

# AUTONOMY & PEACE REVIEW

*A Quarterly Publication of the Institute for Autonomy and Governance*

Volume No. 6 Issue No. 2

April - June 2010

## Security Sector Transformation- Praxis from the Ground



INSTITUTE FOR AUTONOMY AND GOVERNANCE



KONRAD ADENAUER-STIFTUNG

The publication of this review is made possible through the grant of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. KAS is in 5<sup>th</sup> floor, Cambridge Center Building, 108 Tordesillas Corner Gallado Street, Salcedo Village, Makati City, Metro Manila, Philippines, telephone 894-3737.

Established in 2001, the Institute for Autonomy and Governance, Inc. seeks to provide research, training and technical assistance to promote meaningful autonomy and governance in the southern Philippines. The Institute is at the Alumni Center, Notre Dame University, Notre Dame Avenue, Cotabato City, Philippines, telefax (64)421-2071.

## *About the Institute for Autonomy and Governance*



The Institute for Autonomy and Governance (IAG) is an independent and non-partisan think tank founded in 2001 to generate ideas on making autonomy an effective vehicle for peace and development in the Southern Philippines.

IAG views autonomy as a broad and evolving concept that encompasses any political structure that is less than an independent state. It provides the country's minority Muslim and Indigenous Peoples platforms to evolve self governance structures whether federal, autonomous or associative.

IAG continues to conduct research, fora, roundtable discussions, and conferences on the issues of autonomy, good governance and political settlements between the GRP and the Rebel Fronts (MNLF and MILF). It has published policy papers and journals on political, economic, and security issues that define the much needed measures to be undertaken for meaningful self-governance in the region.

IAG also provides support to the ARMM Regional Legislative Assembly and the Iranon 'County' (Buldon, Barira, Matanog and Parang), specifically in capacity-building with focus on the processes of policy formulation and legislation.

IAG is an institutional partner of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung in the Philippines.

IAG is located at the Alumni Center, Notre Dame University, Cotabato City, Philippines. Telefax (64)421-2071. Email: [info@iag.org.ph](mailto:info@iag.org.ph) and Website: [www.iag.org.ph](http://www.iag.org.ph)

# Autonomy and Peace Review

## CONTENTS

<b>EDITORIAL</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Challenges of Security sector Transformation in the Philippines: a Policy Recommendation for the New Aquino Administration</b> Rommel Banlaoi, Executive Director - PIPVTR	<b>11</b>
<b>The Comprehensive Peace Process</b> Fr. Eliseo R. Mercado, Jr., OMI	<b>73</b>
<b>Soldier as a Bridging Leader</b> Fr. Jonathan Domingo, OMI	<b>97</b>
<b>Breaking Barriers, Building Partnerships and Helping Make New Societal Arrangements</b> Lt. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino - Commander AFP Western Mindanao Command	<b>119</b>
<b>Establishing a Safe and Secure Environment for all Parties in Conflict</b> Lt. Gen. Raymundo Ferrer - Commander AFP Eastern Mindanao Command	<b>125</b>
<b>Forging the Peace in Buliok: Colonel Ben DeOcampo Dolorfino &amp; the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Brigade (A Case Study)</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>Photos</b>	<b>185</b>

## **Editorial Board**

### **Eliseo R. Mercado Jr., OMI**

Editor-in-Chief

Institute for Autonomy and Governance

### **Dr. Peter Koepfinger**

Country Representative

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

### **Ramie Toledo**

Communications Specialist

Institute for Autonomy and Governance

### **Prof. Sheila Algabre**

Vice President for Mission and Identity

Notre Dame University

### **Amina Rasul**

Convenor

Philippine Council for Islam and Democracy

### **Alber Husin**

Professor

Ateneo de Zamboanga University

### **Omar Vicente D. Tadeja**

Layout Artist

Institute for Autonomy and Governance

# **Editorial**

---

## EDITORIAL

*ELISEO “JUN” MERCADO, OMI*

It is interesting to note that the Security Sector Reforms (SSR) is one of the four pillars mentioned by President Noynoy Aquino in his National Security Policy. He outlines four pillars that should guide the new government in dealing with peace and security issues. These are the following: (1) Good Governance; (2) Delivery of basic services, particularly health and education; (3) Economic upliftment and sustainable development; and (4) Security Sector Reforms.

The Institute for Autonomy and Governance is engaged in the security sector reforms since 2007. The two major Mindanao AFP Commands (Western Mindanao Command and the Eastern Mindanao Command) have been the IAG partners in the conduct of workshops and sessions on security sector reforms. In fact, the field experiences of both Lt. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino of WESMINCOM and Lt. Gen. Raymundo Ferrer of EASMINCOM are concrete lessons and testimonies to the actual praxis of Security Sector Reforms in the AFP.

Gen. Dolorfino and Gen. Ferrer share their actual journey to the path of peace. It is truly fantastic that the two top generals who have seen and participated in numerous battles and war in Mindanao have now become the leading proponents of SSR. Their contributions to this issue on SSR are drawn not from textbooks but from their actual praxis honed by numerous sharing on the subject both here and abroad.

The two anchors of the actual praxis of SSR are the module on Bridging Leadership presented by Fr. Domingo (the regular resource speaker on the subject) and the module on the Comprehensive Peace Process presented by Fr. Mercado (also a regular resource speaker on the subject). The two modules are part of the 10-module course on SSR that IAG has developed and in use in Mindanao for the AFP and PNP and LGU.

This issue has also included a concrete case study of SSR through bridging leadership path. The case study presented is the experience of Gen. Dolorfino while still a Colonel and Comandant of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Brigade based in Buliok, Pikit following the Battle of Buliok that led to the destruction of Ustadz Hashim Salamat's Main Camp. It is published here with the permission of the AIM Team Energy Center for Bridging Societal Divide.

The SSR issue of the Journal hopes to continue the ongoing discussion on the subject as policy makers seek to firm up the national peace and security policy of the new government.

**Challenges of Security Sector  
Transformation in the Philippines:  
a Policy Recommendation for the  
New Aquino Administration**

---

## **Challenges of Security Sector Transformation in the Philippines: a Policy Recommendation for the New Aquino Administration\***

### **Introduction**

In a country undergoing a painful process of nation-building, addressing complex internal armed conflicts is an arduous task of the security sector. From a traditional and narrow perspective, the Philippine security sector refers primarily to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) that is mandated to protect the state against internal and external security threats.

