of the old order with all the components of worldliness, hedonism and materialism. They mimicked blindly their masters' ideas, values, outlooks and tastes and very soon, their whole personality revolved around the cult of the "stateside" or the attitude that everything American was not only good but the best. And even after the physical exit of their masters, the alter egos continued in subservience and worship. No Filipino leader then and now had successfully dissociated himself from this entrapment. Politicians, perhaps with very few exceptions, enhanced their political clout by seeking the blessings of their former bosses in Washington. This submission was clearly seen during the inaugural Independence Day in 1946. Pres. Manuel Roxas, the first President of the Republic, had dutifully declared:

> *We have already subscribed irretrievably to the principles of the American Declaration and the American Constitution. Those principles are now embodied in the basic law of the*

land. We are committed to the cause and international programme of the United States of America. [2]

It is not unusual for states which had achieved their freedom to dissociate themselves from the policies and values of their colonial masters. The case of the Filipinos was different. Nationalism did not become part of the national policies as long as Mother America was on the other side. Filipinos and Americans had parity rights in the exploitation of the natural resources. The Filipinos also agreed to grant lands in the public domain, rent-free, to the United States as military bases. Free trade was also agreed upon, a scheme that insured the perpetuation of the agricultural-type of economy for the Philippines.

The overriding belief during the struggle for the grant of independence was that the Filipinos could govern the Moros properly. This was the message conveyed, at least ostensibly, for placing early Christian settlers right in the middle of Moro areas, so that the two groups could live harmoniously and productively. The belief later became a neurotic assumption that the Moro Problem had ceased to exist and therefore, the grant of independence, more than ever, was not only necessary but very timely. Unfortunately, there was no corresponding effort to ensure that the assumption would become a reality through the formulation of proper state policies or programs. Thus equipped with this distorted presumption, the Filipinos proceeded to rule and trade on the basis of tact and luck with the Moros of Mindanao and Sulu. What followed next cannot be overstressed here, but the following pages will attempt to put it plainly.

Second Class Citizens

As a young and emerging state, the Philippines had to attend to many priorities needed for reconstruction and nation-building. The country was so devastated during the last war that she had to start practically from scratch. There were other social, political and economic problems. The Communist-inspired rebellion was one of the most serious concerns of the state. In contrast, the so-called

Moro Problem was never given proper attention. It was deliberately dropped from the national agenda that required immediate action. Consequently, the Moros also assumed minor roles after the war.

For a while, Mindanao as the "Land of Promise" continued to lure in hordes of people. Not to be outdone, in fact in the lead roles, were American capitalists – thanks to the parity rights agreement – and the local elites, who were mostly feudal lords and political kingpins. The American capitalists intensified their spoliation of Mindanao. In 1957, Firestone Tire and Rubber Company was awarded 1,000 hectares of land in Makilala, Cotabato for a rubber plantation. In 1963, Dole Philippines, a subsidiary of the Castle and Cooke Company, acquired a vast tract of lands in Tupi and Polomolok, Cotabato for its pineapple business. In 1966 Weyerhaueser Corporation obtained 72,000 hectares of forest lands in Mindanao for its logging operation. In 1968 Boise-Cascade Corporation started hauling lauan timber from its 42,000-hectare concession, also in Mindanao. For reason of space, we cannot list all the American capitalists who engaged in big business ventures in Mindanao.

The case of the Filipino capitalists is even more revealing; in fact, they cornered the lion's share of the booming timber, pasture and coconut concessions in Mindanao. Imagine one such locally-owned company, the Bislig Bay Lumber Company, which had acquired 141,000 hectares in Surigao for its logging operation. Such names as the Sarmientos, Magsaysays, Sorianos, Cojuangcos, Puyats, Alcantaras, Ayalas, Floirendos, Yuchengcos and many more did not only enrich themselves from the wealth of Mindanao but directly contributed to the deprivations and sufferings of the natives of the region. The era also witnessed the emergence of absentee Filipino landlords like Angel Elizalde and Alejandro Roces.[3]

In 1973, a government-sponsored study found out the following disparity between the socio-economic conditions of the Moros and the Christians: 1) Only 12 percent of the Moros had electricity, while the average in the whole of Mindanao was 17.5 percent; 2) 20 percent of the Moros had water supply, while the

average for Mindanao was 25 percent; and 3) There was only one doctor for every 6,959 Moros, while there was one doctor for every 3,954 non-Moros.[4]

Earlier in 1957, the Province of Cotabato had 1,546 Christian educators as against only 37 Moros; six Moro business proprietors versus 144 Christians; one Moro lawyer to 38 Christians; and not one Moro dentist, engineer or pharmacist.[5]

Unlike other provinces, Sulu, Lanao and Cotabato continued to be governed as "special provinces." The government directly chose the highest officials of the provinces until 1950, when the right of suffrage was extended to the Moros. Except for Cotabato, the two other special provinces persisted in having Christian governors until later. The Commissioner for Mindanao and Sulu exercised control and supervision over these provinces until 1950, when this office was abolished and its functions were taken over by the Office of the President. In 1956, the supervision was transferred to the Executive Secretary until these provinces were reclassified as "regular" the following year.

Legalized Landgrabbing Persists

As noted in the preceding discussion, the full-blast settlement of Mindanao initiated by Pres. Manuel Quezon was temporarily shelved in view of the impending war with Japan. This was not continued until 1950, when the government established the Rice and Corn Production Administration (RCPA), which was apparently a continuation of the bid to promote rice and corn production. Subsequently, in the same year, the RCPA and the Agricultural Machinery and Equipment Corporation, whose function was to supply farmers with farm machinery and equipment, were merged to form the Land Settlement Development Corporation (LASEDECO). The new agency became the implementor of the resettlement program of the state. By the end of its mandate, it had resettled 1,500 families at the expense of P3.5 million.[6]

The resurgence of the agrarian-related problem posed by the

Communist-inspired *Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon* (National Army Against the Japanese) or *Hukbalahaps* or *Huks* called for the immediate upgrading or reshuffling of government agencies handling land settlement. Thus, Mindanao also became the dumping ground for the so-called "undesirables" of Luzon and the Visayas. In 1954, the National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Administration (NARRA) was created through Republic Act No. 1160. At the outset, the NARRA efforts were not very extensive. But a few years later, in 1963, it had already resettled 20,500 families at the cost of P44.5 million.[7] As in the Commonwealth period, Lanao and Cotabato were adversely affected by the convergence of migrants. The government also created the Economic Development Corporation (EDCOR) which issued homestead lands to alleged former Huks. Ironically, however, many of those resettled in Mindanao, especially in Cotabato and Lanao, were not former Huks. In fact, many former soldiers were deliberately mixed with the former rebels in order to function as stabilizers.[8] The EDCOR was set up under the control of the Philippine Army and its budget also emanated therefrom. The EDCOR settlements were established largely through the initiatives of Ramon Magsaysay, then Secretary of National Defense.

NARRA was subsequently taken over by the Land Authority, and one of its functions was to administer all the various settlement projects of the government. In September 1971, Pres. Ferdinand Marcos signed into law Republic Act No. 6389 creating the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR). The agency took over the administration of all existing settlement projects in the country. By December 1980, the DAR, now renamed Ministry of Agrarian Reform (MAR), was administering some 23 settlement projects in Mindanao. And in 1983, the MAR was incharge of 52,728 resettled families nationwide, 22,639 of them in Mindanao and Sulu.[9]

In February 1986, Pres. Corazon Aquino carried on with the settlement projects of the Ministry of Agrarian Reform (MAR). After some time, the government made a new approach by pushing for the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP). This approach called for the breakup of big landed estates into small

units of seven to 15 hectares, depending on whether the land was planted with rice, coconut, sugar, etc. The CARP Law is still in effect at the time of this writing (1999).

It is very clear that the various land laws and settlement projects of the government, since the beginning of this century, benefitted only the Christians. Hardly any effect trickled down to the benefits of the Moros and other indigenous natives. This historic injustice became more appalling with the introduction of the Torrens System of land ownership which was copied from Australia. The system was a complete anathema to the clan or community ownership system prevalent among the Moros. The doctrine considers all lands within the state as public domain and ownership is a state-conveyed privilege. Any person or group may own property subject to the laws of the land. Its implementation, therefore, resulted in the wholesale confiscation of the ancestral lands of the Moros, and the expropriated lands were declared "public lands" and hence subject to distribution even to outsiders. This state of affairs is well elucidated by the following statements by Aijaz Ahmad in *Class and Colony in Mindanao:*

> *Muslims, who were 98 percent of the region's population in 1913, accounted for only 40 percent by 1976, according to government estimates. They had owned all the land in Mindanao on the eve of colonization. Today, they own less than 17 percent, most of it in remote and infertile mountain areas which lacked marketing and infrustructural facilities. Over 80 percent of the Muslims are now landless tenants.*[10]

Sad to state, this tragic scenario persists. In collusion with greedy agents, the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) and the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) continue to dispossess the Moros of their few remaining landholdings, in consideration of payment from 30 to 40 percent of the amount.

Recrudescence of Troubles

Exactly as it had been forewarned, hardly a year elapsed since

the granting of independence without trouble erupting in Mindanao and Sulu. The momentary truce caused by the bitter pangs of the last global war vanished as quickly as a passing fad after the superficialities or cosmetics of the day had worn off. In fact, the discriminatory policies persisted, the onrush of land-hungry outsiders continued unabated, greedy entrepreneurs and power seekers saw the vast opening and seized it, while the Moro leadership grovelled in lip-service or sank further in ineffectiveness. All these troublesome events continued to grow until fighting erupted once again.

Immediately after the War, in 1947, Saubing and Binang, two "notorious bandits" to the government, refused to be cooperative with the maiden state. They started engaging government troops sent to quell them in Sulu. The situation deteriorated further when other Moro warriors joined the insurrection.

By about 1951, armed clashes started to rage over wide areas of Sulu, Lanao and Cotabato. The most bloody was the one launched by Kamlon Hadji and 100 followers. Despite their inferior strength and crude weapons comprising mostly of old rifles and *krises* and their being mainly restricted to the Luuk area on Jolo island, Kamlon and his band made the government shake in its shoes. They inflicted severe losses in lives, equipment and funds. For almost eight years the government engaged Kamlon and, during the final assault, 5,000 ground troops were utilized along with naval, air and mortar supports. Logistical expenditures, after the final inventory, amounted to P 185 million. Despite all this cost, Kamlon could not be routed or captured. He finally gave up conditionally due to advancing age.

At the same time, two Lanao chieftains, Abdulmajid Panondiongan and Tawantawan, were also proving very troublesome to the government. Like Kamlon, they decided to raise the banner of resistance and succeeded in inflicting considerable casualties on pursuing government troops. As expected, the uprising did not succeed, but they brought to light the cumulative effects of official neglect, wrong assumptions, mistaken policies and lop-sided opportunities disadvantageous to the Moros.

In Cotabato, the off-and-on armed skirmishes also during this period were outright dismissed as "plain banditry." As in other cases, these skirmishes were mainly in opposition to an imposed authority and the frequent intrusions of government agents into mainly Moro communities. The most wanted man tagged as "bandit" was Disumimba Rashid, the terror of the upland areas of Dinaig and Datu Piang.

In 1961, a move to fight the government with the ultimate aim of separating Mindanao and Sulu was winning adherents in Sulu. The leader, Hadjal Uh, had a motivation similar to those of his predecessors, save for the ideological undertone of his movement. He sought the resignation of the Christian governor of Sulu and called upon the people to refuse to pay taxes. But the movement was cut short when the leader was captured

Also in 1961, Cong. Ombra Amilbangsa sponsored a bill in Congress which sought to declare the independence of the Province of Sulu.[11] He was disgusted by the chronic ills and inequalities prevalent in society, which mainly hit the Moros. As foreseen, the bill did not merit the attention of his colleagues in Congress and his action was simply dismissed as "attention-calling."

Integration Envisioned

There has not been an era of genuine peace in Mindanao and Sulu since the Spaniards came. In all the American years, except perhaps for the minority view among American policy-makers, the approach had always been to integrate the Moros into the political life of the majority, that culminated in the annexation of the Moro country to the new republic. But the American colonial government, unlike the Spaniards, never attempted to convert the Moros to Christianity. On the contrary, they even recognized the "distinctness" of the Moros when they set up special administrative agencies to take charge of Moro affairs.

When the Filipinos took over the reins of government, they

ignored the Moro "distinctness." Pres. Manuel Quezon never gave an inch of recognition to the age-old sultanate system of the Moros. He denied the petition from Sulu for the succession of Dayang-Dayang Piandao to the throne after the death of Sultan Jamalul Kiram II. In a forthright tone, he told them that the sultanate ceased to exist with the death of the sultan.[12]

After World War II, sporadic armed clashes returned to the various parts of Mindanao and Sulu. In a vicious cycle, the government sent troops to quell these disturbances and, after a brief lull, trouble would erupt again. This approach had never been questioned until the Kamlon and Tawantawan Affairs, when it became the subject of intense assessment for possible administrative and legal remedial measures or alternatives. The government had practically exhausted its military muscles to defeat Kamlon Hadji and his followers, only to conclude with a negotiated surrender. Its necessary outcome was the sudden national interest in the Moros were pathetically bogged down in the quagmire of neglect and isolation. Hastily, the government decided to investigate the causes of the unrests. Consequently, a Special House Committee was organized to inquire into the problem; named to this body were Sen. Domocao Alonto of Lanao, Cong. Luminog Mangelen of Cotabato and Cong. Ombra Amilbangsa of Sulu. After the investigation, the Committee's findings were: the Moros must be made to feel that they were an integral part of the Philippine nation and this aim must be achieved through a comprehensive approach covering economic, social, moral, political and educational developments. The direct result was the creation, in 1957, of the Commission on National Integration (CNI) by virtue of Republic Act 1888. The agency was charged with the task of "effecting in a more rapid and complete manner the economic, social, moral and political advancement of non-Christian Filipinos and to render real, complete and permanent the integration of all said minorities into the body politic." The Commission was given ten years, later extended by a few more years, to operate and accomplish its task; chiefly, it was education through which it must carry out this assignment. It had an annual appropriation of P5 million, but not more than half the amount was actually released every year. In the

words of one of its officials, the CNI, in spite of its sparse funds and resources, was working "tooth and nail, hoping for miracles to accomplish the rest."

In fairness to the government, it may have fully believed in the effectiveness of the CNI in addressing the Moro Problem. But it little realized what the implications were to the sensibilities of the Moros, who were basically Muslims. The Moros believed that "integration," in essence, would lead inevitably to the abandonment of their beliefs, mores, and racial or cultural traits, in favor of the system professed by the state that is suffused with Christian ideology. The essential result would be a situation where one could not distinguish Muslims from the Christians, and vice versa. For a real Muslim, this was absolutely unacceptable. It would be incompatible with Islam.

There were at least two objections to this integration scheme. First, integration was seen as just the beginning and not the end of the process. The fullest outgrowth would be "assimilation" and this was what was in the minds of the great many Christians when they thought of integration. [12] In this process, the religious and cultural identity of the Moros would be absorbed by the belief and culture of the dominant group, the Christians. Secondly, integration implied that the Christians were not only superior in all spheres of life, but even in the matters of religion they were spiritually or religiously correct. These perceptions, whether well-founded or imagined, do not fit well with the Moros. To them, it is an act of injustice to refer to them as members of the "cultural minority" for, beyond the Philippine territory, live more than a billion Muslims, who like them, are believers of Islam. This claim finds more validity because right next to our doors are the Muslim states of Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei, which are far more developed economically and are as culturally-heterogeneous as, and yet are generally more peaceful than, the "only Christian nation in Asia," the Philippines.

The CNI could have succeeded in many of its programs, if only the government had extended to it all the funding mandated by law. If it had failed in its goal of integration, its inefficacy in the other aspects of its mission was equally disheartening. Even in the

granting of scholarships there were reports of anomalous awarding of scholarships favoring one ethnic tribe over the rest. Even full-blooded Christians sneaked into the roster of CNI scholars. The government did not only fail to release the full funding provided for by law but, almost always, the releases were delayed.

CHAPTER 7

DIASPORA OF THE MOROS

The Past Revisited

Before and during the Spanish times, the Moros were under sovereign sultanates. Left to themselves, they might have developed into unified and constitutional sultanates, or evolved into a political system of the Malaysian pattern, where the different princely states are federated and headed by a paramount ruler, although he is not the repository of powers and functions. But the course of history changed when powers changed in Spain. The Moors were defeated and Spain, eventually becoming a world power, grabbed lands overseas; thence, the "rediscovery" of the New World and – in search for taste-enhancing spices -- the Philippines.

The tasks of the Moros during the Spanish era were simple and yet bloody: defend, attack, negotiate, defend, attack, etc. This vicious cycle lasted for over three centuries. In the end, the Moros survived, Islam survived, and the Moro country survived.

At the exit of the Toledo blade, the Krag rifle came in and assumed the war with the Moros. There were still 34,000 armed Moros ready for action. But the newcomers were not "Christ"; they were "Caesar." Armed with no "crosses" but "carrots and sticks" or "sticks and carrots", they tamed and disarmed the "unsubdued." After years of agonizing tit-for-tat interactions, the Moros learned to accept the Americans, not just as ordinary friends but as endeared ones, so that when the grant of self-rule was forthcoming they pleaded to be retained under the American flag or be segregated from the Filipinos. The Americans fully grasped this sentiment and they even predicted that the Moros would rise up in arms against the Christians if U.S. rule ended.[1] But alas! they did not only ignore this premonition; they committed another unconscionable act by handing the Moros, defenseless and disorganized, to the Filipinos.

This was the state of affairs when the Moros slipped into the hands of the neo-colonial Filipino rulers when the Americans left. In the previous discussion, we have dealt with the policies of the new state and how these affected the twist and turn of events in Moro country. This time we will probe how the situation of the Moros, instead of improving, had steadily deteriorated into chaos, destruction and open warfare when the Filipinos assumed power in the Philippines.

Back Against the Wall

Soon after the end of World War II, independence was granted to the Philippines by the United States. The timing was excellent for it perfectly coincided with the positive atmosphere created by the invasion. Fighting side by side against a common foe somehow gave the Moros and the Filipinos mutual approbation and satisfaction. The war also created remarkable opportunities, such as material rewards for jobs well done in the service of country and the United States. All these, however, were transient. Under Filipino neo-colonial rule, the condition of the Moros became worse than it was under the Americans. The regime was not only proved apathetic and discriminatory; it "resorted" to the extreme measure of systematic dispersal and destruction of the Moros.

On the basis of the past and the stark realities of the present, the Moros rightly or wrongly concluded that under the Filipino flag the future was hopeless and not worth living. There were no genuine efforts designed to set them free from the bondage of exploitation, oppression and persecution. The few or insignificant positive steps taken by the government were no more than palliatives to appease them momentarily.

Economically, a very large proportion of the Moro population sank deeply into the morass of poverty and hunger. In every respect, they lagged behind others. Moro communities remained stagnant and backward. The situation was so depraved that many believed the Moros were better off during pre-Spanish days than at present. One writer described this pathetic situation in the following lines:

The national census of 1948 placed 80 percent of the Moslems as having no definite source of income, no property. This still holds today. An average Moslem is either a farmer or a fisherman.[2]

In politics, there was steady loss of Moro-controlled areas in Mindanao as one province after another slipped from the hands of the natives. Newly created provinces went also to the newcomers. The brief supremacy of the Moros in local politics in Cotabato was cut short when the government arbitrarily got its proteges elected. A case in point was that of Lt. Col. Carlos B. Cajelo, who was made to run and win in the 1971 gubernatorial race over Cotabato Gov. Simeon Datumanong. In Lanao del Norte, Colonel Buenaventura, a congressional candidate, tried to contest the governorship. Again, the unseen hand of the state pushed his candicacy vigorously to make him win. Only a last hour compromise, leaving no losers, saved the day for the Moros.

TABLE 6

MINDANAO POPULATION, 1990

	Western Mindanao	Northern Mindanao	Southern Mindanao	Central Mindanao
Muslim	1,060,965	11,209	129,951	1,488,331
Non-Muslim	2,089,941	3,491,465	4,318,665	1,679,209

Source: 1990 Census on Population and Housing

In the field of education, the Western system was prevalent in the Philippines. Consequently a great many of those among the so-called educated class, like their predecessors during the American colonial period, started looking to the West for inspiration and direction. What they learned, instead, was that spiritualism gave way to materialism, hedonism and the easy life. Education, contrary to what Islam teaches, became the means to actualize material and

social gains.

This time hordes of new migrants, concessionaires, businessme and other gold- or power-seekers came in concentric waves Methodically they edged out the natives, first from the plains, valley and hills, and eventually, out of the hinterlands. And with paralle precision, vast tracts of land were requisitioned for militar reservations or camps which, in most cases, were owned by the Moro under the system of communal ownership. At first, only the immediat families of soldiers were allowed to live there but later their close an distant relatives and then their friends were accommodated until the formed clusters of communities. Since these groups were usuall secured or armed, the Moro neighbors nearby had to choose one o two evils: either they move out at the first instance or stay awhile, se the lands if these were titled, and then leave. The third option was t stay and fight. Said Aijaz Ahmad in his write-up:

> *Pushed onto a mere 17 percent of their land, an agrarian people with no alternative directions for development – such as the Moros – must either perish or fight back. By the same token, the northern elite can make further substantive gains only through a genocidal war of total occupation.*[3]

TABLE 7

Estimated Moro & Non-Moro Population in Mindanao, 1903-1990

Year	Mindanao Population	Moro Population Number	As % of Min. Pop'n	Non-Moro Popuplation Number	As % of Min. Pop'n
1903	327,741	250,000	76	77,741	24
1913	518,698	324,816	63	193,882	37
1918	723,655	358,968	50	364,687	50
1939	2,244,421	755,189	34	1,489,232	66
1948	2,943,324	933,101	32	2,010,223	68

1960	5,686,027	1,321,060	23	4,364,967	77
1970	7,963,932	1,669,708	21	6,294,224	79
1975	9,146,995	1,798,991	20	7,348,084	80
1980	10,905,243	2,504,332	23	8,400,911	77
1990	14,269,736	2,690,456	19	11,579,280	81

Sources: Che Man (1990); 1990 Census of Population and Housing

Massacre in the Rock

If there was one Philippine president who was close to the hearts of the Moros, he must have been Pres. Diosdado Macapagal.[4] In saying so, the author does not speak for other Moros, but only for himself. But he is quite certain that many others share this view. When he first came to Manila, as a student, barely less than a year was left of the term of President Macapagal. But even in such a brief period of time, he could not fail to feel the warmth and sincerity in the man, and even other Moro students, mostly shy and unassuming, had little difficulty reaching him. Had such a moving personality stayed longer in power, the violence that rocked Mindanao in the 1970s would have taken place sometime much later. But he was defeated in the 1965 presidential election and the man who beat and succeeded him was Ferdinand Marcos, who like the other "Ferdinand," surnamed "Magellan," was instrumental in sowing the seed of enmity that finally made an already seething social volcano erupt.

However, in fairness to President Marcos, it was not he who first initiated the Philippine claim to Sabah. It was President Macapagal, himself,, who formally put forth the Sabah Claim in 1962, based on the sovereignty once exercised by the Sulu sultanate over the northern Borneo territory. By all indications, however, President Macapagal was pressing the claim through peaceful and diplomatic channels. In the case of President Marcos, it was an open secret that, in addition to the normal procedure in international law that disputes between and among states be resolved through pacific methods, like negotiations and through the adjudication of the

International Court of Justice, he resorted to extra-legal actions in securing the claim. It was in the light of this scenario and his obsession to stay in power beyond the period the law allowed, that the massacre of sixty-four Moro trainees, popularly known as the "Jabidah Massacre," on March 17, 1968 on the rocky island of Corregidor, could be appreciated. The victims were part of the 180 trainees, mostly Moros, who were undergoing training on jungle warfare, sabotage and infiltration. The training was purportedly part of a wider clandestine operation code-named "Operation Merdeka" for the invasion of Sabah, to which the Philippines had a pending claim. The word *merdeka* is an Indo-Malayan term meaning "to set free" or simply "freedom."

The real story behind the cold-blooded massacre was never made public by the government. There were explanations but at most those were intended to mislead rather than to inform. The lone survivor, Jibin Arola, however, made shocking and chilling revelations. He said that they were ordered shot because they refused to follow orders to attack Sabah. He explained: "How could we attack the Malaysians when they are our brothers and we do not have any quarrel with them?"[5] That he survived by swimming the shark-infested waters of Corregidor to Cavite was in itself a miracle. Other reasons given were the non-payment of their monthly allowances and the trainees' desire to resign.[6] Another version spoke of the mutiny of the trainees which forced their military handlers to order the massacre of the entire company, so that none could survive to tell the story of the horrendous nightmare.

When the invasion story hit the international news headlines, Malaysia, expectedly, reacted sharply to the point of going into a frenzy of war preparation. Already having strained diplomatic relations since 1962, when the Sabah claim was first filed, the two neighbors almost fell into a shooting war. President Marcos vehemently denied the alleged plan of invasion. But no one took his words seriously. Such a project of formidable magnitude and full of diplomatic dangers could not have been undertaken without his official go-signal. Besides, the man in charge of this top-level project, Maj. Eduardo Martelino, was, like him, an Ilocano by ethnic

affiliation. Moreover, the project was under the direct supervision of the Civil Affairs Office of the Office of the President of the Philippines.

Who was Maj. Eduardo Martelino? As above stated, Major Martelino was an Ilocano. Once a Christian, he reportedly became a Muslim and adopted "Abdulatif" as his new Muslim name, after marrying a Moro lass by the name of Sofia or Safiyah. The wedding ceremony took place in Simunul, Tawi-Tawi, while he was posted there supervising another batch of trainees, also under the same project. Simunul is the last town before Sabah and, on a clear day, Sabah is visible from there. Whether he really became a Muslim or his conversion was merely a propaganda tool to win support or to cover up his real intention, nobody knew for sure. But before his stint with Project Merdeka, while serving as military attache in Washington, D.C., he proposed in a book for the federation of the states of Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines into a Pan-Malayan aggrupation; and to realize this, he thought of organizing an expeditionary force code-named *Jabidah* to be based in Simunul Island.[7] Though his idea appeared fantastic, he earned some prominence for it.

This is the sketchy background of Maj. Eduardo Martelino who was made to appear as the man behind the ill-fated project and on whose shoulders all the blame, insult, curse and international ramifications were placed squarely. Obviously, he was sacrificed or had himself sacrificed to conceal and save the real brains behind the invasion plan. But the public perception was quite clear: If Martelino was the lead actor of the project, Gen. Romeo Espina, then AFP Chief of Staff, was the Director, and President Marcos, as Commander-in-Chief, was the Producer.

Had Project Merdeka succeeded and Sabah was invaded, the consequence would have been disastrous. Besides, what benefits awaited the Moros if Sabah became part of the Philippines? The fact of the matter was that Sabah under Malaysia was very progressive.

The Old Man is Angry

The bloodbath at Corregidor did not only anger the Malaysians including Sabah Chief Minister Datu Tun Mustapha Haron, but jolted the Moros and their leaders, particularly Cotabato Gov. Datu Udtog Matalam. Hardly two months after the incident, Datu Udtog Matalam spearheaded the move to create an Islamic Republic of Mindanao in answer to the alleged systematic policy of genocide, discrimination, and dispossession of lands pursued vigorously by the government. On May 1, 1968, he organized the Muslim (and later Mindanao) Independence Movement (MIM), which sought to form a state comprising of the contiguous southern portion of the Philippine Archipelago. In the Manifesto issued by the MIM, the following, among other matters, were declared:

1. That it is a recognized principle underlying the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration of Human Rights that all peoples consisting the minority in a given state possess the right to self-determination;

2. That the Islamic World Congress has affirmed the above principles, particularly the right of Muslims who are in the minority in non-Muslim states, to self-determination;

3. That the systematic extermination of the Muslim youth – like the Corregidor Fiasco – and the policy of isolation and dispersal of the Muslim communities have been pursued vigorously by the government to the detriment of the Muslims; and

4. That Islam, being a communal religion – an ideology and a way of life -- must have a definite territory for the exercise of its tenets and teachings, and for the observance of its laws.

The text of the Manifesto was forwarded to U.N. Sec. Gen. U Thant and copies were also furnished to all heads of Muslim states and to Pres. Ferdinand Marcos.

In a flash, the Old Man (Datu Udtog Matalam) and the MIM were in the headlines. But nobody seemed to have known why he

went on to such an extreme move. The desire for power was quite remote. He was already the governor of the biggest province in the entire country. Neither could his action be attributed to the desire for more wealth, for revolution does not pay off. Whether or not he was serious, is not within our competence to judge. But one thing is certain. The MIM did not gain much momentum and few outside his home province of Cotabato listened to him seriously enough. But the reaction of the government was a different story. From all indications, it did not take the MIM challenge lightly. Subsequently, one of his advisers, Atty. Hussain Pangato, was killed sometime in 1970 by PC troopers at Tinidtiban, Pikit, Cotabato.

The MIM may not have endured long, but it contributed in no small way to the revival of the spirit of independence among the Moros, particularly the studentry and the professionals. In fact, the professionals and students in Manila who later formed the Moro National Liberation Front were also moved by the spirit of the MIM when they enlisted in the first batch of trainees to undergo guerrilla training in a nearby state.

At this point in time, President Marcos was about to run for his second term, beyond which the Philippine Constitution barred him from seeking a third term. It was in this setting that the threats raised by the Matalam's bugaboo and the political ambition of Marcos could be tied together; also on this basis, many loose ends of contemporaneous events could be correlated to yield a clearer picture of the larger scenario which later unfolded to this country's surprise and shock. President Marcos, on several occasions, was overheard as saying that "only fools get out of the Palace," meaning, as president of the Philippines. His declaration of Martial Law in 1972 and his stay in office for more than twenty years substantiated beyond doubt the allegations that he indeed had dictatorial ambitions.

The Rats Strike

The emergence of the *Ilagas* was allegedly attributed to threats posed by the MIM to the Christians in Cotabato.[8] In the province at

the time, there were reports of Moro youths undergoing guerrilla warfare training in Malaysia and several training camps in the province. As a result, Christians who chose to stay and fight for everything they held dear, reportedly became the early pioneers of the *Ilaga* movement.

The word *Ilaga* is an Ilonggo or Visayan term for "rat," that highly voracious creature that infests our crops. How these "half-crazed or mad killers," whom the regime preferred to call "fanatics," acquired the name or chose to be known by it, is perhaps explained by the widespread proliferation of their gory activities in Mindanao. Other sources went further to decipher the name as an acronym for "Ilonggo Land Grabbers' Association." The final truth of the matter still remains to be seen, but in the absence of more solid evidence to the contrary the theory might as well stand. Initially, a simple folk leader, Feliciano Luces, was tagged as the *Ilaga* chief. Those who knew him well in Upi, Cotabato, could not help but wonder how a mild-mannered farmer of this town could become an overnight leader of an ultra-rightist Christian organization whose name struck terror and awe.

Early references to the name theorized that it referred to the voracious animals to symbolize the natural right of any man or community to legitimate self-defense. There were rumors and wild stories about the organization, all unsubstantiated at the time. But in July 1972, the Associated Press, an American wire service, reported that the *Ilaga* organization was the brainchild of seven Christian leaders of Cotabato.[9] Later, in 1973, a group of students commissioned by the government reported that the *Ilaga* was founded in Cotabato City in September 1970 by Mayors Wenceslao de la Cerna of Alamada, Nicolas Dequiña of Midsayap, Pacifico de la Cerna of Libungan, Bonifacio Tejada of Mlang, Conrado Lemana of Tulunan, Jose Escribano of Tacurong and Esteban Doruelo of Pigkawayan, and PC Capt. Manuel Tronco of Upi, the overall commander.[10] Being seven in all, they were thus called the "Magnificent Seven." However, a later recruit, Lt. Col. Carlos B. Cajelo, also an Ilonggo -- who became governor of Cotabato and later the Deputy Defense Minister for Civil Relations -- was

popularly believed to have been the real leader. He was suspected to have taken over the command discreetly from Manuel Tronco, a candidate for Mayor of Upi in 1971, when the latter was slain in ambush in 1972 in Upi, Cotabato. Ex-mayor Esteban Doruelo, then an assemblyman of LTP-12, was also assassinated on February 4, 1984 in Cotabato City for reasons believed linked to the founding of the *Ilagas.*

The *Ilaga* rampage started in the middle of 1970, barely a year-and-a-half before Pres. Ferdinand Marcos plunged the country into Martial Law on September 23, 1972.[11] The first killing field was Upi, Cotabato, the new home of Commander Feliciano Luces, alias "Toothpick." There he led a band of Tiruray tribesmen, who readily responded allegedly to settle an old score with the Maguindanaon Moros.[12] On March 22, 1970, Commander Toothpick and his band of so-called "fanatics," initiated, as their baptism of fire, an attack on an isolated Moro village, killing six people and burning several houses. They left behind their horrifying trademarks on the victims: cut ears, slashed nipples, plucked-out eyes, and cross markings on the body. Members of the gang, mostly teenagers, were subjected to rigid initiation rituals and were required to wear amulets and other charms believed to have magical powers to ward off evil and harm. In the beginning, the Tirurays dominated the gang but, later on as other *Ilaga* units sprouted in other areas of Cotabato, Bukidnon, Lanao del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur and elsewhere, the movement was dominated by Ilonggos. Later, the *Ilaga* gangs acted as "storm troopers" for government troops when the Moros succeeded in putting up an effective defense. A pertinent article in one of the front-running Manila dailies had this to say of this tie-up:

> *The list is long... but it can be compressed into one single horrifying theme – a near absolute lawlessness armed and protected by... government officials and the military in remote corners of Mindanao to look for and kill... Muslim rebels, and whoever they believe to be their sympathizer.*[13]

The late Pres. Diosdado Macapagal had this to say in connection with the *Ilaga* Organization:

The political and short-sighted handling of Muslim problems under the Marcos reign reached a zenith when the authorities sanctioned and believably helped arm the Ilagas, an armed band of Christian Filipinos, who have waged an operation to kill Muslims. Reports of massacres and of the number of victims continued to increase as the PC-Ilaga tandem mounted and widened its bloody sorties in the other provinces and towns outside of its original base of operations. Hardest hit by these depredations usually were isolated Moro villages.[14]

So far, there is no formal research work conducted or made available that shows data on these *Ilaga*-related massacres, including the names of the victims, number of houses burned or destroyed, and other losses or damages. The following listing is not presumed to be complete, but efforts have been made to make the entries as detailed as possible.[15]

TABLE 8

LIST OF MASSACRES COMMITTED BY *ILAGAS* IN MINDANAO

Municipality/ Province	Year	Dead	Wounded	Houses Burned
1. Upi, Cotabato	March 22, 1970	6	2	Ud
2. Upi, Cotabato	September 10, 1970	6	Uk	Uk
3. Polomolok, South Cotabato	August 10, 1970	8	Uk	Uk
4. Alamada, Cotabato	December 3, 1970	13	Uk	Uk
5. Midsayap, Cotabato	December 16, 1970	18	Uk	Uk
6. Ahan, Datu Piang, Cotabato	December 21, 1970	7	Uk	147
7. Bagumbayan, Cotabato	January 1, 1971	12	Uk	Uk
8. Alamada, Cotabato	January 17, 1971	73	Uk	36
9. Carmen, Cotabato	April 6, 1971	18	25	Uk
10. Manili, Carmen, Cotabato	June 19, 1971	70	17	Uk
11. Wao, Lanao del Sur	July 4, 1971	Ud	Uk	60
12. Buldon, Cotabato	August 5, 1971	14	Uk	Uk
13. Wao, Lanao Sur	August 5, 1971	36	Uk	Uk
14. Kauran, Ampatuan, Cotabato	August 9, 1971	4	Uk	Uk

15. Buldon, Cotabato	August 9, 1971	60	Uk	Uk
16. Kisulon, Bukidnon	October 23, 1971	67	Uk	Uk
17. Magsaysay, Lanao del Norte	October 24, 1971	66	Uk	Uk
18. Tacub, Kauswagan, Lanao del Norte	November 22, 1971	40	140	Uk
19. Siay, Zamboanga del Sur	November 1971	Uk	Uk	Uk
20. Ipil, Zamboanga del Sur	December 1971	Ud	Uk	Uk
21. Palembang, Cotabato	January 21, 1972	Ud	Uk	Uk

Legend: Ud = Undetermined; Uk = Unknown

Question of Genocide

The nightmarish killings did not only alarm the local Moro population, but even the Islamic world was led to believe that there was really a systematic genocide campaign waged by the state to annihilate the Moros in Mindanao. According to the Marcos regime, more than 1,000 civilians had died, about 2,000 armed Moros and Christians had been killed, and more than half-a-million persons had been wounded, displaced, or rendered homeless, not to speak of heavy casualties among government troops.[16] According to another source, the number of Moro victims of the Army, PC and *Ilaga* attacks reached as high as 10,000 killed.[17] In addition, thousands of Moro houses, mosques and Arabic schools were destroyed or razed to the ground by these ruthless depredators.

In response to the issue of genocide, the Islamic world sent missions to Mindanao to investigate the reported mass slaughter of Muslims. In January 1972, eight Muslim ambassadors visited the various Moro areas, particularly Cotabato and Lanao del Norte. Members of the mission were ambassadors from Malaysia, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Singapore, and the United Arab Republic, came to Mindanao to monitor the situation of the Muslims. The delegation was headed by Dr. Ali Abdulsalam Treki, the Libyan Foreign Minister, who spoke for the group:

> *... We don't believe there is such a thing. But what is important is not what we educated people believe in. What matters is what the Muslims in Mindanao think. They think their war against Christians is a religious one.*[18]

Both the second and first missions found no trace of genocide as an official policy of the Philippine government. However, the collusion of many military and government officials in the series of *Ilaga* activities was not only a matter of public knowledge; it was confirmed by no less than a ranking member of the organization. One *Ilaga* commander, Carmelino Abagon, who figured in many massacres in Mindanao, told newsmen that they never attacked Muslims without the permission of or an order from, the Philippine military.[19] The least the government was guilty of was tolerating -- hence acting as an accessory to -- the bloody activities of these gangsters. One can only wonder the wisdom or folly of the decision of Pres. Ferdinand Marcos to play host to the notorious Ilaga chieftain, Feliciano Luces, in late 1970 right at the Presidential Palace in Manila. Instead of being punished, the *Ilaga* kingpin, to borrow the words of the late Cong. Salipada Pendatun, was "knighted" and "bade to go back to his kingdom to bear more arms and commit further depredations."[20]

In the meantime, the displacement and dispersal of the Moros from their ancestral lands continued unabated. The towns of Ampatuan, Bagumbayan, Alamada, Columbio, Upi, Palembang, Tulunan, Carmen, Isulan and Esperanza, all in Cotabato; of Wao, Lanao del Sur; of Magsaysay, Kauswagan, and all areas along the national highway from one end to another, in Lanao del Norte; of Siay, Labangan, Dimataling, and other areas along the national highway as well as along the coastline, in Zamboanga del Sur; of Kalilangan, Talakag, and nearby places, in Bukidnon; and of Tantangan and a few other towns of South Cotabato, were rendered "ghost areas" after evacuating Moros and Christians moved out in opposite directions. However, in predominantly Muslim towns like Dinaig, Parang, Buldon, Barira, Matanog, Maganoy and Datu Paglas, all in Cotabato, and Balabagan, Lanao del Sur, the evacuees were mostly Christians.

Up to the present, most of the people who were uprooted from their ancestral dwellings have not returned. A few who dared to return had to flee again from the incessant fear for their lives from

their erstwhile enemies, who were usually clothed with authority and brandished high-caliber firearms after their integration into the paramilitary forces of the government. Others failed to reoccupy their lands because other people were already tilling them. And it was not an uncommon instance that those who managed to return became tenants on the lands they once owned. Survival, even by sub-human standards, was really difficult. Not a few survived by swallowing whatever remained of their dignity and pride by winnowing the grains from the chaff of rice left over in Christian granaries and farmlands.

The Terror Escalates

The off-and-on and yet bloody confrontations remained towards the last quarter of 1971. By this time, the Moros had been able to put up a more organized resistance against the onslaught of the *llaga*-PC tandem with the formation of the so-called "Blackshirts," said to be the army of the Muslims or more precisely of the Mindanao Independence Movement (MIM) of ex-Gov. Datu Udtog Matalam. The Blackshirts, so-named because they wore black khaki, as well as chevrons, boots, and name tags, first tasted prominent combat experience in the much-heralded "Battle of Buldon" in August 1971. Buldon is a border town next to Lanao del Sur, thus an ideal place for defense against the PC troops sent to blast the Blackshirts from the town.