As of January 2010, the AFP had a total of around 113,000 personnel, with the Philippine Army having the biggest number of 65,000 personnel followed by the Philippine Navy with 35,000 and the Philippine Air Force with 15,000 personnel.<sup>1</sup> But to view the AFP as the main security sector is utterly misleading. This paper provides an overview of security sector in the Philippines and identifies some challenges for its transformation. This paper also aims to provide policy recommendations for the new administration of President Benigno Aquino III in his attempts to improve the quality of overall governance in the Philippines necessary for nation-building.

### **The Concept of Security Sector Transformation**

As a concept, security sector transformation presents a paradigm shift in security sector governance. It recognizes

the blurring of lines between internal and external security challenges. It identifies the current and evolving role played by military and non-military players as well as government and non-government stakeholders in addressing the multifaceted security challenges faced by the nation. The concept of security transformation primarily seeks to understand underlying conditions for the emergence of these security challenges and builds capacity to strengthen national and local leadership “in dealing with new security demands and to establish effective processes and structures commensurate with the new challenges.”<sup>2</sup>

The most important intention of security sector transformation is to make the security sector accountable to democratic processes and ensure armed forces to promote democratic norms and principles, which include respect for human rights, observance of international humanitarian law, and upholding the rule of law, among others. In other words, security sector transformation aims to implement effective governance of the security sector through democratic processes. It also ensures that the security sector play an effective, legitimate, and democratically accountable role in providing external and internal security for their citizens. It endeavors to prevent the illegitimate use of state violence against its own people. Most importantly, it intends to enhance the capacity of state in deterring groups or individuals to use armed violence for private ends and/or for partisan political purposes.<sup>3</sup>

Security sector transformation is warranted in developing or weak states experiencing internal armed conflicts

or facing the proliferation of private armed groups. It is usually implemented in states where there is weak or failed governance that encourages groups and individuals to arm themselves for protection (vigilantism) or for a living (entrepreneur of violence). It is also pursued in countries undergoing the painful process of democratic transition and democratic consolidation where the rule of law is still fragile and weak.

Security sector transformation is an integral aspect of the overall process of democratization. It aims to strengthen the democratic governance of the security sector so it can be an effective tool to prevent or resolve internal armed conflicts and to counter political violence, terrorism and criminal violence.

Poor governance of the security sector is often a source of internal armed conflicts and private armed violence as well as a great obstacle to peace-building efforts and the strengthening of the rule of law. Security sector transformation is an important process for the promotion of justice, peace and over-all national development.

The transformation of the security is considered vital to the success of internal armed conflict resolution and peace processes. It is regarded as effective antidote to armed violence, criminality, insurgency and terrorism. Security sector transformation is also crucial to foster structural stability so that communities can live in a safe and security environment necessary for the enjoyment of human secur. Security sector transformation aims to ensure state security without compromising human security. Security sector transformation

endeavors to build the capacity of the security sector in order for the state to fulfill its role in advancing human security of its citizens.

## **An Overview of Philippine Security Sector**

To discuss security sector transformation, it is necessary to discuss an overview of Philippine security sector. Viewing the armed forces as the main security sector is apparently based on a limited definition of security.<sup>4</sup> This limited definition is deeply anchored on the realist school where the concept of security is viewed in pure military sense.<sup>5</sup> Other scholars have challenged this limited definition of national security arguing that security has become a broad concept that goes beyond its military dimension.<sup>6</sup> Security is a comprehensive concept that includes economic, political, socio-cultural, environmental and human security.<sup>7</sup> Thus, there is also a broader concept of the security sector, which “is taken to mean all those organizations which have the authority to use, or order the use of force, or threat of force, to protect the state and its citizens, as well as those civil structures that are responsible for their management and oversight.”<sup>8</sup> Given this view, there are three pillars of the Philippine security sector:

- Groups with a mandate to wield the instruments of violence – military, paramilitaries and police forces;
- Institutions with a role in managing and monitoring the security sector – civilian ministries, parliaments, non-government organizations (NGOs) and local government units (LGUs); and,

- Bodies responsible for guaranteeing the rule of law – the judiciary, the penal system, and human rights ombudsmen and, where these bodies are particularly weak, the international community.<sup>9</sup>

Aside from the AFP, therefore, Philippine security sector includes but is not limited to the following:

- The AFP and its various intelligence services including the Civilian Armed Forces Geographic Units (CAFGU)
- The Philippine National Police (PNP) and its various intelligence services
- The Philippine Coast Guards (PCG) and its intelligence services
- The Intelligence and Enforcement Group of the Bureau of Customs;
- Local Peace and Order Watchers or the *Baranggay Tanod* (Village Watchers as well as Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Traffic Enforcers and Civilian Volunteer Organizations (CVOs)
- The Office of the President and its various departments, like the Department of National Defense (DND), the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Department of Finance (DOF), and the Department of Budget and Management, the National Security Council

(NSC), and the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (NICA)

- Independent commissions like the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), the National Police Commission (Napolcom), and the Philippine Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC), the Commission on Audit (COA), the Commission on Appointments (CA) and the Philippine Commission on Good Government (PCGG).
- The Supreme Court of the Philippines, the Office of the Ombudsman and the *Sandigang Bayan*.
- The Philippine Senate and the Philippine House of Representatives, particularly their committees on defense, security, peace and order, foreign affairs and legislative oversight.
- Civil society organizations like strategic think tanks, human rights organizations and other governance watch groups.

The National Security Council (NSC) is the lead agency of the national government mandated to address the multifaceted national security concerns of the Philippines. Its principal function is to coordinate the formulation of policies relating to or with implications for Philippine national security. But its major activities, so far, have been largely confined to making key decisions on high-impact external and internal security issues confronting the country. The major external security concern of the Philippines is the South China Sea Disputes.<sup>10</sup> Its major internal security issues, on the other hand,

are local communism, Muslim secessionism and domestic terrorism posed by the New People's Army (NPA), Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), respectively.<sup>11</sup>

The main document that defines the present juridical personality of the NSC is the Executive Order (EO) No. 115 dated 24 December 1986. This document states that the NSC shall perform the following duties:

- To advise the President with respect to the integration of domestic, foreign, military, political, economic, social, and educational policies relating to the national security so as to enable all concerned ministries, departments, and agencies of the government to meet more effectively, problems and matters involving the national security;
- To evaluate and analyze all information, events, and incidents in terms of the risks they pose or implications upon and/or threats to the overall security and stability of the nation, for the purpose of recommending to the President appropriate responses thereto and/or action thereon;
- To formulate and coordinate the implementation of policies on matters of common interest to the various ministries,

departments, and agencies of the government concerned with the national security, and to make recommendations to the President in connection therewith;

- To insure that policies adopted by the NSC on national security are effectively and efficiently implemented; and,
- To make such recommendations and/or render such other reports as the President may from time to time direct.<sup>12</sup>

The NSC does not conduct its own regular meeting to address those threats. The President usually convenes NSC meetings on *ad hoc* basis depending on the present national crises situation. So far, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo held 9 meetings of the NSC from 2001-2004 compared with only 4 meetings during the time of President Joseph Estrada (1998-2001), 7 meetings during the time of President Fidel Ramos (1992-1998), and 3 meetings during the time of President Corazon Aquino (1986-1992).<sup>13</sup> President Ferdinand Marcos held the most number of meetings of 33 from 1972-1986. After the restoration of Philippine democracy in 1986, President Aquino reorganized the NSC to be a democratic collegial body that includes pertinent security players in the Philippines. In 1987, the NSC comprised the following members:

- The President
- The Vice-President

- Executive Secretary
- Secretary of Foreign Affairs
- Secretary of National Defense
- Secretary of Justice
- Secretary of Labor and Employment
- Secretary of Local Government
- National Security Director
- The AFP Chief of Staff,
- And “such other government officials and private citizens as the President may designate from time to time.”<sup>14</sup>

Since then, however, the membership of the NSC has undergone some changes to accommodate the widening scope of the security sector and the broadening concept of security. In the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, President Arroyo expanded the membership of the NSC pursuant to Executive Order No. 34 dated 17 September 2001. The NSC now includes the following members:

- The President as Chairman
- The Vice President
- The Senate President
- The Speaker of the House of Representatives
- The Senate President Pro-Tempore
- Deputy Speakers of the House for Luzon, Visayas & Mindanao
- The Majority Floor Leader of the Senate
- The Majority Floor Leader of the House
- The Minority Floor Leader of the Senate

- The Minority Floor Leader of the House
- The Chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
- The Chairman, Senate Committee on National Defense and Security
- The Chairman, Senate Committee on Public Order and Illegal Drugs
- The Chairman, House Committee on Foreign Relations
- The Chairman, House Committee on National Defense and Security
- The Chairman, House Committee on Public Order and Safety
- The Executive Secretary
- The National Security Director General as Secretary
- The Secretary of Foreign Affairs
- The Secretary of National Defense
- The Secretary of Justice
- The Secretary of Interior and Local Government
- The Secretary of Labor and Employment
- Presidential Spokesperson
- Head, Presidential Legislative Liaison Office
- Presidential Legal Counsel
- The Past Presidents of the Philippines and other government officials and private citizens whom the President may designate from time to time

Though the above NSC membership shows the inclusion of many relevant players in the Philippine security

sector accommodating both elected and duly appointed civil authorities from both the executive and legislative branches of the government, the NSC does not include judicial authorities and special oversight bodies like the CHR, the Office of the Ombudsman, the PCGG, and the PAGC. It is also noticeable that the AFP Chief-of-Staff is not included in the NSC membership, which is meant to stress the supremacy of civilian authorities over the military. Ironically, retired military officers are usually appointed to assume the post of the NSC Secretary General acting concurrently as the National Security Adviser (NSA), with the exemption of the current NSA in the person of Norberto Gonzales who was recruited from the civil society. The present head of the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (NICA) that provides intelligence support to NSC also comes from the military sector.

The NSC membership allows private citizens to be represented in the council and encourages the civil society to be involved in NSC discussions. But confidentiality over “national security concerns” prevents civil society from really participating. This situation creates a dilemma of balancing transparency and secrecy over issues of national security. Attempting to ensure the participation of various players of Philippine security sector in addressing the country’s internal security problems, the Philippine government formed the Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security (COCIS) on 19 June 2001 through Executive Order No. 2, as amended by Executive Order No. 138 issued on 21 October 2002. It was chaired by the Executive Secretary with the Secretary of National Defense as Vice-Chair. The main task of the COCIS was to

implement the government's National Internal Security Plan (NISP) by involving all national government agencies, LGUs, and the private sectors in the internal security campaign.

One notable feature of the NISP is the inclusion of poverty-reduction program in counter-insurgency campaign through close coordination with the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) that is tasked to implement the *Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan* (KALAHI) Program, a poverty alleviation strategy of the Philippine government. Among the strategies of KALAHI are asset reform, human development services, employment and livelihood opportunities, and convergence mechanism. The convergence principle calls for the active participation of national government agencies with local government units, non-government organizations, private sector organizations, academic communities and local communities in the anti-poverty campaign.

But some progressive sectors of the Philippine society are criticizing the implementation of the NISP for adopting a Strategy of Holistic Approach (SHA), which is directed primarily against local communism and Muslim secessionism rather than the total well being of the Filipino people.<sup>15</sup> Despite the claim of being holistic, the NISP's operational methodology of Clear-Hold-Consolidate-Develop (CHCD), later called Clear-Hold-Defend-Develop (CHDD), is said to be a predominantly military approach based on counter-insurgency doctrine developed by American scholars.<sup>16</sup> The NISP, itself, admits that this counterinsurgency approach was effective in dismantling the *Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas* in the 1950's during the time of President Magsaysay. Edward Landsdale of

the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) assisted Magsaysay in the implementation of this counterinsurgency approach.<sup>17</sup>

President Arroyo abolished the COCIS on 7 September 2004 and created the National Security Council Cabinet Group (NSCCG) pursuant to Presidential Administrative Order No. 104. The NSCCG comprises the following members:

- The National Security Adviser
- The Secretary of Interior and Local Government
- The Secretary of National Defense
- The Security of Justice
- The Secretary of Foreign Affairs
- The Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process
- The Presidential Adviser on Constituency Affairs
- Chair of the Mindanao Economic Development Council

But this particular order does not provide any detailed functions of the NSCCG. It only states that the group “shall meet upon call of the President who shall preside at all meetings.”<sup>18</sup> To encourage the participation of various agencies of the national and local governments in addressing terrorist threats besetting the Philippines, the government formed the Anti-Terrorism Task Forces (ATTF) on 24 March 2004 originally placed under the defunct COCIS. Currently under the Office of the President, the ATTF aims to conduct an extensive information drive at both national and local levels “to prepare the public and all stakeholders to get involved in the national anti-terrorism campaign.”<sup>19</sup>

It is noteworthy to note that the ATTF does not only encourage the involvement of national and local government agencies. It also urges members of the civil society in the government's drive against terrorism. Some members of the civil society, however, are critical of the activities of the ATTF for alleged human rights abuses committed by the military in anti-terrorism campaign.<sup>20</sup>

All security players in the Philippines are subject to the oversight functions of the Philippine Congress, which has the power to allocate budget, confirm appointments of officials and call for legislative inquiry in aid of legislation.<sup>21</sup> The COA, on the other hand, ensures the financial accountability of the security sector.<sup>22</sup> To investigate mismanagement, fraud and corruption in the security sector, there is the Office of the Ombudsman that acts as a "watchdog" to monitor the "general and specific performance of government officials and employees."<sup>23</sup> The Office of the Ombudsman aims to protect the people from abuse and misuse of governmental power, which includes military power, for personal aggrandizement.<sup>24</sup> The Philippines also has the CHR that oversees the functions of the security sector in the area of human rights promotion and protection.<sup>25</sup> The CHR issues certification for military and police officials prior to promotion. Civilian officials head all these bodies. Furthermore, the Philippines promotes free press that provides investigative reports on the state of the Philippine security sector.

In other words, the Philippines has very impressive and exemplary legal and formal mechanisms that strongly promote the good governance of the security sector. In practice, however,

the Philippine government is facing difficulties in the democratic management of the security sector because historical, social, cultural, political and cultural contexts in which pertinent players find themselves.

## **The State of Philippine Security Sector**

As a relatively young democratic republic with weak institutions of governance in a diverse society beset by internal armed challenges and other non-traditional security threats, the Philippines is arguably suffering from a weak governance of the security sector, which warrants urgent transformation. In the past, the Philippines had one of the better-governed security forces in Asia. It adopted a constitution in 1935 upholding the principle of supremacy of civilian authority over the military by putting the armed forces under the supreme control and supervision of an elected civilian president serving as their commander-in-chief.<sup>26</sup> The 1935 Constitution also empowered the Philippine Congress to exercise oversight functions of the military establishment through budgetary allocation and confirmation of military appointments and promotion.<sup>27</sup> The 1935 Constitution, therefore, provided a sound legal policy framework for the development of a corps of professional Filipino soldiers inspired by the “professionalization” of the military of its erstwhile colonial master, the United States.

When the US restored Philippine independence in 1946, the Philippines became one of best-equipped and well-trained professional soldiers in Asia.<sup>28</sup> On 30 June 1946, the US turned over a total of 36,800 armed forces to the Philippine

government composed of 33,000 army, 2,000 air force and 1,800 naval force equipped with previously used American army weapons and supplies.<sup>29</sup> During the administration of President Manuel Roxas (1946-1948), the Philippine government signed the Military Assistance Agreement in March 1947. With US military assistance and support, the AFP then became one of the finest armed forces in Asia. During this period, the AFP was seen as a professional force because “it was essentially apolitical, subordinate to civilian authority, and capable of performing its duties efficiently.”<sup>30</sup>

It was also viewed that during this time:

...the AFP was completely subordinated to the civilian political authority. The President, being the Commander-in-Chief enjoyed considerable control powers over the military. Congress fully used its authority to allocate funds and confirm senior military promotions.<sup>31</sup>

The Philippines and the US also signed the Military Bases Agreement in 1947, which provided the Philippines an efficient external defense capability under the auspices of the US. Because the US provided a strong external defense support to the Philippines, the AFP concentrated on defending the state against internal threats posed initially by local communist insurgency and later by Muslim separatist insurgency. A theory of civil-military relations states that when military professionals perform a lot of domestic functions, they become politicized and may be tempted to intervene in civilian political affairs.<sup>32</sup>

The decision to divert military resources away from its inherent external war-fighting roles to domestic activities can also lead to the politicization of the armed forces, weakening of democratic institutions, and waning of legitimacy of civilian officials.<sup>33</sup>

Involvement of the military in domestic security affairs became more pronounced during the administration of President Ramon Magsaysay (1953-1957) who earlier served as the Secretary of National Defense during the administration of President Elpidio Quirino (1948-1953). With the assistance of Lt. Col. Edward Landsdale of the Joint US Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG), the AFP during the Magsaysay administration embarked on vigorous military campaign against local communist insurgency posed by the Huks. In support of the government's counter-insurgency (COIN) operations, the AFP also performed various civic duties like infrastructure activities, medical missions and legal services to citizens in the countryside. Magsaysay even appointed at least 122 military officers to civilian posts, which encouraged the military to assert active role in civilian political affairs.<sup>34</sup>

The administration of President Carlos Garcia (1957-1961) reinforced the role of military in civilian matters when he enunciated the Socio-Economic Program (SEMP), which strongly urged the AFP to perform socio-economic development functions. It was only during the administration of President Diosdado Macapagal (1961-1965) when the government required the AFP to return to their barracks. Macapagal even ordered the passage of A Code of Conduct for the AFP

upholding the “supremacy of civil authorities.”<sup>35</sup> But long years of military involvement in domestic politics failed to transform the political orientation of the AFP.