The attacking PC troops, backed up by tanks and mortars, confessed that they could hardly move 100 meters forward without being pinned down by heavy enemy fire. After a few days of fighting, President Marcos sent a group of emissaries to negotiate the surrender of Bangon Aratuc and to forge a truce. First, the Mayor sent his son, Tomatic Aratuc, to Manila, and then he followed to meet President Marcos. He denied there were Blackshirts in his municipality. "What I have are black teeth,"[21] he cracked. A few aging rifles of World War II vintage were surrendered, obviously to save faces, especially for the government, which promised a consolation of P75,000 to "rehabilitate" the town. Soon Buldon faded out of the limelight.

On August 20, 1971, news flashed that Ampatuan, Cotabato was under siege. Ilaga gangsters had swooped down on isolated Moro villagers. The Moros fought back to defend themselves. In Maneba, Ampatuan, a series of pitched battles was fought involving the *Ilaga*-PC on one hand and the villagers on the other. Two of the "Malaysian-trained" Moro students, Abdulmanan Abas and Akmad Enampadan, saw action here.

In September 1971, the escalation of hostilities switched to Lanao del Norte between *Ilagas* and "Barracudas." Both Muslims and Christians evacuated in large numbers: the former to Marawi City and the towns around Lake Lanao, and the latter to Iligan City, Ozamis City, Cagayan de Oro City and, across the sea, to Dumaguete City. Estimated to have swollen to 50,000, the evacuees now became a major refugee problem, especially to the government.

As in Cotabato, the hostilities in Lanao del Norte were inflamed by local politics. A Christian governor, Gov. Arsenio Quibranza, was on one side of the political divide, against Cong. Ali Dimaporo on the other side. The Barracudas were labeled as the private army of the Dimaporos while the Ilagas were said to be at the disposal of the Quibranzas. This conflict peaked when 40 unarmed Muslims were mercilessly mowed down at a checkpoint in Tacub, Kauswagan, Lanao del Norte in November.[22] The victims were returning home after casting their votes in a special election set by the Commission on Elections (COMELEC).

The massacre shocked the entire nation and the Muslim world, which denounced the carnage as another attempt of the Philippine government to make true its genocide campaign against the Muslims in Mindanao. Malaysia, Libya and Kuwait adopted special efforts including calling upon the United Nations to intervene in the crisis. Libya offered relief assistance to the victims.

Towards the end of 1971 and up to April the following year, there was a lull in the fighting. No major confrontations took place. But suddenly in May renewed fighting raged in Balabagan, Lanao

del Sur. The *Ilagas* were reported to have come to the town to rally the local Christians against the predominantly Muslim populace. The initial cause, in fact, was the bloody feud between a local politician and a Christian-owned logging company. After some fighting, the result was the evacuation of some 5,000 Christians.

Almost simultaneously, Iligan City, a predominantly Christian city, clamped a boycott on Marawi City, a city of Muslims. No food, fuel or communication could reach the city. Even the price of salt sky-rocketed from P20.00 to P40.00 per sack. Sometimes, even if money was available, no stock was on hand. The boycott was lifted only after the government sent in Marines and Constabulary troops to replace the local police force and dismantle all the roadblocks.

After a while, in July 1972 the battles shifted to at least two towns in Zamboanga del Sur. First to succumb was Siay Mayor Maulod Puasa, a Subanon-Maguindanaon mestizo, who was cut to pieces right at the market place by rampaging *Ilagas*. Next to be attacked was Hadji Van Jadjourie, a Tausog trader; fortunately for him, he and his clan managed to beat off the 60-man Ilaga attackers. Then there was the free-for-all fight involving Dimataling Mayor Diog Carmona and the Maguindanaon residents. In a peace dialogue hastily called by Gov. Jose Pecson, the two warring groups were told to appear in order to thresh out the roots of the problem. First to arrive were Governor Pecson and the Muslim group, and while the Governor and the Muslims were discussing some aspects of the conflict, Mayor Diog Carmona and his armed followers barged in. Alarmed by their sudden and threatening appearance, the Muslims opened fire, first to fall was Mayor Diog Carmona himself. A firefight ensued. The governor barely survived, and the casualties on both sides were heavy.

The Zamboanga incidents were not the end of the conflict. People looked toward Basilan and Sulu, expecting them to be the next battleground. But before such could happen, a major event stunned the nation: the sudden declaration by Pres. Ferdinand Marcos of Martial Law on September 23, 1972.

CHAPTER 8

THE QUEST FOR SURVIVAL

The Search for Alternatives

The travails of the past and the chilling fears over an uncertain future aroused the Moros to activity. Led by the studentry, professionals and some political leaders, the Moros looked for alternatives that could secure or at least defend the survival of the Moros as a people. The Manila government was to them still a "government of outsiders" and was not only indifferent but, even more so, appeared to be the main force behind a move to "liquidate them," as revealed in the Jabidah Massacre in 1968 and the series of mass slaughters in Mindanao by the Ilaga-PC tandem in the early 1970s.

The old Moro leaders, nationalists or "collaborators," had tried to secure Mindanao and Sulu from the control of the outsiders but failed miserably. One major reason for their failure was lip-service they offered to what was generally perceived to be a real and serious problem requiring immediate and concrete action. Evidently, they had become too preoccupied with the present, since most of them were either politicians or high government officials, to refresh the hard lessons of the past and warn of the threats in the offing. Such lackluster mentality must have been the consequence of having made too many compromises, which ultimately led to surrender, or what we may mildly term as "subservience." In addition, the lure of the world and the inability of these aristocratic leaders – most of the them belonged to the so-called royal class – to shed off their traditional privileges, must have contributed a lot to this unfortunate frame of mind. As virtual captives of this leadership crisis, the Moro people apparently could only had become unproductive and uncreative, and thence, generally passive, if not indolent – almost like the *indios* of the past Spanish regime.

As the conflict hardened and intensified – against the backdrop of deepening Islamic consciousness – the Moros had to find ways

to survive and at the same time to make true their distinct national identity. This necessity found expressions in the rise of the numerous organizations. The listing would be very long, but for the purpose of this section, it is enough to make mention of three organizations, namely, the Muslim Association of the Philippines (MAP), Ansar El Islam, and the Mindanao Independence Movement (MIM). The Muslim Association of the Philippines was founded in 1926, ironically by Indian Muslims,[1] but after a while local elite Moros began to dominate it. Prominent among these local leaders were ex-Sen. Salipada Pendatun, ex-Sen. Domocao Alonto, Cong. Rashid Lucman and ex-Ambassador Pullong Arpa. Under ex-Sen. Domocao Alonto came the Ansar El Islam in 1969, which later on branched out surprisingly to practically all corners of Mindanao and Sulu where Muslims were domiciled. Its main objective was the complete establishment of Islam in all aspects of life.[2] However, many eyebrows were raised as to why, during the hard conflict that followed in Mindanao and Sulu, the Ansar El Islam failed to rise to the occasion when its services were most needed by the people. If there was any organization that evoked much terror in the power circle in Manila, the Mindanao Independence Movement under Cotabato Gov. Datu Udtog Matalam in 1968 must have been that organization. But after much rumblings, the MIM itself may have succumbed to the threats and enticements of the government. In December 1971, Pres. Ferdinand Marcos and Datu Udtog Matalam met in Manila, after which only the name was left of this organization.

There were other organizations earlier founded by Moro elders, but most if not all were either regional or mainly religious or educational in character. In 1934, the Sarikatul Islam Association was formed in Zamboanga but its objective was more that of a commercial venture. Trading during this period had expanded and the people were accorded a greater chance to dispose of their produce easily and to buy merchandise at reasonable prices. In 1936, the Kamilol Islam Society was established in Lanao del Sur. Its purpose was mainly educational.

The years from the early second half of the sixties to the early seventies marked the height of student militant activitism and unrest. There was widespread agitation, violence and disturbance, both global and national, which stirred student activism manifested through the "parliamentary of the streets," demonstrations, rallies, pickets, teach-ins and other forms of radical protest. The Moro students and even the professionals were not remiss in moving apace with this world phenomenon.

In the case of the Moro students both in Manila and in Cairo, Egypt, there were seven eventful episodes, three global and four national, which had the greatest impact upon their lives and the trend of events in Mindanao and Sulu. The three global incidents were as follows: 1) the June 5, 1967 Arab-Israeli War; 2) the 1968 aborted but bloody coup attempt in Indonesia; and, 3) to a lesser degree, the rise of student demonstrations in Indonesia and Malaysia in 1968. And in the national scene, the 1968 Jabidah Massacre easily was the main "eye-opener," which evoked much disgust that revived the old fears that under Filipino rule the Moros were not safe. It was followed by the founding of the Mindanao Independence Movement by Datu Udtog Matalam in 1968, the 1970-1971 series of massacres of Muslims in Mindanao, and finally by the declaration of Martial Law in 1972. All these incidents were highly momentous circumstances that no rational person, lest of all a Moro, could ignore and abandon altogether to chance.

Initially, the studentry, professionals and, to some extent, the politicians were locked in debate over what course of action to pursue for the Moros, as a whole, to survive. There were three options before them: 1) adopt a collaborationist line, as did most of the old nationalist leaders, whose only weapon to attain or maintain freedom was lip-service; 2) assume a riskless but dishonorable stance of acquiescence and leave the rest to "fate;" and 3) subscribe to the view that man, as the "best of creations," has the relative capability to make or unmake his own destiny. All the three options had takers. Ironically, those who took No. 1 shone in the heyday of student activism, especially in Manila, but were mostly nowhere to be found when the sailing got rough in Mindanao and Sulu. Those

who picked option No. 3 generally assumed supporting roles in the "parliament of the streets," but became the ones who personally led the revolutionary war later. Takers of No. 2 were the slaves of the insatiable self and remained in the cities; many married Christians and raised their families outside the moral realm of Islam.

In the language of the day, the "aroused" students or professionals were branded "activists" or "radicals" and were more likely declared "subversives." Despite the so-called policy of maximum tolerance issued as orders to anti-riot policemen and Metrocom soldiers, not a few Moro student activists were injured during rallies and demonstrations. Cases in point were the violent demonstrations against the visit of Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban in 1967 and the coming of Gen. Abdul Harris Nasution of Indonesia in 1968. The demonstrators protested against the Israeli Foreign Minister and the pro-Israeli policy of the Marcos regime. Some of the demonstrators managed to barge into the Israeli Embassy in Makati and pulled the Israeli flag down.

Actually the confrontation in 1968 was not pre-planned. The Moro students were set to welcome Gen. Abdul Harris Nasution, the man who was highly regarded as the successor to Pres. Ahmad Soekarno. While the Moro students were at the Manila International Airport (MIA) waiting for General Nasution to disembark, another group of militant students identified with the pro-communist Kabataang Makabayan (KM) protested his visit and started hurling invectives, such as "Nasution: Butcher of Indonesia," "US puppet, go Home!" and other stinging insults. Consequently, the pro-Nasution and the anti-Nasution demonstrators clashed, hurling stones, bottles and Molotov bombs that resulted in several injuries on both sides.

The study groups, mostly hastily formed, centered on alarming issues of the hour. The members wanted to rationalize everything on the basis of something. As their discussions dragged and sometimes got heated, their conclusions differed as to what must be the direction and the guiding light of their activities. All were Moros, but although they were all Muslims by upbringing,

they were enrolled in secular universities and colleges and not all followed a purely Islamic way of thinking. Others adopted a nationalist line. This confusion remained even after the battle scene shifted from the streets to the frontlines of Mindanao and Sulu.

In the beginning, both Moro and Christian students jointly denounced the prevalent evils of the day. They organized demonstrations against the prevailing political and economic frustrations of the people, the widespread graft and corruption, elitism in the social and political structure, and so forth. Gradually, however, the Moro activists began to realize, albeit quite late, that although there were common serious national issues confronting the Moros and the Christians that they could both cry about, the fact was that the Moros themselves had their particular tune to sing. They, therefore, started to speak of the problems of the Moros, in particular, how they would fare in a predominantly Christian state, what would be their destiny under the Filipino flag, should they have to work for reforms within the realm of national politics, etc.

It was not long after that many Moro student organizations began to sprout in metropolitan Manila, the nerve-center of student activism. Some of these organizations were the Union of Islamic Forces and Organizations (UIFO) under student leader and later lawyer Macapanton Abbas Jr.; the Muslim Progress Movement (MPM) led by Dr. Alunan C. Glang; the Philippine Muslim Nationalist League (PMNL) spearheaded by UP Instructor Nur Misuari; the Students' Supreme Council of the Philippines; the Muslim Students' Association of the Philippines (MUSAPHIL); the Muslim Lawyers' League; the Muslim Youth Assembly; the Bismillah Brotherhood; the Al Muslimin Fraternity; and the Sulu Muslim League. Students in the provinces also formed organizations, two of which were the Mambarul Islam based in Cotabato City and the Sulu Islamic Congress in Jolo, Sulu.

Very soon the disillusionment of these activists came to surface, in early 1970. They were particularly cynical of and disheartened by the continued lip-service of their leaders, both of the traditional and political stripes. In May 1970, the Moro youth activists convened

the first Muslim Youth Assembly in Zamboanga City, where they denounced the evils of the day. They exhibited an anti-government posture and called on the Moro youths to take the lead.

Overseas, the Moro students in Cairo, Egypt, despite being detached from their homeland by thousands of miles, were in fact much ahead in addressing the need to form themselves into an organization, initially in response to their basic requirements as students. This later developed into a vehicle for bringing forth to the international forum the sad plight of their people. In 1962, the Philippine Students' Union (PSU) was formed in Cairo, Egypt. The leading personalities were Salamat Hashim of Cotabato, Abdulbaki Abubakar of Sulu, Mahid Mutilan of Lanao, Ibrahim Abdulrahman and Khalifa Nando, also of Cotabato. Other students who shared the same sentiments were Omar Pasigan, Salman Sangki, Saleh Loong, Sharif Mohsin Julabbi, Salipada Tamano, and Alexander Lucman. Other organizations also cropped up later in other Arab capitals, but were not as politicized and representative as the PSU. Either their membership was limited to an ethnic group or was purely religious in orientation.

On several occasions, the PSU staged rallies to denounce the persecution of the Moros back home. Their presence in what was considered the most influential Arab capital under the able leadership of Pres. Gamal Abdul Nasser, as well as their proximity to other Muslim capitals in the Middle East and Africa, was conducive to the forging of contacts with other Muslims also working for their emancipation. Such contracts, especially with the Palestinians, buttressed in no small way their early revolutionary inclination and motivation. These contacts facilitated the solicitation of help from many Muslim states and leaders. [3]

Formation of Liberation Fronts

1. Birth of the Moro National Liberation Front – It was not until early 1973 that the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) was made public and started to claim credit for the series of fighting in Mindanao and Sulu. [4] In Cotabato, the early statements or press

releases of the rebels were issued in the name of the High Command of the Moro fighters. Before that, the name and identity of the Front were even more shrouded in mystery.

The founding of the MNLF[5] was made in 1969 by young secular-minded Moro students and professionals in Manila. The decision was bold indeed, for the stakes were high and laden with dangers. But it was not a carelessly thought-out decision. In fact, under the prevailing circumstances, there was no other recourse except to organize, mobilize and fight to survive. After a while, a seven-man Provisional Central Committee was organized with Nur Misuari as Chairman and Abulkhayr Alonto as Vice Chairman. The other major portfolios were given to Otto Salahuddin of Basilan, Ali Alibon of Davao, Lumet Hassan ("King Size") of Cotabato and Sali Wali of Zamboanga. Salamat Hashim was tasked to head the undivided Empire Province of Cotabato where a provincial committee was set up immediately.

Around the second half of 1972, a meeting was slated to take place in Sabah to install, as the main agendum, a permanent Chairman of the Central Committee. The meeting was facilitated by Chief Minister Datu Tun Mustapha Haron. Unlike the previous meeting in 1969, the Cairo group was now represented. Salamat Hashim, Dr. Saleh Loong, Daud Tayuan and Muntassir Abdulrahman were there for the group. The names of Nur Misuari, Salamat Hashim and Dr. Saleh Loong cropped up as front-runners for the chairmanship. However, in a tripartite meeting involving the above-named persons, Hashim eventually gave in, in favor of Nur Misuari. He could have prolonged the process and allowed the intramural to protract while subtly maneuvering to take the post for himself. He knew that Dr. Saleh Loong, who simply cannot see eye-to eye with Misuari, would side with him. But after intense soul-searching, Hashim opted for Misuari, for the sake of unity and in deference to what Islam teaches -- that a Muslim cannot vote for himself to become leader.

Early in 1973, Nur Misuari moved to Sabah, Malaysia, where he established his headquarters, and from there he directed much

of the early fighting in the war theater in Mindanao and Sulu, while Salamat Hashim remained in Cotabato where there was full-scale fighting. However, in December 1973, upon the instruction of the MNLF Chairman, Hashim proceeded to Tripoli, Libya via Sabah for consultations, and to assume a new assignment in the foreign service. Amelil "Ronnie" Malaguiok succeeded him as Chairman of the Kutawato Revolutionary Committee (KRC). In 1975, Nur Misuari left Sabah and joined Salamat Hashim in Libya where they, together with the other MNLF leaders, officially organized the expanded MNLF Central Committee. Nur Misuari was reelected Chairman and Abulkhayr Alonto was chosen, in absentia, as Vice Chairman. Salamat Hashim became the Chairman for Foreign Affairs. Abebakrin Lucman was named Secretary General, and Abdurasad Asani as the Chairman of the Committee on Information. The rest of the offices went to other trusted lieutenants of Misuari.

In March 1978, Abulkhayr Alonto and his followers surrendered to the government and, soon after, Salamat Hashim, in concurrent capacity, became the Vice Chairman of the Central Committee.

2. Founding of the BMLO – Before the declaration of Martial Law in 1972, the Moro traditional or aristocratic leaders, the likes of Cong. Rashid Lucman, ex-Sen. Salipada Pendatun and ex-Gov. Datu Udtog Matalam, were still very powerful. As a matter of fact, the assembly of the first batch of ninety Moro trainees known as the "Top 90" -- who were sent to Sabah or, more precisely, to Pulau Pangkor, State of Perak, Malaysia, for intensive military training or guerrilla warfare -- was made possible through the facilitation of these leaders.[6] As shown by the number of recruits from each ethno-linguistic grouping, Lucman, who was a Maranao, had the greater say: 64 members were Maranaos, 15 were from the Sulu region, and only 11 were from Cotabato. Sad to state, however, most of the Maranaos surrendered to the government and the remaining few returned to civilian life.

In 1970, Cong. Rashid Lucman organized the Bangsa Moro Liberation Front (BMLO). It was designed to function as an umbrella

organization under and from which all other liberation forces must radiate. [7] In 1984, it was renamed Bangsa Muslimin Islamic Liberation Organization.[8] It frowned upon the use of the term *Moro*, which was given by the enemies of Islam, and in its stead *Muslimin* was chosen.

The first set of officers of the BMLO were the following: Rashid Lucman as head of the Supreme Executive Council; Macapanton Abbas Jr., Secretary; Udtog Matalam Jr., Chief for Cotabato Affairs; Abulkhayr Alonto for Lanao Affairs; and Nur Misuari for the Sulu region. Obviously, Misuari and Alonto were using the BMLO as a cover in the meantime, while exerting effort to strengthen the MNLF, which was still top secret. At this time the first batch of trainees had already reached Sabah and it was believed that the BMLO was to be a control mechanism set up by the Lucman group in anticipation of the return of these trainees and the forthcoming arms shipments.

In 1971, Cong. Rashid Lucman, ex-Sen. Salipada Pendatun and ex-Sen. Domocao Alonto, now overtly carrying the name of another but legal organization, the Islamic Directorate of the Philippines, declared themselves as the "representatives" of the Moro people and went to Libya to seek assistance. Pres. Muammar Qhaddafi did not only meet them but promised "all forms of help" to the Moro people. However, in an ironic twist of circumstances, when the Libyan aid started to roll, only the initial releases were channeled to Lucman and his group. The rest went straight to the MNLF. This marked the start of the BMLO-MNLF fight; later BMLO leaders started to accuse the MNLF leadership of betrayal and counter-revolution.[9] Lucman also charged Misuari and Hashim and other MNLF leaders of deliberately withholding the letter of Libyan Minister Saleh Bouyasser bearing an instruction for him (Lucman) to meet Dr. Ali Treki in Sabah and receive the $3.5 million requested. The accusation was not substantiated, but nevertheless it exacerbated the rift in the relations between the BMLO and the MNLF.

In 1972, after the declaration of Martial Law, Macapanton Abbas Jr. presented the case of the Moros before the Organization of the

Islamic Conference (OIC) in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The OIC Secretary General was erstwhile Malaysian Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman. The following year, Macapanton Abbas Jr. returned to the Philippines and, along with several others, he accepted a position in the Presidential Task Force for the Reconstruction and Development of Mindanao (PTFRDM). The main task was to restore peace and order in Mindanao and Sulu and to implement selective amnesty and rehabilitation. On the other hand, Cong. Rashid Lucman worked his way to be declared, with President Marcos' consent, as "Paramount Sultan of Mindanao and Sulu." On June 4-6, 1974, Sultan Rashid Lucman and other Moro aristocratic leaders conducted a conference, with government approval and logistical support, at Mindanao State University (MSU) in Marawi City, with reportedly 20,000 participants. The main resolution adopted was the demand to implement autonomy for the Moro areas. The document was attached to the report of the Quadripartite Ministerial Committee of the Organization (OIC) of the Islamic Conference, which was to meet in Kuala Lumpur in the same month. The Kuala Lumpur Foreign Ministers' Conference of the OIC, to the displeasure of the Philippine government, adopted a strongly-worded resolution urging the Philippine government to undertake a political and peaceful solution to the Moro problem through negotiation with the Moro leaders, particularly the MNLF. Feeling short-changed, President Marcos described Lucman and other Moro leaders as his "opponents." In 1975, Sultan Rashid Lucman, ex-Sen. Salipada Pendatun and Macapanton Abbas Jr. left for Saudi Arabia to try once again to reunite with the MNLF leaders. The effort failed.

3. **Dawning of the MILF** – As early as 1962, students in the Middle East, particularly in Cairo, Egypt, started to form organizations, initially along broad Islamic sentiments and orientations. Gradually this paved the way for the formation of a nucleus with the sole intention of freeing the Moro homeland from Manila rule.[10] As mentioned earlier, the leading personality in this group was Salamat Hashim. The fact that these students, mostly taking up various Islamic-related courses, antedated their counterparts in Manila by several years, gives credence to the assertion that they were the first to conceive the idea of organizing

a liberation organization, which later emerged as the Moro National Liberation Front. Given the free choice, they may not have called it "MNLF," more so considering their religious background; but certainly they would have put up an organization along Islamic perspectives, which would undertake the historic task of liberating the Moros.

In the early years of the struggle, Nur Misuari and Salamat Hashim were one and worked together as closely as possible. They were comfortable with each other. Hashim even helped Misuari get the top post of the MNLF. But as the struggle hardened and prolonged – often made more serious by human error – the rift between the two leaders started to surface. Hashim started to be left out of many major sessions of the Central Committee. Soon they began to disagree on almost every major point and finally even on political and ideological issues. Secular-educated, Misuari was nationalistic and Hashim, Islamic-oriented, was Islamic. The breaking point came on September 21, 1977, right after the collapse of the GRP-MNLF talks in Manila, when 57 leading officers of the Kutawato Revolutionary Committee (KRC) signed a petition addressed to the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Muslim World League (MWL) calling for the ouster of Nur Misuari as Chairman of the MNLF and, in his stead, recognizing Salamat Hashim as the new Chair. Among the signatories were Al Haj Murad, Ghazali Jaafar, Amelil Malaguiok, Mohagher Iqbal, Abukhalil Yahya, Khalifa Nando, Moslemin Sema, Ibrahim Sema, Kabilan Sema, Boy Hashim, Adan Abdullah, Nur Miranda, Daud Tayuan and Tani Malaguiok, all of Cotabato. Similar petitions emanated from Lanao and among the signatories were Abowidad Mimbantas, Saleh Rascal, Ansarie Mutia and Mohammad James Bond. In December 1977, several follow-up petitions were forwarded to the OIC and MWL from Cotabato, Lanao, Zamboanga del Sur, Davao and other areas. Consequently, on December 26, 1977, Salamat Hashim, acquiescing to the popular clamor of the leaders in the field, executed the "Instrument of Takeover." In his letter to OIC Sec. Gen. Dr. Ahmadou Karim Gaye, [11] Hashim enumerated the following major points for the takeover:

1) The MNLF leadership was being manipulated away from Islamic bases, methodologies and objectives, and was fast evolving towards a Marxist-Maoist orientation;

2) Instead of evolving towards harmonized and collective leadership, the Central Committee has evolved into a mysterious, exclusive, secretive and monolithic body, whose policies, plans, decisions and dispositions – political, financial and/or strategic – became an exclusive preserve of Nur Misuari, vitiating all commitments previously arrived at to submit for consultations all plans and strategies not only to the MNLF members themselves but also to organizations, local and external, sympathetic with the movement; and

3) This mysterious, exclusive, and arrogant nature of the MNLF leadership resulted in confusion, suspicion and disappointments among members and *mujahideen* in the field, resulting in the loss to the cause of a great number of freedom fighters.

As expected, Nur Misuari did not only refuse to recognize the takeover but also accused Salamat Hashim of "treachery," "incompetence and insubordination." He was also stripped of all his MNLF posts and declared *persona non grata.*

The OIC and the MWL tried to tackle the MNLF leadership crisis seriously. Sec. Gen. Ahmadou Karim Gaye, both in his official and personal capacities, exerted efforts to patch up the split, but without success. The attempt of the MWL was similar. Sometime in 1980, MWL Sec. Gen. Dr. Mohammad Ali Harakan invited Nur Misuari and Salamat Hashim and their assistants to a dialogue. He personally presided over the conference. The aims of the meeting were three-fold: 1) to forget and forgive all their differences; 2) to set up a common platform and program; and 3) to form a collective leadership[12] through the formation of a higher political committee with Nur Misuari as Chairman and Salamat Hashim as Vice Chairman. Hashim acceded to this arrangement of the MWL, while Misuari refused to accept some aspects of the deal.

Several years after, reactions to the takeover remained varied. Some felt that it was fully justified, timely and was the only way to save the struggle from collapse. Others said this amounted to serving the devils and to collaboration with the enemy. Still others branded this as the handiwork of the enemy or its agents.[13] In the absence of a common basis for judgment, nay, a common frame of mind, there would always be wranglings. But, in the end, the final arbiter will always be history – and this moment is forthcoming.

In March 1984, after due and exhaustive consultation and in depth analyses, the Central Committee of the New MNLF Leadership, in a plenary session, officially declared itself a separate organization called the "Moro Islamic Liberation Front." While there were other important reasons, the most compelling was the need to emphasize the Islamic orientation of the group as contrasted to the secular-nationalist line pursued by the MNLF. Islam thus became the official ideology of the MILF, which would guide all its affairs and activities.

4. Entry and Exit of the MNLF- Reformist – After the exit of Salamat Hashim from the MNLF in 1977, Dimasangkay Pundato was groomed to succeed him and, later, was officially installed as Deputy to Chairman Nur Misuari. However, in March 1982, after barely six months in the fold of the MNLF, Dimas Pundato, Jibril Ridha, Napis Bidin and 42 others signed and submitted a nine-point reform proposal to MNLF Chair Nur Misuari, to strengthen or to reform the organization. The proposals included the creation of: 1) a real, functional and representative Central Committee; 2) the creation of an Executive Committee; 3) the sincere forging of unity with other organizations such as the BMLO, and the MNLF Salamat faction; and 4) the localization of the leaders and commands in the provinces.[14]

Misuari rejected the proposals outright, and all the petitioners were summarily dismissed from the MNLF. Immediately, in June 1982, Dimas Pundato and associates formed the "MNLF-Reformist" faction.

Earlier in 1981, during a pilgrimage to Mecca, the Pundato group, after an extended preliminary, sought a unity meeting with the New MNLF Leadership of Salamat Hashim. When appraised by Dimas Pundato of the MNLF leadership "excesses," Hashim retorted: "What you cannot bear for only six months, I swallowed for six long years."[15] The meeting succeeded in effecting cordial working relations between the two groups. But for some unknown reasons, the fruitful prospect of this meeting was shortlived. In 1985 Dimas Pundato and practically all his associates in the MNLF-Reformist faction surrendered and accepted positions in the government. This was the death of the MNLF-Reformist as a revolutionary organization.

The Countdown Begins

The deaths and destruction brought forth by the turbulent years 1968-1971 and the climate of fear created by the declaration of Martial Law had both their negative and positive effects upon the Moros and the students in particular. On one hand, they clamped down on the cold-footed and the unprincipled, but, on the other, they motivated the God-fearing and those dedicated to initiate a struggle.

That struggle was inevitable. As long as a man was aware of his obligation to the Almighty, to his people and to himself, he would never be at peace even with himself with the status to which the Moros had been reduced. Men of this persuasion first made a declaration to fight for their people, homeland and Islam. Then, they went abroad to train in military warfare. Third, after returning home, they effected an alliance with the broad spectrum of society and formed the MNLF. And fourth, they set the timetable to fight back and start the war for liberation.

CHAPTER 9

MINDANAO AND SULU IN FLAMES

Suddenly in October

At first, nothing special seemed to have happened immediately after the declaration of Martial Law. Everything seemed to remain normal, with the status quo as bad as before. However, to the dismay of many, suddenly on October 21, 1972, exactly one month after the declaration, things took a turn for worse. On this day, Marawi City, in Lanao del Sur, was attacked by several hundred MNLF rebels, who succeeded in pinning down troopers at the Philippine Constabulary (PC) headquarters at Camp Amai Pakpak and in capturing the detachment at Pantar Bridge, which linked the two Lanao provinces. They took complete control of the Mindanao State University (MSU) compound where the Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines, Toshio Urbano, was almost captured. The rebels also grabbed the PBS Radio Station inside the MSU compound and started playing martial music and broadcast appeals calling the people to arms and to support the MNLF cause.

One of the leaders of the attackers was Abulkhayr Alonto, scion of a popular clan but whose family's collaboration with the American and Filipino leaders during pre-independence days was never a secret. He was then vice chairman of the Central Committee of the Moro National Liberation Front. But instead of calling themselves or their group the "MNLF," they used the name "Mindanao Revolutionary Council for Independence." One probable reason for this subterfuge was that the MNLF, as matter of policy, was yet a secret from the public and the government. The other compelling explanation was that the attack did not have the official go-signal of the Central Committee.[1] As a matter of fact, this unilateral decision, and grabbing of authority, by Alonto, was one of the main reasons for his disgrace in office and finally for his demotion in rank.

After two days of fighting, on October 24, the number of deaths

– soldiers, rebels and civilians – was put at 75. By this time, however, the beleaguered government troops received reinforcement from Iligan City. Consequently, the rebels withdrew away from the city.

MNLF Spearheads Struggle

The attack of Marawi City, as noted earlier, was not the handiwork of the MNLF.[2] As a matter of fact, the brains behind the attack turned out to be a man with a personal grudge. This man was then the Chief of Police of Marawi City, who was known to be perennially at odds with his superiors over his promotion. [2] It was only on November 14, 1972 that the guns of the MNLF started to speak. The first to be assaulted was the island of Jolo, the capital of Sulu. Simultaneously, the firefights rapidly spread to various islands.

For the seizure of Jolo, the MNLF guerrillas first attacked the countryside. They captured many firearms and guns, including a cannon, a mortar, and machine guns, and ammunition. Another group of fighters attacked an adjacent town, Parang, southwest of Jolo, and in no time had it under control.

Hardly two weeks had passed when fighting erupted in the Empire Province of Cotabato, on February 27, 1973. This fighting was considered the most serious threat to the security of the state.[3] More than any other previous engagements, this offensive attracted worldwide attention because the Cotabato rebels displayed exceptional striking power and logistical capability. Government positions were overran everyday and 12 towns firmly came under rebel control.

Initially, the fighting centered on the coastal town of Lebak, now in Sultan Kudarat Province. Within a span of less than one month, it engulfed practically all of what are now the provinces of Maguindanao, North Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, South Cotabato and Sarangani. By and large, the engagements in Cotabato were positional and sometimes it took weeks or months before an area was won or lost. The one at Tran, Lebak, was fierce and bloody. The

ferocity of the fight was what perhaps compelled Brig. Gen. Fortunato Abat, Commanding General of the hastily-formed Central Mindanao Command (CEMCOM), to declare the place as "Hell's Little Acre."

The government practically committed its entire firepower, including jet planes, tanks, helicopter gunships, navy boats, howitzers and even the prohibited incendiary bombs, in the battle over Tran. Inspite of this massive display of military power, it suffered one of its serious beatings in the war. The government lost, at least, one plane and two helicopters, three tanks and one mortar, not to mention the small arms. After the official termination of this offensive on August 6, 1973, the government listed the following losses on both sides: 46 army soldiers, and six Civilian Home Defense Forces (CHDFs) slain; 167 soldiers, 13 CHDFs wounded; and, on the MNLF side, 137 killed.[4] Considering that the government could admit only this number, hewing to standard military practice of minimizing losses in war, its casualties could have been much higher. Among the wounded was Lt. Gregorio Honasan, who later figured prominently in the series of coup attempts since 1986 to topple Pres. Corazon C. Aquino from office and is now a Senator.

As early as April 25, the town of Tarragona, Davao Oriental, was attacked and captured. MNLF rebels took over the town until May 7, when they decided to abandon it in the face of a massive counterattack by government troops. On September 25, MNLF forces struck in another direction towards Mati, an adjacent town, and succeeded in wiping out a joint PC-Police patrol. By government account, six PC troopers and three policemen were lost in this firefight.

Meanwhile, the provinces of Zamboanga, Tawi-Tawi, and parts of Bukidnon and Misamis were also burning. Not a few of the early victories of the MNLF were fought in these areas. As a matter of fact, the one in Zamboanga in March 1973 was dubbed -- though clearly a case of intelligence-gathering failure on the part of the government -- as the biggest battle. It was asserted that "200 Maoist-led rebels" were slain in the firefight. There might have been some

cadres in the MNLF who were taking cues from the teachings of Mao Tse Tung, given their exposure to left-leaning individuals or groups during their college days in metropolitan Manila, but to brand them as Maoist was ludicrous.

On the early morning of February 7, 1974, a massive assault was let loose on Jolo. First, government positions were bombed with 81mm and 60 mm mortars and with rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) launchers, and then, after sensing that the enemy defense had collapsed, the MNLF forces massed forward into the town. After some heavy fighting, one strategic area after another fell into the hands of the attackers. Camp Asturias, the airport, the harbor, the Notre Dame College campus, arid the entire downtown area were in the hands of the MNLF forces. Jolo thus became a rebel country. The MNLF casualties numbered only fourteen killed.

On June 20, the Awang Airport came under mortar attack. Simultaneously, several villages of Midsayap, some 46 kilometers northeast of Cotabato City, came under siege. The MNLF used mortars to pound the defenders. Hand-to-hand fighting ensued. The government reported losing two army officers, 14 enlisted men, and one CHDF. Twenty-four others were wounded. Cotabato City was also threatened. The CEMCOM headquarters was subjected to occasional mortar attacks. One of the casualties was Col. Emilio Luga Jr., the Deputy Commander of the 23rd Brigade. However, he was lucky to survive his wounds. Many outlying areas of the city like Biniruan, Kakar, Pagalamatan, Bubong, and even the Notre Dame University campus were scenes of bloody combat actions. The fiercest was fought in Biniruan on July 14, where at one time the CEMCOM troopers suffered over 100 casualties, mostly from the 15th Infantry Battalion, including one army major, and the capture of 86 high caliber firearms. [5]

The MNLF forces were also active in some areas in Lanao del Norte particularly in the Tangkal-Munai area. As early as January 1975, MNLF forces launched operations against joint army-Findlay security forces. They first burned bridges to the town, burned heavy equipment of the Findlay Miller Logging Company, and then laid

ambuscades along the roads.

The Cost of War

Up to the early part of 1975, the MNLF was wresting many areas from the government. Several towns and islets in Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Basilan, and the Zamboanga Peninsula were under MNLF control. The same was also true in the Empire Province of Cotabato. Committees, as a parallel apparatus of governance, sprung up in the villages, towns and provinces. A central committee, the highest governing and policy-making organ of the Front, was organized. Everyone, especially Muslims, came forward to offer his or her life, service and property. On the other hand, the government political machinery virtually ceased to function in these areas. Similarly, its military arm, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) had a difficult time raising troops for assignment in Mindanao. The Philippine Constabulary (PC) was replaced by army troopers, many of whom had a taste of battle in Vietnam.

So massive and bloody was the war that practically the whole of Mindanao and Sulu was a virtual inferno. This was confirmed by the late Deputy Minister for Defense, Carmelo Barbero (in an interview with a Mindanao weekly), who revealed that the government was spending about P15 million and playing with 5,000 lives a day in military operations. [6] This disclosure could have appeared a little exaggerated, had it come from someone other than the Deputy Minister for Defense.

This revelation was not only corroborated later on, but an even more ruthless picture of the conflict was presented, when Cong. Eduardo Ermita, a member of the GRP Panel that negotiated peace with the MNLF in 1993-1996, disclosed:

> *Over a period of 26 years since 1970, more than 100,000 persons were killed in the conflict in Southern Philippines...*
>
> *The AFP has spent about P73 billion in connection with the Mindanao conflict since 1970.*

... Sixty-one percent of our Army and Marine battalions... more than 40 percent of our artillery capability and 50 percent of our armor assets... 63 percent of our tactical aircraft [were committed to the Mindanao conflict].... [7]

Casualties of Time

In the meantime, a ceasefire was declared in the 13 provinces and ten cities covered by the proposed area of autonomy stated in the Tripoli Agreement signed in Tripoli, Libya on December 26, 1976. The lull in the fighting gave the government a tactical advantage in deploying troops in strategic areas and allowed it to gain vital intelligence on MNLF forces and mass bases.

By this time, the wounds inflicted by the Constabulary-Ilaga depredations in the 60s and 70s were already healing considerably. Those who had joined the fighting chiefly to take revenge had lost interest after their thirst for vengeance had been quenched. The same was true of those who merely wanted a taste of the thrills of adventure, or those who went into battle for personal glory and gain. It was also no less true for those who only loved banditry. The coming of the war gave them many a chance to fight side by side with a multitude of men and women against the same enemy whom they had been occasionally confronting. Whatever their other reasons, all these people joined the MNLF to fight the government. They saw the MNLF as the only ray of hope for protection in the face of the "genocidal campaign" being waged by the regime of Marcos.

Inevitably, the time of reckoning for the "dogs of war" -- to lay bare what was truly in their hearts -- would have to come. These "dogs" were the hypocrites, the opportunists, the waverers, the pseudo-revolutionaries, the unbelievers and the dregs of society, who finally realized that a revolution was not the place and time for pleasure or for any self-serving end. That time came after 1977, when everyone became to choose based on one's true self. Singly or in droves, they crossed over to the side of the enemy, where there was licentiousness in everything, from sex to material satisfaction.

At the outset, they were most welcome to the regime and th military. They were received with all grandeur and glory an extended all necessary amenities. Their past misdeeds were easil forgiven. A Manila-based columnist of the ***Manila Bulleti*** sarcastically commented:

> *Messrs. [Jamil] Lucman and [Amelil] Malaguiok[8] are among the most privileged citizens in the country nowadays. They got government awards – practically for a song – to import sardines, cut logs and export bangus fry or fingerlings, among others.*
>
> *Recently, Lucman was granted authority to export 10 million bangus fry and fingerlings. We don't know anybody who was given such a privilege before.*
>
> *Perhaps, Lucman and Malaguiok want to show the government their gratitude for the bounty. Or perhaps it was their way of telling the government to grant them more concessions. You know, soft-scaping.* [9]

But later on, all these privileges and wealth that they, except fo a rare few, enjoyed with impunity, vanished forever. Their true colo and odor in the community began to surface.

However, not all who left the cause chose this route to se serving ends. Some just left the revolution without formal surrendering. They simply changed trades, careful not to offe the MNLF cause.

This was the catastrophe that rocked the MNLF. But it was n an isolated phenomenon among revolutionaries all over the wo Often, they would be hit by the same internal tornado that only hardcore members could withstand. It is a phenomenon that is p of the cleansing process that every revolutionary struggle ha undergo. Many inadequate persons would join the revolution ranks, only to become casualties of time, either from their o making or as a result of the hard conflict.

Almighty Allah clearly warned the believers of this rectification process when He said in the Holy Qur'an:

God will not leave the believers in the state in which ye are now, until He separates what is evil from what is good. [10]

In the field of combat, the positional warfare characterizing the initial MNLF strategy contributed a great deal to the early exit of the vacillators and pseudo-revolutionaries. The weakness of the strategy in a clearly guerrilla stage of the struggle began to be felt in the years following the MNLF general offensive in 1972-1975. While this form of warfare once again displayed the gallantry and determination of the MNLF fighters and the Moro people in general even against formidable foes, it also brought home to the MNLF military strategists and tacticians the need to reassess the strategy in the light of prevailing conditions. Finally, they were convinced that commanders could not and should not adopt a war plan calling for greater strength and resources than what actually were available in a given condition, in which the final outcome would be determined by various decisive factors which are not within the control of said commanders.