Military role in domestic politics became more apparent when President Ferdinand Marcos (1965-1986) declared that socio-economic development was an integral function of the armed forces. Marcos emphasized that “It would be culpable negligence on our part if the peaceful uses of military forces were not availed of to the fullest extent possible in our continuing program of economic development.”<sup>36</sup> The declaration of martial law in 1972 arguably led to the rapid strengthening of military role in domestic politics. Though Marcos still upheld civilian control, there was the concomitant weakening of democratic control of the AFP because of his authoritarian leadership. Marcos abolished the 1935 Constitution and replaced it with his own constitution in 1973. Under the 1973 Constitution, Marcos asserted his own brand of governance called “constitutional authoritarianism” to justify his dictatorial rule with the military as the primary basis of his power.<sup>37</sup>

Except for Marcos, there was no civilian oversight institution that regulated the behavior of the military during the entire martial law period because Marcos abolished the Philippine Congress that functioned as the national legislature from 1946-1972.<sup>38</sup>

Though the 1973 Constitution mandated the creation of an Interim National Assembly to perform legislative functions,

it was, however, never convened. Marcos amended the 1973 Constitution to replace the Interim National Assembly with an Interim *Batasang Pambansa* (IBP) or interim national legislature. But elections to the IBP were not held. Instead, Marcos created in 1976 a *Batasang Bayan* (BB), whose members were all Marcos appointees, to function as the national legislature. But the BB functioned more as a consultative body rather than as a legislative and oversight body.<sup>39</sup> Thus, there was no legislative institution to oversee the activities of the military. It was only in 1978 when members of the *Batasang Pambansa* were elected to perform legislative functions. But the *Batasang Pambansa* functioned more as a rubber stamp of Marcos until 1986. Even the Philippine Judiciary lost its independence because from 1972 to 1986, the military became the most important institution of governance of Marcos administration. Political parties were even marginalized because Marcos ensured one-party dominance through his *Kilusang Bagong Lipunan* (KBL) or New Society Movement. Marcos also suppressed the media and the right to free press.

Though Marcos was a civilian leader asserting supreme authority over the military, democratic control was apparently gone astray. Under Marcos' authoritarian regime, the AFP arrogated upon itself the power of governance by taking various civilian functions. Military officers took control of many civilian offices and received vital positions in many government-owned-and-controlled corporations (GOCCs).<sup>40</sup> Rather than curbing the power of the military, Marcos expanded the role of the military to maintain his position in an authoritarian regime.<sup>41</sup>

Marcos justified the role of the military to perform inherently civilian functions to promote development,<sup>42</sup> prompting some military officials to declare “martial law had given the AFP new confidence in its own ability to run the government.”<sup>43</sup> He used the intelligence services of the police and the military to monitor and suppress both the legal opposition and the local communist insurgency that aimed to topple his authoritarian regime.<sup>44</sup>

Marcos also utilized patronage politics to demand loyalty of both the military and civilian leaders. He overextended retiring general loyal to him and marginalized those officers critical of his policy. Because of overextension officers loyal to Marcos, there was slow attrition at the top with concomitant slow promotion from below. During the Marcos administration, the AFP lost its professionalism leading to the rapid demoralization of some ranks, particularly of junior officers. This led to the formation of the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM) in 1982 by middle-level officers of the AFP headed by then Colonel Gregorio “Gringo” Honasan, a military aide of then Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile.

The principle objective of RAM was to restore the “pre-martial law professionalism” of the AFP. Composed mostly of graduates from the Philippine Military Academy (PMA), RAM, as its name suggests, advocated for military reforms in the AFP. Most of its members viewed themselves as protectors of the people against corrupt, abusive and incompetent civilian leaders. Some of its leaders embraced a more populist and sometimes leftist ideology. It was only in

1985 when RAM received greater support from other AFP officers who provided military backing for the 1986 popular uprising.<sup>45</sup> Called People Power, this military-backed popular uprising restored the pre-martial law democracy in 1986, led to the demise of Marcos authoritarian regime and installed President Corazon Aquino (1986-1992).

### **Early Attempts at Security Sector Transformation in the Philippines**

When President Aquino assumed the presidency in 1986, one of her first agenda was the transformation of the Philippine security sector. The Aquino government passed the 1987 Constitution mandating the creation of an independent judiciary, a bicameral parliament and some constitutional commissions that have oversight functions of the security forces. As stated earlier, the 1987 Constitution promotes the civilian democratic control of the AFP.

But some disgruntled elements of the AFP found it very cumbersome to submit themselves to civilian control having been socialized in a political environment where the military is viewed as “the savior of the people.”<sup>46</sup> The AFP, therefore, continued to play a significant role in Philippine domestic politics<sup>47</sup> despite repeated orders to “return to their barracks” after the democratic restoration.<sup>48</sup> Though the Aquino administration forcibly retired over-staying generals of the AFP, and replaced military officers occupying civilian posts, the military remained influential in the realm of Philippine politics, particularly as a power broker.<sup>49</sup> Like Marcos, Aquino also

used patronage politics to lure the support of the military. During democratic transition, retired generals were even given important civilian posts as a reward to their “loyalty” to the duly constituted civilian authorities.

The Aquino government attempted to assert civilian control by reorienting the AFP towards the acceptance of the civilian supremacy over the military by reorganizing the military and police establishments to assume a new role in a restored democracy. Aquino delineated the functions of the military and the police through the 1987 Constitution, which states that the Philippine government must have a police organization that is “national in scope and civilian in character.”<sup>50</sup> She also signed Executive Order No. 247 on 24 July 1987 to abolish Marcos’ National Intelligence Security Authority (NISA), and the Civil Intelligence and Security Agency (CISA) and replaced them with the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (NICA) headed by a Director General who was supposed to be recruited from the civilian sector. But retired generals were appointed to the NICA post. NICA was mandated to be “the focal point for the direction, coordination and integration of government activities involving intelligence, and the preparation of intelligence estimates of local and foreign situations for the formulation of national policies by the President.”<sup>51</sup>

In short, Aquino initiated the transformation of security institutions in the Philippines so they could play a new role in a restored democracy. But her transformation efforts did not prevent rouge factions of the AFP to mount eight coup attempts against her government, which undermined the consolidation of civilian control of the military.<sup>52</sup> These coup attempts were

1) the February 1986 coup attempt, 2) the July 1986 Manila Hotel mutiny, 3) The November 1986 “God Save the Queen” plot, 4) the January 1987 GMA-7 incident, 5) the April 1987 “Black Saturday” incident, 6) the July 1987 takeover plot of the Manila International Airport (MIA), 7) the August 1987 coup attempt, and 8) the December 1989 coup attempt.<sup>53</sup>