The years of conventional warfare, of pitting the entire armed forces of the government in conjunction with the active combat support of paramilitary forces, mostly former Ilaga members, against the MNLF, was distinctly a one-sided affair disadvantageous to the latter. It was only the strength of the faith and motivation of the Moros that gave them steadfastness and determination to succeed, in spite of the imbalance in physical and material resources. Under the circumstances, however, prolonged and bitter confrontations, sometimes weeks or months of see-saw fighting, tended to erode the stamina, efficiency and morale of the fighters. Many of the MNLF forces as a result, became sluggish in initiative and direction. Some even began to evince hopelessness that finally led to their abandoning the cause, either by lying low, outright betrayal, or surrender.

The War Stalemates

After having faced the worst scare of its life in the MNLF 1972-1975 offensive, (perhaps, second only to the horror of the Japanese invasion in 1941), the government began to launch a massive counter offensive to arrest the secessionist threat. Two unified commands, the Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) and the Central Mindanao Command (CEMCOM), were hastily formed. The SOUTHCOM area of responsibility (AOR) covered South-Western Mindanao, ncluding principally Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, and Basilan. The CEMCOM had jurisdiction over the provinces of North Cotabato, South Cotabato, Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Bukidnon, and parts of the Davao area. Both the CEMCOM and SOUTHCOM, as above-stated, were unified commands -- meaning, they had operational control and supervision over all major service elements, except for some outfits of the Philippine Constabulary (PC). Control and supervision emanated from the General Headquarters, AFP, in Camp Aguinaldo, which in turn provided all necessary support, such as combat troops, services, equipment and other resources.

The government was so ill-prepared at the start of the offensive, especially in matters of logistical capabilities, that it practically dropped to its knees, begging from friendly non-Muslim neighbors, to sell it what the United States under the terms of the Mutual Assistance Program (MAP) was obliged to provide the AFP in terms of ammunition and weapons. [11] As a matter of fact, it even sought the aid of home-based gun factories in Mandaue City to help produce direly-needed parts of Garand (M-1) rifles. [12]

After the f rst quarter of 1975, the MNLF offensive was greatly blunted by the massive counter-offensive of the government. The government was able to bring in enough troops, equipment and other war materials to sustain the fight and, later, to consolidate positions, especially in the most strategic or critical areas. Both sides, as a consequence, changed battle tactics. Although the MNLF's main f ghting force and will to resist were largely intact, its logistical capabilities were not limitless; it could not wage indefinitely massive conventional warfare. The MNLF, therefore, had to resort to guerrilla warfare in order to maintain a share of combat initiative. On the other hand, the government, after concluding that the MNLF

threat had been checked, abandoned wide-scale campaigns in favor of small-unit operations. Thus, in a sense, a strategic stalemate between the forces of the MNLF and the government was in place.

This stand-off was further reinforced when a formal ceasefire was signed between the MNLF and the government in the closing days of 1976. The ground rules of the ceasefire, though clearly favoring the AFP, particularly on the subject of police powers, helped to hold the peace. For the first time since 1972 the forces of both sides met each other without their fingers on the trigger.

Hostilities Resume

The days of peace, as the cynical or the doubting Thomases would have it, were doomed from the outset. The government, using every pretext to circumvent the terms of the ceasefire, had violated the truce to the last letter as early as the first quarter of 1977. Under the guise of "police action," the regime unleashed military operations against the so-called lawless elements, although in most cases the real targets were MNLF forces. MNLF areas or those occupied by their supporters or sympathizers were not spared. When confronted about the flagrant violations, the regime's reply or alibi was that it was just exercising its police prerogatives, as sanctioned by the ceasefire agreement. It turned out that the victims of these operations were not criminals but, at times, organic members of the MNLF.

But this shallow pretext did not last long. As early as May 1977, barely five months since the forging of the truce, a full-fledged "search-and-destroy" operation was conducted in Basilan. Rear Admiral Romulo Espaldon, Chief of the Southcom, ordered this all-out military offensive against the MNLF and its mass bases. The operation lasted for 45 days. Three battalions of infantry troops and 2,000 paramilitary personnel were thrown into action. But before pushing inland, the target areas were subjected to intensive bombardments, and the flow of foodstuff and other basic human supplies was restricted. This was intended to starve the rebels and their mass supporters.

As soon as the bombardment was over and the government troops began to close in on the target, fighting commenced. After ten days of combat, the final account revealed that the MNLF suffered five martyred and 24 wounded. On the side of the attackers, one tank was destroyed and more than 90 were slain or wounded.[13]

A more dramatic disregard of the ceasefire agreement took place in Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, North Cotabato, and South Cotabato. In these provinces, there were mutually recognized bivouac areas where representatives of the Manila government, the MNLF and the Quadripartite Ministerial Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) met and discussed ways to carry out the ceasefire effectively. As early as January 1977, these areas were used by the MNLF in good faith as camps, to facilitate effective cooperation in the peace process then going on.

In spite of this mutual recognition, the bivouac areas were treacherously attacked by government forces under the very eyes of the representatives of the Quadripartite Ministerial Committee. The base in Darapanan, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao had been under siege for the whole of September 1977. On the last day, the whole range of the base came under a veritable hail of artillery shelling and machinegun fire. Enemy forces occupied every strategic hill overlooking the base. They also closed all routes and stopped the flow of food supplies to the camp. Consequently, the MNLF failed to bring in war materials for much of the days of fighting despite continuous skirmishes in the immediate fringes of the camp. Under such condition, the only alternative was to force a breakthrough. Involved were about a thousand officers, men, and a few civilians. Among the key officers of the Kutawato Revolutionary Committee (KRC), who were inside the camp at that time, were Amelil Malaguiok, KRC Chairman; Al Haj Murad, Military Chairman; Ghazali Jaafar, Head of the Political Bureau; and Mohagher Iqbal, Chief of the Information Committee.

Until almost midnight, there was no final decision as to which which route to take. All the reconnoitering parties, except one, reported back with negative findings on a better way out. The last

to arrive said that the only choice was a route traversing rocky cliffs, steep slopes and wooded areas. This route could allow the rebels to escape detection by the enemy blocking forces. Hurriedly the group called for a caucus and soon a decision was clinched -- to breakthrough at all cost, following that designated route.

All the MNLF forces were arrayed in battle formation for effective firepower and maneuverability. Anti-tank weapons, 60 mm mortars, and grenade launchers were located in the forward positions to ensure the piercing effectiveness of the formation.

However, the expected clash did not take place. There was no encounter. The 40-man ambush party was obviously scared and ran away when it saw such a mammoth group heading towards its blockade. Despite this good fortune, the MNLF suffered untold difficulties. What would have been a two-hour walk took them almost the whole night to negotiate. Much of the slowdown was caused by the number of fighters who had to be carried out on stretchers.

Almost at the same time, the bivouac areas in Bagoinged, Dinaig, Maguindanao, in Rajamuda, Pikit, North Cotabato, and in Wato, Sultan-sa-Barongis, Maguindanao, were similarly attacked, all in flagrant violation of the canons of civilized nations, considering that the Philippine government had agreed to abide by the terms of the Tripoli Agreement and the ceasefire.

In the meantime, new flashpoints flared in Western Mindanao, particularly in Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Basilan and Zamboanga, when the regime started new fighting. In Sulu, it culminated with the death of Brig. Gen. Teodulfo Bautista and 34 of his men in the town of Patikul on October 10, 1977. An MNLF contingent of 200 fighters led by Commander Usman Sali, an ex-Vice Mayor of the town, was responsible for the bloodbath. Only one sergeant lived to tell the story.

What precipitated the massacre of Bautista and his men were the various atrocities and killings perpetrated by the army in

violation of the truce. Many of the victims were close relatives of Usman Sali and his men. Being the commanding officer of the Tabak Division that had operational jurisdiction over the Sulu area, General Bautista was held responsible. At the time of his death, he was engaged in a surrender campaign, urging the MNLF forces to come out and join the government. This actuation of the General greatly offended Commander Sali, who also had to avenge the death of a son and the rape of his daughter by army soldiers.

It was a shocking incident to the regime and brought much disgrace over its shabbiness in security matters. In retaliation, Marcos ordered the mass slaughter of no fewer than 600 men, women and children of the municipality.

By middle November, five army battalions and an unspecified number of paramilitary forces attacked the MNLF base in Sapu-a-Masla, Malapatan, South Cotabato. The attackers used mortars and howitzers and the aid of naval bombardment to pound the entrenched MNLF forces. Jet planes and gunships were also thrown into action. But when the attackers tried to advance they came up against strong resistance from the defenders. Five MNLF fighters were martyred, while the government lost 12 men in this confrontation.

On November 27-30, three army battalions led by Col. Jose Magno Jr. and an undetermined number of policemen and paramilitary forces assaulted an island bastion of the MNLF in Lake Lanao. Earlier, the island was shelled for many hours. Jet planes also flew sorties on a strafing and bombing mission, killing or wounding scores of fighters and civilians. The island was named the "Martyrs' Island" in honor of the fighters and civilians who perished during the bombardment. On the final day, government forces approached the island, using water launches or pumpboats. They disembarked immediately, apparently believing that all the defenders had perished or at least that the island's defense system had already collapsed due to the intensive bombardment made earlier. But the attackers were cut down by bursts of automatic rifles and grenade launchers. They scurried for safety and tried to fight

back, if possible, but were too late. The MNLF defenders were safely under cover in foxholes and trenches, and had a commanding view of the enemy landing point. The result was conclusive: 100 army soldiers slain, 40 paramilitary personnel and policemen killed or wounded, and 38 captured.[14]

The resumption of hostilities spread to various parts of Mindanao and Sulu, and were at times even deadlier than that those preceding the ceasefire. The boiling point came when even those who have already surrendered to the government were not spared from abuses and barbarities. A glaring example was the incident in Pata Island, Sulu on February 12, 1981, where a bloody shoot-out between a renegade armed group and army soldiers took place. Army men were sent by higher military command to collect the firearms owned by or issued to the surrenderees. The moment they landed on the island, they started to commit savagery against the residents, who included relatives of the surrenderees. They manhandled many civilians, raped women, raked dwellings with gunfire and butchered dogs inside mosques.[15] Subsequently, they were "lured" to a festival in the town proper, where they were finished off by the enraged former rebels and the aggrieved families.

The result, again, was a bloodbath. Of the 124 soldiers, only three survived. Among the slain were Lt. Col. Jacinto Sardual and three other officers. What made the task easier, according to a well-placed source, was that some MNLF forces participated in delivering the final touches.

Immediately, the regime sent naval gunboats, surrounded the island and started shelling it. Then several battalions of Marines disembarked. They moved inland and started to kill the inhabitants. Village after village were reduced to ruins. No one was allowed to evacuate. Troops destroyed all boats on the island and the flow of food was halted. In the final count, the civilian casualties numbered 2,000. They were killed either by the shelling or in the massacre that followed. The government, however, admitted only 750 deaths.

CHAPTER 10

WAR BY OTHER MEANS

On Negotiation

If war uses the force of arms to achieve both military and political objectives, negotiation pursues the same goals through the skillful use of language and diplomacy. If war, as once aptly put, is an extension of politics, and negotiation is an aspect of war, then negotiation is war in another form.

What are its objectives when a regime agrees to resolve the conflict through the round table? Is negotiation the only form of struggle to achieve a just and lasting peace? Or is it merely used as a weapon to gain time, accumulate resources and consolidate power for the next round of battles?

Negotiation does not always happen between the two warring parties. Its occurrence is contingent on the concrete realities recognized by both sides and their willingness to undertake it. The government can refuse a peace deal if it can beat the other side on the battlefield. However, it can be over-eager to negotiate, if the other party indicates a weakness that can be exploited over the negotiation table, or can be tricked into capitulation. The government can also use negotiation as a weapon to mis-represent itself as the just and reasonable side, to sow intrigue in the ranks of the rebels and to fool the people.

War is always costly, while negotiation is cheap. A day in war is usually costlier than a month of talking. In negotiation, there are no lives lost, properties destroyed or people rendered homeless. And as the negotiation drags on, the status quo of disengagement or non-engagement is given more and more a sense of reality and the hope of becoming permanent.

In many instances, it is true that talking is better than not talking at all. But talking as if the whole peace process revolves around it

only validates the charge that negotiation is mere exercise in futility. It is not meant to reach anything lofty. It is an end in itself.

However, a sincere quest for peace – a just and lasting one – through negotiation, is a different story. It is a slow process and has no or few shortcuts. Its soul is the identification of the root causes of conflict and its primary objective is to carry out an urgent agenda of change by the agreeing parties, that would resolve the problems underlying the conflict.

However, there is little reason to doubt that when the government agreed to sit down with the MNLF to talk, it was resorting to the time-tested tactic: when hard-pressed, negotiate. The grand design of the MNLF to carve an empire known as the *Bangsa Moro Republik* was high on its agenda. Fighting was raging everywhere and a sizeable portion of Mindanao and Sulu was in rebel hands. The government also knew that peace achieved by violence will not last and represented only a part of the solution to the rebellion.

The Foreign Connection

International support for the Moro cause started as early as the late 1960s when reports of massacres of Moros hit world headlines. The first to react openly was Col. Muammar Qhaddafi, President of Libya, who said that his government will come to the rescue of the Moros in Mindanao and Sulu if the mass killing of his brethren did not stop. He was not alone in expressing such serious concern. Many other Muslim leaders in Asia and Africa shared the same sentiments. The world-wide reactions pushed the Philippines and the Marcos regime into a precarious position, because many of these states did not need the Philippines as much as she needed them. Many of these states were producers of oil, which the Philippines needed very much. Consequently, Marcos began to look for scapegoats. He accused foreign agents of blowing up the conflict out of proportion.

The first foreign leader, at the state level, to extend concrete

help to the Moros was Tun Datu Mustapha Haron, Chief Minister of Sabah. There were many reasons why he came to the rescue of the Moros. One of these was his biological, emotional and historical connection with the Moros of Mindanao and Sulu. His mother was a Tausog and, therefore, he was as much a Moro as the rest of his brethren. He allowed Sabah to be used as training camp, supply depot, communication center, and sanctuary. [1]

Tun Datu Mustapha Haron's stance and later also that of Kuala Lumpur — Sabah is part of the Federation of Malaysia --- was a major irritant between the two neighbors. The Philippines had a long-standing claim over Sabah that at one time almost led to open warfare. Sabah came to be regarded by the Philippines as part of her territory on the strength of the ownership claim of the ancient Sulu sultanate.

Kuala Lumpur never admitted aiding the Moros. The official position of Malaysia regarding the Mindanao crisis was confined only to actively supporting resolutions passed by the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

In 1971, Libyan Pres. Muammar Qhaddafi openly declared his support for the Moros, who were apparently the object of a genocide campaign. In the same year, Libyan Foreign Minister Saleh Bouyasser came to the Philippines with a US$1 million pledge of his government to bankroll the on-going guerrilla training of 300 Moro recruits in Malaysia. A year later, when Martial Law was declared, Libyan money, weapons and other materials started to flow into the frontlines in Mindanao and Sulu.

In May 1971, the Organization of the Islamic Conference was founded. One of its aims, as set clearly in its Charter, is to strengthen the struggle of all Muslim peoples to safeguard their dignity, independence and national rights. It so happened that Tunku Abdul Rahman, the founding father and first Prime Minister of Malaya (later, Malaysia), became the first Secretary General of this powerful Pan-Islamic body. As head of the OIC, he was instrumental in the support extended to the Moros by the OIC member-states,

especially Libya and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

From February 29 to March 4, 1972, the Third Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, passed a resolution calling for the review of the plight of the Muslims living in the Philippines, especially in Mindanao and Sulu.

On March 24-26, 1973, the Fourth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers meeting in Benghazi, Libya, expressed deep concern over the reported repression and mass extermination of Muslims in South Philippines and decided to send a delegation of Foreign Ministers from Libya, Senegal, Somalia and Saudi Arabia. The Conference also created a voluntary fund from member-states to help the Muslims in South Philippines. It further passed a resolution requesting Indonesia and Malaysia to exert their good offices, within the framework of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), to help find a solution to the problem.

In August of the same year, the four-nation delegation visited Mindanao and Sulu. Members of the delegation were Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Omar Al-Shakaff, Libyan Foreign Minister Abdulati Al-Obeidi, Somalian Foreign Minister Arteh Ghalib, and Senegal Ambassador to Egypt Moustapha Cisse. The fact-finding mission took note of the steps taken by the Philippines to improve the condition of the Muslims. These steps however were considered insufficient to solve the whole problem, as reflected in the resolution of the succeeding meeting of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers in Kuala Lumpur the following year.

On March 9-13, 1974, Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Omar Al-Shakaff again visited the Philippines in a bid to follow up earlier efforts to monitor the condition of the Moros. President Marcos told him that the government was doing everything to attend to the needs of the Moro communities, which included the setting aside of wide tracts of land for resettlement.

On May 29, 1974, President Marcos and President Suharto met

at Menado, North Sulawesi, Indonesia to discuss, among other vital ASEAN concerns, the Moro rebellion. But unlike Malaysia and Libya, Indonesia was more concerned with regional unity, as expressed in the ASEAN, of which both Malaysia and the Philippines were members.

On June 21-25, 1974, the Fifth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The conference called upon the Philippine government to desist from all measures which may result in the killing of Muslims and the destruction of their properties and places of worship in Southern Philippines. It urged the government to find a political and peaceful solution through negotiation with Muslim leaders, particularly with the representatives of the Moro National Liberation Front, in order to arrive at a just solution to the plight of the Filipino Muslims, within the framework of the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Philippines. It also created a welfare agency, known as Filipino Muslim Welfare and Relief Agency, for the purpose of extending welfare and relief aid directly to Muslims in the Southern Philippines.

The Initial Talks

On the basis of Resolution No. 18 approved in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, follow-up efforts to bring the two warring parties to the negotiating table rose high on the OIC agenda. At the invitation of the Philippine government, Dr. Mohammad Hassan Al-Tohamy, the new OIC Secretary General, visited the Philippines to discuss matters in connection with the resolution. He succeeded in bringing the MNLF and the Philippine government to the negotiating table in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on January 18-19, 1975. The MNLF formally abandoned the pursuit of independence, in favor of a strong autonomous region with internal security forces.

The GRP and MNLF panels met in the presence of the OIC Secretary General. The talks, however, did not materialize because both sides presented demands that could not be met by either side.

The MNLF panel was composed of Nur Misuari, MNLF Chair; Salamat Hashim, MNLF Deputy Chair; Abdulbaki Abubakar, Hamid Lukman, and Abdulrasad Asani. Executive Secretary Alejandro Melchor headed the government panel. The members were Admiral Romulo Espaldon, Ambassador Liningding Pangandamen, Col. Jose Almonte, and four others.

The aborted talks, after further consultations, were re-scheduled to take place on April 7. It did not take place, because President Marcos instead called for a dialogue in Zamboanga City from April 17 to June 30. Those invited to this dialogue were Marcos-handpicked Muslim leaders, government officials and the "rebels" -- those who rejected the nine-point agenda proposed by the OIC Quadripartite Ministerial Committee for the resumption of the stalled negotiation.

The Sixth Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference convened in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on July 12-15, 1975. The conference approved the nine-point proposal for the resumption of talks and urged both the MNLF and the Philippine government to resume the negotiation, as early as possible.

On May 6, 1976, Dr. Karim Gaye of Senegal, the new OIC Secretary General, met President Marcos in Nairobi, Kenya. The OIC Chief told the President of the need for the resumption of the talks between the MNLF and the Philippine government.

A week later, on May 13-16, the Seventh Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference held session in Istanbul, Turkey. As usual, the conference reiterated its call for the immediate resumption of the talks between the MNLF and the Philippine government.

On October 1, the Islamic Solidarity Fund donated US$1 million to the Agency for Development and Welfare of the Muslim in the Philippines. However, this fund was coursed though the Philippine government which had the discretion over the manner of disbursement and programming.

Signing of the Covenant

In the meantime, Mrs. Imelda Marcos, the First Lady and wife of President Marcos, was designated Special Envoy of her husband. This brought her to Egypt, Algeria, New York, Saudi Arabia, and then to Libya. At the United Nations, she had an occasion to discuss the Mindanao crisis with Algerian Foreign Minister Abdul Aziz Bouteflika, then President of the U.N. General Assembly, and through him with the Arab delegates to the world body. From there, she proceeded to Tripoli, Libya where she had a lengthy dialogue with Pres. Muammar Qhaddafi on the Mindanao crisis.

On December 15-23, 1976, the second round of negotiation between the MNLF and the Philippine government took place in Tripoli, Libya. The talks were conducted in the presence of the Quadripartite Ministerial Committee. Dr. Ali Treki, the Libyan Foreign Minister, presided over the series of meetings between the two panels, which culminated in the signing of the covenant now known as the Tripoli Agreement of December 23, 1976. The agreement provided for the establishment of an autonomy for thirteen specified provinces and nine cities in Mindanao and Sulu.

The government panel was chaired by Undersecretary Carmelo Barbero, with the following as members: Liningding Pangandamen, Simeon Datumanong, Karim Sidri, Pacifico Castro, and Col. Eduardo Ermita. The MNLF panel again was composed of Nur Misuari, Salamat Hashim, Abdulbaki Abubakar and Abdurasad Asani. Also with the group, as legal counsels, were Atty. Zacaria Candao [2] and Atty. Pangalian Balindong of Lanao del Sur.

Subsequently a formal ceasefire agreement between the two warring parties was signed on January 20, 1977. A committee was organized, composed of the MNLF, the Philippine government, and the Quadripartite Committee to oversee the implementation of the ceasefire. Provincial ceasefire committees were also set up in the thirteen provinces to help monitor and maintain the observance of the accord.

The philosophy behind the declaration of a ceasefire is simple. Heads must cool off, shooting must stop before the talking can proceed. It is only in an atmosphere of understanding and serenity that the search for real peace can proceed.

The ceasefire agreement was generally holding during the early months of 1977, but it collapsed completely towards the end of the year when the government troops mounted massive offensives against all known MNLF strongholds. Even the mutually-agreed bivouac areas in Mindanao, as earlier depicted, were also attacked almost simultaneously.

The Day of the Clown

The Tripoli Agreement was lacking in sufficient detail, and, therefore, the two panels agreed to meet first in Libya, from February 9 to March 3, and then in Manila, from April 21 to 30, 1977 to finalize it. However, on both occasions, they bogged down owing to the over emphasis on the side issues, rather than on the substantive points, by representatives of the Philippine government.

The meeting in Libya first stalemated and then bogged down. The two panels simply could not agree on the degree of autonomy to be handed to the Moros and the definite role the MNLF had to play in it. More time had been expended on the side issues than on the substantive points. National Defense Undersecretary Carmelo Barbero, head of the GRP panel, even brought up the issue of a plebiscite -- which was nowhere to be located in the entire text of the agreement.

Again the First Lady was sent to Libya to thresh out matters with President Muammar Qhaddafi. The result was the exchange of cables between President Marcos and President Qhaddafi on March 17-18. The communique contained their consensus on the declaration of autonomy, a provisional government, and the holding of a referendum or "consultation."[3]

The meeting in Manila, like the first, was tense. There was a

heated discussion between the Philippine panel and representatives of the Quadripartite Committee, particularly Dr. Ali Treki.

The talks failed, as had been predicted right at the outset. Firstly, President Marcos hastily went to Japan in an obvious attempt to escape any role in a negotiation he may have maneuvered towards collapse. Secondly, the Philippine delegation was engaging in too many questions over technicalities, virtually reducing the talks into a grammar class. Even a single article like "the" or "of" sent the Philippine side -- composed mostly of ministers like Foreign Minister Carlos P. Romulo and Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile -- to gang up on and lock horns with the OIC representatives. And thirdly, as in the first negotiation in Tripoli, Libya, the Philippine panel showed its bad faith and sinister attempt to obstruct the path to peace in Mindanao.[4]

High-handed Hypocrisy

Capitalizing on the stalled negotiations which later degenerated into a "no-peace no-war" situation, President Marcos unleashed a multi-faceted, multi-pronged counter-insurgency program which was implemented at an exceptionally rapid pace. Militarization continued to increase and identified MNLF[5] areas were flooded with bloodthirsty military regulars and irregulars. Under the veneer of his socio-economic and infrastructure agenda, he built roads, bridges, dikes and ports, dredged rivers and canals, reclaimed marshes, etc. With his land reform program, he further dispossessed the Moros of their remaining landholdings. New waves of emigrants from the North kept pouring in, which resulted in the creation of fresh settlements and colonies.

One may be led to believe that all these programs were executed in the names of peace, security and progress. But in reality they were in the nature of "sugar-coated" bullets. All were intended to defeat the MNLF, deny it of its favorable natural sanctuaries and to penetrate into the "hearts and minds" of the people.

The government's unusual interests in "promoting" Islam and

the study of the Arabic language did not fail to intrigue inquisitive minds. These culminated in the creation of the so-called Ministry of Muslim Affairs. A similar approach was instituted during the American colonial regime in the Philippines. The study of the Qur'an, was introduced, obviously, as part of their pacification campaign. Thousands of Moro kids, as a result, filled schoolhouses.[6]

The hypocritical bid to promote Islam cannot be discerned unless one viewed this as part of the wide-ranging counter insurgency scheme of the government. This country is strictly secular. The church and state are separated. Both the 1935 and 1973 Philippine Constitutions – also the 1987 Charter – explicity prohibit the government or any of its agencies or instrumentalities from promoting, assisting or uplifting any one religion in the Philippines, directly or indirectly.

The appointment of erstwhile Rear Admiral Romulo Espaldon[7] as head of this Ministry of Muslim Affairs was offensive to the Muslims of this country. During his stint with the SOUTHCOM, the Admiral's hands had dripped with much Moro blood. He renounced Catholicism – or was made to renounce it – in order to qualify for the job, as being a Muslim was obviously its first criterion. Was there no full-blooded Muslim at the time who could fit the job squarely?

A New Kiram-Bates Treaty

The air of optimism that greeted the diplomatic breakthrough in Tripoli, Libya, at the signing of the agreement was but analgesic. Even after the lapse of almost a decade since the signing on December 23, 1976 and the subsequent ouster of Marcos on February 25, 1986, many eyebrows were still being raised in wonder whether Marcos was really sincere or had merely played a cat-and-mouse game. However, those who had a commanding grasp of Philippine history -- especially that segment which is focused on the interludes of peace negotiations and truce agreements -- simply view the Tripoli Agreement as another Kiram-Bates Treaty of 1899. That treaty was signed between Sultan Jamalul Kiram II of the Sulu Sultanate

and Brig. Gen. John C. Bates, representing the United States. The Sultan signed the treaty in the firm belief that it signaled the safety of the homeland and the expulsion of the American colonialist. The Americans had a different motive in mind. They made use of the treaty to usher in eventual occupation of the Moro country.

A close scrutiny of the circumstances leading to the conclusion of both agreements would reveal striking similarities. As pointed out earlier, the Kiram-Bates Treaty was chiefly used by the Americans to prevent the opening of another battle front in Mindanao and Sulu while they were battling the forces of Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo in Luzon. It was indeed as a matter of temporary exigency that this treaty was conceived. Eight decades later, history seemed to have repeated itself. The pre-1977 period was really a precarious one for the Marcos regime. Metropolitan Manila, the state nerve-center, was becoming vulnerable to Communist forces because most of the AFP combat forces were deployed in Mindanao and Sulu. The years of confrontations in the South allowed the Communist New People's Army (NPA) to grow in size and strength. In fact, NPA forces were already scoring many remarkable victories in many areas in the North. And for some time the island of Samar in the Visayas was practically a liberated area. This was why some army contingents were shipped back to Luzon and the Visayas immediately after the signing of the Tripoli Agreement.

Until the very last moment of the American regime in the Philippines, the Kiram-Bates Treaty was no more than a scrap of paper. It was not recognized or observed faithfully by the Americans. The case of the Tripoli Agreement was not much different. Up to the disgrace of President Marcos in early 1986, the agreement was just a "scrap of paper." One Mindanao leader, Reuben Canoy, who figured prominently in the move for the island to secede from the Philippines, observed:

> *... The Tripoli Agreement was soon reduced to a mere scrap of paper. Perhaps this was bound to, for like most diplomatic documents the pact was couched in imprecise language liable to all sorts of misinterpretation by the signatories.*[8]

The Eighth Foreign Ministers Conference convened in Tripoli, Libya on May 16-22, 1977. A historic decision was passed granting special observer status to the MNLF, an action clearly conveying additional political clout in dealing with the Philippine government. The conference also held the government solely responsible for the failure of the negotiations in Tripoli, Libya in February 1977 and in Manila in April 1977.

The Republic of Senegal hosted the Ninth Foreign Ministers Conference at its capital, Dhakar, on April 24-28, 1978. Here the OIC denounced the Philippines for the massacres committed against the Muslims and for reneging on her international obligations to honor the Tripoli Agreement. The conference also called upon both parties to come to a ceasefire and resume negotiations.

After a year, on May 8-12, 1979, the Tenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers assembled in Fez, Kingdom of Morocco. Again the OIC called on the government to implement the agreement.

In February 1980, the new OIC Secretary General, Habib Chatti, paid a visit to Manila to bring up the issue once again. Again, only cold response was forthcoming.

Sometime in 1981, Indonesia, the most populous Muslim state, offered her good offices as an "honest broker" to arbitrate the conflict or at least to restart the stalled negotiations. There was no concrete reply.

On March 21-23, 1982, Saudi Arabia tried to give the precarious peace another lease on life. The late King Khaled Ibn Saud personally brought up the case with President Marcos during his visit to the kingdom. But, smart as ever, the latter placated his host by assuring him that autonomy was already in place in Mindanao and Sulu.

Then came the big bang of 1983. Former Senator Benigno

Aquino Jr. was shot dead on the tarmac of the Manila International Airport on August 21. The "conjugal dictatorship" of Marcos and Imelda was the prime suspect. Aquino was their bitterest political rival. No one person or group had a greater motive to execute the assassination.

Thenceforth, the Moro issue was relegated to the sidelines. The Marcoses were busy shielding themselves against the backlash of the assassination.

The years 1984 and 1985 came and went. They glided away almost unnoticed as far as the Mindanao problem was concerned. President Marcos was not only holding on to power by a hairline; he was also very ill, extremely ill.

Enters the Widow

Then another big bang occurred. The dynasty came to an end. President Marcos was ousted from power on February 26, 1986. The widow of the slain Senator, Mrs. Corazon C. Aquino, was installed President of the Philippines, not on the basis of the 1935 or 1973 Constitutions, but through the EDSA People Power Revolution. As a revolutionary government -- at least of the right, center, and right-of-center -- it functioned without a regular constitution for about a year.

In the meantime, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Muslim World League (MWL), both based in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, were undertaking efforts to merge the MNLF and the MILF into one expanded negotiating panel once talks resumed with the new administration of President Aquino. MNLF Chair Nur Misuari and MILF Chairman Salamat Hashim had already agreed, before officials of both world Islamic organizations, to unite and close ranks as a prelude to new negotiations to resolve the Mindanao crisis. [9]

The OIC and MWL emphasized that they would only host this proposed renewed peace negotiations if both the MNLF and MILF

were represented. The Aquino administration had already been informed of this stand.[10]

But in a surprise move, President Aquino, setting aside protocol and security concerns, met with MNLF Chairman Nur Misuari in Jolo, Sulu, on September 5, 1986. This so-called historic meeting resulted in an agreement to cease hostilities and lay the groundwork for formal negotiations. One writer commented on this meeting:

> *All of a sudden, after the EDSA revolution in 1986, the new Administration, deliriously overjoyed by its victory, brought back Nur Misuari like a hero. Nur Misuari came back with him full with rising expectations of triumph. He brought back with him a more complicated package of the problems in Mindanao to ensure that victory would be theirs.* [11]

Meeting in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the GRP and MNLF Panels forged an agreement, now known as the Jeddah Accord, on January 3, 1986. The two sides agreed to continue discussion of the proposal for the grant of full autonomy to Mindanao, Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Palawan. It was further agreed that substantive talks would be held in the Philippines.

On February 9 and 20, the GRP-MNLF peace talks proceeded in Manila and in Zamboanga City, respectively. It became apparent, even at the outset, that the talks would collapse due to fundamental differences in the proposals submitted by both panels. The MNLF wanted full autonomy for the 23 provinces in Mindanao, on the ground that the government had already agreed to it as mentioned in the Jeddah Accord. The government, on the other hand, refused to toe this line, because the Tripoli Agreement only speaks of 13 provinces and nine cities.

After the breakdown of the talks, the government proceeded to devise the necessary processes to implement the so-called mandate in the 1987 Constitution to grant autonomy to Muslim Mindanao. Accordingly, in October 1987, President Aquino started

to lay the groundwork for the creation of the Mindanao Regional Consultative Commission (MRCC), which was tasked by Congress to assist it in drafting an organic act intended for an autonomous Muslim Mindanao.

On the other hand, MNLF Chairman Nur Misuari, bitterly criticizing the creation of the MRCC, once again renewed his bid for full MNLF membership with the OIC. Observer status had been conferred on the MNLF in May 1977.

Similarly, MILF Chairman Salamat Hashim denounced the government action as an obstacle to peace. He accused it of not being really sincere about the early and genuine resolution of the conflict in Mindanao and Sulu.[12]

The Interlude: MILF 5-Day War

The MILF did not only denounce the Jeddah Accord as a "cheap drama" -- it launched a full-scale five-day tactical offensive in Maguindanao, North Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte on January 13-17, 1987. Military installations, equipment and personnel were attacked and suffered heavy losses and damage.

An MILF spokesman, however, clarified that the offensive was not meant to attract national or international attention, and thereby secure inclusion in the so-called negotiations between the MNLF and the government. Fighting was simply one of the two weapons a revolutionary organization could use against the enemy.[13]

The MILF also wanted to convey the message that it was not a pushover organization, but a power to reckon with. It would always rise to the occasion in full force, if the situation warrants. However, this message was never delivered through official channels.[14]

Afterwards, an informal truce was forged between Hadji Murad Ibrahim and National Affairs Minister Aquilino Pimentel Jr., on January 17 at Crossing Simuay, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao. With

Murad during the signing was Mohagher Iqbal, also a senior officer of the MILF.

The strength of the MILF was not only seen in matters of its military organization and hardware. The magnitude of people's support was another important yardstick. This was showcased during a military consultative assembly on October 5-7, 1986 at Darapanan, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao. The convenors' group listed more than one million people from all over Mindanao and 75,574 armed components, including highlanders or *Lumads* with their bows and arrows, who attended the assembly. Thus far, this was the biggest number of Moros ever assembled at one time and in one place by any group, organization, political party or even by the government, in the entire history of the region.

Many high government officials graced the occasion, including Quezon City Mayor Brigido Simon Jr., Gov. Rosario Diaz of North Cotabato, Gov. Zacaria Candao of Maguindanao, and the late Gov. Francisco Abalos of Lanao del Norte. Former Tarlac Gov. Margarita "Ting-Ting" Cojuangco, sister-in-law of former President Aquino, also attended. Even AFP top brass in Central Mindanao were on hand to witness the historic consultation. Among them were Brig. Gen. Jesus Hermosa and Brig. Gen. Cesar Capa.

The MILF, wiser from years of traumatic experiences in the twists and turns of the so-called peace parleys, continued to strengthen itself in all aspects of the struggle. The MILF believed that only a strong revolutionary organization could assure victory and liberate the people from the bondage of oppression and exploitation. A 10-year four-point program -- later extended by ten more years (1980 - 2000) -- was launched, which covered the four priority fields of concerns, namely, Islamization, organizational build-up, military build-up, and self-reliance. The plan started in 1980 and was pursued more vigorously five years after the MILF had ascertained beyond reasonable doubt that the government was using the peace process as a "dilatory tactic."

The Anointed Barges In

Pres. Corazon C. Aquino, true to her pledge, did not run for re-election in the 1992 presidential polls. She stepped down from office resisting all the lures of power, limelight, money and, if she were a man, of women attached to the presidential office. She passed the test with flying colors, indeed, with the stamp of statesmanship. Perhaps, she craved to return to the quiet life of a "mere housewife." After all, it was only by chance that she became president after the fall of Marcos. She never had any presidential ambitions; her phenomenal ascent to power just happened.

But like any human being, she did things with a motive: be it for all the people or mainly for the self. That is not ours to judge. We can only wonder what motivated her when she "anointed" as her successor to the presidency, ex-Gen. Fidel Ramos, the former jailer of her fallen husband, surprisingly, over Speaker Ramon Mitra Jr., who stood by her husband in all the bloody years of the dictatorship. And in the next election, Ramos was elected into the presidency, but not before he reneged on a covenant with Mitra, that whoever was not selected during the presidential convention of the *Laban Ng Demokratikong Pilipino* (LDP) would support the winner.

Immediately, on June 30, 1992, in his inaugural address, President Ramos issued a call for the peaceful resolution of conflicts in the Philippines. On July 22, in his First State of the Nation Address before a joint session of Congress, he invited both chambers to constitute the National Unification Commission (NUC), which was tasked, among other functions, to formulate a peace process that would lead to a "just, comprehensive, and lasting peace." On September 1, the NUC was formed, with former COMELEC Commissioner Haydee Yorac, as Chairman, and the following, among others, as members: DOJ Secretary Franklin Drilon, Sen . Rodolfo Biazon, Sen. Wigberto Tañada, Rep. Eduardo Ermita and Rep. Jose Yap. Among the members of the Council of Advisers were former President Diosdado Macapagal, former Senator Manuel Manahan, former Congressman Luis Taruc, Dr. Jesus Lava, the late Governor Sandiale Sambolawan, Ustadz Abulgani Yusop, and Tarhata Alonto Lucman.

The NUC held public consultations at all levels. It also talked to the various rebel groups, including the MNLF and MILF, and sought simultaneous but separate talks with each of them. The results of these consultations formed the basis for President Ramos to issue Executive Order No. 25 defining the approach and administrative structure of the government's comprehensive peace efforts. The so-called "six paths to peace" were formally adopted as the major components of the peace process.

GRP-MNLF Talks Resume

On October 3-5, 1992, the first round of exploratory talks between the MNLF and the government was held in Tripoli, Libya. The response of the MNLF to these initial talks was positive.

The second round of GRP-MNLF Exploratory Talks was convened in Cipanas, West Java, Indonesia, on October 2-4, 1992 to finalize the agenda of the proposed formal negotiations.

From October 25 to November 7, 1993, the First Round of Formal Negotiations between the GRP and MNLF was held in Jakarta, Indonesia. An Interim Ceasefire Agreement was inked between the two parties. The GRP and MNLF also signed a Memorandum of Agreement providing for the reactivation of the Mixed Committee, creation of five support committees, Ad-Hoc Working Groups, and other matters.

On December 20, 1993, the First Mixed Committee Meeting was held in Jolo, Sulu. It was followed in Zamboanga City on April 6-7, 1994; the third was in Jakarta, Indonesia on August 31, 1994; the fourth in Zamboanga City on January 29-31, 1995; the fifth in Davao City on June 19-23, 1995; the sixth in General Santos City on July 26-28, 1995; the seventh in Zamboanga City on March 1-2, 1995; the eighth in Davao City on June 21-23, 1996; and the ninth in Jakarta, Indonesia on August 30, 1996.

On September 1-5, 1994, the Second Round of Formal Talks was again held in Jakarta, Indonesia. From November 28-December

2, 1995, the Third Round of Formal Talks was again held in Jakarta, Indonesia. An Interim Agreement was signed between the GRP and MNLF containing the points of consensus reached in earlier negotiations. And finally, on August 30, 1996 the Fourth Round of Formal Talks was again held in Jakarta, Indonesia, which resulted in the initialing of the GRP-MNLF Final Agreement.

The Signing in Manila

After about 22 long years of off-and-on GRP-MNLF negotiations that started in 1975 in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, involving three presidents and outlasting two, the talks had finally come to a close with the signing of the peace pact on September 2, 1996 in Malacañang Palace, Manila, Philippines. The agreement formally ended the MNLF armed struggle in Mindanao and Sulu that had lasted for about 30 years.

The signing ceremony was witnessed by President Fidel Ramos; Vice President Joseph Estrada; Dr. Hamid Al-Ghabid, OIC Secretary General; OIC Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Mohammad Moshin; Hon. Ali Alatas, Foreign Minister of Indonesia; a representative of the OIC Ministerial Committee of the Six; ambassadors of different Muslim states; and many other local high government officials and foreign dignitaries.

The signing took place in the morning of September 2. Chairman Nur Misuari signed for the MNLF, and Ambassador Manuel T. Yan for the Government of the Republic of the Philippines. Also affixing their signatures as participants in the peace pact were Hon. Ali Alatas, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia and concurrently Chairman of the OIC Ministerial Committee of the Six, and Dr. Hamid Al-Ghabid, Secretary General of the OIC.

"Peace at last!" was on every participant's lips. Everybody looked up to the future with high hopes and expectations. In the words of President Ramos, not long before the signing, "Today we have all come closer to becoming that nation of our dreams."

As we wind down this discussion, may we paraphrase the statement of Hon. Ali Alatas, Foreign Minister of Indonesia -- as words to ponder -- from his speech on that occasion:

> *It may be worth reiterating that real hard work begins after the signing of the Agreement. For a Peace Agreement, or any other agreement for that matter, does not implement itself: it assumes concrete reality only on accretion of activities completed.* [15]

The meaning of this statement cannot be oversimplified. Only people can cause the realization of any agreement, plan, or program. Without the intervention of man, no agreement, which is a mere piece of paper, can implement itself. But in the case of the GRP-MNLF peace agreement, the main implementor is the Philippine government. The MNLF and the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) have weak roles to play in the implementation process. Their roles, in essence, are similar to those of pressure groups, which have no actual power, not even influence, to effect favorable decisions. This is where the gray area is located.

Strictly speaking, the peace pact signed in Manila was not pursuant to the letter and spirit of the Tripoli Agreement. It was an entirely new agreement. The Tripoli Agreement provided for a provisional government— not a "toothless" monitoring agency such as the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD). The SPCPD's main function, according to Executive Order No. 371 that created it, is only "to coordinate, promote and accelerate the peace and development efforts" in the so-called Special Zone of Peace and Development (SZOPAD).

CHAPTER 11

WAR BY OTHER MEANS CONTINUES

Conclusion Not the End

"Peace at last!" was the catchphrase appearing on the front cover of a special magazine of the MNLF printed on the eve of the signing of the GRP-MNLF Final Agreement at the Malacanang Palace on September 2, 1996.

What does "peace" mean to the MNLF, based on the magazine article, is difficult to ascertain. Does it imply the absence of fighting alone? Infusion of capital in Mindanao for development projects? That political solution to the problem presumably set forth in the agreement? Or should it be taken in its strictest sense -- harmony with oneself, with fellowmen, and with the Almighty?

Whatever this word truly means to the signers of the peace pact, we have no sure way of knowing. The inquisitive mind can only do so much brainstorming; it cannot say with certainty what it means to others. But as it happens, the implications are four-fold: 1) the signing was the final *coup de grace* to the MNLF as a revolutionary organization; 2) the termination of fighting between the MNLF fighters and their former enemy, the Armed Forces of the Philippines; 3) the integrative or assimilative features of the agreement will inexorably disadvantage the MNLF; and 4) money shall be allocated for development projects for the benefit of the MNLF, especially the leaders.

However, contrary to what is commonly perceived, the end of the GRP-MNLF negotiation that culminated in the signing of the final GRP-MNLF peace pact, did not mean a total halt to the war. Rather, it signaled the beginning of another war by other means, this time, with the MILF. The MILF had finally prevailed upon itself to talk to the government, in the search for the elusive solution to the age-old conflict in Mindanao.

How the Deal Started

While it is true that it was only after the 1996 GRP-MNLF peace agreement that the government had a formal peace deal with the MILF, the contacts actually started long, long before. The efforts were mostly undertaken away from the glare of cameras or the sponsorship of international groups or states.

As early as the late 1970s, Chairman Salamat Hashim of the New MNLF Leadership had firmly valued, as a matter of policy, the wisdom of conducting dialogues in lieu of armed confrontation in the resolution of even the most difficult cases of conflict. He knew that conflict is exacerbated, more easily than it can be solved, because of the hatred, racism and prejudice ingrained in every society. A pacific means of resolving conflict is thus listed as a priority in the MILF's early political agenda, and the organization has pursued this means actively through the good offices of friendly states and the OIC. That is not to say, however, that it regards an unjust peace to be better than a just war.

Before the signing of the Tripoli Agreement on December 23, 1976, the MNLF, of which the Salamat wing was an integral part, was fighting for total independence. Having had a long and bitter experience with the changing regimes in Manila since the annexation of Mindanao and Sulu, the Moros had come to conclude that the only lasting solution to their problem is the total independence of their homeland, which can only be achieved through the force of arms. But owing to the friendly and brotherly urgings of our supporters abroad, particularly the OIC, the MNLF leadership, of which Salamat Hashim was one, agreed to mellow down their demand and accept autonomy on the basis of the Tripoli Agreement. This commitment has remained valid, even after the takeover of Salamat Hashim as Chair of the New MNLF Leadership. In a letter to fellow mujahideen on December 10, 1979, Hashim clarified:

> *... We have adopted a moderate policy with regards to the political aspects of our struggle to prove our sincerity in finding a political solution to the problem.*[1]

This gesture was not empty rhetoric concocted for political adventure. The New MNLF Leadership, in fact, had for this purpose appointed two official emissaries and one legal counsel, namely, Sheikh Abukhalil Yahya, Sheikh Omar Pasigan, and former Governor Zacaria Candao, respectively. The group's main task was to act as a conduit of communication relative to the Moro rebellion. In February 1979, in response to an earlier invitation, they exchanged views on the conflict with President Marcos and the First Lady right at the Presidential Palace. As expected, nothing substantial came out of this conference because, firstly, the government's aim in this backdoor diplomacy was tactical and, secondly, it was formally negotiating with the OIC-backed MNLF under Nur Misuari.

The Marcos regime adopted a dual-approach policy in dealing with the MNLF and the New MNLF Leadership -- dealing officially with the former, and informally with the latter. This meant that while it negotiated with the MNLF with all the fanfare and in the limelight, it was at the same time pursuing low-key contacts with the Salamat wing. However, the official foreign policy of the government was to negotiate only with one rebel group, in an obvious attempt to divide them as far as the peace initiative was concerned.

The MILF was supposed to join the MNLF in an enlarged negotiating panel when Mrs. Corazon C. Aquino, the widow of ex-Senator Benigno Aquino Jr., assumed the presidency in 1986. This was the earlier understanding between MNLF Chair Nur Misuari and MILF Chair Salamat Hashim, clinched through the good offices of the OIC and the Muslim World League (MWL). But as previously said, President Aquino defied protocol and security requirements and met Nur Misuari in Jolo, Sulu in September, which eventually paved the way for the resumption of the GRP-MNLF talks in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in February the following year.

As a sign of protest, the MILF unleashed the January five-day military offensives that paralyzed transportation in Central Mindanao and clamped a power blackout on Lanao del Sur and the Zamboanga Peninsula. On January 16, President Aquino sent

National Affairs Minister Aquilino Pimentel Jr. to the MILF on a mission of peace that culminated in the signing of a truce agreement the next morning. On the third day, President Aquino met Al Haj Murad Ibrahim and Mohagher Iqbal, representing the MILF, somewhere in Cotabato City. The meeting was brief due to the stiff opposition of the military, particularly Brig. Gen. Jesus Hermosa Jr..[2] However, the President invited Murad to Manila for another meeting.

Consequently, LTP Chairman Zacaria Candao and Sheikh Abukhalil Yahya went to Pakistan on March 1987 to contact Chairman Salamat Hashim. Candao had with him the official invitation of the government to meet Hashim for a dialogue. The meeting took place in Karachi, Pakistan where the Chairman put forward a three-point proposal:

1. That he (Salamat) would return home and meet President Aquino in Camp Abubakar of the MILF or in the Office of Governor Zacaria Candao in Cotabato City as a prelude to joining the talks;

2. That he would join the present GRP-MNLF talks as a separate entity; and

3. That Secretary-General Dr. Omar Naseef of the Muslim World League (MWL) be invited to attend the meeting with the President in Cotabato City.[3]

Up to the closing stretch of the term of President Aquino, no nonsense dialogue had ever involved the MILF. The government despite MNLF and MILF denunciations, went on its way to implement its brand of autonomy delimited by the 1987 Constitution.

In November 1990, OIC Secretary General Dr. Hamid Al-Ghabid dispatched Ambassador Ibrahim Saleh Bakr, OIC Deputy Secretary General for Political, Legal and Minorities Affairs, to Mindanao to talk to both MNLF and MILF leaders about the resumption of the stalled negotiations and the possibility of putting

up a common and expanded negotiating panel. He met MILF leaders led by Al Haj Murad Ibrahim, MILF Deputy Chair for Military Affairs and concurrently Chief of Staff of the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF), at Darapanan, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao.

The Trip to Senegal

In response to the coming of Ambassador Ibrahim Saleh Al-Bakr to Mindanao, the MILF sent a delegation to the OIC Summit Conference in Dhakar, Senegal on December 9-12, 1990. Composed of Mohagher Iqbal and Abdulfattah Delna -- and after a bitter experience at the hands of corrupt immigration and customs officials at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport -- the delegation submitted the MILF official position vis-a-vis the Moro issue.

The delegation left Manila on the 5th of December, passing by Charles de Gaulle International Airport in Paris, France, and arrived at Dhakar, the capital of Senegal, on the 6th. That was Friday and the summit conference was to start on Monday, the 9th, and in this country Saturday and Sunday were holidays. With a very tight time frame at their disposal, the two moved swiftly and resolutely. Partly because of their efforts and mainly as a result of the earlier trip of Ambassador Bakr to Mindanao, the OIC, for the first time, took the bold step of explicitly mentioning the MILF in its pertinent resolution on Moro issues, thus:

> *The conference welcomed the agreement between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro National Liberation Front and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front to resume negotiations at the Headquarters of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and under its auspices with a view to reaching a just and comprehensive solution to the problem within the framework of the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Philippines.* [4]

The resolution implied the diminution of the OIC's former monolithic view of the MNLF as the "sole legitimate representative

of the Moro people." And, also for the first time, the OIC allowed another Moro rebel group to join the proposed dialogue in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

The Exploratory Talks

Pres. Fidel Ramos, as soon as he assumed power in 1992, formed the National Unification Commission (NUC), chaired by former COMELEC Commissioner Haydee B. Yorac. The NUC was tasked, among others, to formulate and recommend a viable peace process that would lead to a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the country.

On November 24, 1992, NUC Chair Haydee B. Yorac rendezvoused with Al Haj Murad Ibrahim in Langkong, Matanog, Maguindanao to talk about the peace deal. She invited the MILF, through Murad, to join the exploratory talks for the purpose of establishing a just and lasting peace in the Philippines. She also proposed to the MILF the formation of a negotiating panel and the formulation of the talking points to be tackled during the formal negotiation.

On December 8, Murad informed the government through NUC Chair Yorac of the desire of the MILF to join the exploratory talks. And accordingly, the MILF formed its panel and the talking points.

Named to the MILF Panel were Sheikh Abukhalil Yahya, chairman, and the following as members: Sammy Gambar, Jannati Mimbantas, Zaid Mohammad, and Jerry Abubakar. Atty. Midpantao Adil acted as legal counsel. The MILF also submitted a list of proposed talking points, as follows:

1. Exploring the possibility of resuming constructive discussion on the stipulations contained in the Tripoli Agreement dated December 23, 1976;

2. Exploring the possibility of the safe return and rehabilitation

of Muslim/native refugees and evacuees to their places of origin in Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan;

3. Exploring the possibility of immediately enforcing an effective cessation of hostilities and other provocative activities during the peace talks; and

4. Exploring the possibility of discussing such other matters that may contribute towards arriving at a just and peaceful social, economic and political solution to the problems in Southern Philippines.[5]

Paradoxically, the GRP-MILF exploratory talks never got a chance to take off. Neither side gave a clear reason for the stand-still. But at the time the government was simultaneously talking to the MNLF, RAM/SFP/YOU and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). The MILF obviously thought it inopportune to butt in, so to speak, while the MNLF was engaged in talks with the government; the MILF did not want to complicate the peace process. This position was articulated in the letter of the MILF to the government dated July 2, 1993:

> *The Central Committee of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front ... interposes no objection to the on-going peace talks between the Moro National Liberation Front and the representatives of the Republic of the Philippines for the purpose of exploring peaceful solutions to the problems in Mindanao.*
>
> *... The MILF Central Committee shall be glad to wait for the result of the said on-going peace talks ...*[6]

After this time, all high-level peace initiatives between the MILF and the government halted. However, local-level peace initiatives continued, which resulted in several agreements and truces between the MILF and the AFP. Among these agreements were the Murad-Diaz Memorandum of Agreement of September 3, 1994, the MALMAR Agreement on January 29, 1995, and the MILF-

AFP Memorandum of Understanding on April 18, 1996. The first two agreements were for the demilitarization and cessation of hostilities in and around the P1.7 billion irrigation project in Carmen, Cotabato, and the third, among other points, was over the maintenance of peace and order in Central Mindanao, particularly along the Narciso Ramos Highway going to Marawi City.

Technical Committees Formed

After the signing of the final peace agreement between the MNLF and the government, top-level initiatives to revive the peace negotiations with the MILF got underway. The initial efforts were two successive exploratory one-on-one talks between Executive Secretary Ruben Torres and Ghazali Jaafar, Vice Chairman for Political Affairs of the Central Committee of the MILF, first in Davao City on August 3, 1996 and then in Cagayan de Oro City on September 10, 1996. The GRP requested for third and expanded exploratory talks on October 22, 1996 in Cagayan de Oro City, but the MILF countered by proposing instead that the GRP-MILF Technical Committee meet as soon as possible. During these meetings, they discussed the general mechanism on how to approach the proposed GRP-MILF formal talks, which included the creation of the main Negotiating Panel and an 11-man Technical Committee by both parties. Before the main panels would meet, the Technical Committees should first meet to discuss the procedure of the formal talks, and to agree on the talking points and the ground rules for the cessation of hostilities. Later on, the 11-man Technical Committee on both sides were split into two, one for agenda-setting, and the other for the cessation of hostilities. The membership of the committee was later enlarged to twelve, with six for each sub-committee.

On October 25, 1996, Ambassador Fortunato U. Abat, head of the GRP Negotiating Panel, submitted the names of the members of the two GRP Technical Committees, as follows:
Technical Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities:

1. Gen. Jocelin Nazareno, AFP -- Chairman

2. C/Supt. Orville Gabuna, PNP
3. Capt. Rolando Garcia, PC
4. Col. Manuel Corales, PA
5. Col. Manuel Ibanez, JAGS
6. Col Rudy So, PA

Technical Committee on Agenda Setting:

1. ASec. Jovenal Lazaga -- Chairman
2. Lt. Gen. Edgardo Batenga (Retired)
3. BGen. Angelo Reyes
4. Atty. Teresita de Castro
5. ADG Zenonida Brosas
6. Exec. Dir. Alma Evangelista

On January 4, 1997, Vice Chairman Ghazali Jaafar officially informed the government through Executive Secretary Ruben Torres of the official members of the MILF's two technical committees:

Technical Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities:

1. Atty. Lanang Ali-- Chairman
2. Sultan Saifoden "Tony Falcon" Tomawis
3. Ustadz Usman Mangkabong
4. Ustadz Elias Macarandas
5. Mr. Japal Ujajan
6. Comdr. Badawi "Boy" Hashim

Technical Committee on Agenda-Setting:

1. Sheikh Moner Bajunaid -- Chairman
2. Atty. Mohammad San Amilhasan
3. Datu Ignacio Ikling
4. Atty. Omar Umpar
5. Mr. Jimmy Casinto
6. Dr. Dingan Ali

As stated above, Ambassador Fortunato Abat headed the GRP

Panel. Also named were Rep. Anthony Dequiña, as Vice Chairman, Sec. Alexander Aguirre, Undersecretary Guttierez Mangansakan, and Undersecretary Macabangkit Lanto, all members. The MILF had also formed its negotiating panel headed by Ghazali Jaafar and with the following as members, namely, Abduladzis Mimbantas, Mohagher Iqbal, Sammy Gambar (Al Mansoor), and Omar Hassan, all top officials of the Front.

Low-level Negotiation Starts

On January 7, 1997, the GRP and MILF Technical Committees met at the Da'wah Center, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao. Security was handled by the local PNP of Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao. Sheikh Omar Pasigan, head of the Da'wah Center, rendered the opening remarks in the opening ceremonies. The GRP side then gave its response. Ambassador Fortunato Abat made the opening statement for the GRP side and proceeded to introduce the members of the GRP's two Technical Committees. Sheikh Moner Bajunaid, head of the MILF Technical Committee on Agenda Setting, delivered his opening address and likewise introduced the members of the two MILF technical committees. Immediately, the two parties split into two technical committees, convened and started the formal dialogue. At the end of the day, a joint press statement was signed by the two parties, as follows:

> *In an historic initial meeting at the Da'wah Center, Crossing Simuay, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao today, January 7, 1997, members of the Technical Committees of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) took a step towards the attainment of a just and lasting peace in Mindanao.*
>
> *The Technical Committees on Agenda Setting of the GRP Panel and the MILF Panel discussed and reached a consensus on the nature and scope of their assigned task — to identify and clarify the issues and concerns which shall become the agenda for the formal peace talks between the GRP and the MILF Panels.*

The MILF Technical Committee proposed a single talking point — To solve the Bangsamoro Problem. Another meeting was set for February 25-26, 1997 at the same venue for the MILF Technical Committee to expound on its proposal and for the GRP Technical Committee to present its position.

The Technical Committees on the Cessation of Hostilities, on the other hand, exchanged position papers on the cessation of hostilities, which are intended to generate a favorable atmosphere for the formal peace talks. They agreed to meet again also on February 25-26, 1997 for the submission of their final respective positions after consultations with their principals.

The meeting was very cordial, with the Technical Committees expressing their willingness to accomplish their assigned tasks at the earliest possible time.

Signing the press statement in behalf of the GRP were Asst. Sec. Jovenal Lazaga, Chair, GRP Committee on Agenda Setting, and Maj. Gen. Jocelin Nazareno, Chair, GRP Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities, and for the MILF, Sheikh Moner Bajunaid, Chair, MILF Committee on Agenda Setting, and Atty. Lanang Ali, Chair, MILF Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities.

Despite the proposal of Ambassador Fortunato Abat to extend the 60-day unilateral truce declared by the government in deference to the holy month of Ramadhan, the AFP, using the cheap pretext of escorting Buldon Mayor Macarampat Manalao, launched a naked aggression on the MILF main camp defense perimeter on January 16. Fierce fighting ensued immediately that lasted up to the 22nd of the same month. The AFP threw into action planes, helicopters, tanks, 105 mm howitzers, mortars, and five thousands troops. The MILF *mujahideen* stood their ground and countered with mortars, rocket propelled grenage launchers (RP), and anti-aircraft guns. The MILF lost 31 fighters, one homemade RPG-2 and five assorted rifles, while the AFP lost nine tanks, one helicopter, several high-powered rifles and 160 soldiers slain. One 105 mm howitzer was badly damaged

by RPG-2 blast.[7] Consequently, the GRP and MILF Technical Committees convened on January 25-27 to stop the fighting. An interim cessation of hostilities was declared in Buldon, Maguindanao, and the two panels agreed to meet again on February 9 to discuss further the Buldon conflict. This meeting was reset to February 16 because the end of the Ramadhan fell on this date.

Unfortunately, the meeting did not take place on February 16. Instead, government troops conducted massive air strikes and assaults on MILF positions in Buldon and Maganoy, both in Maguindanao. The MILF accused the government of insincerity, and unilaterally postponed the talks indefinitely.

After several delays, the talks finally proceeded on February 25-27 at the Da'wah Center, Crossing Simuay, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao. The main agenda were the fresh fighting in Buldon, where an interim cessation of hostilities was in place, and the adoption of an administrative procedure[8] that would regulate and guide the conduct of the subsequent meetings of the two panels.

The MILF Technical Committee elaborated on the single agendum it had presented: "How to resolve the Bangsamoro problem." Sheikh Moner Bajunaid discussed the various perspectives of the problem, which involved a variety of social, cultural, economic and political issues and concerns. He stressed that these issues and concerns included, but were not limited to, ancestral domain, displaced and landless Moros, destruction of properties, war victims, human rights issues, social and cultural discrimination, corruption of the mind and the moral fiber, economic inequities and widespread poverty, exploitation of natural resources, and agrarian-related problems.

The Technical Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities initially discussed unfinished business, such as the fighting in Buldon. The GRP side through Maj. Gen. Jocelin Nazareno presented a draft general agreement for the cessation of hostilities. Atty. Lanang Ali, on the side of MILF, put forward a four-point proposal for the cessation of hostilities:

1. Recognition of MILF camps and territories;

2. Withdrawal of government troop in MALMAR, Carmen, North Cotabato, in Sultan sa Barongis, Maguindanao, and in Tipo-Tipo and Tuburan, Basilan;

3. Stop deployment and augmentation of government troops in areas adjacent to MILF camps and territories; and

4. Recognition of the provisions of the Geneva Conventions on the Articles of War.

On March 23-25, the GRP and MILF Sub-Committees on the Cessation of Hostilities met for the third time to discuss the truce violations in Buldon, Maguindanao, allegedly by both forces of the AFP and the MILF. The two sides agreed to organize an Interim Ceasefire Monitoring Committee (ICMC) with the following composition:

1. Representative of the Norte Dame University Peace Center;

2. Maguindanaon Professionals and Employees Association (MAPEA);

3. Protestant Lawyers' League of the Philippines (PLLP); and

4. Cotabato City Media Multi-purpose Cooperative (CCMMPC).

The Interim Ceasefire Monitoring Committee (ICMC) was mandated by the GRP and the MILF to watch, observe or check on the implementation of the truce by both parties. Named as the Chair of the ICMC was Fr. Eliseo Mercado Jr. of the NDU Peace Center, with Datu Hussain Ampatuan of the MAPEA as the Vice Chairman. The members of the ICMC are Atty. Allan Tan and Atty. Samuel Matunog of the PLLP, Dr. Abid Ayunan of MAPEA, Deng Giguinto of the NDU Peace Center, and Avelino Acoymo and Hernani Pastolero of the CCMMPC.

During the meeting, the GRP and MILF Technical Committees gave the ICMC the green light to investigate the death of ten students and one teacher on March 16 in Tugaig, Barira, Maguindanao.

On April 23-25, the GRP and MILF Sub-Committees on the Cessation of Hostilities met for the fifth time. This time the meeting took place at the Notre Dame University Peace Center in Cotabato City. The ICMC, through its chair, Fr. Eliseo Mercado Jr., submitted its terminal report on the March 16 bombing and found enough reasons to pinpoint the AFP as responsible for the death of the students and one teacher. Specifically held responsible for the bloody attack was the Philippine Army's 27th Infantry Battalion of the 603rd Brigade, 6th Infantry Division, which had a position about 3½ kilometers away from the site of the blast.

The GRP and MILF Sub-committees on the Cessation of Hostilities, however, adjourned without arriving at any concrete agreement on the repositioning of troops in Garigayan, Buldon, Maguindanao. There was an impasse in the talks.

In the meantime, fighting escalated in several parts of Maguindanao and North Cotabato. Under the shallow pretext of going after kidnappers, the government deployed more troops and war materiel in Central Mindanao to run after these criminals, whom the military tagged as operating under the patronage of the MILF. The MILF denied this accusation and retorted by saying that it was the military which was coddling these criminals.

Amid these accusations, the GRP and MILF Sub-Committees on the Cessation of Hostilities managed to meet on May 20 - 23 to continue to tackle the unfinished business of the repositioning of troops in Buldon, Maguindanao. As in the previous meeting, the two sides adjourned without arriving at a consensus on the repositioning of troops. They, however, agreed to meet again.

On June 17-18, the two panels met for the sixth time at the Notre Dame University. This meeting discussed the following: first, to resolve the most ticklish issue on the repositioning of troops in

Buldon, Maguindanao and, second, the need to sign and declare a general cessation of hostilities in Mindanao. As a gesture of peace, the MILF agreed in principle to sign this, provided that there is a special clause incorporating as binding on both sides the Buldon Interim Ceasefire Agreement signed earlier on January 25-27, 1997. The GRP accepted the proposal.

The two panels adjourned before high noon the following day but agreed to meet again on June 28-29 at NDU Peace Center. However, the two panels failed to meet on this date due to the AFP assaults on MILF positions on June 16-17. These happened in Kabasalan, Rajahmuda, Inog-og, all in Pikit, Cotabato, and in Bagoinged, Pagalungan, Maguindanao.

In a special session on June 25, the Central Committee of the MILF decided to suspend the peace talks until the situation in Rajahmuda, Pikit, had normalized. It also ordered the defense of all MILF positions at all costs, and an immediate counter-offensive. As ordered, MILF *mujahideen* hit back at several Philippine military strongholds in Pikit, Aleosan, Kabacan, and Carmen in North Cotabato and in Pagalungan, Maguindanao. Consequently, the Davao-Cotabato national highway was blockaded twice, closing traffic for most of the day on July 25. This pressured government soldiers to reinforce their beleaguered comrades in the Rajahmuda complex. Government forces suffered heavy casualties, both in manpower and war materiel. Six army tanks, mostly of the British Simba-type, and one 6x6 military truck, were destroyed. But their biggest loss was the death of eight military officers, (including one Marine major), and 195 soldiers. Moreover, scores of their soldiers were wounded. In contrast, the MILF lost the lives of 23 *mujahideen*. Twenty-five others were also wounded.[9]

At this stage, the fighting escalated and looked like it would affect not only Maguindanao and North Cotabato but also the entire Mindanao. On July 5, Al Haj Murad Ibrahim, Vice Chair for Military Affairs of the MILF and concurrently Chief of the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces, released a press statement threatening to declare an all-out *jihad* in Mindanao if the military forces will not

put a stop to their offensive, especially if Camp Abubakar As-Siddique, the main MILF camp, will be attacked. The statement also warned, in no uncertain terms, that the MILF will pull out of the peace negotiations should the Philippine military forces continue with their offensives against MILF strongholds. In the meantime, MILF *mujahideen* were massing up in various parts of Mindanao, especially in Lanao del Sur, where a reported caravan of 3,000 armed *mujahideen* were engaged in a tactical movement, dubbed openly as part of the MILF's owned anti-kidnapping campaigns.

Declaration of Formal Ceasefire

As the conflict was affecting many parts of Mindanao, leaders of both the government and the MILF saw it best to put a stop to the fighting by agreeing to declare a formal general cessation of hostilities. On July 17-18, top Philippine government officials, led by no less than Executive Secretary Ruben D. Torres, met with an equally power-packed MILF delegation led by Ghazali Jaafar, Vice Chair for Political Affairs in Cagayan de Oro City. This historical meeting has been called "back-channel diplomacy" by some political observers.

After two days of hard bargaining, the two panels forged an agreement for the declaration of general cessation of hostilities in Mindanao, which took effect three days later. The chairman of the GRP panel in the GRP-MILF peace talks, Ambassador Fortunato Abat, was the principal signatory for the GRP. Other GRP signatories were Exec. Sec. Ruben Torres; Department of National Defense Secretary Renato de Villa; Maj. Gen. Jocelin Nazareno, Chairman of the Sub-Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities; Lt. Gen. Edgardo Batenga (Ret.), Member, Technical Committee; Asst. Sec. Jovenal Lazaga, Chairman of the Technical Committee on Agenda-Setting; Atty. Grace M. Tan, Director, Office of the President; and Atty. Alberto Bernardo, Executive Director of the National Peace and Unification and Development Council (NPUDC). Those who signed in behalf of the MILF were the following: Ghazali Jaafar, Chairman of the MILF Panel; Mohagher Iqbal, Chair of the Committee on Information, Central Committee; Sammy Al-Mansoor,

Deputy Chief of Staff of the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces; Omar Hassan, Special Member of the Central Committee; Abdulmanaf Mantawil, Head of the Secretariat of the MILF Technical Committee; and Omar Umpar, MILF Legal Counsel.

Low-level Negotiation resumes

The ceasefire agreement also revived the peace talks. A new meeting was scheduled and held on July 30- August 1, 1997 at the Notre Dame University, Cotabato City. However, instead of proceeding to discuss the ground rules of the ceasefire, the two panels conducted an ocular inspection of the condition of the evacuees in Pikit, North Cotabato and Pagalungan, Maguindanao. They also had an update on the progress of the rehabilitation efforts of the government, particularly on road-building.

On September 2-3, 1997, the GRP and MILF Sub-Committees on the Cessation of Hostilities met again at the Notre Dame University. This time they made substantial progress in the talks. The government agreed to pull out its troops from Barangay Rajamuda, Pikit, North Cotabato and its environs within 15 days after September 3, to the national highway. On its part, the MILF made a solemn commitment not to display its firearms in said areas. The government, in coordination with the MILF, would assume the responsibility of maintaining peace and order in the said areas. Both sides pledged to work for the immediate return of the evacuees.

A week after, on September 11-12, the two panels resumed the talks in the same venue. They managed to strike a deal on the creation of a coordinating committee to implement the administrative guidelines, an independent fact-finding committee, and a secretariat. They also defined the areas of coverage of the ceasefire, and the scope, composition and functions of the various agencies they were creating.

This agreement was signed by Maj. Gen. Jocelin Nazareno and Atty. Omar Umpar of the GRP and MILF Sub-Committees on the Cessation of Hostilities, respectively. Ambassador Fortunato Abat

and Ghazali Jaafar also affixed their signatures.

For the 11th time the Sub-Committees on the Cessation of Hostilities met on October 2 - 3, 1997 at the Notre Dame University. The MILF submitted its counter-proposal to the GRP-proposed ground rules of the ceasefire. It deleted those portions of the GRP proposal which prohibit the MILF from displaying its flag, collecting revolutionary taxes, conducting military training and additional recruitment, and procuring firearms. No revolutionary organization worthy of its name would agree to the government proposal. The meeting was adjourned without any headway made, but they agreed to meet again on November 12 - 13, 1997 in Marawi City.

However, on October 21, 1997, the Sub-Committees on the Cessation of Hostilities held an emergency meeting at the Notre Dame University, to tackle the issue of the public execution of hardened criminals by the MILF. At the time, the government had ordered a massive deployment of troops in Matanog, Barira, and Buldon, in Maguindanao. All these municipalities are in the vicinity of Camp Abubakar As-Siddique.

After hard bargaining, the two sides finally agreed to reduce the tension around the biggest MILF camp through the reduction of troops, especially by the government. A press release to this effect was jointly signed by Maj. Gen. Jocelin Nazareno and Atty. Lanang Ali, Chairs of the GRP and MILF Sub-Committees on the Cessation of Hostilities, respectively.

As scheduled, the 13th meeting of this sub-committee was held in Marawi City on November 12-13; this was extended to the 14th. This time Aleem Abduladzis Mimbantas took over as head of the MILF Negotiating Panel, replacing Ghazali Jaafar who was on an important mission abroad.

The stakes in this meeting were not only high but very sensitive as well. There were many pitfalls for both sides. The government was too cautious and "allergic" to questions concerning "MILF camps or areas" or the granting of recognition to MILF territories

-- which may give the semblance of *de facto* recognition to the belligerent status of the MILF. On the other hand, the MILF also always kept a close watch against the use of such terms as "constitutional process," "sovereignty" or even grammatical constructions susceptible to many interpretations.

After days of hard bargaining, the agreement on the Implementing Operational Guidelines of the GRP-MILF Agreement on the General Cessation of Hostilities was finally signed on November 14, 1997 by Maj. Gen. Jocelin Nazareno on the GRP side and by Atty. Omar Umpar on the MILF side. The document was also signed, as witnesses, by Lt. Gen. Orlando Soriano (Ret.), Chairman, GRP Negotiating Panel, and Aleem Abduladzis Mimbantas, Chairman, MILF Negotiating Panel.

The next round of talks was scheduled on December 1 - 2, 1997 but it was reset to December 22-23, 1997 to give way to more urgent business by both sides. Up for discussion was the identification of MILF areas or camps, as stipulated in the ground rules of the ceasefire earlier signed by both parties. However, the meeting did not push through as rescheduled. The MILF was set to convene its 15th General Meeting of the Central Committee at Camp Bushra Somiorang in Lanao del Sur. Camp Boshra is the second largest camp of the MILF.

January 1998 came and went. The two parties were still preoccupied with other more urgent matters that required priority attention.

Finally on February 4 - 6, 1998 the two parties met. However, this time, not just their two Sub-Committees on the Cessation of Hostilities were involved, but the GRP and MILF Technical Committees, *en banc*, convened their 3rd meeting at the Marawi City Resort Hotel. Including the sub-committees' meetings, this was the 14th time that the two parties had faced each other. Each side was led by the respective chairman of its technical committee: Asst. Sec. Jovenal F. Lazaga for the GRP and Shiekh Moner Bajunaid for the MILF.

However, instead of tackling the agenda set for deliberation, i.e., identification of MILF areas, camps or positions, the two parties trained their attention on the upsurge of fighting in Upper Minabay, Buldon, Maguindanao between the MILF *mujahideen* and AFP troops. Such a dangerous situation could degenerate into a more intense confrontation as both sides continued to bring in reinforcements and war materiel.

After considering the gravity of the situation and the need to pursue the road to peace, the GRP and the MILF, in a supplementary document, agreed to the following: 1) the GRP shall immediately commence to reposition its forces in Buldon, Maguindanao, at least five kilometers from Banganan River, to be completed not later than February 20, 1998, with the MILF committing not to occupy areas vacated by the AFP troops; 2) the GRP shall immediately exert utmost efforts to resolve the watershed issue involving Upper Minabay-Banganan-Ambal River in Buldon in coordination with appropriate government agencies; and 3) the GRP shall cause the immediate suspension of logging operations of the Cotabato Timber Company, Inc. and other logging operations in the area until final resolution of the conflict in the Banganan-Ambal watershed.

The GRP and MILF also agreed to activate the Monitoring Office of the Coordinating Committees on the Cessation of Hostilities, in order to implement the terms and conditions set forth in the ceasefire accord. The main office shall be established in Cotabato City and sub-offices in Marawi City and other areas in Mindanao. They also expanded the membership of the Independent Fact-Finding Committee (IFFC) and initiated the creation of a Quick Response Team (QRT). The QRT was to be composed of representatives from the GRP, MILF and IFFC, and was tasked to immediately investigate and address any violation of the ceasefire. Father Eliseo Mercado Jr. was selected to become the chair of the QRT.

The talks ended with the signing of the supplementary agreement on February 6, 1998.

On February 26-27, 1998, the GRP and MILF Technical

Committees *en banc* convened again in Marawi City for their 4th session -- and 15th meeting for the two parties — to try anew to tackle the untouched agenda on the identification of MILF areas, camps or positions. This time Asst. Sec. Jovenal Lazaga was not around to lead the discussion on the GRP side; instead Maj. Gen. Jocelin Nazareno acted in his behalf. On the MILF side, Shiekh Moner Bajunaid, as usual, was on hand to head his group.

Once more, the discussion did not delve into the identification of the MILF areas. Instead, the parties reviewed the implementation of the ceasefire agreement forged earlier, especially on the manner of compliance by both sides. The meeting ended with no major decision and signed document. However, they reached agreement in principle, for the formal formation of the Quick Response Team (QRT) to be headed by Father Eliseo Mercado Jr.

On March 10-11, the 5th *en banc* meeting of the GRP and MILF Technical Committees was held at Da'wah Center, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao. This was the 16thsession of the two parties. This time Asst. Sec. Jovenal Lazaga chaired the GRP side while Sheikh Moner Bajunaid chaired the MILF. The two parties first tackled the report submitted by Father Eliseo Mercado Jr. of the QRT. After some refinements on the draft, the two committees agreed to sign the resulting formal agreement.

The QRT is composed of the following: 1) GRP representatives: three permanent members from the GRP Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH), with three alternate members; 2) MILF representatives: three permanent members from the Secretariat of the MILF CCCH, with three alternate members; 3) IFFC principals: one representative each from the Notre Dame University Peace Center, Maguindanao Professionals and Employees Association, Inc. (MAPEA), and Cotabato City Media Multi-purpose Cooperative, Inc. (CCMMPC). The main function of the QRT is to immediately address any reported conflict or confrontation between the GRP and MILF forces. Reports may also come from any of the following: the GRP panel, the MILF panel, and the IFFC.

The agreement to this effect was signed on March 11, on the GRP side by Asst. Sec. Jovenal Lazaga and Maj. Gen. Jocelin Nazareno, and on the MILF side by Atty. Lanang Ali and Atty. Omar Umpar.

On April 23-24, 1998, the GRP and MILF Technical Committees, *en banc*, convened their 6th session in Marawi City. This was the 17th time that the GRP and MILF met to discuss the remaining contentious points before the formal talks. This time Maj. Gen. Jocelin Nazareno assumed the chair of the GRP Technical Committee, replacing Asst. Sec. Jovenal Lazaga who was committed to campaign actively for the candicacy of Exec. Sec. Ruben Torres for a senate seat in the May 11 presidential polls. Likewise, Atty. Lanang Ali temporarily assumed the chair of the MILF Technical Committee in lieu of Sheikh Moner Bajunaid.

Contrary to what was expected, the two parties did not proceed to take up the identification of MILF areas, camps or positions. Instead, on the request of the MILF, they made an assessment on the progress of the February 6, 1998 agreement on the repositioning of AFP troops and the watershed question in Buldon, Maguindanao.

On this subject, Datu Hussain Ampatuan, Vice Chairman of the IFFC, in the absence of Father Eliseo Mercado Jr., formally submitted the findings and recommendations of the QRT. Acting on the basis of the report and recommendations, the two parties adopted a joint motion to verify the status of the repositioning of AFP troops in Upper Minabay, Buldon, Maguindanao, and other concomitant matters.

The succeeding months of May, June and July comprised the official 1998 pre- and post-election period in the Philippines. The Filipinos were to elect new sets of officials starting from the president, vice-president, senators, and congressmen, and down to the provincial, city and municipal officials. President Fidel Ramos, though not a candidate, was working round-the-clock to ensure that his party and protègès' would win in the May 11 synchronized

national and local polls and control the government.

For these reasons, the talks were temporarily shelved. However, back-channel or informal diplomacy, with the end in view of hastening the peace process, was intensified. Several important government officials came to Camp Abubakar As-Siddique during this period to confer with the top leaders of the Front: Chairman Salamat Hashim, Al Haj Murad Ibrahim, Aleem Abduladzis Mimbantas, Ghazali Jaafar, Mohagher Iqbal, and other members of the Central Committee. Among them were Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., Lt. Gen. Orlando V. Soriano (ret.), Chief of the GRP Negotiating Panel, and Sec. Robert Aventajado, Presidential Adviser on Economic Affairs and Flagship Projects. Another dignitary who came during this period was Ambassador Rajab Azzarouq of the Libyan Jamahiriyah.

In that May election, the administration candidate, Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., was defeated handily by Joseph Estrada, an opposition candidate. Because of this change of administration and personality in the government, it was doubted whether President-elect Joseph Estrada would follow the policies of the Ramos administration on the peace process. It was expected that a change in administration and personality in the government would have direct effects on the shaping of new policies, priorities and concerns.

After an extensive exchange of notes and shuttling by emissaries, the talks finally resumed on August 25 - 27, 1998 at the Da'wah Center, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao. However, the format had undergone minor changes. On the first two days, the GRP and MILF Technical Committees *en banc* were to meet first to prepare the agenda of their next meeting, to receive the report of the QRT, and to finalize plans and arrangements for the signing of the Agreement of Intent (AOI) by the GRP and MILF Negotiating Panels.

As scheduled, the signing ceremony of the AOI was held at the Da'wah Center, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao. This was a very historic occasion. First, this marked the formal opening of the talks under the administration of President Joseph Estrada. Second, for

the first time, a foreign dignitary witnessed the GRP-MILF peace negotiation. Third, for the first time, too, the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were mentioned and made references in the conduct of the GRP-MILF peace negotiation.

Entitled the "General Framework of Agreement of Intent Between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)" or simply "Agreement of Intent" (AOI), it was the cumulative result of the back-channel diplomacy that started in the time of President Ramos. The plan of the government was actually to fast-track the negotiation and to forge an agreement similar to the GRP-MNLF peace pact, before the term of President Ramos was to expire on June 30. This did not materialize because the MILF did not see the logic of signing an agreement with a lameduck government whose term of office had just about reached its fixed terminus.

The AOI was largely made possible through the collaborative and cumulative efforts of Ambassador Alunan C. Glang, Adviser, MILF and Consultant to the Peace Process, and Executive Secretary Ronaldo Zamora of the Office of the President of the Republic of the Philippines.

On hand to witness the historic signing ceremony were Libyan Ambassador Rajab Azzarouq, Maguindanao Governor Zacaria Candao, Lanao del Sur Governor Mahid Mutilan, General Jocelin Nazareno, AFP Chief of Staff, and other government provincial and local officials.