To conduct a fact-finding investigation of the 1989 coup attempt, Aquino created a commission headed by Hilario G. Davide. Based on the result of the investigation, the Davide Commission enumerated the following causes of coups in the Philippines, which all have bearings on security sector transformation:

- Failure of the government to deliver basic services especially in the rural areas;
- Graft and corruption;
- Too much politics and grandstanding of politicians, and unfair criticism, even humiliation, at the hands of politicians;
- Bureaucratic inefficiency, which exacerbates the alienation and poverty of the people;
- Poor and non-responsive military leadership which is manifested by a *tayo-tayo* system [clique system], factionalism, and inadequate financial and logistical support for the soldier in the field;
- Lack of genuine reconciliation;
- Uneven treatment of human rights violations committed by the military and the CPP-NPA (Communist Party of the Philippines-New

People's Army);

- Absence of good government;
- Softness on the CPP-NPA and left-leaning elements; and,
- Failure of the civilian leadership to effectively address economic problems.<sup>54</sup>

In 1990, the Aquino made a landmark decision related to security sector transformation when she signed Republic Act 6965 creating the Philippine National Police (PNP) as part of her government's public safety reform. This Act mandates that "the police force shall be organized, trained and equipped primarily for the performance of police functions" and that "its national scope and civilian character shall be paramount". It also specifies, "no element of the police force shall be military nor shall any position thereof be occupied by active members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines."<sup>55</sup> More importantly, the PNP was placed under the control of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) in order to civilianize the police force. But during the Aquino administration, the civilianization of the police force was not actually achieved because graduates of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) continued to occupy vital positions in the PNP hierarchy. This revealed the dependence of the PNP on the military for police leadership. Thus, concerns were raised that "predominant values imbibed by certain members of the PNO in their former military setting could be carried over to the present national police organization."<sup>56</sup>

During the administration of President Fidel Ramos (1992-1998), some military and police officers continued to perform important non-military and non-police responsibilities either as cabinet members, presidential advisers or consultants on national security and public safety concerns. Filipino soldiers were even trained to perform duties and operations “other than war”.<sup>57</sup> Ramos even offered a general amnesty to military officers involved in the past coups. Other officers found their fortune in the Philippine Congress either as senators or congressmen after retirement. Notably, the Ramos government never experienced a single coup attempt.

Ramos was able to establish control of the military and the police during his full presidential term. But his ability to control the military and the police was not based on the strength of the civilian institutions but on the ability of Ramos to demand obedience from its former subordinates in the military. Prior to becoming president, Ramos served as chief of the Philippine Constabulary-Integrated National Police (PC-INP) during the Marcos Administration and the AFP during the Aquino Administration.

When Ramos assumed the presidency, he implemented some measures that had implications for security sector transformation. It was during his term when Republic Act No. 7898, otherwise known as The AFP Modernization Law, was passed on 23 February 1995. This Act approved the AFP Modernization Program as a response to the situation unleashed by the withdrawal of American military troops in 1991.<sup>58</sup> He

even ordered the AFP to concentrate on external defense and instructed the PNP to focus on internal security to professionalize the two organizations. In 1998, Ramos signed Republic Act No. 8551, otherwise known as the “Philippine National Police Reform and Reorganization Act of 1998” for the PNP to concentrate on peace and order concerns.

But the poor implementation of the AFP Modernization Program further demoralized the Filipino soldier creating some restiveness within their ranks. In fact, “excessive civilian control” is being blamed for the poor implementation of the AFP Modernization Program.<sup>59</sup> Inadequate resources, poor pay and limited capacity building created some grievances in the military. To contain the military and get the loyalty of the soldiers, Ramos lured officers by giving them important positions in the government, which somehow hindered the transformation of the security sector.

The trend of recruiting retired military officers to occupy civilian positions in the government continued during the short-lived administration of President Joseph Estrada (1998-2001). A study made by Glenda Gloria indicates that since 1986, military officers continue to be appointed to civilian positions in the bureaucracy.<sup>60</sup> Although Estrada appointed former senator Orlando Mercado as the civilian head of the Department of National Defense (DND), retired generals still dominated several undersecretary positions. Like his predecessors, Estrada appointed several retired military officers to various civilian posts.<sup>61</sup> Estrada also gave the military “new” roles such as environmental protection, disaster management, anti-drug

campaigns, anti-corruption campaigns, and other nation-building tasks.<sup>62</sup> With these “new” roles, the Philippine military intervened again in domestic politics when it withdrew its support to the Estrada Administration in 2001 at the height of impeachment process against the president for alleged plunder of the Philippine economy.<sup>63</sup> Then Vice President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo succeeded him after a weeklong popular protest now called People Power II.

Arroyo also relied on the political support of the military to protect her administration from opposition leaders sponsoring some destabilization activities. Immediately upon assumption into office, she appointed retired general Eduardo Ermita as acting Secretary of National Defense. When then AFP Chief of Staff Angelo Reyes retired from the military service shortly after the People Power II, Arroyo immediately appointed him as the new defense chief. Reyes issued Department Circular Number 02 on 26 May 2003 to fine-tune the organization and functions of the DND to make it more responsive to the present situation. But the fine-tuning of the DND organization did not materialize due to inevitable leadership changes in the defense establishment after the July 2003 Oakwood Mutiny.

Two years after President Arroyo assumed office, a restive faction of the AFP staged a mutiny at Oakwood Premier Ayala Center on 23 July 2003. Though the mutineers clarified that they did not attempt to grab power and only wanted to air their grievances against the alleged rampant graft and corruption in the AFP, their actions were seen in the literature as an apparent military intervention in politics. Among their complaints included

the alleged irregularities in the procurement system in the AFP, favoritism within the ranks, alleged involvement of some military officers in terror bombings in Mindanao, and reported selling of firearms to insurgents by some AFP officers.<sup>64</sup> The Oakwood mutiny disclosed the weakness of the civilian authority to assert democratic control of its own armed forces.