The principal signatories, on the GRP side, were Lt. Gen. Orlando V. Soriano (Ret.), Chairman, GRP Negotiating Panel; Ambassador Manuel Yan, Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process; Dr. Emily M. Marohombsar; Gen. Santos Gabison Jr., Member, GRP Negotiating Panel; Dir. Alma R. Evangelista, Chairperson, GRP Technical Committee; and ADG Zenonida F. Brosas, Member, GRP Technical Committee; on the MILF side, the signatories were: Aleem Abduladzis Mimbantas, Chairman, MILF Negotiating Panel;

Ambassador Alunan C. Glang; Ghazali Jaafar, Member, MILF Negotiating Panel; Mohagher Iqbal, Member, MILF Negotiating Panel; Sammy Al-Mansoor, Member, MILF Negotiating Panel; Omar Hassan, Member, MILF Negotiating Panel; Sheikh Abukhalil Yahya, Chairman, *Majlis As-Shura*; and Sheikh Ali Ismail, Chairman, MILF Supreme Islamic Court.

On September 17-18, 1998, the GRP and MILF resumed their talks with the 19th session — and 8th *en banc* for the GRP and MILF Technical Committees — at the Da'wah Center. They tackled and agreed on the following: 1) upon the recommendation of the QRT, to send an investigation team to Upper Minabay, Buldon, Maguindanao; 2) to sustain the quest for peace and to implement fully the agreement on the repositioning of AFP troops in same area, and other related matters; and 3) to make the Coordinating Committees on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH) fully operational.

During this meeting, the MILF submitted the list of its 13 major camps and 33 other camps throughout Mindanao and Sulu. They also agreed to meet on October 22-23, 1998 at a venue to be determined later.

On October 15-16, the GRP and MILF Sub-Committees on Cessation of Hostilities instead met to discuss the growing tension in Buldon, Maguindanao. The MILF *mujahideen* and AFP troops were no longer just within "shooting distance" of each other but, to borrow the words of one interested observer, were already within "eyeball-to-eyeball" distance. A single press of the trigger by either side could spark a conflagration, it was feared.

To defuse the situation, the two parties agreed to implement what they had decided earlier, to wit: 1) the repositioning of AFP troops in Buldon, Maguindanao; 2) to suspend the logging operation of the Cotabato Timber Company, Inc. in the affected area in Upper Minabay, Buldon, Maguindanao; and 3) to establish a Joint Monitoring Contingent (JMC) at the said area of conflict.

The agreement was signed by Atty. Lanang Ali and Maj. Gen. Santos Gabison Jr. of the MILF and GRP Sub-Committees on the Cessation of Hostilities, respectively. Other signatories included Col. Alfredo Limoso, Brig. Gen. Ramon Ong, Sultan Saipoden Tomawis, Aleem Elias Macarandas, and Abdulmanaf Mantawil. Father Eliseo Mercado Jr. witnessed the signing of the agreement.

Due to the upsurge of fighting in three towns of Maguindanao, the GRP and MILF Sub-committees on Cessation of Hostilities, represented by Maj. Gen. Santos Gabison Jr. and Atty. Lanang Ali, respectively, convened an emergency meeting on October 25 at the Notre Dame University Peace Center in Cotabato City in a effort to try to stop the fighting. Also present were Maguindanao Governor Zacaria Candao and Father Eliseo Mercado Jr.

After a brief meeting, the two parties agreed on the following as the means to halt the fighting: 1) that the GRP-AFP and the MILF-BIAF reposition their armed forces to the "Status Ante Bellum"; and 2) that the MILF-BIAF shall reposition their forces within the defense perimeter of Camp Umar Ibn Khattab and the GRP-AFP shall, likewise, reposition their forces along the national highway.

On November 4-6, 1998, the 9th *en banc* meeting of the GRP and MILF Technical Committees was convened in Marawi City. Sheikh Moner Bajunaid reassumed his post while Exec. Dir. Alma Evangelista took over as head of the GRP Technical Committee.

After three days of hard work, the two parties failed to extract a compromise formula on the identification of MILF areas, camps or positions based on pertinent rules, articles or references in the Implementing Guidelines of the GRP-MILF Agreement on the General Cessation of Hostilities signed on November 24, 1997 at Marawi City. The two parties remained as wide apart and divergent in their views as when they had started. The government was insisting on the application of its laws over these camps, while the MILF remained firm that it recognizes neither the Constitution nor the applicability of Philippine laws in its areas. Both parties returned home empty-handed, except for an agreement in principle to meet

again.

Again, on November 24, 1998, Maj. Gen. Santos Gabison Jr. and Atty. Lanang Ali hurriedly called an emergency meeting at the NDU Peace Center in Cotabato City. Fighting had flared up again between MILF *mujahideen* and AFP troops in the Maguindanao municipalities of Talayan, Datu Piang, and Sharif Aguak, and the immediate task of the two parties was how to halt the fighting.

Despite the interim agreement to effect an immediate ceasefire, fighting still raged until after nightfall on the following day, mostly along a 15-kilometer stretch of the Cotabato City-General Santos national highway. Fighting was fierce as both sides brought in reinforcements, military hardware and other war materials. On the side of the AFP, it had already committed to the fighting several OV-10 planes, Patton or Simba tanks, and MG-520 attack helicopters. The MILF countered by saturating the battle zone with mortars and RPG rocket launchers. Casualties on both sides were heavy.

On the 26th of November, members of the GRP and MILF Negotiating Panels, the Quick Response Team, and the Maguindanao Provincial Government decided to dialogue with AFP and MILF commanders in the frontline. Those who went out of their way to stop the fighting were Lt. Gen. Orlando Soriano (Ret.), Chair of the GRP Negotiating Panel, Maguindanao Governor Zacaria Candao, Sammy Al-Mansoor, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF), Father Eliseo Mercado Jr., and Colonel Delfin Lorenzana. The group was able to talk to Col. Alfonso Dagudag, commanding officer of the 601st Brigade, and Ustadz Ameril Umbra Katog, commanding officer of Camp Umar.

After the dialogue, a truce agreement was clinched. Dubbed as a "Gentleman's Agreement", the truce was unwritten but contained the following terms and conditions: 1) reopening of four roads leading to Camp Umar, namely, in Bagan, Tuayan, Maitumaig, and Limpongo, and to normalize traffic along the national highway going to and from Cotabato City and General Santos City; 2) the AFP committed to respect the agreement by not pursuing MILF forces

while clearing the national highway; and 3) the Quick Response Team (QRT) to install four teams of the Joint Monitoring Contingent (JMC) to be composed of 20 policemen and 12 civilians to be selected by the provincial government of Maguindanao.

The 10th *en banc* meeting of the GRP and MILF Technical Committees was convened on December 9-10, 1998 at the Da'wah Center to try once again to break the deadlock over the identification of MILF areas, camps, and positions. They agreed that this was to be their last meeting for 1998 because, aside from the fact that the year was ending, the Muslim fasting month of Ramadhan would start on the 20th and the Christian Christmas season would culminate on the 25th. As in the last session, the parties failed to find a compromise version. The GRP again pressed for the application of Philippine laws over the MILF areas, camps or positions. And, as usual, the MILF did not budge an inch from its original position of never recognizing the applicability of Philippine laws over itself or its camps. They parted with neither an agreement nor a joint press statement, but had a mutual understanding to meet again after Ramadhan. Short of breaking down completely, the talks had hit an impasse.

Towards a Deadlock

On several occasions, the negotiation was on the brink of near total collapse. On several key and sensitive contentious points, the spirit of compromise seemed not feasible. As earlier pointed out, the main reason, according to the GRP, was the demand of the MILF for the recognition of its territory, particularly the 13 major camps and 33 other camps, something like asking for itself the grant of belligerent status. The occupation of a substantial portion of the national territory, say by the MILF, is normally construed as a hostile and belligerent act; yet the government, paranoid at the thought of the MILF qualifying formally for belligerent status[10] -- with the legal, political and diplomatic privileges that such status brings -- resisted any refrence to the subject. The MILF countered by scoring the government for its misplaced insistence on applying Philippine laws over MILF camps and on making the Constitution the basis of

the negotiation; the MILF would thereby dilute its own revolutionary character, as well as suicidally accept "criminalization" by Philippine laws against subversion, rebellion and other acts of war.

As early as the first meeting of the GRP and MILF Technical Committees *en banc* on January 7, 1997 at the Daw'ah Center, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao, this controversy had already come to the surface, when the GRP and the MILF each submitted what seemingly were irreconcilable and contradictory positions on the issue of ceasefire. Two points of the four-point proposal of the MILF dwelt on such delicate points: 1) recognition of MILF territory or camps; and 2) recognition of the Geneva Conventions on Articles of War. Similarly, the GRP proposal was strewn, like a minefield, with poison clauses which no revolutionary organization worthy of its name could accept, such as, "subject to the Constitution and sovereignty of the government", "no collection of revolutionary *zakat*" (poor's due), and "no military training and procurement of firearms."

Although the entire proceeding was very cordial, no substantial headway was made. The ceasefire issue was set aside until the next round of talks which was set for February 25-26, 1997.

However, before the two could meet on the set date, as already dealt with in the previous chapter, the government launched an unprovoked military operation in Buldon, Maguindanao on January 16 - 22, 1997 despite the fact that it was Ramadhan, the fasting month of the Muslims, and disregarding the extension of the GRP unilaterally-declared ceasefire. Hurriedly, the GRP and MILF Technical Committees on the Cessation of Hostilities (later reclassified into the Sub-Committee on Cessation of Hostilities) instead convened, earlier on January 26 - 27, which resulted in the forging of the interim ceasefire while the issue of the formal declaration of a general ceasefire was still hanging in the balance.

After several postponements, the agenda on the identification of MILF areas was finally calendared for deliberation on the 19th

session of the GRP- MILF low-level talks on September 17-18, 1998. However, this was where the real hitch started -- when the MILF formally submitted the list of its camps: 13 major and 33 satellite. Suddenly, the atmosphere in the session hall appeared not very cordial. The GRP coldly requested the MILF to prepare an overview of the subject, for discussion in the next round of talks.

On November 4-6, after at least three intervening *en banc* or sub-committee sessions, the 9th *en banc* meeting of the GRPandMILF Technical Committees was held in Marawi City. Both parties considered it urgent to finish this agenda on the identification of MILF areas, in order to elevate the talks to the formal and higher level of negotiation, meaning, the talks between the main GRP and MILF Negotiating Panels. However, despite this need to move faster, the GRP was showing jitters. As stated, the subject at hand is not only crucial but also sensitive. It inevitably dealt with arguable concepts like "sovereignty," "constitution," "belligerency," "territory," and "controlled areas," over which the two parties, the government especially, had no wish to trade tact with luck, so to speak. Such issues cut across the very existence of the government as a sovereign state, and of the MILF as a revolutionary organization.

Comparing the GRP and MILF versions, one may say that they are "earth and sky apart." The MILF defined camp as "any place covered and secured by the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF)," and a major camp as "a contiguous area which maybe composed of two or more adjacent municipalities or portions thereof, covered and secured by a division or expanded brigade of the BIAF, where its/their headquarters are located, including but not limited to military installations, encampments, structures, and facilities, and such other areas or positions occupied and used by MILF civilian workers or followers, such as, among others, agro-industrial establishments, educational institutions, political offices, medical centers, commercial establishments, agricultural lands, forests, marshes, lakes and other ancestral possessions of the Bangsamoro people, all falling within the perimeter defense of the camp." On the other hand, the GRP defined the MILF camps as

"temporary places or shelters where a significant number of MILF armed elements are located but with delimiting conditions in accordance with AFP-accepted definitions and descriptions." The government position also provided that the government shall exercise authority in these MILF camps/positions within the framework of the 1987 Constitution and in line with the concept of national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

As anticipated, the talks stopped on the third day without any formal agreement, despite last minute efforts to save them. The parties only agreed in principle to meet again but no date and venue were fixed.

Before the year ended, there was another try to break the deadlock. It was set on December 9 - 10, 1998. The two sides were really resolute to finish this agenda by infusing fresh goodwill and camaraderie. Indeed, on the eve of the meeting, the GRP group headed by no less than Lt. Gen. Orlando Soriano (Ret.), Exec. Dir. Alma Evangelista, and Col. Victor Corpus, met with Al Haj Murad, Mohagher Iqbal, Sammy Al-Mansoor, Sheikh Muhammad Muntassir, and Sheikh Omar Pasigan right at Camp Abubakar As-Siddique. Also present were Abdulmanaf Mantawil and Maguindanao Governor Zacaria Candao, popularly-accepted as consultant to both parties. Without need of announcement, the purpose of this meeting was mainly to iron out differences over the points to be tackled the next day in a more personal manner and outside the restraints of protocol. Facing each other across the negotiating table demanded that protocol be followed, thereby making bargaining more difficult.

At the start of the talks the next day, both parties were in high spirits thinking that everything would run smoothly and that an agreement on the identification of MILF areas was within reach. This optimism was not really unfounded, because the two parties, in the course of the deliberation, agreed on all but one item in the criteria on the identification of MILF camps, to wit: "It shall not in any way limit or otherwise affect the national sovereignty, territorial integrity and legal processes of the Republic of the Philippines." The GRP wanted this provision included, but the MILF said this

was not necessary. The MILF argued that, first, the identification of MILF camps was solely for the purpose of the implementation of the ceasefire and, second, the question of sovereignty should properly be discussed by the main GRP and MILF Negotiating Panels, and not on the technical committee level.

The talks ended with no agreement signed. Nor did they come out with a written joint statement on what the two parties had so far accomplished. They only agreed verbally to meet again the following year, date and place unknown.

On January 7, 1999, amid the raging "word war" between the MILF and no less than President Joseph Estrada, Lt. Gen. Orlando Soriano (Ret.), Maj. Gen. Santos Gabison Jr. and Col. Delfin Lorenzano came to Cotabato City on a "mission of peace." They talked to the leaders of the MILF about the unwavering desire of the government to pursue peace with the MILF. On hand to meet them were Ghazali Jaafar, Mohagher Iqbal, Sammy Al-Mansoor, Sheikh Abukhalil Yahya, and Abdulmanaf Mantawil. Technically, this was a meeting of the main negotiating panels of the GRP and the MILF. Soriano and Gabison were members of the GRP Panel, and Ghazali Jaafar, Mohagher Iqbal, and Sammy Al Mansoor of the MILF Panel. After a no-holds-barred discussion and very personal interaction, they agreed to hold the next meeting of the GRP and MILF Technical Committees *en banc* on February 8-10, 1999 at the Da'wah Center, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao. They were hoping that this time there would be a breakthrough.

However, the atmosphere of optimism thus created was shortlived. It was marred by what was seemingly a deliberate move to create a "crisis scenario" in Mindanao, hatched no less by government and military officials. They accused the MILF of planning to launch massive military offensives after the fasting month of Ramadhan, which was to end on January 19. The MILF Central Committee denied the accusation and assured the people of its committment to pursue the peace process.

Barely had the fasting month ended when the AFP did exactly

what it accused of the MILF of planning to do. On January 24, the AFP launched one of the biggest offensives it had assembled since the height of the Moro rebellion in 1972 - 73, against three of the 46 camps of the MILF in Mindanao, namely, Camp Abubakar As-Siddique, Camp Umar Ibni Khattab, and Camp Bad'r. The heavy fights affected the towns of Matanog, Barira, Buldon, Parang, Talayan, Datu Piang, and Sharif Aguak, all in the province of Maguindanao, and later spilled over to Midsayap, North Cotabato, and President Quirino, Sultan Kudarat. The government mobilization was so big that it threw into action 16 army battalions, four Marine battalions, and thousands of backup police personnel. In one battlefront alone, in the town proper of Talayan, the AFP assembled an array of twenty-seven 105 and 155 mm howitzers which it fired at the same time to blast MILF positions.

Both sides suffered heavy losses, both in men, equipment and other war materiel. On the side of the government, 50 M-16 Armalite rifles, four M-60 machineguns, one 81 mm mortar, one 60 mm mortar, one M-79 grenade launcher, and two M-203 grenade launchers were lost or captured by the MILF *mujahideen*. In addition, three Simba-type tanks were damaged, one Huey helicopter was shot down, 71 soldiers were slain, and an undetermined number were wounded. However, one highly-placed source revealed that about 300 soldiers, killed or wounded, were brought to Awang Airport, D.O. Sinsuat, Maguindanao for treatment or for airlifting to Zamboanga or Manila.[11] On the side of the MILF, 23 were martyred and about the same number wounded, several in critical conditions. One RPG-2 and several M-16 Armalite rifles were lost or captured by government forces.[12]

Each side blamed the other for violating the truce and starting the fighting. The Quick Response Team (QRT) headed by Fr. Eliseo Mercado Jr. was doing a fine job, but as always it was almost inutile to stop the fighting. The best that it can do was to investigate any violation; but it can never punish the culprit. It cannot do otherwise because that was the only mandate given to it by the GRP and the MILF.

After almost four days of conventional confrontation, the GRP and the MILF representatives finally met at the Notre Dame University, Cotabato City, on the evening of January 27, to try to halt the fighting. Lt. Gen. Orlando Soriano (Ret.) represented the GRP and Mohagher Iqbal, OIC Chair of the MILF Negotiating Panel, spoke for the MILF. Also present, aside from Fr. Eliseo Mercado Jr., were Maguindanao Governor Zacaria Candao, Maj. Gen. Santos Gabison Jr., Atty. Lanang Ali, and other GRP and MILF officials. The two sides agreed: 1) to declare a ceasefire; 2) to proceed with the February 3 meeting of the GRP and MILF sub-committees; and 3) to hold the meeting of the GRP and MILF technical committees *en banc* on February 8-10.

The truce was to start immediately and was to be completely in place within 48 hours or by 6:00 a.m. on January 30. However, until February 3, sporadic skirmishes were still taking place in several points in Maguindanao.

As scheduled, the GRP and MILF Sub-Committees on the Cessation of Hostilities met at the Notre Dame University, Cotabato City on February 3. Atty. Lanang Ali and Maj. Gen. Santos Gabison Jr. of the MILF and GRP Sub-Committees on the Cessation of Hostilities, respectively, discussed further the implementing details of the January 27 truce.

On February 8-10, the 11th *en banc* meeting of the GRP-MILF Technical Committees was held at the Da'wah Center, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao. Sheikh Moner Bajunaid and Exec. Dir. Alma Evangelista of the MILF and GRP, respectively, led the discussion. The meeting was very cordial.

In this meeting, the two parties agreed, among others, to fill up vacancies in the Coordinating Committees on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH), to mandate the CCCH to formulate its internal procedures pursuant to its mandated powers and functions, and after approval of these procedures by pertinent authorities of the GRP and MILF, to proceed with the verification of other MILF camps. The two parties also finalized plans for the signing ceremony for

both this agreement they named as "Agreement for the Pursuit of Peace" and the Joint Acknowledgment to be signed by the GRP and MILF Negotiating Panels. The signing was to take place on February 10.

The GRP and MILF Joint Acknowledgment was signed by Lt. Gen. Orlando Soriano (Ret.), Chair, GRP negotiating panel, and Ghazali Jaafar, Vice Chairman for Political Affairs, Central Committee, MILF. Signing as witnesses on the GRP side were Secretary Robert Aventajado, Presidential Adviser on Economic Affairs and Chair, Committee on Flagship Projects; and Gen. Jocelin Nazareno, Chief of Staff, AFP; and on the MILF side, Mohagher Iqbal, Chair, Committee on Information, CC, MILF; and Sammy Al Mansoor, Deputy Chief of Staff, BIAF, MILF. Also signing as other witnesses were Maguindanao Governor Zacaria Candao and Congressman Simeon Datumanong, 2nd District, Maguindanao.

The important points contained in the GRP-MILF Joint Acknowledgment were as follows: 1) as a confidence-building measure in the furtherance of the peace process, the GRP and MILF acknowledge Camp Abubakar As-Siddique and Camp Busrah Somiorang as MILF camps to be covered by the cessation of hostilities for the duration of the GRP-MILF peace talks; 2) tasking of the GRP and MILF CCCHs to immediately schedule at their first meeting the determination of the limits of these two camps to be submitted to the GRP and MILF peace panels for confirmation; and 3) tasking of the GRP and MILF CCCHs to proceed to determine and verify other MILF camps to ensure the proper coordination of the implementation of the cessation of hostilities for the duration of the peace talks.

On February 17, the GRP and MILF CCCHs held their initial meeting at the NDU Peace Center chaired by Brig. Gen. Jose Proceso Torrelavega and Sultan Saifudin Tomawis, respectively. The two parties agreed: 1) after the approval of their internal procedures by appropriate GRP and MILF authorities, to determine and verify the limits of the seven MILF camps: Abubakar As-Siddique, Bushra Somiorang, Rajamuda, Umar, Badre, Darapanan, and Bilal; 2) to create three sub-committees/ working groups; 3) to work for the total and full implementation of the general cessation of hostilities signed on July 18, 1997 at Cagayan de oro City; and 4) to fully support the Independent Fact-Finding

Committee (IFFC) and the Quick Response Team (QRT) in their mandated tasks.

On February 26, the GRP and MILF Sub-Committees on Agenda-Setting, chaired by Exec. Dir. Alma Evangelista and Sheikh Moner Bajunaid, respectively, called for an emergency meeting at the Provincial Capitol of Maguindanao to discuss, among other related issues, the early holding of the peace talks between the government and the MILF. Accordingly, they tentatively set the schedule of the formal peace talks for May this year. However, both the venue and exact date were not yet agreed upon. The GRP wanted it held in the Philippines, while the MILF preferred it to be held either in Malaysia or Indonesia. They also set the tentative schedule of the meeting of the GRP and MILF Technical Committees, an *en banc* session, for March 25, 1999.

On March 9, the GRP and MILF Coordinating Committees on the Cessation of Hostilities met briefly at the Notre Dame University Peace Center, Cotabato City, mainly to discuss internal procedures so that they could carry out their tasks more effectively, especially the implementation of the ceasefire and the verification and determination of the MILF camps and positions. The MILF was represented by Sultan Saifoden Tomawis, Badawi "Boy"Hashim, Jerry Abubakar, Eid Kabalu, and other members of the group, and the GRP by Lt. Col. Ernesto Aradanas, Maj. Jaime Calunsag, and Capt. Jose Emmanuel Jabido. They agreed to meet again on March 18 at the same venue.

Earlier, what was billed as a "shot in the arm" to push the GRP-MILF peace negotiation into high gear did not take place, due principally to the untimely disclosure of some vital details of the meeting particularly the date and venue. President Joseph Estrada and Chairman Salamat Hashim were supposed to meet on February 28 at the Notre Dame University -- not to discuss contentious issues like " independence" and "constitution" – but to speed up the resolution of the conflict in Mindanao through peaceful means. All security and protocol arrangements or requirements had been discussed and agreed upon except for some minor items such as the size of the official entourage of each party. The text of the joint communique had been more or less finalized and readied for signing on meeting day. The preparatory committee had met on several times to iron out details of the meeting. The GRP was represented by Secretary Robert Aventajado and General Jocelin Nazareno, AFP Chief of Staff, and the MILF by Vice Chairman Ghazali Jaafar and Sammy Al-Mansoor,

Deputy Chief of Staff of the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF). All systems were ready for the meeting, until the unexpected happened.

According to verified reports, General Jocelin Nazareno disclosed the date and venue of the proposed Estrada-Hashim one-on-one meeting. He made the disclosure during an interview with reporters Maki Pulido of ABS-CBN and Sylvia Calderon of Sarimanok News Agency (SNN) on February 23 in Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao. Undoubtedly, the Estrada-Hashim meeting was the hottest news of the time. Media persons would surely score a coup when they break this news – which the two reporters did the following day.

Why did General Nazareno leak the secret meeting, given the security risks that premature disclosure posed to President Estrada and MILF Chairman Salamat Hashim? Giving General Nazareno the benefit of the doubt, the MILF attributed the untimely disclosure to human error (a slip of the tongue) rather than a sabotage. General Nazareno did not become AFP Chief of Staff by being crude and clumsy. Assuming that he had been influenced to short-circuit the top level meeting, he could have done the job better and with finesse.

Contrary to reports, including some statements attributed to President Estrada, the meeting was aborted, not because of the MILF's many demands, but because of time constraint. With the original meeting compromised by premature disclosure, the whole process of discussing, agreeing on and physically setting up the sundry details of an alternative venue have to be totally repeated. While both GRP and the MILF had proposed alternatives, reaching a consensus would still require time. Because it valued its own security, the MILF understood the GRP's corresponding security concerns. An untoward incident that may endanger the GRP could also threaten the MILF; it could shatter all confidence building measures and make them harder to rebuild. A small spark, which could ignite massive conflagration, could be rekindled by third parties – saboteurs of peace – those hostile to the GRP, to the MILF or to both. The death toll would be tragic. Multitudes would come, not only to catch a glimpse of a film star-turned-politician, but also to witness and be part of history in the making.

However, GRP and MILF organizers of the Estrada-Hashim meeting were not about to give up. In fact, they told reporters they had already agreed in principle where, when and how the two leaders would meet. They however did not provide details.

After several delays, including some aborted meetings, the GRP-MILF Coordinating Committees on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCHs) met in Davao City on May 5-6, 1999. In this meeting, they agreed to initial the final draft of the Rules and Procedures in the Determination and Verification of the Coverage of Cessation of Hostilities. The two panels agreed that the formal signing shall take place when the GRP and MILF Technical Committees en banc would meet three days later.

On May 8-9, as scheduled, the GRP and MILF Technical Committees conducted their 12th *en banc* session at the Provincial Capitol of Maguindanao. Their main concern was to finalize the agenda of the forthcoming formal negotiations between the government and the MILF, including the venue and the date. Unexpectedly, the document was not signed due to some technical complications arising out of Rule V or the Separability Clause in the draft proposal of the Rules and Procedures in the Determination and Verification of the Coverage of Cessation of Hostilities. These required the CCCHs to finish their tasks of verification and validation of the seven identified MILF camps within 60 days upon signing of this document. It was deemed that such a time frame was too short for the CCCHs to finish their job of verification and determination. The venue of the formal talks was also another hitch. The government wanted the talks held in Philippine soil while the MILF insisted on a foreign venue, at least for the opening ceremonies. The MILF proposed either one of the three states, in the order of preference, as venue of the talks, namely, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Libya.

The meeting adjourned without achieving any concrete results, except the mutual understanding to meet again.

After an exchange of notes and communications, the MILF later agreed not to insist on the foreign venue of the formal talks. This change of mind was not to toe the government line that the problem is an internal affair of the Philippines, and hence, must be settled here in the Philippines. The MILF simply gave greater importance to substance, rather than to form, of the talks. Whether the talks would be in Philippine soil or in a foreign country is only secondary

to the urgency of settling the problem as soon as possible.

On May 18, the GRP-MILF CCCHs met again at Estosan Hotel, Cotabato City to sign the agreement on the determination and verification of the coverage of the cessation of hostilities. The MILF CCCH was represented by Sultan Saifoden Tomawis, Badawi "Boy" Hashim, Jerry Abubakar, and Guinaid Paduman. The GRP counterpart was composed of Brig. Gen. Jose Torrelavega, S/Supt Jainal Jamasali, Lt. Col. Ricardo Torrevillas, and Maj. Policarpio Zacarias. Witnesses were Lt. Gen. Orlando Soriano (Ret) witnessed for the GRP while Ghazali Jaafar signed for the MILF. The two CCCHs agreed to meet again in the same venue to finalize plans to discharge their mandated tasks properly and effectively. They also identified the facilities, security arrangements and communications equipment to be used during the conduct of inspections. Aside from Camp Abubakar As-Siddique and Camp Bushra Somiorang, which were already identified and acknowledged since February 10, 1999, there are five additional camps of the MILF, as stated earlier. These are Camp Umar Ibn Khattab, Camp Badre, Camp Darapanan, all in Maguindanao; Camp Bilal in Lanao del Norte; and Camp Rajahmuda in North Cotabato-Maguindanao. In this meeting, the two parties had fixed until August 31 as the time frame for confirming if the seven camps were indeed established and occupied by the MILF.

The GRP-MILF CCCHs started their tasks of verifying the MILF camps initially in two phases. The first phase started with Camp Abubakar As-Siddique on June 10. Camp Bilal was verified next on June 12. Then they verified Camp Bushra Somiorang on June 13. The second phase began a week later. On June 21, the CCCHs visited and verified two camps, Camp Darapanan in the morning and Camp Rajahmuda in the afternoon. On June 23, they verified Camp Umar and Camp Badre.

In every verification activity, a brief program took place, which included a welcome address by the host camp commander. The camp coordinator briefed the visitors on the history and current status of the camp as well as the activities therein. Usually, messages

of support for peace and development from well-meaning sympathizers and non-government organizations (NGOs) were sent to the GRP-MILF CCCHs.

However, the fate of the other MILF camps was still unclear. The GRP-MILF CCCHs had not made a definitive stance whether or not to visit them or even to schedule visiting them. In fact, this was the bone of contention during the meeting of the GRP-MILF sub-committees on agenda setting held at the Da'wah Center, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao on June 15-16, 1999. The MILF wanted the opening of the formal talks between the GRP and MILF only after all its 46 camps are officially identified, verified and acknowledged. But the GRP insisted on holding it simultaneously with the inspections. The two technical committees adjourned without the usual joint statement that explained the highlights of the meeting. They agreed, however, to schedule another round of meetings in July to tackle this contentious issue and finalize the rules, procedures and protocol that will govern the preparation and conduct of the formal negotiations. They also discussed and agreed on a list of prospective observers or guests. This included ambassadors of foreign states, agencies of the United Nations, and other world or regional organizations, which included the Organization of Islamic Conference, Muslim World League, International Committee of the Red Cross, and the World Assembly of Muslim Youth, and other non-government organizations. They also created a Joint Working Committee to undertake the task identifying observers and guests to the opening of the formal talks.

Meanwhile, former Executive Secretary Ruben Torres, accompanied by the GRP main negotiator, Department of National Defense Undersecretary Orlando Soriano, paid a friendly visit to Chairman Salamat Hashim inside Camp Abubakar As-Siddique on June 15. This was their first meeting since the latter returned to Mindanao in December 1987. Joining Hashim in the meeting were Al Haj Murad Ibrahim, Aleem Abduladzis Mimbantas, Ghazali Jaafar, Mohagher Iqbal, Sammy Al-Mansoor, Omar Hassan, Muhammad Muntassir, and other high ranking members of the MILF Central Committee.

Torres and Jaafar were instrumental in paving the way for the opening of the GRP-MILF peace deal in 1997. They met twice in 1996 – first in Davao City, then in Cagayan de Oro City – to discuss the mechanics of the proposed talks. In the Estrada administration, Torres was appointed adviser to the GRP negotiating panel.

On July 22, the second phase of the verification activities of the GRP-MILF CCCHs started. First to be inspected in the morning was Camp Abu Ubaidah in the Provinces of Sultan Kudarat and Sarangani, and in the afternoon, it was Camp Khalid Ibn Al Walid, also in Sarangani Province. After a day's rest in General Santos City, the members of the CCCHs proceeded to verify Camp Jabalsur in South Cotabato on July 24. The following day, they moved to Carmen, North Cotabato and inspected another major MILF camp, Othman Ibn Affan. From there, they proceeded to Davao City. On July 27, they moved to Davao Oriental and Compostela Valley to inspect Camp Salahudin Al Ayyubiy.

The GRP-MILF CCCHs was supposed to start the third phase of their verification in August, then in September, and then in October. The camps to be verified were Salman Al Farisi in Zamboanga Peninsula, Abu Muasanna in Basilan, and those in other parts of Western Mindanao, particularly in Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, and Palawan.

On July 14, Secretary Robert Aventajado made another sortie into Camp Abubakar As-Siddique to meet with Chairman Salamat Hashim. Former Miss Universe Margie Moran-Floirendo, accompanied Aventajado. The former Ms. Universe, who now hosts a weekly show on ABS-CBN, "Margie on Mindanao," conducted interviews with Salamat Hashim, Al Haj Murad Ibrahim, Aleem Abdulazis Mimbantas, Ghazali Jaafar, and Mohagher Iqbal. These interviews were to be featured in her TV program. While it was not clearly drawn, the purpose of the trip was believed part of the "back-channeling" diplomacy, especially on the subject of MILF camps. The GRP was not yet prepared to acknowledge these camps due to the stiff opposition of many non-Muslim politicians in North and South Cotabato.

As set earlier, the GRP and MILF Sub-committees on Agenda Setting met for the 14th time on July 26-28 at the Maguindanao Provincial Capitol in Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao to continue discussions on the preparation for the opening of the formal peace talks. Exec. Dir. Alma Evangelista was not around to head the GRP Technical Committee. In her place, Commodore Percival Adiong acted as chairperson. As usual, Sheikh Moner Bajunaid led the MILF group in the discussion.

A day before, Undersecretary Orlando Soriano met with Vice Chairman Ghazali Jaafar at Crossing Simuay, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao. With Soriano were Brig. Gen. Jose Torrelavega and Col. Delfin Lorenzana; and with Jaafar were Mohagher Iqbal, Badawi "Boy" Hashim and Atty. Napis Bidin. They tackled matters of mutual concern, including the need to clarify which of the reports was to be adopted – the one prepared in Davao City on July 20 by the Joint GRP-MILF CCCHs or the other one made in Manila, without the knowledge or participation of the MILF CCCH.

After an extended but friendly deliberation, the GRP finally gave in and subscribed to the version prepared in Davao City, which after all bore the signatures of the members of the GRP CCCH, especially that of Brig. Gen. Jose Torrelavega. They also agreed that the GRP and MILF Technical Committees would meet in the afternoon to start discussing the second acknowledgment of the five MILF camps and to finalize the program for the opening ceremonies of the GRP-MILF formal negotiations.

At 3:00 in the afternoon of July 26, the GRP and MILF Technical Committees started their work. It was on the second acknowledgment that they found themselves stalled in disagreement thereby forcing them to adjourn the session. However, they easily had consensus on the creation of two special committees purposely for the opening ceremonies of the formal peace talks. They also agreed to hold the opening of the formal talks either on September 9 or 25.

Late on July 27, the talks resumed. Unexpectedly, the GRP

presented a modified version of the second acknowledgment it presented earlier, which the MILF considered unacceptable. The session adjourned only on the next day. Even with the intervention of Secretary Aventajado and Brig. Gen. Rodolfo Garcia, commanding officer of the 6th Infantry Division on the side of the GRP, the two parties failed to break the impasse. The MILF, now taken over practically by its negotiating panel, did not budge an inch from its original position that all remaining camps of the MILF shall be inspected, verified, and acknowledged before the opening of the formal peace talks. Similarly, the GRP insisted on the clarification of the word "acknowledgment" before any new document on this would be signed. Again, the two parties adjourned without any agreement nor any specific date for their next meeting.

In that meeting, the MILF was led by Ghazali Jaafar. He was joined by Mohagher Iqbal, Sammy Al-Mansoor, Sheikh Abukhalil Yahya, Sheikh Muhammad Muntassir, and Sheikh Omar Pasigan. Also present were Maguindanao Gov. Zacaria Candao and Atty. Lanang Ali, OIC-Chairman of the MILF Technical Committee.

On August 16-19, 1999, the GRP and MILF Technical Committees held their 15th session at the Maguindanao Provincial Capitol, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao. The GRP was chaired by Exec. Dir. Alma Evangelista and the MILF by Atty. Lanang Ali. The agenda of the meeting were 1) second acknowledgment of the five MILF camps; 2) joint declaration for the opening of the GRP-MILF formal negotiations; and 3) finalization of the program for the opening ceremonies of the GRP-MILF formal negotiations.

After four days of hard and prolonged bargaining associated with emotional outbursts at times, the GRP and MILF negotiators failed again to sign the second acknowledgement of the five MILF camps, including their satellite camps, and the joint declaration for the opening of the GRP-MILF formal negotiations. They also failed to finalize the program for the opening ceremonies of the formal talks.

The controversial issues , which the government proposed but

the MILF vehemently objected, were three provisions of items No. 10: " What is Acknowledgement?" in the proposed "Primer on the Areas of Coverage of the Cessation of Hostilities Between the GRP and MILF", specifically as follows:

1. It [acknowledgment] shall not preclude the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Philippine National Police, and other law enforcement agencies of the Republic of the Philippines from performing, respectively, their mandated statutory functions and duties of security, peacekeeping, and law enforcement within the effected areas.

2. It [acknowledgment] shall not diminish or adversely affect the duly mandated authority of the officials of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines over the affected areas.

3. It [acknowledgment] shall not, any way, decrease or reconfigure the territory of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines; and it shall not contravene the existing laws, regulations and ordinances of the Republic of the Philippines and the subdivisions thereof.

The GRP was actually trying to extract a favorable definition of the term "acknowledgment" before it agreed to sign anything including even the Joint Declaration for the formal opening of the GRP-MILF Formal Peace Negotiations, earlier set on September 25. It is now reset to October 9 due to the many intervening deadlocks in the talks. The GRP insisted that "acknowledgment" would mean "conditionalities", which implies that this "recognition" or "acceptance" or any given event will only occur if it is certain that another event has taken place or will take place. The MILF argued on the contrary by saying that the word has no meaning or meanings aside from those already found in standard dictionary, including a legal dictionary, which defines "acknowledgment" as "the recognition and acceptance of the physical existence of something." The MILF further argued that the word had already been used in the Joint Acknowledgment of Camp Abubakar As-Siddique and Camp Bushra Somiorang on February 10, 1999. In this document,

no less than Secretary Robert Aventajado, AFP Chief of Staff General Jocelin Nazareno, Cong. Simeon Datumanong (2nd District, Maguindanao) and Maguindanao Governor Zacaria Candao were among the witnesses-signatories. Lt. Gen. Orlando Soriano, Chairman of the GRP Negotiating Panel, signed in behalf of the government, while Vice Chairman Ghazali Jaafar represented the MILF. Also affixing their signatories as witnesses for the MILF were Mohagher Iqbal, Chair, Committee on Information, and Sammy Al-Mansoor, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces.

Herein below is the text of said Joint Acknowledgment of the GRP and MILF Technical Committees:

As a confidence-building measure in the furtherance of the peace process, we, the undersigned, hereby acknowledge Camp Abubakar As-Siddique and Camp Bushra Somiorang as MILF camps to be covered by the cessation of hostilities for the duration of the GRP-MILF Peace Talks.

Along this line, we hereby task the GRP and MILF Coordinating Committees on Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH) to immediately schedule at its first meeting the determination of the limits of these two (2) camps to be submitted to the GRP and MILF Peace Panels for confirmation.

The CCCH shall also proceed to determine and verify other MILF camps to ensure the proper coordination of the implementation of the cessation of hostilities for the duration of the peace talks.

Done this 10th Day of February 1999 at the Da'wah Center, Crossing Simuay, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao.

On the 19th of August, the talks continued until late in the afternoon. Atty. Lanang Ali and Commodore Percival Adiong met at the Provincial Capitol of Maguindanao to try to break the impasse. However, nothing came out of this meeting, except a harsh exchange of words between Ali and a certain Atty. Zosimo Jesus Paredes II,

who was not even a formal member of the GRP Technical Committee.

With these developments, the GRP-MILF low-level talks appeared to have been in a virtual state of collapse. The MILF had firmly made clear that it will never sign any deal that would require it to recognize Philippine laws nor would it allow government agencies from performing their functions and duties of security, peacekeeping and law enforcement in said camps, except upon prior coordination.

In the early morning of August 18 one unusual event had interrupted the rather uneasy and unpredictable course of the low-level quest for peace in Mindanao. The Central Committee of the MILF, in deference to the spirit of the peace process with the government, had decided to return the six M-16 Armalite rifles seized earlier by MILF forces from members of the Engineering Construction Team, Engineer Support Battalion, 55th Engineer Brigade, on August 1 in the village of Angkayamat, Sultan sa Barongis, Maguindanao. In a simple and unannounced ceremony, Vice Chairman Ghazali Jaafar turned over the firearms to Undersecretary Orlando Soriano. Only Maguindanao Gov. Zacaria Candao and some senior members of the MILF Central Committee of the MILF witnessed the turnover.

Undersecretary Orlando Soriano, Chair of the GRP Negotiating Panel, hurriedly returned to Manila via Davao City reportedly "disheartened" and of course, "empty-handed." He was overheard to have told a member of his group that the matter now rested with Cabinet Cluster E of Pres. Joseph Estrada. This cluster handles political issues of high magnitude, such as negotiations with armed groups fighting the Philippine government. Members of this Cluster E included the Executive Secretary, the Secretary of National Defense, the Secretary of Justice, the Secretary of Interior and Local Government and the National Security Adviser.

Quite unexpectedly, few days later, former Executive Secretary Ruben Torres, obviously not acting on his own but with the go-signal from the government, first made a call to Ghazali Jaafar in

Maguindanao. He finally met Jaafar, Mohagher Iqbal, and Sammy Al Mansoor in Davao City on August 24 to confer with them the possibility of breaking the deadlock. Armed with good grasp of the political line of every genuine revolutionary organization, including the methods of handling situations and issues, himself being one-time a communist or to say the least, socialist, Torres had no hard time appreciating the arguments of the MILF leaders. At the end of the meeting, he casually told his MILF "friends," "I'll talk to them" (referring to the members of the GRP panel).