To investigate and evaluate “all the facts and circumstances surrounding the [military] rebellion, its roots, and the provocations that inspired it”, Arroyo signed the Presidential Administrative No. 78 dated 20 July 2003 creating the Fact Finding Commission headed by Retired Supreme Court Justice Florentino P. Feliciano. The Feliciano Commission found that the grievances of Oakwood mutineers “are not unique to the military but rather reflect insistent demands for reforms made by practically all sectors” of the Philippine society.<sup>65</sup> Among the root causes of military rebellion identified by the Feliciano Commission are the following:

- The politicization of the military amid the erosion of civilian political institutions that had oversight powers over the military, particularly during and since the imposition of martial law, is a cause of military adventurism;
- Failure on the part of the government to enforce the law deprives the law of its power to deter, particularly among those who had engaged in previous coup plots against the government but who were granted unconditional amnesty in 1995 without prior punishment;

- The key role of the AFP in the campaigns against communist insurgency and Moro secessionism creates civilian government dependence upon the military; and,
- Enlistment by civilian persons, including politicians, of military support for their personal and political ambitions contributes to military politicization and adventurism.<sup>66</sup>

In the aftermath of the Oakwood mutiny, Reyes was forced to resign in August 2003 as the Secretary of National Defense. President Arroyo designated herself as the concurrent Secretary of National Defense, which made her the first woman civilian head of the defense establishment. During her stint as defense secretary, Arroyo ordered the restructuring of the defense and military establishment and emphasized civilian authority in the chain of command.

Despite the restructuring effort, retired military officers continue to shape the policy direction of the defense and military establishment. To address this issue, Arroyo also formed the Office of the Presidential Adviser for the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Feliciano Commission. Among its major recommendations are the appointment of a civilian Secretary of National Defense, return of the NICA to its original mandate, observance of military's political neutrality and effective institutionalization of grievance mechanism in the AFP. These recommendations were building blocks for security sector transformation in the Philippines.

To reform the intelligence service of the national government, Arroyo called for the holding of the “National Intelligence Summit” in 2002. But the government failed to realize the objectives of the summit because of the disagreements of many stakeholders. Instead, Arroyo issued Administrative Order No. 68 on 8 April 2003 to strengthen NICA. But prior to his retirement, former AFP Chief-of-Staff Narciso Abaya candidly acknowledged that the non-sharing of intelligence information by military spy units is hampering the government’s internal security campaign.<sup>67</sup> Abaya said that a culture exists among intelligence units in the Philippines to withhold vital intelligence information from other groups and stressed, “I think we have to improve on our intelligence. The trend now is not the need to know but the need to share. That is the emerging trend among intelligence units all over the world.”<sup>68</sup>

He further lamented, “Sometimes, our intelligence units zealously keep to themselves intelligence information which, if fused with the information of other intelligence units, would give a more comprehensive picture of the enemy [of the state].”<sup>69</sup>

To really professionalize the Philippine military, the Arroyo government embarked on Philippine Defense Reform (PDR), which was viewed as the contribution of the defense establishment for security sector transformation. The PDR aims to provide a “framework for introducing a comprehensive, institutional, structural and systemic reform package at the strategic level for the defense and military establishment.”<sup>70</sup> It was a product of the Joint Defense Assessment (JDA)

conducted by American and Filipino defense and military officials in 2001 and 2003. The PDR originally aims to pursue 10 key areas of reforms, which include among others the implementation of a strategy-driven, multi-year defense planning system and improvement of personnel management systems.

Upon the recommendation of the Feliciano Commission, Arroyo appointed a civilian Secretary of National Defense in the person of her chief legal adviser, Avelino Cruz, Jr., who is presently tasked to implement the PDR. To carry-out this task, the DND created the Undersecretary for PDR in the person of retired major general, Ernesto Carolina. According to Undersecretary Carolina, the PDR is a transformation program that essentially aims to re-engineer systems, re-tool personnel and improve competence of the DND. The PDR is presently pursuing the following four-fold goals:

- To provide the overall framework to link the implementation of the recommendations of the JDA and other AFP reform measures;
- To improve institutional and individual core competencies in the AFP;
- To implement a realistic defense capability program to address current and emerging threats; and,
- To broaden defense and security relationship with key allies<sup>71</sup>

The implementation of PDR provides many opportunities for the improvement of the democratic governance

of the security sector because it is a vital component of security sector reform. But there are larger issues that pose tremendous challenges to security sector transformation in the Philippines, which can undermine the PDR. These challenges will be discussed in the next section.

## **Challenges of Security Sector Transformation**

As a democratic and republican state, the Philippines has excellent legal mechanisms that promote the security sector transformation. In practice, however, the Philippines has to face various governance issues that have implications for effective security sector transformation.<sup>72</sup>

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) argues that most problems confronting the Philippines may be attributed to the lack or absence of good governance, which includes the governance of the security sector.<sup>73</sup>

One major challenge facing security sector transformation and governance in the Philippines is the limited capacity of the civilian bureaucracy to exercise effective control and management of the security sector, particularly the military and the police and their respective intelligence services. Though the Philippine bureaucracy upholds various democratic principles necessary for the promotion of good governance in the security sector necessary for its transformation,<sup>74</sup> it lacks the capacity to effectively govern the security sector because of rampant bureaucratic corruption and limited competence of civil service personnel.<sup>75</sup>

An ADB study showed that the Philippines ranked second to Bangladesh among 102 countries in terms of bureaucratic corruption in 2003.<sup>76</sup> The Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Risk Consultancy Ltd. (PERC) ranked the Philippines as Number Two in the ten most corrupt countries in Asia in 2005. By 2010, there was a perception that the Philippines has become the most corrupt country in Southeast Asia.