On September 2, after a brief exchange of notes, Torres and Undersecretary Orlando Soriano flew to Maguindanao. After conferring with leaders of the MILF, they finally agreed to push ahead with the peace deal by signing a document containing the following provisions:

1. Both parties agreed to hold the opening ceremony of the formal peace talks at the historic Da'wah Center, Crossing Simuay, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao on October 25, 1999.

2. Both parties also agreed that the inspections, verifications and acknowledgment of the remaining MILF identified areas shall continue until its completion on December 31, 1999.

Undersecretary Soriano signed for the GRP and Vice Chairman Ghazali Jaafar for the MILF. Torres, Secretary Aventajado, and Maguindanao Governor Zacaria Candao also signed as witnesses.

The two parties also agreed to schedule the next round of meeting of the GRP and MILF Technical Committees on September 14-15, 1999. This meeting will discuss and finalize plans for the historic opening ceremony of the GRP-MILF Formal Peace negotiations on October 25, 1999 at the Da'wah Center, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao.

As indicated above, the two parties met on September 14 - 15 at the Maguindanao Provincial Capitol to discuss further the final preparation for the opening ceremony of the formal talks. They also delved deeply into the issue of acknowledgment of the remaining

MILF camps, which so far was the most contentious issue that boggled the mind of the negotiators of both parties.

On September 29 -30, the GRP and MILF Technical Committees again convened at the Maguindanao Provincial Capitol to smoothen preparation for the opening ceremony of the formal talks. The GRP and MILF Technical Committees started their session late in the afternoon of September 29. Joining the deliberation for the first time were chairmen and vice chairmen of the various subcommittees of the working committee for the opening ceremony. The subcommittees were: Protocol, Program and Invitation, Accommodation, Food, Security, Transportation, Physical Arrangements, Media Plan, Medical Team, and Health and Sanitation. As pointed out earlier, they agreed, among others, to invite foreign dignitaries, representatives of world organizations, non-government organizations, government officials, local and national, and leaders of indigenous natives in the Philippines. They also set two more meetings, October 13 and October 20, and they expected that by this time all systems would be in place and ready for the October 25 occasion.

The following afternoon of the second day, Undersecretary Orlando V. Soriano, accompanied by Brig. Gen. Jose Torrelavega, conferred with his MILF counterparts at the Maguindanao Provincial Capitol. However, hardly had they started exchanging notes when what began as "ordinary" reports of sniping or harassment suddenly degenerated into major engagements between government troops and MILF forces. Aside from the resurgence of fighting, the two parties also dealt on several urgent issues and concerns, such as the opening ceremony of the GRP-MILF formal peace negotiations and the third round of acknowledgment of MILF camps.

The MILF was represented by Aleen Abduladzis Mimbantas, Ghazali Jaafar, Mohagher Iqbal, Sammy Al Mansoor, and other senior officials of the Front. Also present was Maguindanao Governor Zacaria Candao, who acted as facilitator of the closed-door meeting.

The first encounter that really sparked the six-day confrontations occurred in Butilen Bridge, near the town proper of Datu Piang, Maguindanao, on September 30. A squad of MILF special forces, who "accidentally" bumped into a column of army soldiers, chose to fight it out "dead or alive" rather than to withdraw nowhere, because on both sides of the bridge are marshes, which offered no natural cover against bullets, cannons, and bombs. Consequently, their will to fight — or rather will to die — paid off unexpectedly. Though suffering two killed and as many wounded and the loss of one M-60 machinegun, one RPG launcher, and one M-79 grenade launcher, the *mujahideen* succeeded to smash two tanks, killed seven army soldiers and wounded several others. The second encounter, which actually started earlier on September 29 and silenced only five days later, was over "Hill 150" in the boundary of the municipalities of Sharif Aguak and Datu Piang, both in Maguindanao. Eight hundred meters away from the national highway and only a kilometer distance from Camp Umar Ibn Khattab, the hill was strategically located that neither the government nor the MILF was willing to give it up without a fight. The bloody armed skirmishes claimed the lives of 23 army soldiers and eight MILF fighters.[11] The government, however, could only admit one soldier killed and 16 others wounded, against 15 slain on the MILF side.[12]

Far from subsiding, the clashes were spreading in at least two provinces in Central Mindanao. Several army positions in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat and Maitum, Sarangani were under siege when MILF forces started counterattacking on October 4. The move was partly in retaliation to the September 28 raid conducted by soldiers of the 25th Infantry Battalion, Philippine Army, against MILF Post No. 5 in Ticalub, Maitum, Sarangani, resulting in two *mujahideen* killed and three wounded. It was also aimed at forcing the government to pullout some of its forces in Maguindanao and send them as reinforcements to these newly-opened battle areas.

Because of the situation and the threat of the MILF to forego with the October 25 opening ceremony, Undersecretary Orlando Soriano and former Executive Secretary Ruben Torres hurriedly few

Maguindanao to confer with the leaders of the MILF on how to stop the fighting and proceed with the scheduled opening ceremony. The two government emissaries were fully aware of the adverse consequences to the peace process and the development of Mindanao if the ceremony would not push through.

On October 5, the two parties held a conference at the Maguindanao Provincial Capitol to retrace their steps and finally to find ways to pursue the opening ceremony as slated. Former Executive Secretary Ruben Torres, Undersecretary Orlando Soriano, Brig. Gen. Jose Torrelavega, and Atty. Zosimo Jesus Paredes II, GRP legal consultant, represented the government, while Ghazali Jaafar, Mohagher Iqbal, Sammy Al Mansoor, Sheikh Ali Ismail, Sheikh Abukhalil Yahya, Sheikh Muhammad Muntassir, and Abdulmanaf Mantawil acted in behalf of the MILF. As usual, Maguindanao Governor Zacaria Candao arranged the meeting. After more than two hours of closed-door meeting, the two parties agreed to meet again the following day.

Notwithstanding the skirmishes along the Cotabato city-General Santos national highway, the two parties patiently proceeded to resolve the remaining contentious issues, forged new agreements, and jointly declared that the opening ceremony would push through as earlier set. The first document contained the second joint acknowledgment, subject to some conditions, of the five MILF camps/positions, namely, Bilal in Lanao del Norte, Rajamuda in North Cotabao and Maguindanao; Badre in Maguindanao; Umar Ibn Khattab in Maguindanao; and Darapanan in Maguindanao. The second agreement was an addendum on the powers and functions of the GRP-MILF CCCH stipulated in the Implementing Administrative and Operational Guidelines of the GRP-MILF Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities. This agreement gave "more authority and substance" to the GRP-MILF Coordinating Committees for the Cessation of Hostilities, which at times were "ignored" by some commanders of both the GRP and the MILF, especially by those of the former. And the third document was the joint statement signed by Undersecretary Orlando Soriano and Ghazali Jaafar, Vice Chair-

man for Political Affairs, MILF, which formally announced and reaffirmed the holding of the opening ceremony of the formal talks.

Finally on October 25, a simple but colourful opening ceremony was held at the Da'wah Center, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao. The program started at 9:00 in the morning and ended before high noon. In their speeches, leaders of both the GRP and MILF expressed high hopes that lasting peace would now reign in Mindanao.

Looking Beyond

As pointed out in the preceding chapter, a negotiation is a process of conferring with one another, so as to arrive at a settlement of a problem. As a process, it is made up of a series of actions or operations that lead toward a particular result acceptable or conducive to the parties in the conflict. As it usually takes time for conflict to reach some kind of boiling point, it often also takes time to solve the conflict. In addition, there are basic essentials of the undertaking that should be attended to first, like choice of venue, the timing, the forced pace of negotiations, and the setting of the agenda. Across the negotiating table, one will have to face someone with specific interests to promote and to defend. The other party cannot be expected to concede every point.

In the light of the above, one cannot expect the problem in Mindanao to be solved, much as we want it, in a year's time, or in two years, three years, many more years. This is a problem that has accumulated through the ages, with confusingly interwoven and tangled strands. The GRP-MILF low-level talks are barely more than two years old and their advance had been slowed down and saddled by one obstruction after another. There seems to be no way out of these quandary, often rendered more agonizing by "saboteurs" of the peace process. We cannot insist on a rigid timetable with deadlines; nor can we cut corners to shorten the route to our destination. A negotiation, as underscored above, is a process -- we need to identify our objective, plan our method, make available our resources, and more importantly, marshal everything in us, our unwavering determination, to strive through to the end.

To illustrate, in the negotiations in Paris between the Vietnamese and the Americans during the Vietnam War, deciding on the shape of the table took an enormous amount of time. During the Algerian revolution, Ahmad Ben Bella, leader of the National Liberation Front (NLF), was arrested and jailed in Paris despite the on-going negotiation to end the crisis. The GRP-MNLF negotiations which started in 1975 apparently ended only in 1996, some 22 years in the making. In the case of the GRP-NDFP negotiation, one would not err too far in saying that this has been an off-and-on undertaking, with one or the other abandoning the talks for varied -- valid or silly -- reasons.

In several ways, the conflict in Mindanao is similar to the Algerian crisis. The French considered Algeria not as a colony but an integral part of France, providing it representation in the French national assembly like any other constituency in metropolitan France. The settlers or *colons* controlled the Algerian government and the economy, and owned most of the land and industry. Seeing that the war against the Algerian nationalists was "unwinnable," Pres. Charles de Gaulle, a realist, first agreed, as a matter of strategy, to grant autonomy to the Algerians and then finally independence in 1962. The decision struck the settlers and their ally, the French army units, like a thunderbolt. In protest, they staged a failed revolt against de Gaulle early in 1960, and in 1961 a group of army generals again tried to overthrow him.

The Mindanao conflict is an endless human drama with all its ugly sides and events. The war may not be won by either side, but largely it is the government's national interests which are affected most, including its stature and credibility in the international community of nations.

The current GRP-MILF peace negotiation is the most sensible substitute to war. The two parties may not have achieved substantial results at the moment, but if they persevere, move forward and look beyond today, who knows that after these bruised and gruelling negotiations, they may yet be blessed with the best formula ever to solve this crisis in Mindanao.

CHAPTER 12

ARE TYRANTS FOREVER?

Who Are the Tyrants?

We have described the Moros as a nation living under an endless tyranny. But who are the tyrants and why are the Moros tyrannized?

If there was one Filipino president who got close to becoming a tyrant or actually became one, he could easily have been Pres. Ferdinand Marcos. He was dubbed, perhaps rightly, as a "dictator" or a "tyrant." But it would be somewhat inexact if one considers him thoroughly a "tyrant." A tyrant is one who rules with absolute power, unrestrained by law or constitution. At least, Marcos had his cabinet, a national assembly, a constitution and a supreme court — though all were rubber-stamps.

Tyranny does not come only from men. There is tyranny of time, there is tyranny of ideas, there is tyranny of numbers. Pres. Thomas Jefferson of the United States once described it as an oppressive power exerted over the minds of people. And any severe condition with an oppressive effect is tyranny.

All the above tyrannies somehow plagued the Moros. Every form of tyranny had already worked on the physical and mental existence of the Moros, individually and collectively. The Spanish colonial regime in Manila was tyrannical in character. Spanish governor-generals were more or less independent in running the affairs of the colony. Spain was very far and for the most part the Spanish Crown ruled the Philippines through Mexico. Similarly, American generals in Mindanao and Sulu almost had a free hand "in cutting the Moro foot to suit the American shoe." Military commanders were good at cutting corners in making decisions. Is the tyranny of 400 years too short for a people to suffer the nightmare of time? The Moros are not only minority, but since the American regime the majority has always decided for them.

The King Could Do No Wrong

Early Christians believed that God imposed the state upon man as punishment for Adam's fall from grace in the Garden of Eden. This divine origin of the state presupposes that the king, who derived his authority from God, could do no wrong and therefore must be obeyed at all times.

This theory is similarly upheld in the Philippines. The Constitution, no matter how imperfect it is and how many loopholes it has, must be obeyed at all times, because it is the supreme law of the land. This follows that any arrangement that is found unconstitutional, no mater how good and beneficial, is still bad and unacceptable, because the Constitution does not permit it. Of course, the rationale behind this is the preservation of the sovereignty, stability and personality of the state. While this view is understandable, because it is identifiable with -- and cannot be detached from -- national interest and survival, in fact the implications and consequences are not always good. As history has shown, the state, which is perceived as the ultimate epitome of *Summum Bonum* or the "highest good for the highest number," would sometimes prefer to do what is morally bad or undesirable to what is good and beneficial.

This is likened to what John Stuart Mill, the famous British economist and philosopher of the 19th century, branded as tyranny of the majority.[22] Unmistakably, in the Philippines, the will of the majority is one and identified with the will of the Christian majority and, sad to state, the government represents them to the disadvantage of the minority groups like the Moros and the *Lumads*.

The tyranny of ideas was best exemplified when the government rationalized that any agreement with any of the revolutionary groups must not be violative of the Constitution. But the hard fact is that this Constitution does not epitomize the dreams and aspirations of the minority with whom the government is negotiating and, on the contrary, it is solely designed to suit the

majority's concept of right or wrong and its standards and interests.

The truth of the situation is that as far as the resolution of the Moro issue is concerned or in any given argument for that matter, there cannot be a monolithic view, not even three views – yours, mine and the correct one, as other proponents would put it. The truth is that there are as many views as there are individuals, groups or organizations in this part of the world, who are directly concerned or have great stake in the conflict under settlement and negotiation. Different peoples, different groups, and different organizations have different points of view. It is human nature to disagree.

Which side or view is correct depends much on the eye of the beholder, or which side of the political, social or religious divide one is identified with. If the MNLF and the government are asked, certainly their reply would be to affirm the validity or rightness of their final agreement as the ultimate solution to Mindanao problem.

On this score, President Ramos made this assertion during the signing of the GRP-MNLF Final Agreement:

> *Today we not only witness history: We make it. Today, with the formal signing of the final peace agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), we bring to a close almost 30 years of conflict, at the cost of more than 120,000 Filipino lives.* [2]

MNLF Chairman Nur Misuari corroborated this statement by saying:

> *We have agreed to end the war and restore peace. This is a very momentous, very historic occasion. This will be written in the golden pages of history.* [3]

Following this line of argument, all non-conforming views concerning the final solution to the Mindanao problem are peremptorily rendered wrong, fallacious or simply untenable or

utopian. But who sets the standards of evaluation? Who gives this authority to evaluate or pass judgment? By whose mutual orcommon agreement, and for whom? For what and for whom is this prescription intended? Who knows this problem better -- the government, the MNLF, the OIC, or the people themselves?

More than two years after the signing of the GRP-MNLF Final Agreement, no law has been passed in Congress, as provided for in the agreement, that would incorporate its terms into law. Nor was a plebiscite conducted to determine which of the provinces or cities would opt to join the expanded autonomous region. Nur Misuari is seething with anger over the delay, but he has limited options to reverse this. He is already in the mainstream society and is a government official as governor of the so-called Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). The only way out, if he still has the resolve, is to go back to the hills and fight the government once again.

It seems the clock of the day of reckoning has already started ticking. The GRP-MNLF accord is now under the scrutiny of time and soon history will give its verdict on whether that GRP-MNLF pact is the solution to the problem or would become part of the problem. That day is not very far away. As a matter of fact, this early the MNLF is getting all sorts of negative comments. One writer acidly observed recently:

> *The MNLF is ..., for all intents and purposes, a spent force. Its leaders are not only aging but have degenerated into pathetic local officials fighting over whatever patronage crumbs [are] thrown to them by Manila.*
>
> *MNLF chief Nur Misuari is sounding and acting more and more like a politico with very little power or influence in Mindanao and Philippine politics. He may have the appropriate titles and amenities of office, but he is ignored by other Mindanao politicians and has no voice in the Estrada administration.*[4]

Colonialism: Mother of Culprits

Before us is a problem that has stayed in our midst for over 400 years. The changing times and the changing leaders, from the colonial period up to the present, have miserably failed to solve the problem once and for all. And chances are that even with the signing of the GRP-MNLF Final Agreement and their mutual declaration for the termination of the 30-year war, the problem will continue to plague this country.

The Philippines is a unitary and highly centralized state which, historically, was an arbitrary creation of the succession of colonial powers that invaded this country. The Moros, as discussed earlier, valiantly stood their ground, succeeded in preserving their distinct way of life, and consolidated their own national political life separately from the colonized natives. However, when the Filipinos, as neo-colonial administrators, succeeded, they followed the footsteps of their masters. This neo-colonialism or, for the purpose of this section, this "internal colonialism," is clearly manifest in the so-called rule of the majority, the Filipinos, over the minorities like the Moros.[5] The neo-colonial power imposes policies that are invariably and solely based on the standard of the majority people's interests. The GRP-MNLF Final Agreement speaks well of this policy. It has very few substantial provisions, especially on the use of natural resources and the powers of the local governants to police and cleanse themselves -- which could have enhanced and strengthened the present ARMM. SPCPD Chairman and ARMM Governor Nur Misuari has since been complaining about many things such as lack of funds, lack of police powers, and the "untimely" GRP-MILF peace talks.

Up to this time, the GRP-MNLF peace agreement is still practically a dead accord. Defying or ignoring this agreement, Congress has not yet passed a law amending or repealing Republic Act 6734, the law that created the ARMM. Without a new organic act for submission to the people in a plebiscite, it cannot be known which of the 14 provinces and 13 cities covered by the Southern Philippines for Peace and Development (inclusive of those specified

in the Tripoli Agreement), will join the area of autonomy. Nor is it certain whether Joseph Estrada -- to honor this agreement credited to his predeccessor as President, Fidel Ramos -- would deliver on the government's side of the commitments made. If he does not, Misuari would be virtually in a bind. Misuari has no sure way of untangling himself from the entrapment. If he sticks it out with the government, he would be no less than submitting himself to its mercy or tyranny.

The neo-colonial masters are not only making life miserable for the Moros, they are also plundering the wealth of Mindanao. The mineral resources and the rivers, lands, forests, etc. are sacrificed on the altar of development for these neo-colonial masters. They are also the main source of many evils in society. Their value system runs counter to that of the Moros. What Islam prohibits they not only tolerate but oftentimes promote. Islam abhors alcoholism, gambling, prostitution, free-mixing of sexes, charging of interests, while they approve and sometimes institutionalize.

Recent history is replete with cases of pogroms designed to undermine the welfare of the Moros right in their own homeland. Let us forget the planting of colonies right in the middle of their communities and the indiscriminate granting of lands to newcomers and multinational corporations. They may interest our readers no more. We would cite just two concrete examples. One was the 20,000 -hectare logging concession awarded to the Cotabato Timber Corporation, Inc. (CTCI) which was situated in the predominantly Moro town of Buldon, Maguindanao. Despite its dwindling timber stand and the meager profits, the CTCI still persisted in operating, disregarding the protestations of the people and destruction to the environment. Once big and powerful, Simuay River is less than half its size and depth two decades ago, because the watershed that supplies water to it is almost bald and dry.

The Agus River hydroelectric project is another example. The Moros around Lake Lanao, the main source of the Agus River, denounced the project as disruptive to their cultural and religious practices. Some of their religious practices including those related

to the mosque like ablution and bathing, depended on the level of water in the lake, which would be disturbed significantly by the dam. They also charged that while the project supplies low-cost electricity to most of Mindanao, they, right at the source of power, either had no electricity or were burdened much by high electric rates levied by the National Power Corporation (NPC).

In summation, colonialism is a system of exploitation.[6] It brings forth economic backwardness, racial or ethnic conflict, and psychological disorder among the colonized inhabitants. Their lifestyles are also disrupted, cultures destroyed or heavily altered, and in many instances, entire peoples are exterminated or subjugated. Moreover, it conflicts directly with the rights of national sovereignty and self-determination.

Of course, the colonizers would disagree. They would rationalize their evil activities and argue that it is their moral responsibility to teach the backward and educate them. But does this rationalization alter the evils of colonialism suffered by the colonized peoples of the world, including the Moros of Mindanao? The depleted natural resources and the absence of alternative economic activities that benefit the Moros? Given the data above, colonialism or neo-colonialism is indeed the mother of all culprits in Mindanao.

Foreign Interference: Age-old Evil

The state of affairs in Mindanao is also greatly influenced by external pressures or foreign interference. Foreign interference, whether expressed directly or indirectly, does not only affect the, formulation of government policies, but also the turn of events in the area, particularly in terms of internal conflict and the economic life of the people. These external political forces, to enumerate the lead actors, count the OIC, the United States, Japan, West Germany, Great Britain, Canada, France, Taiwan, and most of the ASEAN states.

Today, it is a fact of global power-play politics that one state

or group of states interferes with or intervenes in the affairs of another state or states by request, imposition or outright invasion. Classical cases of intervention included those in Korea, Palestine, Israel, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, Yugoslavia, Argentina, and Ethiopia.

Intervention, *per se*, is bad and against the Charter of the United Nations. This is the general rule. An exception is allowed in special cases. But today these exceptions have creepingly become the general rule. In the name – or under the guise – of humanitarian or global security reasons, intervention is committed everywhere, especially by big and powerful nations.

In what ways could interference possibly benefit people and terminate conflicts? Would it promote genuine peace and development, say, in Mindanao?

Invariably, the state formulates foreign policy and conducts diplomatic relations solely on the basis of national interest. "My country, right or wrong" is still the foundation of all foreign policies of nations today. It has not changed with the passing of time and the coming of state-of-the-art technology.

Be this as it may, the fact is that using the good offices of a third party in the settlement of a state's internal dispute is a widely accepted practice. It is gaining acceptance among states world-wide, either as a matter of expediency or an addition to the practice of diplomacy. The OIC's role in the Mindanao conflict was in line with this practice. Its participation was deemed beneficial to all the parties in the conflict. The OIC was merely helping the peace initiatives to move forward and succeed. Except in 1979 and 1980, [7] neither the OIC nor any of its member-states had tried directly to pressure the Philippine government for a role in arbitrating the Mindanao conflict. By and large, OIC efforts have been exceptionally within the ambit of diplomatic etiquette and procedure.

The case of the United States is a different story. For the U.S., the stakes in the Philippines are high and varied. The three most

important considerations are political, economic and military, all strategically related to her prime standing as the world's number one superpower and the world's premier self-styled policeman. In all three, she needs the Philippines, which she finds to be a steady and willing partner. The Philippines has consistently shown her loyalty and the United States simply does not want to lose that loyalty, nor is willing to write this off. It is a valued prize, not so in terms of friendship but because American national and global interests demand it.

Since 1991 until May 26, 1999, the U.S. exerted pressure through her huge investment here. American multinational companies operating in Mindanao have earned huge profits from lands that used to belong to many indigenous tribes.[8] They seek overseas markets because of the unlimited potential for growth compared to limiting their operations within their home countries.[9] However, today, American influence can be carried out more effectively after the Philippine Senate concurred in the ratification of the RP-U.S agreement, later known as the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), on May 27, 1999, with a vote of 18 - 5 in favor. This agreement restored American military domination in the Philippines. Whatever clout the U.S. may have lost with the rejection of the Military Bases Agreement (MBA) in 1991 was restored when the Philippine Senate voted in favor of the VFA. Americans may not only be here physically and have access to more than 20 ports of the Philippines, but they may have also the privilege of indefinite stay and indeterminate number of places they can go. All these can provide the Americans enough elbow room to do what they want.

In some covert ways, and, undiscountedly, even including overt means -- thanks to the VFA -- the United States would help the Philippine government in its counter-insurgency campaigns, especially against the Communist New People's Army and, not surprisingly, against the so-called "Islamic extremists". The victory of either one of these perceived enemies, or just a serious military setback from them suffered by the "client state" such as the Philippines, could send not only a wrong signal to allies and foes alike and to her business partners abroad, but this situation is

simply unacceptable.

For instance, the psychological-military doctrine of Low Intensity Conflict (LIC), though generally applied as an instrument of U.S. military aggression in Central America in the early 1980s, traces its roots to the anti-communist campaigns in the Philippines.[10]

Militarization: The Main Punch

What is the reason for the continued military build up in Mindanao amidst the successes of the government peace initiatives? If the civilian government is talking peace or reaping the fruits of peace, why is the military preparing for war? Is the government already abandoning the political approach in favor of a military option?

As a background, let us flash back of the status or militarization in Mindanao more than two decades ago. In 1972, the AFP was barely 70,000 in strength and its annual budget was only ₱500 million. At the height of the Moro rebellion in 1973-1975, the number swelled to more than 300 percent or 250,000 with a yearly expenditure of ₱3.5 billion, or an increase of 700 percent. In 1982, AFP regulars reached 275,000 and military spending skyrocketed from ₱7.1 billion in 1981 to ₱8.3 billion. Sixty percent of the army, half of the Marines, one-third of the Coast Guard, and 6,080 Air Force personnel and 200 pilots were deployed in Mindanao. In addition, there were 7,500 constables, 11,900 policemen, 64,000 ICHDFs and 35,000 paramilitary men.

Today, more than half of the AFP total strength is deployed in strategic areas in Mindanao, estimated at 40 to 45 battalions with 60,000 to 70,000 men.[11] Also stationed here are 40 percent of AFP artillery capability, 50 percent of armor assets, and 63 percent of tactical aircraft.[12] The province of Maguindanao alone is hosting one army division, two army brigades, one Marine brigade serving as SOUTHCOM's rapid deployment force, and one police regional command.[13] During the January 24-February 2, 1999 fighting in Maguindanao, the AFP said that of the 45 maneuver battalions in

Mindanao, 15 or one-third in Maguindanao: the army's 11th, 15th, 25th, 27th, 37th, 38th, 39th, 47th, 57th, 72nd, 75th and 78th, and the Marines' 3rd, 5th and 7th battalions. They were under the supervision of two army brigades and one Marine brigade. On standby at the 6th Infantry Division base in Awang, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao were four MG-520 attack helicopters, two OV-10 warplanes, four Huey helicopters, and two F-5 fighter planes.[14]

This massive troop build-up has not only heavily saturated the province of Maguindanao, but also North Cotabato, Lanao del Sur, Basilan, and Sulu, followed by Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and South Cotabato. The dangers inherent in this kind of situation always linger ominously in the air. The perpetuation of the previous widespread violations of human rights through summary executions, warrantless arrests, involuntary disappearances, seizures, torture, forced dislocation, hamletting, raids and bombings will most likely continue. Indeed, despite the signing of the GRP-MNLF Peace Agreement, heavy fighting is still taking place in many parts of Mindanao. The *Harakat Al-Islamiah* (Islamic Movement), more popularly known as Abu Sayyaf, after having stepped into the vacuum left by the MNLF, started to step up its attacks on government troops and installations in Basilan and Sulu. Quite unexpectedly, the New People's Army, after years of seeming dormancy, has hit back hard against the government. NPA guerrillas not only engaged army soldiers in several firefights in North Cotabato, the Davao areas, and Surigao, but managed to capture or "arrest" Brig. Gen. Victor Obillo and Capt. Eduardo Montealto in Davao City on February 17, 1999. And on March 5, they again struck in Lianga, Surigao del Sur, capturing one army sergeant, Sgt. Alipio Lozada, and 12 high-powered firearms. And not to be outpaced, the highland tribes are now fighting back in Davao del Sur, South Cotabato, Surigao and Sarangani, after they have been systematically pushed to the wall by settlers, loggers, and miners, and multinational investors. These confrontations are expected to increase and aggravate in the coming months or years, as the forces of vested interest groups are getting more and more favorable treatment from the government.

Severe Deprivation: In Continuum

1. Socio-Economic Marginalization — The areas occupied by the Moros are generally among the most depressed in the Philippines today. Life is so miserable that people could hardly make both ends meet — they are already at the edge of socio-economic survival. It is often said that the Moros 400 years ago were better off than their descendants today, despite the blessings of modernism, science and technology.

However, poverty is not the monopoly of the Moros. In fact it is besieging almost every home in the Philippines. On the eve of the imposition of Martial Law, one out of every two families was poor. In 1986, three out of every five families were poor.[15] Statistics show that the poorest of the poor depend only on rice, corn, sugar and coconut production.[16] Most of the poverty-stricken families are found in the rural communities.

The Moros are overwhelmingly rural dwellers, although many are finding the cities as their new havens from the raging conflict in the countrysides. Based on the 1991 Family Income and Expenditure Survey, average household incomes among the Moros were generally low. At least 83 percent of Moro families lived below the poverty line.[17] The majority of Moros get their income from agriculture, mainly subsistence farming and fishing. Crop farming, aqua-farm cultivation and orchard farming are among the primary occupations. Poultry raising, mat-weaving, and vegetable gardening are also practiced.

The usual reason given for this abject poverty is the alleged indolence of the Moros. The same accusation was hurled against the now industrious Filipinos (formerly *Indios*) by the Spaniards. The truth is that when any member of the human race, including a Moro, is motivated, as the Filipino now proves to be, he will become hard-working and productive.

2. Landlessness — The Moros are landless. The 1991 Census of Agriculture put the average farm size at 2.7 hectares for every

family.[18] The communal system of land ownership still persists. Several Moros still own a piece of land inherited from generation to generation. Most of their lands are untitled, or titled in other people's names.

However, the crux of the land issue is the contradiction between the state's legal system and the communal system prevalent among the Moros. This conflict of legal concepts and practices in land ownership had given rise to many related problems, such as landgrabbing by the moneyed and powerful and expropriation of vast tracts of land for use by the state to giant transnational companies.

In addition, this heart-rending situation is presently being aggravated by the renewed massive confiscation of land by the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) in connivance with corrupt employees of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), Register of Deeds, and greedy and moneyed individuals who managed to acquire and title -- through fraudulent transactions -- tens of thousands of hectares of land in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and sell them to the government through the voluntary-offer-to-sell (VOS) scheme. The names of former ARMM Governors Atty. Liningding Pangandamen and now Maguindanao Governor Zacaria Candao were used without their knowledge, in validating spurious land titles. The syndicate managed to employ the services of the so-called "golden hands" who adroitly imitated the signatures of the two former ARMM governors, so deftly that they looked genuine and authentic. By power of money and threats, the syndicate sidestepped the hunt undertaken by agents of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) sent from Manila to look into the anomaly.

3. Poor Basic Services — The Moros are also deprived of basic services, such as electricity, potable water, sanitary toilet facilities, etc. The 1990 Census of Population and Housing indicated that, in Sulu, only 9.4 percent of the households had electricity, in Tawi-Tawi, 10.0 percent, in Maguindanao, 25.8 percent, in Lanao

del Sur, 34.9 percent, and in Basilan, 19.4 percent.[19]

Drinking water is a problem. Most households do not use faucets or any other water system. About half of the population drink from various types of wells, and the rest from rain, lakes, rivers, streams, and springs.

4. **Low Literacy** — In the field of education, more than one-fourth of the population has neither entered school nor finished elementary schooling. Primary education is the highest educational attainment enjoyed by two-fifths of the population. For every 20 elementary graduates, only seven finish high school and only one survives to earn a college diploma.[20]

Infant mortality among the Moros is higher due to unhealthy environmental conditions. There is inadequate access to medical services. Health education and nutrition are poor.

The Enemy Within: Harder to Crack

There is wisdom — no matter how it hurts — in the statement of Prof. Patricio Diaz, former Editor of the *Mindanao Kris*, when he addressed the following statement to the Muslims in general and to their leaders in particular. We shall comment on his statement further down this section. Here are his words:

> *Apparently, the leaders and the people in the Muslim Provinces have different outlook, foresight and priorities from those of the leaders and people in Christian provinces. This difference makes a big different achievements.*
>
> *All leaders in the Christian provinces tell their people to look forward to the year 2000 and beyond. Many Muslim leaders tell their people to look back to 1900 and farther back, highlighting their lost glory, the oppressions they have suffered and are suffering, and their being a different nation. Different motivations make different achievements.*[21]

The tyranny of the self over self is what we refer to here as the enemy within. Let us remember that when we point two accusing fingers at someone, our other three fingers are pointing back at us. While it is pointless to argue that the mother of all the culprits in the whole mess in Mindanao and Sulu is the colonization of this region, this does not mean that the Moros, particularly the leaders, have not been party to the aggravation of the situation. Dulawan (Buayan or Buhayen) is as old as or older than Manila, but see what there is in Dulawan that is good for the eyes to see. There may have been improvements lately, but rarely have they interested even the local population. There is really a sad inadequacy — many, many things wanting — in the leaders who have generally failed to discharge their duties to their people. While many or most of them have kept on enriching themselves, the people have continued to wallow in poverty and other deprivations.

What is more intriguing is that many of these leaders have a distorted sense of values. They claim to be of the best breed, they being the scions of "royal families," but try to examine many of the areas they control and compare them with those run by the "former slaves" of the Spaniards, the Christian Filipinos. They are almost beyond comparison. They seemed to have not known that one of the benchmarks of "nobility" and good upbringing is development, not only of themselves, but more importantly of their people and areas.

By the same token, the individual Moro or the entire population, with many exceptions, can be faulted also. They appear to have learned nothing and, by their misdeeds or omissions, they have excluded themselves from among those whom the Almighty has described as "the best of creations." What our forefathers used to do many centuries ago, they have continued to hold on to, despite the passing of time and the coming of the 21st century. Take, for instance, the matter of building a house. A great many if not most of our forefathers would consult a "fortune-teller" before erecting a house in particular spot. Many of us are still doing the same thing but look what has happened in most Moro communities, in the Supermarket area of Cotabato City, in Taluksangay, Zamboanga

City, in Bongao, Tawi-Tawi, etc. Although there may be other reasons for their pathetic situation, certainly this superstition, which is contrary to Islamic teachings, has been primarily responsible and is still prevalent.

This traditional disposition and outlook that generally makes up the Moro psyche or frame of mind has stunted development and brought negative consequences. Its acceptance seems so widespread that its carriers appear powerless to change in conformity with the demands of the modern age. The Moros should heed the injunction in the Holy Qur'an which says: "God does not change the condition of people unless they change what is in their hearts."[22]

Prof. Patricio Diaz was right when he practically charged many Muslim leaders of leading their people back in time, to fantasize on the glory of the past and blame others for their present condition as if admitting indirectly that they have failed and have not been men enough to put up a good fight.

On the other hand, Professor Diaz seemed to have failed to understand that the Muslims and their leaders are just human beings and, as such, it is natural for them to prefer what is good or desirable over what is bad or undesirable. If the Muslims are looking back to the past, it is because that past represents the best of their lives. It is a past that the Christians are less eager to recall, with its shameful memories of their ancestors having been slaves, *pintados*, indolent *indios*, etc. The Christians' best world is now, in the present and in the future because, as successors of the colonizers, they now run the whole show. They control everything, have the power, access to state funds and resources, and greater opportunities; and above all, they decide and predetermine the destiny of the Moros.

It is history that the Moros fought for more than three centuries against the superpowers of the time and they were not utterly routed. If they are what they are now, it is because of circumstances, over which they had no control. It is now up to the "only Christian

nation in Asia" to show what Christian justice and morality are all about by rectifying the historic injustices committed against the Moros of Mindanao and Sulu! No amount of moralizing arguments could justify the colonization of the Moros. The Moros do not demand the whole moon; they are just seeking their rightful share of the political pie!

EPILOGUE

The mammoth gathering at Simuay, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao more than two years ago today on December 3-5, 1996, was a very historic event. More than one million people from all over Mindanao came in droves. Organizers called it the "Bangsamoro People's Consultative Assembly." The assembly was organized to feel the pulse of the Bangsamoro people vis-à-vis the resolution of the problem in Mindanao and Sulu.

It was unfortunate, however, that only a few had the chance to deliver their speeches. But the rest spoke eloquently through their resolutions and placards: "Bangsamoro is not Filipino," "No to autonomy, no to federalism, yes to independence," and many more. Had this event taken place during the dark days of Martial Law, it would have been considered subversive, and could have sent to jail anyone who participated in it. Surprisingly, the Ramos administration chose to view it from a positive angle. Perhaps the government had some plans for the immediate future — which inhibited it from offending the sensibilities of the people who participated in such a peaceful assembly.

A popular government is like a good doctor. A doctor diagnoses diseases. Once the doctor discovers the real cause of the disease, he or she prescribes the best and ultimate cure. The government is the doctor, while the Moros are the patients. But unlike ordinary patients, the Moros are not only manifesting the symptoms, they are already telling the doctor what the disease is and its ultimate cure. If the government has enough political will to solve this historic disease, it could administer the cure right now. The first opportunity to do this was during the time of President Fidel Ramos. He had started the process, but for lack of material time — his only source of vindication — he had it passed on to the present administration. Now, it is the turn of President Joseph Estrada to try his tact and luck. He may have all the reasons to accomplish it. In "reel" life, he could lick a horde of toughies single-handedly, and in "real" life, his famous saber-rattling cliché' "Huwag n'yo ako subukan" (Don't dare me) may do him wonders. Fortunately, he has enough time

at his disposal within which to do the job.

It is time that the government abandons subjugation as final the solution to the so-called Moro problem. The Moros may be slaughtered to the last man or woman, but the consequences for this government could be tremendously disastrous. But the Filipino conscience would not accept this, and above all, the Almighty will decree otherwise – *Insha Allah!* The Spaniards, the Americans, and the Marcos regime tried to annihilate the Moros -- they all failed.

The government should now face the reality that any solution to the Moro problem which does not reflect the true sentiments and aspirations of the Moros is bound to fail as all previous approaches had failed miserably. For a long time, the Moros have been hounded by hatred and prejudice. This shows in expressions of distrust typified by the notoriously racist saying: "The only good Moro is a dead Moro." The Moro could be as sincere and trustworthy as any one, or perhaps more, because he believes in God, prays five times a day, fasts for one whole month every year, gives the poor's due diligently, and believes in the Day of Judgment when God rewards the good and punishes the evil. If there is anyone who craves a just and honorable peace, he is the Moro, because all throughout his existence, he never tasted this.

Man can suppress truth for a while, but he cannot stop it from being unveiled. As sure as the sun rises in the east and sets in the west, truth always triumph over falsehood in the end. When will that time be, no one will ever know until it has come. If one scans the pages of history, certainly he or she would know that the Moros are a wronged people. Contrary to what is commonly perceived, they are not really the problem. They were the ones invaded in their homeland, and deprived of their basic rights as a sovereign people.

The issue before us now is deeper than, say, a matter of land, autonomy or development. To the Moros, the issue is no less than how they be able to please their Lord and prepare for the everlasting Day Hereafter, an eternal life of "all-good-and-no-bad" (Paradise)

for the righteous and "all-bad-and-no-good" (Hell) for the unbelievers. Life on earth, though but a chip of the road to eternity, is made delightful to man. He can use it as a springboard to heaven or as a shortcut to hell. In either case, man alone shall be responsible for his deeds and misdeeds.

In brief, the Moros want to live -- and die -- in accordance with Islam. To them and to every believing Muslim, Islam is not only a religion, a way of life, but a system of government. It is a be-it-all system or ideology that guides every Muslim's need and deed.

The Moros are not asking for the whole of Mindanao, because circumstances have superseded some facts of history. They just want a parcel of it, especially where they predominate. This will enable generations after them to live in peace and piety, as Islam enjoins all believers. The indigenous peoples, whom the Visayans call *Lumads* may opt to join their blood-brothers, the Moros, and they are welcome. After all, the two peoples are inseparable in the history of Mindanao and Sulu. Is this too much a price for peace, development and prosperity for all?

In its political context, what is this aspiration and how must it be addressed? The government says it is economic in nature, and thus that requires an economic solution. Apparently, the government is being naive, carefree, myopic or evasive, despite its interest. The Bangsamoro people want "self-governance" and this is their inherent right based on the principle recognized by the United Nations -- that peoples, including minorities, have the right to determine, among others, their political way of life. And in this particular case, there can only be two valid and sensible expressions of this right, namely, autonomy and independence. Autonomy, however, has already been tested and even the latest recipients, Nur Misuari and the MNLF, are crying foul and protesting to the highest heavens. It simply is not the final answer to the age-old bloody mess in Mindanao. The MILF is not pushing for an outright grant of independence to the Bangsamoro people, since this would entail lot of complications and even troubles. But it is asking the government in Manila to agree on resolving the problem in a more civilized and

nonviolent means by asking the Bangsamoro people in a plebiscite whether they like independence or autonomy. This is not the first time such a call was made by our people. In 1924, a similar call was made by our people in their petition addressed to the Congress of the United States. They proposed that 50 years after independence, a plebiscite shall be held in the Islands of Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan whether these islands be incorporated in the government of the Islands of Luzon and Visayas, remain a territory of the United States, or become independent (See Appendix "D"). And very recently, on October 23 and 24, 1999, our people had spoken again. In their rallies in Cotabato City, Marawi City, Davao City and General Santos City, they had echoed the same desires and sentiments. Their streamers and placards read. "Independence is the only solution to the Mindanao problem", "No to autonomy, no to federalism, yes to independence", "Independence for East Timor, why not for Bangsamoro?", and many more. For the first time, they were not alone in the clamor for independence. Some Christian groups joined the rallies and supported the demand for independence for the Bangsamoro people.

The government should now hear the voice of the people. If it was heard and respected in tiny East Timor, why can't it be given due course in the predominantly Moro areas in Mindanao?

The MILF is just articulating the demands and aspirations of the Bangsamoro people. Even without its participation, the same would still be expressed and pushed forward either by the people themselves by other entity or entities, perhaps more militant than the MILF.

The world is changing fast. Decolonization of states and peoples is a global trend. The Chechens, after bitter servitude to the Czarist and communist rulers, are moving towards self-rule. The Albanians are rediscovering Islam as the real source of salvation after a "bitter dosage" of communism. There are other contemporary examples where one state grants or is forced to give independence or quasi-independence to another, to cite some, in Russia, in Yugoslavia, in Israel, in Malaysia, in Quebec, Canada, and in Ethiopia-Eritrea. Kosovo in Yugoslavia is on the fringes of gaining self-rule. If this

could be done elsewhere, why can't it be done here, when the claim of the Moros to self-rule is a fact of history?

If the Moros have suffered a lot and are on the verge of extinction, they and their leaders are partly to be blamed. But the greater blame falls on the leaders, who are mostly traditionalists or secularists. In both leadership styles, leaders contribute little, if any, to the general welfare of the people. In the end, they also make themselves losers. Traditionalism perpetuates age-old practices, which usually spawn abuses and tribulations in society, while secularism enslaves man in his quest of satisfaction for the insatiable self. Secularism leads him to many evil ways like impiety, alcoholism, materialism, and other acts of hedonism. Moreover, people should stop thinking of salvation as forthcoming from without or by someday's gift. Man should rely, first of all, on Allah, and then on himself, to develop, succeed and to be truly God's vicegerent on earth.

There are many honorable men among the Christians in Mindanao and Sulu, whose hearts are bleeding for the suffering and destruction in our midst. They also yearn that genuine understanding and peace should reign in this region. But at the same time, there are a great many of them, especially the capitalists, loggers, ranchers, bankers and the like who are bent on getting everything in Mindanao at the expense of the native inhabitants. Where is Christian charity and justice?

The honorable Christians should come forward to spread the gospel of love as enshrined in their religion, and not allow the evils within their ranks to spread darkness and destruction. If they could not practice responding with bread every time a stone is thrown in their direction, could they not try the Islamic way of responding stone-for-stone, if one cannot pardon?

The future is not bleak. It is full of promise. But, first, we must get rid of our hatred, our biases, our pretensions, our impiety and our greed. It is now time for all of us to prefer trust to suspicion, friendship to confrontation, and accommodation to exclusion. Only then can Mindanao be called the land of fulfillment for all. "Live and let live" shall be our credo for all eternity.

NOTES

CHAPTER 1

[1] The word *Moro* had its root from the Latin term *Mauris* or *Maurus,* which referred to the people of North Africa especially Morocco and Mauritania, who professed Islam and once ruled Spain for about 800 years. When the Spaniards came to the Philippines in the 16th century, they discovered that the inhabitants of Manila, Tondo, Sapa (now Sta. Ana) and other adjacent areas and, later those of Mindanao and Sulu, had a striking semblance in faith, bravery and lifestyles with their North African conquerors. Thus they called these Islamized natives as *Maurus* or *Mauris,* which in later years, was corrupted into its present form *Moros.*

[2] William Henry Scott, *Barangay: **Sixteenth Century Philippine Culture and Society*** (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1994), p. 8.

[3] F. Landa Jocano, ***Questions and Challenges in Philippines Prehistory*** (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1975), p. 50.

[4] Cesar Adib Majul, ***Muslims in the Philippines*** (Quezon City: University of the Philippines, 1973), p. 342.

[5] Scott, p. 113.

[6] Instead of using the Christian system of indicating time division of Anno Domini (AD) or literally translated into "In the Year of our Lord" (Jesus Christ), the author, being a Muslim, has chosen AC or "After Christ." Islam does not deify Jesus Christ, who is considered only as a Prophet.

[7] AH stands for "After Hijrah or Hegirah." Literally, it means "migration" or the departure of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him!) from Mecca to Medinah approximately on June 20, 622 A.C.

This is the start of the Muslim era as a fixed point in time from which years are reckoned.

[8] Majul, p.60.

[9] 1515 is the view of Majul, Ibid., p.65. However, according to Gregorio Zaide, ***World History: Asian Setting*** (Manila: Rex Printing Company, 1986), p. 68, the coming of Sharif Mohammad Kabungsuan was 1475.

[10] Carmen Guerrero Nakpil, ***The Philippines and the Filipinos*** (Quezon City: Vidal Publishing house, Inc., 1977), p.34.

[11] Selurong is said to be the island of Luzon, although it corresponds more appropriately to the present-day site of Manila. Cited in Majul, pp.73-74 from the *Brunei Selsilah,* Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, No. 5, June 1880.

CHAPTER 2

[1] Carlton C. Rodee, Totton J. Anderson, Carl Q. Christol, and Thomas H. Green, ***Introduction to Political Science*** (New York: McGrawHill Book Company, 1976), pp. 21-22.

[2] Jose M. Aruego and Gloria Aruego-Torres, ***Principles of Political Science*** (Manila: University Book Supply, Inc. 1981), p.20.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Teodoro A. Agoncillo and Milagros C. Guerrero, ***History of the Filipino People*** (Quezon City: R.P. Garcia Publishing Company, 1977), p. 126.

[5] Maguindanao is believed to be *Mindolang* in the Chinese records cited in Scott, p. 77. Maguindanao or Mindanao was already a port of call in the 14th century.

[6] The map and compass used the Christopher Columbus in the

discovery of America on October 12, 1492 were made by Spanish Muslims. Cited in the article by Atty. Lugum Uka, ex-Commissioner of the Commission on National Integration (1958-1961) entitled "Interesting Facts About Islam and Muslim" published in the magazine of the Muslim Association of the Philippines on the eve of the Third Philippine Congress in Manila in 1987.

[7] Peter Gordon Gowing, ***Muslim Filipinos – Heritage and Horizon*** (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1979), p.4.

[8] It is a Samal-Tausog word, which literally means "half-breed" and technically they are the Islamized Subanons. Even in the Maguindanaon dialect, *kolibogan* denotes "transfused," "interwoven" or confused."

[9] ***The Philippine Daily Inquirer,*** **August 9, 1998**

[10] Gowing, p.4

[11] Frank M. Lebar, (ed.), Ethnic Groups of Insular Southeast Asia. Vol. 2; Philippines and Formosa, (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, 1975), asserts that the Maranaos are Iranuns, who migranted centuries ago from the shores of Illana (more appropriately Iranun) Bay to Lake Lanao.

[12] Agoncillo and Guerrero, p. 5

[13] Tejero C. Constantino, "The Philippine-Mexican Connection: Salute to History", ***Sunday Inquirer Magazine,*** No. 43, Vol. 6, p. 13.

[14] Belinda Olivares-Cunanan, "Political Tidbits," ***The Philippine Daily Inquirer,*** October 25, 1992.

[15] The islands of the central and South Pacific including Hawaii, the Line, Ellice, Phoenix, Tonga, Cook, Samoa Island, Easter, French Polynesia, and often New Zealand.

[16] Gowing, p.10

[17] Reuben C. Canoy ***Mindanao: The Quest for Independence*** (Cagayan de Oro City: Mindanao Post Publishing Company, 1987), p. 107.

[18] Scott, pp.176-176

[19] Cotabato is the only province in the Philippines which had the distinct honor of being referred to as the "Empire Province" and is now subdivided into five provinces, namely, North Cotabato, South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao and Sarangani.

[20] ***The Philippine Daily Inquirer,*** January 11, 1999

[21] Rizal G. Buendia, "The Autonomy Struggle: A Question of Nationalitiy," in Jose V. Abueva, ed., ***The Making of the Filipino Nation*** (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1998), p. 198.

[22] W.J. Garner, an American authority on constitutional law and political science, in his book ***Introduction to Political Science,*** p.24. Cited in Aruego and Aruego-Torres, p.19.

[23] Edmundo Garcia and Carolina G. Hernandez, (Eds.), ***Waging Peace in the Philippines*** (Quezon City: Ateneo Center for Social Policy and Public Affairs, 1988), p. 108.

[24] Romeo Intengan, "Christian Social Ethics and the SPCPD." Published in the *Moro Kurier* (October-December) Cotabato City, 1996. Reprinted from ***Intersect-- the Intersectoral Communication*** published monthly by the Institute on Church and Social Issues, Ateneo de Manila Campus, Loyola heights, Quezon City.

[25] Samuel K. Tan, ***The Internationalization of the Bangsamoro Struggle*** (Quezon City: Center for Integrative and Development Studies, 1993), p. 38.

[26] Gowing, x

[27] The word "lumads" is a Visayan word for "highlanders,"

referring to the ethnic tribes, which are largely untouched by religion. They usually dwell in upland areas. In Mindanao alone, they account for 23 ethno-linguist tribes.

[28] Buendia, p. 197.

CHAPTER 3

[1] The original Portuguese name was Fernao de Magalhaeus. Perhaps due to difficulty in spelling or pronouncing, it was hispanised into Fernando Magallanes and then later into Ferdinand Magellan.

[2] A group of fertile, volcanic islands in East Indonesia between Celebes and New Guinea. This was the center of the world spice trade during the Medieval Age. Spice is any of the various aromatic vegetable products such as cloves, cinnamon, pepper, ginger, nutmeg, and mace used to season or flavor foods.

[3] Antonio Pigafetta, official press relation officer (chronicler) of the expedition, listed March 16, unaware of the existence of the International Dateline: The date is put forward a day when crossing the line going west and back a day when going east. He stuck to the date when he should have added one day upon crossing the line.

[4] Raul Valino in his article "Rizal and the Jackson Concert," ***The Manila Chronicle,*** November 20, 1996, commented that to many Filipino historians, the hero of Mactan was Capt. Ferdinand Magellan not Rajah Lapulapu, and Magellan was honored with a shrine in Mactan ahead of Lapu Lapu.

[5] Miguel Lopez de Legazpi financed his own expedition out of his hacienda in Mexico hoping for quick profits from his discoveries, especially in the lands where spices grew.

[6] No less than President Estrada had affirmed this claim in his weekly television program "JEEP ni Erap" aired at PTV-4, December 26, 1998.

[7] Emma Blair and James A. Roberston, (eds.), ***The Philippine Islands,*** 1493-1898 (Cleveland: 1903-1904), Vol. III, p. 95.

[8] There is enough data available showing that the island of Mindoro lies within the sphere of influence of the Sulu sultanate. As a matter of fact, Mindoro represents one of the five stars in the sultanate flag.

[9] Blair and Robertson, " Account of the Expeditions", Vol. IV, p.178.

[10] Tampakan, according to Victor Hurley, ***Swish of the Kris: The Story of the Moros*** (New York: E.P. Dutton, Inc., 1936), p.66," is a place about a league upstream from Tumbao," now Kabuntalan or from its equivalent 3.861 kilometers to 7.401 kilometers from where the river forks or what is now Tuka na Landasan, Kabuntalan. Atty. Michael Mastura," A Short History of Cotabato City and Its Historic Places", ***Cotabato City Guidebook,*** (1979, Victoria Press, General Santos City), described it as above Tamontaka near Butilen Estuary. Cesar Adib Majul, p.114, commented that Tampakan is a place somewhere between the settlements of Maguindanao and Buayan. Horacio de la Costa, S.J. ***The Jesuits in the Philippines 1581-1768*** (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), P. 153, described Tampakan as a "settlement... at the mouth of the river."

From the above, only Victor Hurley had categorically stated that Tampakan is above Tumbao. Majul and Mastura were largely identical in their descriptions. The mid-point between Buayan (Dulawan) and Maguindanao (Cotabato City) is approximately in the vicinity of Butilen River estuary or the village of Taviran, Datu Odin Sinsuat. This is reinforced by Father de la Costa's statement that the settlement is at the mouth of the river (reference perhaps is Butilen River).

[11] Hurley, p.65.

[12] It was reported that the Sulu sultan became "fond of her" by appointing her as secretary. The Spaniards later offered a ransom

of six hundred pesos, but the sultan refused and instead proposed to just set her free provided that some artillery captured earlier be returned.

[13] Camara D. Dery, ***The Kris in Philippine History: A Study of the Impact of Moro Anti-Colonial Resistance, 1571-1896*** (1997), p. 136.

[14] Ibid. p. 137.

[15] From Gov. Gen. Alfonso Fajardo Y. Tenga (1618) to Gov. Gen. Juan Manuel de la Pena Bonifaz (1669). When Qudarat died 1671, Gov. Gen. Manuel de Leon had already assumed his rule two years earlier and lasted up to 1677. Excluded here were two interior administrations that lasted for few years.

[16] Pedro de San Francisco de Assisi, ***Recollect Mission in the Philippines, 1661- 1712*** (Zamboanga, 1756) Vol. 4, p. 113.

[17] Majul, p.134, said Lamitan is now Baras, Malabang, Lanao del Sur.

[18] Francisco Combes, ***Historia de Mindanao y Jolo*** (Madrid: Retana's Edition., 1897), P.164. Cited in Majul, P.141.

[19] In Islam, *jihad* does not mean "holy war." Its nearest meaning is "to strive with one's utmost capacity in the path of Allah."

[20] A vessel with outriggers and capable of more than ten tons burden.

[21] King Philip II issued the Real Cedula of April 27, 1524 at Arranjuez which directed the religious corporation to divide the different provinces and islands among themselves.

CHAPTER 4

[1] Michael O. Mastura, " American Presence in Mindanao: The Eventful Years in Cotabato," ***Mindanao Journal,*** University Research

Center, Mindanao State University, VIII, 1-4 (July 1981-June 1982), 14.

[2] Onofre D. Corpuz, ***The Roots of the Filipino Nation*** (Quezon City: Akhlahi Foundation, 1989), Vol. 11, p. 376.

[3] Francis Burton Harrison, ***The Cornerstone of Philippine Independence*** (New York: The Century Co., 1922), p.36.

[4] Corpuz, p.506.

[5] J.G. Schurman, Philippines Affairs. Cited in Peter Gordon Gowing, ***Mandate in Moroland:*** *The American Government of Muslim Filipinos 1899-1920* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1983), P. 34.

[6] It took more than three hundred years since the first permanent European settlement was established in America in 1565 for slavery to be abolished in the United States, when on 7 January 1863 Pres. Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation on the emancipation of all Negro slaves. But this discrimination resisted time so much that even to this day there are still restaurants, cafes, bars and other public places that do not cater to blacks.

[7] Samuel K. Tan, "Sulu Under American Military Rule, 1899-1913", ***Philippine Social Sciences and Humanities Review***, University of the Philippines, Quezon City (1967), p. 149.

[8] Ibid. pp. 150-151.

[9] The so-called territorial limits of the cession delineated in the Treaty of Paris did not include Cagayan de Sulu, Sibuto, and few other islands. In a subsequent supplementary treaty with Spain signed in Washington on November 9, 1900, the United States paid for these islands US$100,000.

[10] Gowing, p.26.

[11] The Filipino-American War officially terminated on April 2, 1902 when the last Filipino general, Gen. Miguel Malvar,

surrendered to the Americans.

[12] Gowing, p.107.

[13] Brig. Gen. Leonard Wood to Gov. Gen. William H. Taft, September 5, 1903. Cited in Gowing, p. 110.

[14] Cited in Gowing, p.46.

[15] Cable from Pres. Theodore Roosevelt to Brig. Gen. Leonard Wood, March 10, 1906. Cited in Gowing, p.162.

[16] Moro accounts of the Bud Bagsak encounter disputed the figures released by the office of Gen. John C. Pershing. As a matter of fact, an epic story which tells of the hardships and sacrifices of the Moro company, particularly one of its officer, a certain Sansawi, as part of the attacking American forces, is still being told to this day.

[17] John Macleod, a quartermaster employee, who tipped off this figure to a San Francisco reporter in 1906. However, the report was not fully substantiated at all. Cited in Gowing, p.240.

[18] Gowing, p.224.

[19] Mastura, p. 44.

[20] By virtue of Philippine Commonwealth Act No. 854 of August 26, 1903. The first batch of pensionados was sent in 1903 and second in 1904.

[21] Ralston J. Hayden, "What Next for the Moros?", Foreign Affairs, 6 (1928), Cited in Gowing, p. 151.

[22] Gowing, p. 151.

[23] Father Pedro Salgado, O.P., "The Rape of Mindanao" (Address to the Association of Diocesan Priests of Mindanao at the town of Sultan Kudarat, North Cotabato (February 1981). Enlarged Version.

[24] Cited in Gowing, p. 152.

[25] Datu Inok or Amani Giday (Father of Giday) disclosed the location of the hideout of Datu Ali in Liguasan Marsh, leading to Datu Ali's death from the hands of the Americans on October 22, 1905. Bagungan, his wife, later became municipal president of Buluan.

[26] Gowing, p. 152

[27] Ibid., p. 179

[28] The following speeches were contained in the Special Report of the Secretary of War, J.M. Dickenson, to the President of the United States, January 6, 1911. House Document 1261, 61st Congress, 3rd Session (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1911)

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Petition to the President of the United States of America from the People of theSulu Archipelago on June 9, 1921. Cited in Datucan M. Abas, "Muslim Secession Movement in the Philippines", MA Thesis, Manuel L. Quezon University, Manila, Philippines (1972).

[32] Declaration of Rights and Purposes Addressed to the Congress of the United States of America on February 1, 1924. Cited in Abas, "Muslim Secession..." See also Gumbay Piang, "Educational Problems Among the Moros," ***Philippine Magazine*** (September 1932) 29/4 pp. 158-182.

[33] Hurley, p.275.

[34] Ibid. p. 276.

[35] Cited in the Speech of Representative Robert L. Bacon of New York who introduced a bill in the US Congress providing for the

separation of Mindanao and Sulu from the rest of the Philippines contained in House Bill 12772, 69th Congress, 1st Session, May 6, 1926. See also Congressional Record, 69th Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 67 No. 164 (June 24, 1926), pp. 11956-11964.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Cited in Howard T. Fry, "The Bacon Bill of 1926: New Light on an Exercise in Divide-and-Rule" in ***Philippine Studies*** (Third Quarter, 1978).

[39] Jaime Dumarpa, "An Exploratory Study of Maranao Muslims Concept of Land Ownership: Its Implications for Mindanao Conflict." ***Dansalan Quarterly*** (October 1984), p.29.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Bacon, Ibid.

[42] Aijaz Ahmad, "Class and Colony in Mindanao," ***Southeast Asia Chronicle,*** No. 82 (February 1982) pp. 4-14.

[43] "The Lumads of Mindanao: What Option Remains," ***Sandugo,*** 3rd Quarter, 17.

[44] Gowing, ***Mandate in Moroland...***, p. 411.

[45] Gowing, ***Muslim Filipinos ...***, p. 175.

[46] Gowing, ***Mandate in Moroland ...***, p. 292.

CHAPTER 5

[1] Gowing, ***Muslim Filipinos...***, p.172

[2] Cited in Datu Michael O. Mastura, ***Muslim Filipino Experience:***

A Collection of Essays (Manila: PDM Press, Inc., 1984), p. 106.

[3] Gowing, ***Muslim Filipino...***, p. 174

[4] Quoted in Corpuz, p.568.

[5] Gowing, p. 178.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid. p. 174

[8] Uldarico S. Baclagon, ***Christian-Moslem Guerillas of Mindanao*** (Manila: Lord Avenue Printing Press, 1988), p. 47.

[9] Gowing, p. 177.

[10] Hilarion Silayan, "Settling Mindanao," ***The Commonwealth Forthnightly*** (October-November, 1935).

[11] ***Public Land Laws of the Philippines***, (Seventh Edition, 1973), Published and Distributed by Central Book Supply, Inc., Manila, p. 32.

[12] Rad S. Silva, ***Two Hills of the Same Land: Truth Behind the Mindanao Problem***, (Mindanao-Sulu Critical Studies and Research Group, 1974), p. 41.

[13] Canoy, p. 85.

[14] Ruben Gomez, "The Muslim Filipinos," ***MSPS Communications***, No. 15 (March 1975), pp. 13-14.

[15] Silva, p. 49.

[16] Gordon, ***Mandate in Moroland ...***, p. 291.

[17] Samuel K. Tan, "The Socio-Economic Dimension of the Moro

Secession," *Mindanao Studies Reports* (1995/No. 1) University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies, Quezon City, p. 4.

[18]Karl Pelzer, *Pioneer Settlement in the Asiatic Tropics: Studies in Land Litigation and Agricultural Colonization in Southeast Asia* (New York: American Anthropological Society, 1945), p. 112.

[19] Mastura, *A Short History* ...., p. 19.

[20] Silva, pp. 25-27.

[21] Mastura, *Muslim Filipino Experience* ...., p. 172.

[22]Samuel K. Tan, "The Americans In Mindanao and Sulu 1899-1946," *Mindanao Journal*, University Research Center, Mindanao State University, Marawi City, VIII, 1-4 (July 1981- June 1982), 69.

[23] Gordon, *Mandate in Moroland* ...., p. 180.

[24]Ibid.

[25] Michael Mastura, "A Short History of Cotabato City and Its Historic Places," *Cotabato City Guidebook* (General Santos City: 1978), p. 22.

[26] Corpuz, p. 569.

[27] Agoncillo and Guerrerro, p. 496.

CHAPTER 6

[1] President Diosdado Macapagal, in a gesture of protest over the refusal of the United States Government to extend much-needed foreign aid, decided in the middle of the 1960s to revert to the original declaration of Philippine independence by Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo on June 12, 1898 at Kawit, Cavite.

[2] Quoted in T.J.S. George, *Revolt in Mindanao: The Rise of Islam*

in Philippine Politics (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 69.

[3] R.J. May, "The Wild West in the South: A Recent Political History of Mindanao", in Mark Turner, R.S. May and Lulu Respall Turner (eds.), *Mindanao: Land of Unfulfilled Promises* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1992), p. 127.

[4] Cited in Fr. Salgado, p. 170.

[5] Ahmad, p.7.

[6] Cayetano W. Paderanga Jr., "A Review of Land Settlements in the Philippines," *Mindanao Studies Reports* (1955/No.2), University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies, p. 14.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid. p. 15.

[9] Ibid. pp. 16-17.

[10] Ahmad, p. 7.

[11] House Bill No. 5692, Fourth Congress, Congress of the Philippines, 1961.

[12] Gowing, *Muslim Filipinos* ...., p. 56.

[13] Ibid. p. 210.

CHAPTER 7

[1] Gowing, *Muslim Filipinos*...., p. 167.

[2] Ibrahim Jubaira, *The Moslem Heritage* (Manila: Foreign Service Institute, 1981), p. 84.

[3] Ahmad, p. 9

[4] This is perhaps due to the blood of Rajah Sulaiman of Manila running in the veins of Pres. Diosdado Macapagal, who was in the ninth or tenth generation from that great martyr of the Moros.

[5] The author was at the gallery of Congress when Jiben Arola was called by the Joint House-Senate Investigation in 1968 to testify and shed light on the Corregidor Massacre.

[6] Margarita R. Cojuangco, "Role of the MILF in the Mindanao Problem," A Masteral Thesis at the National Defense College of the Philippines, (1988), Fort Bonifacio, Metro Manila.

[7] Reuben B. Canoy, ***The Counterfeit Revolution: Martial Law in the Philippines*** (Manila: Philippine Editions Publishing, 1980), p. 27.

[8] Gowing, ***Muslim Filipinos ....***, p. 193.

[9] George, p. 145.

[10] Ibid.

[11] The widespread fighting in Mindanao was one of the two allegations why President Marcos declared martial law in 1972. The other was the threat posed by the CPP/NPA.

[12] ***Malaya***, June 30, 1985.

[13] In the entire history of the Maguindanaons and Tirurays from the coming of Sharif Kabungsuan in the 15th century, there has not been a major conflict between the two ethnic tribes. The story of the two brothers, Mamalu and Tabunaway, the former the progenitor of the Tirurays and the latter of the Maguindanaons – how they parted and swore never to forget each other – is still remembered to this day. It was only the coming of the settlers that interrupted this long-standing good relations.

[14] Diosdado Macapagal, ***Democracy in the Philippines*** (Ontorio: Published by Ruben J.Casipag, 1976) ,. 91.

[15] Most of the entries were taken from official files of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. See also Macapado A. Muslim, ***The Moro Armed Struggle in the Philippines: The Nonviolent Autonomy Alternative*** (Marawi City: University Press and Information Office, 1994), pp. 95-100. See also Robert D. McAmis, "Muslim Filipinos: 1970-1972," Complied by Peter Gordon Gowing, ***Muslim Filipinos*** (Manila: Solidaridad Publishing House, 1974), p. 49.

[16] ***Philippine Sunday Express,*** September 24, 1972.

[17] Salamat Hashim, "The Struggle for Survival of the Bangsamoro People in Southern Philippines," Published by the Committee on Information, Moro National Liberation Front (New Leadership), 1983.

[18] McAmis, p. 52.

[19] ***The Manila Times,*** March 14, 1972.

[20] Salipada K. Pendatun, "Is There a Design to Wipe Out the Muslims in the Philippines?" A Speech Delivered at the House of Representatives, Congress of the Philippines, 1971. Reprinted by the Ansar El Islam on the Occasion of its 2nd National Islamic Symposium and 3rd Foundation Anniversary, Marawi City, April 28-May 1, 1972.

[21] Buldon Mayor Bangon Aratuc still retained the ancient practice of chewing a mixture of betel nut, lime, a leaf of piper vice and citrus dyed tobacco that produces a blood-red spittle.

CHAPTER 8

[1] Mohammad B. Quraish, "Brief History of the Muslim Association of the Philippines," ***MAP Journal,*** 3rd Philippine Muslim Congress, April 3-May 3, 1981, 1981, Manila.

[2] ANSAR EL ISLAM, Manifesto Presented to the Opening Session of the Muslim Conference on Government Policies and Programs, MSU, Marawi City.

[3] The author talked to many of these students, now serving in the frontlines, who revealed that two of their Cairo associates actually escorted the first arms shipment in 1971 all the way to Sabah, Malaysia.

[4] ***Tantawan,*** A Mouthpiece of the Kutawato Revolutionary Committee, MNLF, March 7, 1973. (Mimeographed).

[5] Who really founded the earliest genuine revolutionary organization is a question more important than the name of the organization. The fact that Nur Misuari and Salamat Hashim were together at the onset of the MNLF presupposes that either they cooperated in its formation or one of them gave in to the name of the organization as long as the moving spirit was there and the cause could move forward.

[6] The initial contacts with Libya and Malaysia, through the Special Branch, were undertaken by the group in Cairo which secured for the Moros funds, training and arms. This was a revelation of MILF Chair Salamat Hashim during an interview with the author sometime in 1989.

[7] Bangsa Moro Liberation Organization (BMLO), A Policy Statement issued by the Supreme Executive Council of the BMLO, May 19, 1978.

[8] Bangsa Muslimin Liberation Organization (BMILO), The First Declaration issued in October by the BMILO Executive Council, Mecca, KSA, 1984.

[9] Moro National Liberation Front, "The Misuari Betrayal of the Bangsa Moro Struggle," Issued by the Moro National Liberation Front (Pundato Faction) and the Bangsa Moro Liberation Organization (BMLO), 1982.

[10] This is revealed by one of the surviving members of the core group in Cairo, Egypt interviewed by the author on November 12, 1993.

[11] File copy of the Letter of Salamat Hashim to OIC Secretary General Ahmadou Karim Gaye dated December 23, 1977 in the Office of the Chairman, Central Committee, New MNLF Leadership.

[12] Mastura, *Muslim Filipino...*, p. 116.

[13] Ibid., p. 117.

[14] The 9-Point Proposal of the MNLF Reformist Group Submitted to Chairman Nur Misuari on March 7, 1982. (File)

[15] Personal account of Chairman Salamat Hashim in a talk with the author in October 1982 in Lahore, Pakistan.

CHAPTER 9

[1] This was revealed by Chairman Nur Misuari to a group of high-ranking MNLF leaders of Cotabato during a visit to the Province in the closing days of 1972. The author was present during the meeting.

[2] George, p. 205.

[3] The Empire Province of Cotabato is now subdivided into five provinces, namely, Maguindanao, North Cotabato, South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat and Sarangani.

[4] Fortunato U. Abat, *The Day We Nearly Lost Mindanao: The CEMCOM Story* (Quezon City: SBA Printers, Inc., 1994), p. 110.

[5] The author had personally inventoried the captured firearms and other war materials which included two machine guns, M-79 grenade launchers, M-16 Armalite rifles, and Garand rifles. A few days later, one machinegun, several M-16 Armalite and Garand rifles

were retrieved from the Kakar Creek just below the Don Sero Elementary School, Cotabato City.

[6] ***The Mindanao Today,*** August-September 1978.

[7]Quoted in the speech of Sen. Alberto G. Romulo, Senate Majority Floor Leader, delivered on August 26, 1976 and published in the September 7, 1996 issue of the ***Manila Bulletin.***

[8] Jamil Lucman and Amelil Malaguiok, both belonging to the first batch of trainees in Sabah, Malaysia, were easily two of the top MNLF commanders who surrendered to the government. Lucman hails from Lanao del Sur while Malaguiok (now deceased) was domiciled in Maguindanao.

[9] Ramon C. Tulfo, ***Manila Bulletin,*** April 23, 1985.

[10] ***Holy Qur'an,*** Chapter 11, Verse 179.

[11] Abat, p. 110.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Based on accounts of the fighting by MNLF reporters. The MNLF had a special agency on documentation that collected and processed data of the fighting.

[14] The AFP account listed down a smaller number of casualties. There is no way to confirm this figure from reliable and independent sources. The one who gave this datum was one of the MNLF commanders, now affiliated with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, who participated in the defense of the island.

[15] To a Moro, this act of desecration is a first degree crime and must never be pardoned or left unpunished.

CHAPTER 10

[1] Che W. K. Man, *Muslim Separatism:* ***The Moros of Southern Philippines and the Malays of Southern Thailand*** (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila Press, 1990), p. 139.

[2] He resigned as Governor of Maguindanao in 1976 to join the MNLF Negotiating Panel as Legal Counsel. After the signing of the Tripoli Agreement on December 23, 1976, he did not return to his former post and continued to serve the MNLF and, later, the MILF until 1986 when he was appointed OIC-Governor of Maguindanao and concurrently as LTP OIC-Chairman.

[3] The MNLF said the Qhaddafi-Marcos Understanding did not speak of referendum or plebiscite but a consultation with the people which shall be conducted not by the government but by the autonomous region solely to determine the administrative arrangements that the people would prefer.

[4] Cited in the Article by B.R. Rodil Entitled "Sequence of Events After the Signing of the Tripoli Agreement December 26, 1976 - October 28, 1978", *Mindanao Forum*, X, 1, June 1996.

[5] The acronym MNLF referred both to the Misuari and Salamat factions. At the time, the New MNLF Leadership under Salamat Hashim had a firm grip of the key provinces of Mindanao particularly the former Empire Province of Cotabato, the two Lanao areas, and a sizable portions of Zamboanga Peninsula and Basilan.

[6] Jubaira, p. 85.

[7] Still the incumbent Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

[8] Canoy, pp. 195-196.

[9] *Maradika*, VII, (February 1987).

[10] Ibid.

[11] Abat, p. 180.

[12] *Maradika, VI*, (December 1987).

[13] *Maradika, VII*, (February 1987).

[14] The author is privileged to know many of the most-tightly

guarded secrets and workings of the inner circle of power of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

[15] Statement by H.E. Ali Alatas, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia, at the Signing Ceremony of the Final Peace Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Moro National Liberation Front, Malacañang Palace, Manila, September 2, 1996.

CHAPTER 11

[1] Moro National Liberation Front, Central Committee, Message of Chairman Salamat Hashim to Fellow Mujahideen and Members (December 10, 1979). (File).

[2] Cojuangco, p. 78.

[3] Cited in Ibid., p. 79.

[4] Draft Final Communique of the Sixth OIC Summit Conference, Dhakar, Senegal, December 9-12, 1990.

[5] Letter of Al Haj Murad Ibrahim to NUC Chair Haydee B. Yorac Dated December 8, 1992.

[6] Letter of Al Haj Murad Ibrahim to NUC Chair Haydee B. Yorac Dated July 2, 1993.

[7] *Maradika XIV*, (February 1997).

[8] The administrative procedure approved by the GRP and MILF technical committees on February 25-27, 1997 called for the creation of only one technical committee, but each side subdivided itself into two sub-committees, namely, for agenda-setting and for the cessation of hostilities.

[9] *Maradika XIX* , (July 1997)

[10] Soliman Santos Jr., "Peace by Piece: Peace Talks and Belligrent Status" (A Discussion Paper series of the Peace Studies Institute, Philippines (PSIPhil), Vol. 2 No. 1).

[11] MILF field report, October 4, 1999.

[12] An interview over Radio DXMS of Brig. Gen. Rodolfo Garcia, commanding general of the 6th Infantry Division, based in Camp Siongco, Awang Airport, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao on October 4, 1999.

CHAPTER 12

[1] Daniel S. Boorstin, Brooks Mother S. Kelley and Ruth Frankil Boorstin, ***A History of the United States Since 1861*** (Massachusetts: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1981) p. 22.

[2] Speech of President Ramos during the Signing Ceremony of the GRP-MNLF Final Agreement in Malacañang Palace, Manila on September 2, 1996.

[3] Speech of MNLF Chair Nur Misuari during his First Meeting With President Ramos in Malabang, Lanao del Sur on August 16, 1996.

[4] P.N. Abinales, "Questions to the Mindanao Opposition (Part 1)", ***The Philippine Daily Inquirer,*** March 6, 1999.

[5] Letter Presented to Pres. Corazon C. Aquino during the Cordillera Peace Talks held on September 11, 1986 at Mt. Data Lodge, Bauko, Cordillera. Cited in the ***Waging of Peace in the Philippines*** (Proceedings of the 1988 International Conference on Conflict Resolution), Edmundo Garcia and Carolina G. Hernandez (Eds.), Ateneo Center for Social Policy and Public Affairs, 1989.

[6] Leon L. Bram and Norma H. Dickey (Eds.), ***Funk and Wagnalls New Encyclopedia*** (Funk and Wagnalls Corporation) Vol. 6, p. 444.

[7] In 1979 Iran and on November 17, 1980 Saudi Arabia conducted an oil embargo on the Philippines for her failure to abide by the terms of the Tripoli Agreement and on the issue of "genocide" and "neglect" of the Moros. Earlier, Malaysia and Libya were also charged with directly aiding the Moro rebels in their war with the Philippine government.

[8] Garcia and Hernandez, p. 107.

[9] Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. "Multinationals' exodus worries RP", ***The Philippine Daily Inquirer,*** March 22, 1999.

[10] Satur C. Ocampo, "Low Intensity Democracy, Legal Systems Development, and the Cooptation of Civil Society." (A Paper Prepared for the Panel Discussion on US-Japan Security Agenda in the Asia-Pacific Regions as Part of the People's Conference Against Imperialist Globalization, November 20-30, 1996).

[11] Congressman Wigberto E. Tanada (Fourth District, Quezon Province), "The Right Way to Peace?" (A Speech Delivered During a Peace rally, General Santos City, June 29, 1996). Published in July - September, 1996 issue of the ***Moro Kurier,*** Cotabato City.

[12] Senator Alberto C. Romulo, "Blessed are the Peacemakers" (A Speech Delivered on the Senate Floor on August 26, 1996). Reprinted in the September 7, 1996 issue of the ***Manila Times.)***

[13] ***The Philippine Daily Inquirer,*** August 8, 1998.

[14] Edwin O. Fernandez, "Maguindanao truce holding; relief work on", ***The Philippine Daily Inquirer,*** February 1, 1999.

[15] Cited in the Paper Prepared by Edmundo Garcia "Resolution of Internal Conflict in the Philippines: The Quest for a Just and Lasting Peace in the Period of Democratic Transition." Garcia and Hernandez (eds.), Ibid., p. 27.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibon ***Facts and Figures,*** XVIII, 13 (July 15, 1995).

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Patricio Diaz, ***To Tripoli and Back*** (Davao City: B&G Printing Press, 1995), p. 48.

[22] ***Holy Qur'an,*** Chapter 13, Verse 11.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX "A"

Qudarat-Lopez Peace Treaty*
Zamboanga, June 24, 1645.

1) That the said Sultan, King of Mindanao, his children and heirs shall truly be the friends of the King of Spain and the Spaniards shall be his friends and neither party should violate the truce. If on the part of the Spaniards or the Mindanaos, someone breaks the law by waging war or making offense, the abused shall report it either to the governor general or to the governor of Zamboanga or to the King of Mindanao for their own satisfaction that the violators be punished. For whose satisfaction, he should wait for six months, within which it is understood that peace should never be violated, after which he would be notified about them.

2) That the enemies of the Spaniards will be theirs and those of the Sultan will be of the Spaniards. If they would have other enemies with whom they would make war, they should notify him that he may give his aid and requesting him, he might as well help fight their enemies, and the ordinary support which the Spaniards used to give in time of war as aid, the Sultan shall also give to the Spaniards and to their faction or party.

3) That the captives captured by either party in war shall be divided equally, i.e., one half for the Spaniards and the other half for the Mindanaos. The same thing should be done to the seized artilleries and other firearms. Those which are already found in each party, which they thought to return, should not be included in the partition. Clothing and other effects should be returned to the person from whom they were taken. All the Christians who will be captured shall be set free. The same thing shall be applied to the Muslim captives.

4) That the vassals which belong to the Sultan are those who acknowledge and are paying tribute to him from Iho river, in the interior, and the middleground of the small by the Tagalooc up to the river Simuey (Sibuguey).

5) That if any people rise against the Sultan, and become converted with help of the Spaniards, they become the vassals of the Sultan. And those who rise against the Spaniards and are reduced with the help of the Sultan, they belong to the Spaniards. But those who are at present do not pay tribute to either party, if they want, they could do it to the Spaniards, however, if they were conquered by both parties, the tributes shall be divided equally.

6) That although the Butios, people of the mountain, and those of Magolabon do not pay tribute to the Sultan, they belong to him. And those who live beside the Lake of Malanao and rivers of Dagum, Taraca and Bansayan belong to the Spaniards. Those left their towns due to the past wars, they could stay with those whom they like preferably with the Sultan, but if they return there and restore their living somewhere in the said lake, they should be tributaries to Spain.

7) That any of the natives, subjects of Spain, who would like to deal business with the Mindanaos, is free to do so, same thing with any of the Sultan's subjects who would transact business in Zamboanga or in other places under Spain but each and everyone of them should be subject to the order of the Leader of the domination where they are transacting their business. The Muslims converted to Christianity, who come from Zamboanga, are not obliged to return to where they come from just to follow sect, they could attend in the church which will be built within the town of the Sultan, with a minister in it. If they escape from one place to another due to crime, they ought to be delivered to the proper authority that there be justice on the part of the offended, if found guilty he would be fined.

8) That the Sultan earnestly requests the governor of the Island and the governor of Zamboanga to admit Manaquior, Datu and King of Taolanos, as their friend because he is his brother-in-law.

9) That the subjects of the Sultan, going to Zamboanga to trade any goods, they ought to pay 5% to the Royal treasury as a manifestation of friendship with the King of Spain.

10) That the Jesuits be given license and be permitted to build a house and church within the town of the Sultan, consulting the minister when and where to erect them so that those Christians there would have a place of worship. Those who would be in ransom should be delivered compulsory paying to the owners 40 pesos for men and women who are in good health, 30 pesos for the unmarried youth and 20 pesos for the old and sick and 10 pesos for the children.

Present during the signing of the Peace Agreement:

1) Sultan Kudarat
2) Badiamuda and Goadin, his sons
3) Manaquior, Datu of the Tagolanos
4) Balamana, nephew of the Sultan
5) Ugbo, general of the navy
6) Tobinga, Mampanguitomoan, Dumoloon, Matag Patiocan and other chiefs
7) D. Francisco Atienza Ibañez, governor of Zamboanga
8) Captain Pedro Duran Monforte
9) Fr. Alejandro Lopez, Rector, Colegio de Zamboanga

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* From the personal files of Ambassador Alunan C. Glang.

APPENDIX "B"

TREATY BETWEEN THE SULTAN OF SULU AND THE UNITED STATES, 1842

Preceding the text of the treaty are some Arabic characters.

I, Mohammad, Sultan of Sooloo, for the purpose of encouraging trade with the people of the United States of America, do promise hereby and bind myself that I will afford full protection to all vessels of the United States, and their commanders and crews visiting any of the islands of my dominions, and they shall be allowed to trade on the terms of the most favored nation, and receive such provisions and necessaries as they may be in want of.

2ndly. In case of shipwreck or accident to any vessel, I will afford them all the assistance in my power, and protect the persons and property of those wrecked, and afford them all the assistance in my power for its preservation and safe-keeping, and for the return of the officers and crews of said vessels to the Spanish settlements, or wherever they may wish to proceed.

3rdly. That any one of my subjects who shall do any injury or harm to the commanders or crews belonging to American vessels, shall receive such punishment as his crime merits.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal, in presence of the datus and chiefs at Soung, island of Sooloo.

February 5, 1842

Here follows a signature in Arabic script

Witnesses:

Charles Wilkes, Commanding Exploring Expedition

William L. Hudson, Late Commanding U. S. Ship Peacock

R.R. Waldron, Purser, U.S. Exploring Expedition

APPENDIX "C"

PETITION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA FROM THE PEOPLE OF THE SULU ARCHIPELAGO

PREAMBLE

Whereas, the territory now inhabited by the Sulu people was never under the control of Spain, or a part of its dominion, and only upon the advent of the American Army in Sulu did the people of Sulu recognize sovereignty- that the United States of America, and,

Whereas, the government of Sulu people under the American Government, as administered by General Leonard Wood and Major Hugh L. Scott, and other American military governors following them was a just government, and,

Whereas, the Filipino people in the northern provinces of the Philippine Islands has no right to force their government upon the inhabitants of these parts, inhabited from the time immemorial by our own people, and to include our territory in theirs, and,

Whereas, it would be an act of great injustice to cast our people aside, turn our country over to the Filipino people in the North to be governed by them, without our consent, and the thrust upon us a government not of our own people, nor by our own people, nor for our own people, and therefore,

We, the People of Sulu Archipelago, recognizing our right to petition the great and good Government of the United States of America and in order to form a more perfect understanding between the President of the United States of America, and the Congress of the United States of America, and ourselves, to establish justice in our courts, insure our own domestic tranquility, promote our general welfare, and redress the wrongs and outrages already

committed on our people by the present government, do hereby make this our petition to the President of the United States of America, thru his Honorable Commission, General Leonard Wood, and the Honorable W. Cameron Forbes, to wit:

Article I. Whether or not independence is granted by Congress of the United States of America to the Northern Provinces of the Philippines, it is [the] desire of the people of Sulu that the Sulu Archipelago be made permanent American territory of the United States of America, and for the following reasons:

1. The people of the Sulu Archipelago are loyal to the American Government, and have been greatly benefited by said government, and desire to remain under said government.

2. The people of Sulu will realize that if independence is granted to the Philippine Islands, and Sulu Islands are included, the taxes which would necessarily have to be lived upon the people would be too burdensome to endure without open revolt. That where we are paying one peso tax now, we would then be called upon to pay more than ten pesos in taxes.

3. The Philippine Legislature has failed to legislate any laws for the benefit of the Moro people. The Special Form of Government which was inaugurated by General Wood, when Governor of the Moro Province, and which was very beneficial to us, has already been set aside by the past administration.

The Philippine Legislature has failed to work for the benefit of our people. They have failed to recognize our religion. They have failed to pass any laws recognizing our marriages celebrated by our Mohammedan priests, and according to the present laws in force in the Philippine Islands, and also the decision of its courts, our wives are concubines, and our children illegitimate. The Philippine government can not protect our religious customs, nor our marriages, as they have no laws to guide them in these questions.

4. The Philippine Legislature has failed to appropriate sufficient money for the maintenance and construction of roads, the

preservation of our health, and the maintenance of schools, although draining our treasury of the taxes paid by our people, and appropriating the money for their own purposes in the northern provinces.

5. The Philippine Government has placed their Constabulary among us to preserve law and order. In this connection, they have utterly failed, year after year. While stationed among our people the Constabulary has committed many outrages upon our people, such as the following:

The petition goes on to cite a number of instances of alleged abuses on the part of the Constabulary patrols harass the people, loot, steal property from our houses, and take our produce, etc., without our consent promiscuously search our houses without warrant, molest our women, and graft from our people. The officials quite frequently force the people to make gifts to them, such as good ponies, cattle, barongs, etc. They maltreat Moro prisoners, while Filipino prisoners receive the best of treatment and attention, and are never sent out to work under guard.

Practically all the trouble and dissension for the past few years in Sulu has been caused by the Filipino Constabulary.

6. The Philippine Government has failed to give us justice in their courts, some instances of which we here mention, as follows:

In Criminal Case No. 2671, before Filipino Justice of the Peace of Jolo, the deputy clerk of court of First Instance, at Jolo, a Filipino civil service employee, a municipal councilor of Jolo, also Filipino, and other Filipinos were fined by the Justice of the Peace only P15.00 for gambling. This withstanding the fact that he had instructions from the Judge of the Court of First Instance, and the Governor of the Province of Sulu to impose jail sentences on those found guilty of gambling.

A week later two poor, ignorant Moros from Lu-uk, far from Jolo and civilization plead guilty to playing a centavo game of ligud. They were fined fifty pesos each. The Filipinos in the first case were playing monte, which in itself is a prohibited game of chance under

the laws of the Philippines.

Sometime after this nine Moros were fined by a Constabulary Officer, acting in the capacity as auxiliary justice of the peace at a remote place from Jolo, one hundred pesos each for violation of the municipal district ordinance punishing gambling. Under directions from the Provincial Commander, also a Filipino officer, these same Moros were again prosecuted under the general statute for gambling and in the Court of First Instance upon pleading guilty were each given five days imprisonment and a fine of five pesos, and had to pay the costs as well. This was in criminal case No. 1963 in the Court of First Instance.

There never has been a Filipino prosecuted under both laws by any Filipino justice of the peace or prosecuting officer, although many have been prosecuted under the ordinance. The Moros for small games have been fined generally from thirty to one hundred pesos and imprisonment ranging to several months, and we cannot understand this discrimination, or why we should be tried twice for one offense, especially when the Filipinos are not so treated. No Filipino has received a large fine or such imprisonment from these courts here in Sulu, except in one case in the Court of First Instance.

Here follow a number of specific cases, each given its court number, in which it is claimed justice was not done or that discrimination in favor of Filipinos was shown. Some complaints specify inefficiency and incompetence of officials.

Constabulary officers, acting as deputy governors, station commanders, and auxiliary justices of the peace ex officio have held our people in confinement for periods of time without any formal complaint and without a trial or hearing. In this triple capacity these officials do with our people as they see fit.

The Provincial Commander, also acting as Auxiliary Justice of the Peace Ex-Officio at Asturias Barracks, and as deputy governor, as well, has repeatedly held our people in confinement at the guard house for periods of time without any formal complaint, trial or hearing.

Thru their soldiers these officials arrest us, without warrants, prepare their own complaints, after examining the witnesses from the prosecution, and in most cases, sign the complaint themselves. On trial of the case, of course, we are convicted. and are then in many cases denied the right appeal, especially in remote places in Jolo, Siasi, and Bongao, where he can not obtain legal advice, or any one to prepare our appeal and bond.

Now there are prisoners being held in confinement without complaint or hearing by Constabulary officers at Camp Rommandier, Camp Andres, Camp Indanan, at Taglibi, at Asturias Barracks, (Guard House), on the Island of Jolo. The Siasi jail is full of prisoners awaiting preliminary hearing, most without any complaint yet presented to the Courts. In the Auxiliary Justice of the Peace Court Ex Officio at Jolo, there are two Moros who have been in confinement about two months without a hearing and they are confined in the Provincial jail.

The Auxiliary Justice of the Peace Ex Officio has not been to Siasi to try cases since March 4, 1921, and therefore, all prisoners confined since then are necessarily without any formal complaint being presented to the Court, and held now by the deputy governor there, a Constabulary Official.

Article II. We, the people of Sulu ask that law and order be maintained by American troops, as they have in the past treated us justly, they do not steal our property, and they do not mix nor meddle with our women.

Article III. We, the people of Sulu guarantee that we ourselves will maintain law and order in the event our territory is made a part of the American nation. We feel assured that the American Government at Washington will provide special laws for our people, protecting our religion and our customs, and that under the protecting arm of America we will have just courts, wherein we will receive justice.

Jolo, Province of Sulu, P.I.
June 9, 1921

APPENDIX "D"

A DECLARATION OF RIGHTS AND PURPOSES ADDRESSED TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Whereas a group of politicians, leading blindly certain elements of the population who have a faith and culture different from our own, as well as widely different political aspirations, have raised a clamor and outcry against the continuation of American sovereignty in the Philippine Islands, thereby jeopardizing our hope of prosperity, liberty, and economic security, through the possibility that the Congress of the United States of America might in opportunely withdrew its sovereignty from these Islands, permitting thereby to be created an independent government under which the Mohammedan or Moro Nation would be destroyed or placed under a galling yoke, we, the following representatives of the Moro Nation, do, in the name of the same Creator, worshipped by Christian and Mohammedan alike, set forth the following solemn declaration our rights, principles and intentions for which we pledge our lives and fortunes:

Assuming that in the course of time the United States of America will grant complete independence, or a larger measure of autonomy to the Philippine Islands, and due to the fact the insecurity of political tenure of the United States and the threat of political domination of our people by the Christian Filipino majority in the Islands of Luzon and the Visayas is holding back the economic development of our country, and causing no little unrest and unhappiness to our people, we hereby submit the following suggestion for the solution of our present difficulties to the consideration of the Congress of the United States of America.

First. We are not seeking temporary or palliative measures. We ask for a solution which will be permanent and lasting in its effects. Therefore, we propose that the Islands of Mindanao and Sulu, and

the Island of Palawan be made an unorganized territory of the United States of America.

In order that we may be fair to the Filipinos and in order that they may not raise an outcry to the effect that we wish to dismember the Philippine Islands, we propose that 50 years after independence may have been granted the rest of the Philippine Islands, a plebiscite be held in the proposed unorganized to decide by vote whether the proposed territory will be incorported in the government of the Islands of Luzon and Visayas, remain a territory, or become independent.

This would apply the principles of justice and equity to all elements of the population and imply a government through the consent of the governed.

Second. That a simple form of government be designed for the new territory, taking into consideration that through lack of education in English or Spanish our people can not hope to exercise suffrage for at least two generations, and with the following objects in view:

(1) Justice and equity for Christian, Mohammedan, pagan, and foreigners alike. In order to attain this we must have Americans in high places to act as referees between our tribal and religious demarcations.

(2) No domination of one element over another.

(3) Freedom of speech and religion.

(4) Every opportunity for American capital to develop the natural resources of our country, thereby affording our people the opportunity to progress in the arts and sciences and in agriculture, as well as to use the lessons of the schoolroom after leaving school. At present, there is no outlet for the talents and energies of our youths, owing to the economic prostration of our country.

(5) That the school system be reformed under American teachers

and made suitable to the needs and prejudices of the Mohammedan population.

(6) That we do not vote in elections for President of the United States, for the reason that we do not wish to do otherwise than trust to the mercy and justice of the United States.

Whereas we enjoy none of the above benefits in their fullest measure, and

Whereas we do not even enjoy the right of petition and redress of wrongs which the Constitution of the United States insures to its citizens, owing to the fact that we have addressed petitions without number to the Governor General even when he has been disposed to grant our desires he has found himself helpless to aid us, owing to the provisions of organic act known as the Jones Law:

Therefore we, in representation of nearly half a million Mohammedan residents of Mindanao and Sulu, do solemnly affirm and declare-

That we are loyal unto death to the United States.

That in proof of this loyalty we have pledged ourselves by the most solemn oath known to Mohammedans, to die rather than submit to domination by Christian Filipinos from the north, and, if necessary, to die in order that the United States Congress, which therefore has lent a deaf ear to our petitions, may now hear us.

That in the event that the United States grants independence to the Philippine Islands without provision for our retention under the American flag, it is our firm intention and resolve to declare ourselves an independent constitutional sultanate to be known to the world as the Moro Nation. It is the duty of the Congress of the United States to make provision at once for the security and protection promised to us when we surrendered our arms to the United States Army. This promise is just as sacred as any alleged promises you may have made to the Christian Filipinos. You have

left us defenseless, and it is your duty to protect us to return to us our weapons you took from us which we freely gave you, relying on your promises.

That while it is not our desire to do so, by disregarding our rights and wishes while at the same time conceding political and economic favors to the Christian Filipinos, favors which are in turn used against us, you are forcing us surely and steadily to recourse to desperate and bloody measures, which are abhorrent to us, in view of our loyalty to the American Flag, our Governor General, and our gratitude to the United States for the liberty and security of life which we enjoyed until you delegated your power and authority to the Christian Filipinos.

We complain that we have not one representative in the Philippine legislative elected by direct vote of the people. Our meager representation is through representatives appointed by the Governor General, who must have the approval of a Senate controlled by Filipinos. Hence such representation is a farce.

We complain that the Philippine Legislature appropriates 1,000,000 pesos per annum for pro-independence propaganda, thereby forcing us to contribute through taxation without representation to the efforts of certain Christian Filipinos to severe the bonds between us and the United States, all of which is not in accordance with our wishes.

We complain that when our people, including women and children, have been shot down by the constabulary or otherwise maltreated investigations have been conducted in such a manner as to gloss over the truth.

We complain that in spite of the large volume of evidence of misgovernment of our people presented to the Wood-Forbes Commission and subsequently to the Governor General, nothing whatever has been done to assure our people that reforms meeting with our approval would be undertaken, for the reason that the power to institute reforms lies in yourselves and not in the Governor

General, the hands of the latter being tied by the provisions of the Jones Law.

We complain that the petitions are being circulated which our people by means of pressure from official sources are obliged to sign. These petitions are for the purpose of leading the people of the United States to believe that we are disloyal to the United States and to our Governor General, when such is not the case. Even provincial governors and other high officials prostitute their offices for this purpose. Therefore, we are forced to take concerted and violent action in order to avoid being misrepresented. Even Americans who sympathize with our aspirations and loyalty to the United States are forced to discuss the situation in whispers, if they dare discuss it at all, for fear of reprisals. Surely this is not in accordance with ideals of American justice and fair play.

We complain that the effort is being made to submerge our civilization and culture through the assimilation of our people by the Christian Filipinos. As means to this end colonies or Christian Filipinos financed by the Government are being injected into our midst to later cause such complications as have caused untold misery in the Balkan States and European Turkey. (Moros returning from pilgrimages to Mecca or from visits to Borneo bring in a fairly steady stream of information as to affairs in the other East), and which constitute a problem today which again threatens the peace of the world.

Had we the machinery of government and taxation in our hands, as have the Christian Filipinos, we could also send missions to Washington to present our side of the question, but having neither we can only offer our lives in order that you may understand and act accordingly.

Therefore, we hereby solemnly and respectfully petition the Congress of the United States for redress and amelioration of our present economic and political situation, and ask you, in the name of your God and our God, who is one and the same, that you promptly grant us our request in order that this, the land of our

forefathers, may not be again drenched in the blood of Mohammedans and Christians who should be dwelling together in peace and amity in the shelter of the American flag.

Zamboanga, P.I.
February 1, 1924

Among the Signatories:

1. Sultan Mangigin of Maguindanao
2. Hadji Panglima Nuño
3. Datu Sacaluran
4. Maharaja Habing
5. Abdula Piang
6. Datu Benito of Lanao

APPENDIX "E"

HOUSE BILL 5682
FOURTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES FOURTH SESSION
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
H. NO. 5682

Introduced by Congressman Amilbangsa

EXPLANATORY NOTE OF HOUSE BILL 5682

This bill proposes to grant and recognize the independence of the province of Sulu. By granting independence to the Province of Sulu, the Government of the Republic of the Philippines will withdraw and surrender all rights and possession, supervisions, jurisdiction and control as well as sovereignty now existing and exercised by the Republic of the Philippines in and over the territory and people of the Province of Sulu.

The financial aid doled out to the province of Sulu is very negligible. In comparison to the national aid given to the other provinces, Sulu province practically receives no national aid. In matters of national concern, the voice of the province of Sulu is seldom heard. Yet the province of Sulu contributes large sums of money to the national coffers by collecting religiously tariff and custom duties in the Port of Jolo. The province of Sulu also helps and cooperates with the Administration in its peace and order campaign. Yet, in spite of all these, the province of Sulu is a forgotten corner of the Republic of the Philippines.

In view of the above, approval of this bill is strongly requested.

(Sgd.) OMBRA AMILBANGSA
Congressman of Sulu

AN ACT

GRANTING AND RECOGNIZING THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE PROVINCE OF SULU

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. The government of the Republic of the Philippines hereby grants and recognizes the full independence of the Province of Sulu as a separate and self-governing nation and acknowledges the authority and control over the same of the government instituted by the people thereof.

SECTION 2. The Republic of the Philippines hereby withdraws and surrenders all rights of possession, supervision, jurisdiction, control or sovereignty now existing and exercised by the Republic of the Philippines in and over the territory and people of the Province of Sulu.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,

(Sgd.) OMBRA AMILBANGSA
Congressman for Sulu

APPENDIX "F"

MANIFESTO OF THE MINDANAO INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

The MUSLIM inhabitants of Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan, invoking the Grace of the Almighty Allah, Most Gracious, Most MercifuL, on whom all Praise is due and whom all creation depends for sustenance, make manifestation to the whole world its desire to secede from the Republic of the Philippines, in order to establish an ISLAMIC STATE that shall embody their ideals and aspirations, conserve and develop their patrimony, their Islamic heritage, under the blessings of Islamic Universal Brotherhood and the regime of law, justice and democracy and the recognized principles of the law of nations, do promulgate and make known the declaration of its independence from mother country, the Republic of the Philippines.

TERRITORIES

The ISLAMIC STATE shall comprise the contiguous southern portion of the Philippine Archipelago inhabited by the MUSLIMS, such as, Cotabato, Davao, Zamboanga, and Zamboanga City, Basilan , Lanao, Sulu, Palawan and the adjoining areas or islands which are inhabited by the MUSLIMS or being under their sphere of influence, including the maritime areas therein.

PEOPLES

The MUSLIM inhabitants of the Republic of the Philippines, numbering some FOUR MILLIONS (4,000,000) with a culture and history of their own are distinct from the affluent Christian majority, and for the reasons above mentioned, its integration into the Philippine body politics being impossible.

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

1. That it is a recognized principle underlying the Charter of the

United Nations and the Declaration of Human Rights of the rights of all people constituting the minority in a given state for self-determination;

2. That the ISLAMIC WORLD CONGRESS has affirmed the above principles, particularly on the rights of the MUSLIMS whom are in the minority in non-Muslim states for self-determination;

3. That the systematic extermination of the MUSLIM youth like the Corregidor Fiasco the policy of isolation and dispersal of the MUSLIM communities have been pursued vigorously by the government to the detriment of the MUSLIMS:

4. That ISLAM, being a communal religion an ideology and a way of life, must have a definite territory for the exercise of its tenets and teachings, and for the observance of its laws;

5. That economic progress, social development, and political independence are the cherished and inviolable dreams and aspirations of the MUSLIMS, and the realization of which can better be served and promoted by and among themselves; and

6. That under the present state of things, the MUSLIMS are capable of self-government or political independence they being endowed with sufficient number of professionals with academic, technical and legal training.

NOW, THEREFORE, it was decided that a government shall be organized and established for the MUSLIMS inhabiting the aforesaid particular areas of the Islands of Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan, and the outlying territories which are all under the sway of the MUSLIMS, said government to be independent from all states and be equal with others under the laws of civilized nations; and

BE IT FURTHER KNOWN that said government for the MUSLIMS shall be known and referred to as THE REPUBLIC OF MINDANAO AND SULU.

Pagalungan Darul Islam, Cotabato, Philippines, May 1, 1968.

PRINCIPAL SIGNATORY:
(Sgd.) Ex-GOVERNOR DATU UDTOG MATALAM

Copies furnished:

1. All Muslim Leaders (Philippines)
2. All Heads of Muslim Countries
3. The United Nations
4. Philippine Political Leaders
5. Newspapers in the Philippines
6. And others.

MIM DOCUMENT NO. 1-A

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
of the
MUSLIM INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT
OF THE PHILIPPINES

PREAMBLE

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, MOST GRACIOUS, MOST MERCIFUL.

The MUSLIM inhabitants of Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan, invoking the Grace of the Almighty Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful, on whom all praise is due, and on whom creation depends for sustenance, in order to establish a solid front that shall work and continuously struggle for the eventual secession and independence of the territories, islands, and the maritime areas therein which are inhabited by the MUSLIMS, and the formation of the ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF MINDANAO AND SULU, that shall embody their ideals and aspirations, conserve and develop their patrimony, their Islamic Malayan heritage and culture, under the blessing of Islamic Universal Brotherhood, social justice, and democracy, with equal rights and privileges under the laws of

civilized nations, do ordain and promulgate this Constitution and By-Laws.

ARTICLE I

NAME AND OFFICE

SECTION 1. That this organization shall be known as the MUSLIM INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT OF THE PHILIPPINES, which, for short, shall be known and referred to as MIM; and

SECTION 2. That this movement shall have its central Headquarters and temporary base of operations at Pagalungan, Cotabato, Philippines until such time as the movement shall have hereinafter designated its permanent base of operation.

ARTICLE II
MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1. That membership in the movement shall be opened to all able-bodied MUSLIMS who are or may be found domiciled within the Republic of the Philippines.

SECTION 2. That application for membership shall be coursed thru the Secretariat which shall then forward it to the Chairman for approval or rejection; and

SECTION 3. That members shall be classified as (a) active and (b) reserved.

ARTICLE III

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

SECTION 1. That it is a recognized principle underlying the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that all peoples constituting the minority in a given state shall have rights to self-determination;

SECTION 2. That the ISLAMIC WORLD CONGRESS has affirmed above inviolable principle, particularly on the rights of the MUSLIMS who are in the minority in a given non-Muslim state, of self-determination;

SECTION 3. That is the duty and obligation of every MUSLIM to wage JIHAD, physically or spiritually, to change DARUL AMAN (present status of the Muslim Communities) to DARUL ISLAM (Islamic Territory), and prevent it from becoming DARUL HARB (hostile territory to the MUSLIM);

SECTION 4. That the policy of isolation and dispersal of the MUSLIM COMMUNITIES by the government of the Republic of the Philippines has been detrimental to the MUSLIMS AND ISLAM;

SECTION . 5. That the Almighty Allah will not change the condition of a people until they themselves change it;

SECTION 6. That ISLAM, being a communal religion, an ideology, and at the same time, a way of life, must have a definite territory of its own for the exercise of its tenets and teaching, and for the observance of its SHARIAH AND ADAT laws;

SECTION 7. That economic progress, social development and political independence are the cherished dreams and aspiration of the MUSLIMS, and the realization of which can better be served and promoted by and among themselves;

SECTION 8. That the MUSLIMS today are already capable of self-government, or for political independence, they being endowed with sufficient trained men in all fields; and

SECTION 9. That the MANIFESTO of May 1, 1968 and the addendum made thereto dated June8, 1968 (12th of Rab All Awal, 1388) shall be as it is adopted, be referred to as APPENDICES "A" AND "B", respectively, and forming integral parts of this Constitution and By-Laws.

ARTICLE IV
AIMS AND PURPOSES

SECTION 1. That the movement shall work and agitate for the secession and independence of the MUSLIMS inhabiting the islands of Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan from the Republic of the Philippines;

SECTION 2. That the movement shall work towards the eventual creation, organization, and establishment of an ISLAMIC STATE which shall henceforth be known as the REPUBLIC OF MINDANAO AND SULU.

SECTION 3. That the movement shall conduct a sustained propaganda within and outside of the country to gain symphatizers and supporters; and

SECTION 4. That the movement shall be guided by the principle and teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (may peace and the Blessing of Allah be on Him).

ARTICLE V
ORGANIZATIONS

SECTION 1. That the movement shall have the following internal organization, to wit:

(a) Central Committee;
(b) Advisory Council; and
(c) Secretariat.

SECTION 2. That the Central Committee shall be composed of not less than six (6) nor more than twelve (12) members, one of whom shall be designated or elected as Chairman thereof by the members;

SECTION 3. That the committee shall act as quasi-executive and legislative organ of the movement;

SECTION 4. That the Chairman of the Committee shall preside over the meetings of the body, or designate someone from among

the members to preside therein;

SECTION 5. That the Chairman shall act in all cases to meet contingencies when the advice to the Chairman on matters of policy and other matters that need serious consideration and thorough study;

SECTION 6. That the Chairman shall act in all cases to meet contingencies when the Central Committee is not in session;

SECTION 7. That the Advisory Council shall be composed of MUSLIM Leaders from the respective MUSLIM communities who may be summoned by the Chairman for counsel and advice, among whom shall be recognized political and religious leaders; professionals and the youth groups shall be represented therein;

SECTION 8. That the Secretariat shall be the implementing arm of the movement which shall be composed of a secretary-general and two under-secretaries for internal and external affairs;

SECTION 9. That the Office of the Chairman shall have three Bureaus;

(a) Political Bureau;
(b) Information and Propaganda Bureau; and
(c) Finance Bureau.

SECTION 10. That the members of the Central Committee shall acts as ex-officio chairman and vice-chairman of the different Bureaus upon being designated by the Chairman of the Central Committee;

SECTION 11. That the Political Bureau shall be the Political Arm of the Movement;

SECTION 12. That the Information and Propaganda Bureau shall be the intelligence and propaganda arms of the Movement; and

SECTION 13. That the Finance Bureau shall be the logistic Arm of the Movement.

ARTICLE VI
MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

SECTION 1. That the Movement shall adopt the following:

(a) Official Coat of Arms;
(b) Official Seal;
(c) Official Standard or Banner;
(d) Official Badge or Insignia; and
(e) Official National Anthem and Hymn.

ARTICLE VII
TRANSITORY PROVISIONS

SECTION 1. That the acts, orders, decisions, mandates, and activities of the movement shall stand as effective until a duly constituted political body of Islamic Congress shall have been constituted and organized by the MUSLIM inhabitants of Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan and the latter entity expressly supplant or repeal the acts of the former.

ARTICLE VIII
AMENDATORY CLAUSE

SECTION 1. That this Constitution and By-Laws may be amended by at least three-fourth votes of the members constituting the Central Committee upon meeting called for the purpose.

Approved and adopted on June 8, 1968 (12th of Rab Al Awal 1388H), at Pagalungan, Cotabato, Philippines.

s/t DATU UDTOG MATALAM
Chairman

ATTESTED BY:

s/t ILLEGIBLE
Secretary General

ORIGINAL SIGNATORIES

APPENDIX "G'

THE TRIPOLI AGREEMENT

IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE OMNIPOTENT, THE MERCIFUL

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNEMNT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES AND MORO LIBERATION FRONT WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF THE QUADRIPARTITE MINISTERIAL COMMISSION MEMBERS OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE AND THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE.

In accordance with the Resolution No. 4 Para. 5 adopted by the council of Ministers of the Islamic Conference in its Fourth Session held in Benhazi, Libyan Arab Republic during the month of Safar 1393 H. corresponding to March 1973, calling for the formation of Quadripartite Ministerial Commission representing the Libyan Arab Republic, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Senegal and the Republic of Somalia, to enter into discussions with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines concerning the situation of the Muslims in the South of the Philippines.

And in accordance with the Resolution No. (18) adopted by the Islamic Conference held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in Jumada Al-Akhir 1393 H. Corresponding to June 1974 A.D. which recommends the searching for a just and peaceful political solution to the problem of the Muslims in the South of the Philippines through the negotiations.

And in accordance with the Resolution No. 12/7/S adopted by the Islamic Conference held in Istanbul in Jumada El-Ula 1396 H. corresponding to May 1976 A. D. empowering the Quadripartite Ministerial Commission and the Secretary General of the Islamic Conference to take the necessary steps for the resumption of negotiations.

And following the task undertaken by the Quadripartite

Ministerial Commission and the Secretary General of the Islamic Conference and the discussions held with H.E. President Marcos, President of the Republic of the Philippines.

And in realization of the contents of Para. 6 of the Joint Communique issued in Tripoli on the 25th Zulgeda 1396 H. corresponding to 17th November 1976 A. D. following the official visit paid by the delegation of the government of the Philippines headed by the First Lady of the Philippines, Mrs. Imelda R. Marcos, to the Libyan Arab Republic and which calls for the resumption of negotiations between the two parties concerned in Tripoli on the 15th of December 1976 A.D.

Negotiations were held in the City of Tripoli during the period between 24th Zulhija 1396 H. to Second to Moharram 1397 H. corresponding to the period from 15th to 23rd December 1976 A.D. at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs presided over by Dr. Ali Abdulsalaam Treki, Minister of State for Foreign Relations of the Libyan Arab Republic , and comprising the Delegations of:

1. Government of the Republic of the Philippines Front, led by Honorable Carmelo Z. Barbero, Undersecretary of National Defense for Civilian Relations.

2. Moro National Liberation Front, led by Mr. Nur Misuari, Chief of the Front.

And with the participation of the representatives of the Quadripartite Ministerial Commission:

The Libyan Arab Republic- represented by Dr. Ali Abdusaalam Treki, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia- H.E. Salah Abdalla El-Fadl, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Libyan Arab Republic.

The Republic of Senegal-Mr. Abubakar Othman Si,

Representative of the Republic of Senegal and Charge d' Affairs of Senegal in Cairo.

Democratic Republic of Somalia-H.E. Bazi Mohamed Sufi, Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Somalia, Libyan Arab Republic.

With the aid of H.E. Dr. Ahmed Karim Gaye, Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Conference, and a delegation from the Secretariat General of the Conference composed of Mr. Qasim Zuheri, Assistant Secretary General, and Mr. Aref Bea Musa, Director of Political Department.

During these negotiations which were marked by a spirit of conciliation and understanding, it has been agreed on the following:

First: The establishment of Autonomy in the Southern Philippines within the realm of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of the Philippines.

Second: The areas of the autonomy for the Muslims in the Southern Philippines shall comprise the following:

1. Basilan
2. Sulu
3. Tawi-Tawi
4. Zamboanga del Sur
5. Zamboanga del Norte
6. North Cotabato
7. Maguindanao
8. Sultan Kudarat
9. Lanao del Norte
10. Lanao del Sur
11. Davao del Sur
12. South Cotabato
13. Palawan
14. All the cities and villages situated in the above mentioned areas.

Third:

1. Foreign policy shall be of the competence of the Central Government of the Philippines.

2. The National Defense Affairs shall be the concern of the Central

Authority provided that the arrangements for the joining of the forces of the Moro National Liberation Front with the Philippine Armed Forces be discussed later.

3. In the areas of the autonomy, the Muslims shall have the right to set up their own Courts which implement the Islamic Shariah laws. The Muslims shall be represented in all Courts including the Supreme Court. The representation of the Muslims in the Supreme Court shall be upon the recommendation of the authorities of the Autonomy and the Supreme Court. Decrees will be issued by the President of the Republic for their appointments taking into consideration all necessary qualifications of the candidates.

4. Authorities of the autonomy in the South of the Philippines shall have the right to set up schools, colleges and universities, provided that matters pertaining to the relationship between these educational and scientific organs and the general education system in the State shall be subject of discussion later on.

5. The Muslims shall have their own administrative system in compliance with the objectives of the autonomy and its institutions. The relationship between this administrative system and the Central administrative system to be discussed later.

6. The authorities of the autonomy in the South of the Philippines shall have their own economic and financial system. The relationship between this system and the Central economic and financial system of the State shall be discussed later.

7. The authorities of the autonomy in the South of the Philippines shall enjoy the right of representation and participation in the Central Government and in all other organs of the State. The number of representatives and ways of participation shall be fixed later.

8. Special Regional Security Forces are to be set up in the area of the Autonomy for the Muslims in the South of the Philippines. The relationship between these forces and the Central security forces shall be fixed later.

9. A Legislative Assembly and an Executive Council shall be formed in the areas of the Autonomy for the Muslims. The setting up of the Legislative Assembly shall be constituted through a direct election, and the formation of the Executive Council shall take place through appointments by the Legislative Assembly. A decree for their formation shall be enacted by the President of the Republic respectively. The number of members of each assembly shall be determined later on.

10. Mines and mineral resources fall within the competence of the Central Government, and a reasonable percentage deriving from the revenues of the mines and minerals be fixed for the benefit of the areas of the autonomy.

11. A mixed Committee shall be composed of representatives of the Central Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the representatives of the Moro National Liberation Front. The mixed Committee shall meet in Tripoli during the period from the Fifth of February to a date not later than the third of March, 1977. The task of said committee shall be charged to study in detail the points left for discussion in order to reach a solution thereof in conformity with the provisions of this agreement.

12. Ceasefire shall be declared immediately after the signature of this agreement, provided that its coming into effect should not exceed the 20th January 1977. A Joint Committee shall be composed of the two parties with the help of the Organization of the Islamic Conference represented by the Quadripartite Ministerial Committee to supervise the implementation of the ceasefire.

The said Joint Committee shall also be charged with supervising the following:

a. A complete amnesty in the areas of the autonomy and the renunciation of all legal claims and codes resulting from events which took place in the South of the Philippines.

b. The release of all the political prisoners who had relations

with the events in the South of the Philippines.

c. The return of all refugees who have abandoned their areas in the South of the Philippines.

d. To guarantee the freedom of movements and meetings.

13. A joint meeting to be held in Jeddah during the first week of the month of March 1977 to initial what has been concluded by the Committee referred to in Para. 11.

14. The final agreement concerning the setting up of the autonomy referred to in the first and second paragraphs shall be signed in the City of Manila, Republic of the Philippines, between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro National Liberation Front, and the Islamic Conference represented by the Quadripartite Ministerial Commission and the Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Conference.

15. Immediately after the signature of the Agreement in Manila, a Provisional Government shall be established in the areas of the autonomy to be appointed by the President of the Philippines; and be charged with the task of preparing for the elections of the Legislative Assembly in the territories of the Autonomy; and administer the areas in accordance with the provision of this agreement until a Government is formed by the elected Legislative Assembly.

16. The Government of the Philippines shall take all necessary constitutional processes for the implementation of the entire Agreement.

Fourth. This Agreement shall come into force with effect from the date of its signature.

Done in the City of Tripoli on 2nd Muharram 1397 H. corresponding to 23rd December 1976 A.D. in three original copies in Arabic, English, French languages, all equal in legal power.

FOR THE GRP:

HON. CARMELO Z. BARBERO
Undersecretary of National
Defense for Civilian relations

FOR THE MNLF:

MR. NUR MISUARI
Chairman of the Front

DR. ALI ABDUSAALAM TREKI
Minister of State for Foreign Affairs,
Libyan Arab Republic and Chairman
of the Negotiations

DR. AMADOU KARIM GAYE
Secretary General of the Organization Islamic
Conference

APPENDIX "H"

IN THE NAME OF GOD THE BENEFICENT THE MERCIFUL

AGREEMENT FOR THE GENERAL CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES AND THE MORO ISLAMIC LIBERATION FRONT

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

WHEREAS, peace talks are now being undertaken between representatives of the Government of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF);

WHEREAS, while an informal ceasefire has been observed between the GRP and the MILF, with the end in view of finding a just and lasting solution to the centuries old problem of the Bangsamoro and native inhabitants of Mindanao, it becomes necessary that peace and order be assured;

WHEREAS, in view of the foregoing, it becomes imperative for the GRP and the MILF to enter into an agreement for the general cessation of hostilities and to agree to continue the formal peace talks;

NOW, THEREFORE, the GRP and the MILF, through their undersigned authorized representatives, agree, as they hereby agreed on the following:

1. To commit the armed forces of the GRP and the MILF to a General Cessation of Hostilities;

2. To direct their respective Sub-Committee on Cessation of Hostilities to meet on 30 July 1997, and on such dates thereafter, but not to exceed two (2) months, to draw and finalize the guidelines and ground rules for the implementation of this Agreement; and

3. To resume and proceed with the formal peace talks in a venue to be mutually agreed upon between the GRP and the MILF Panels. This Agreement shall take effect on the 21st day of July 1997.

SO AGREED.

DONE in the City of Cagayan de Oro, Philippines, this 18th day of July 1997.

For the GRP:

AMB. FORTUNATO U. ABAT
Chairman, GRP Panel

For the MILF:

GHAZALI JAAFAR
Vice Chair for Political Affairs
Central Committee, MILF
Chairman, MILF Panel

ATTESTED:

RUBEN D. TORRES
Executive Secretary

SEC. RENATO S. DE VILLA
Dept. of National Defense

WITNESSES:

For the GRP:

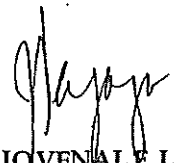
MAJ. GEN. JOSELIN E. NAZARENO
Chairman, Sub-Committee on
Cessation of Hostilities

Lt. GEN. EDGARDO E. BATENGA (RET.)
Member, Technical Committee

For the MILF:

MOHAGHER IQBAL
Member, Central Committee
MILF

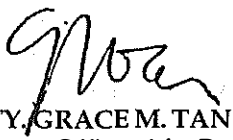
SAMMY AL MANSOUR
Deputy Chief of Staff, BIAF
MILF



ASEC JOVENAL F. LAZAGA
Member, Tecjnical Committee on
Agenda Setting



OMAR HASSAN
Member, Central Committee
MILF



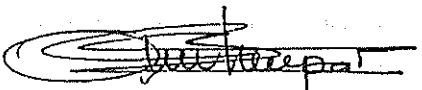
ATTY. GRACE M. TAN
Director, Office of the President



ABDULMANAF MANTAWIL
Chairman, Secretariat
MILF, Technical Committee



ATTY. ALBERTO A. BERNARDO
Executive Director, NPUDC



ATTY. OMAR B. UMPAR
MILF Legal Counselor

APPENDIX "I"

IN THE NAME OF GOD, MOST BENEFICENT, MOST MERCIFUL

GENERAL FRAMEWORK OF AGREEMENT OF INTENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES (GRP) AND THE MORO ISLAMIC LIBERATION FRONT (MILF)

The Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), herein referred to as the Parties;

Recognizing the need for a negotiated political settlement to bring an end to the armed conflict in Mindanao;

Desiring to contribute toward that end and to promote an enduring peace and stability in Mindanao;

Noting the Agreement on General Cessation of Hostilities of July 18, 1997, signed at Cagayan de Oro City, between the Parties;

Have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE I

The Parties commit to pursue the peace negotiations on the substantive issues as soon as possible, and resolutely continue the negotiations until the Parties reach a negotiated political settlement.

ARTICLE II

The Parties affirm their commitment to protect and respect human rights in accordance with the principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

ARTICLE III

The parties negotiate with sincerity in the resolution and pacific settlement of the conflict, and hereby pledge to implement the joint agreements/arrangements previously signed by the Parties' representatives, such as the Agreement for General Cessation of Hostilities signed on July 18, 1997 at Cagayan de Oro City and other supplementary agreements.

ARTICLE IV

The Parties pledge to refrain from the use or threat of force to attain undue advantage while peace negotiations on the substantive issues are on-going.

ARTICLE V

The Parties recognize that there will be lasting peace in Mindanao when there is mutual trust, justice, freedom, and tolerance for the identity, culture, way of life and aspirations of all the peoples of Mindanao.

ARTICLE VI

This Agreement shall enter into force upon signature.

Done at the Da'wah Center, Crossing Simuay, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao, this 27th day of August, 1998.

FOR THE GRP:

LTGEN. ORLANDO V. SORIANO (RET)
Chairman
GRP Negotiating Panel

FOR THE MILF:

ALEEM ABDULAZIZ MIMBANTAS
Chairman
MILF Negotiating Panel

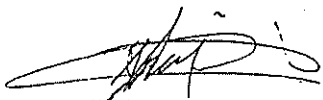
WITNESSES:



AMB. MANUEL T. YAN
Presidential Adviser on Peace Process



DR. ALUNAN C. GLANG
Adviser, MILF



REP. ANTHONY T. DEQUINA
Member, GRP Negotiating Panel

SHEIKH ABUKHALIL YAHYA
Chairman, Majlis Al-Shura



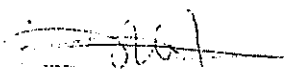
DR. EMILY M. MAROHOMBSAR
Member, GRP Negotiating Panel



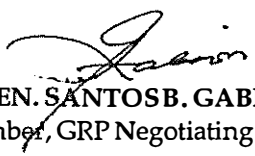
SHEIKH ALI ESMAIL
Chairman, MILF Islamic Supreme Court



DIR. ALMA R. EVANGELISTA
Chairperson, GRP Technical Committee



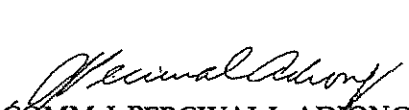
MOHAGHERIQBAL
Member, MILF Negotiating Panel



MGEN. SANTOS B. GABISON, JR.
Member, GRP Negotiating Panel



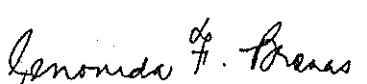
OMAR HASSAN
Member, MILF Negotiating Panel



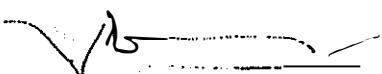
COMM. J. PERCIVAL L. ADIONG
Member, GRP Technical Committee



GHAZALI JAAFAR
Member, MILF Negotiating Panel



ADG. ZENONIDA F. BROSAS
Member, GRP Technical Committee



SAMMY AL-MANSOUR
Member, MILF Negotiating Panel

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