Even the AFP is tainted with strong allegations of graft and corruption, particularly in the logistic and procurement system.<sup>77</sup> The plunder case against Major General Carlos Garcia illustrated the type of corruption happening in the military.<sup>78</sup> Though corruption in the Philippine military is just a drop in the big bucket compared to the corruption in the civilian sector, bureaucratic corruption arguably result in the weakness of the general public administration and the public service system in country. The weakness of civilian bureaucracy makes it vulnerable to the influence of the military. Samuel Huntington even argues that the major factor that draws the soldier into the political arena is the weakness of the civilian bureaucratic system.<sup>79</sup>

To curb graft and corruption and improve the civil service system in the Philippines, the Arroyo government embarked on some anti-graft and corruption reform initiatives. It enacted the Government Procurement Reform Act (GPRA) or RA9184 that aims to redefine the procedures and processes in government purchasing. The GPRA was expected to result in

enhanced transparency, competitiveness, and accountability in procurement.<sup>80</sup> It also supported the formation of Inter-Agency Anti-Graft Coordinating Council (IAGCC) and Coalition Against Corruption/Transparency and Accountability Network to help in the conduct of lifestyle checks of government and military officials.<sup>81</sup>

But the Philippine bureaucracy continues to suffer “from the limited technical skills and low morale of its personnel and has to live with recruitment rules and promotion procedures heavily tainted by patronage politics.”<sup>82</sup>

Though the Philippines has many talented people that can improve the Philippine bureaucracy, many Filipino professionals prefer to work abroad in search of a greener pasture. In the report released by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Filipinos seek employment overseas due to higher pay and better benefits, not because there are few jobs in the Philippines.<sup>83</sup> Thus, only few talented people prefer to work in the Philippine civil service. This situation is confounded by the habit of civilian leaders to appoint retired military officers to civilian posts, particularly those posts with national security duties like defense, police, prisons, intelligence, customs, immigrations, ports authority, aviation authority, investigation bureaus and the like. This habit blurs the division of professional responsibility between civilian and military officials and undermines the principle of supremacy of civilian authorities over the military. Adding insult to injury is the fact that even the current Chief Executive does not have a full control

of the intelligence services of the state. This was indicated by the “Hello Garci” wiretapped tape controversy that has recently disturbed the present government.<sup>84</sup>

To strengthen and reform the Philippine bureaucracy and improve public service delivery, the Arroyo government embarked on the rationalization of the functions and agencies of the Executive Branch. Arroyo signed Executive Order 366 on 4 October 2004 directing all agencies of the national government to conduct strategic review of their operations and organizations for purposes of focusing government efforts and resources on its vital/core services; and, improving the quality and efficiency of government services delivery by eliminating/minimizing overlaps and duplication, and improving agency performance through the rationalization of service delivery and support systems, and organization structure and staffing.<sup>85</sup> It is still premature to assess the rationalization program of the Philippine government. But there is strong call from the academe to involve non-governmental organizations, private sector organizations and the larger civil society in the strengthening of Philippine bureaucracy.<sup>86</sup>

Aside from the weakness of civilian bureaucracy, another challenge of security sector transformation and governance in the Philippines is the issue of legislative control and oversight. An important oversight power of the legislature is the power of investigation that requires military and civilian officials to appear before Congress in order to answer queries in aid of legislation. But members of the Philippine Congress are being criticized for just using their power for grandstanding and to get back at those who earned their displeasure.<sup>87</sup> It has

also been observed “that serious attention to undertaking legislative oversight activities has been lacking because of low political returns, lack of expertise of members and staff member support to conduct oversight activities, and inadequate data and information to support oversight activities.”<sup>88</sup> A University of the Philippines professor argues, “While civilian oversight institutions had been restored by the 1987 Constitution, these institutions remained weak and largely uninformed about defense and security issues. Politicians tend to exercise these powers irresponsibly and many continue to enlist the support of officers and soldiers in their personal and political agenda.”<sup>89</sup> Moreover, the Philippine Congress has been tainted with many allegations of graft and corruptions that exacerbate its credibility dilemma.<sup>90</sup>

Judicial control of the security sector is also a major challenge. If the Philippine legislature is suffering from a credibility dilemma, the Philippine judiciary is agonizing from an integrity crisis because of allegations that judges can be bought and cannot be trusted.<sup>91</sup>

Rampant delay in the disposition of court cases at all levels has already been documented. As of June 2004, it was reported that there were 837,436 pending cases in various Philippine courts.<sup>92</sup> This situation is aggravated by the judiciary’s lack of independence because the Supreme Court and other lower courts failed to insulate themselves from interferences of politicians and high-ranking public officials.<sup>93</sup> To address many problems confronting the Philippine judicial system, the Philippine judiciary is implementing the Judicial Reform Support

Project (JRSP) that aims to support an accessible judicial system in order to foster public trust, and confidence.<sup>94</sup> The JRSP particularly aims to:

- Improve case adjudication and access to justice, through the implementation of modern case management techniques, planning and tools, and the upgrading of information and communication systems. Case management reform will include electronically integrating court processes, enabling analysis of cases, and case management performance of the courts;
- Enhance institutional integrity, by: a) strengthening the Code of Ethics for justices, judges, lawyers and court personnel; b) strengthening the monitoring of the conduct, operations and performance of judges, lawyers and court personnel; c) implementing the computerized Judicial Performance Management System, within the pilot model courts, and higher courts of the judiciary; and, d) implementing a gender-sensitive Human Resources and Development Master Plan for non-judicial personnel, strengthening the overall capacities of the Philippine Judicial Academy as well;
- Strengthen institutional capacity through the implementation of a decentralized administration

model for the judiciary; installing comprehensive computer-based financial, and administrative systems; developing model integrated court facilities; and strengthening policy, research, and development capabilities, including the establishment of an electronic judicial library; and,

- Assist in strengthening support for the reform process, ensuring that judges and other stakeholders are able to participate in the development, and implementation of key reform activities.<sup>95</sup>

Philippine electoral system also poses a major challenge to security sector governance in the Philippines. In theory, election is a democratic process by which the country's political leaders are chosen by and made accountable to the people. But the Philippine electoral system is tainted by irregularities.<sup>96</sup> The military and the police forces are also said to have participated in election irregularities.<sup>97</sup> In fact, the result of the 2004 elections was highly contested because of alleged massive frauds and violence.<sup>98</sup> Even the 2007 elections were also accused of many irregularities. Despite the automation of the May 2010 elections, allegations of frauds and violence persisted indicating that the Philippine electoral system remained weak.

The weakness of the electoral system is aggravated by a weak political party system. Political parties in the Philippines are formed as a matter of convenience and political expediency rather than a tool of democratic governance.<sup>99</sup> This situation widens the "democratic deficit" in the country.<sup>100</sup> A weak party and electoral system increases the propensity of the military to

stage a coup as an “alternative” mechanism for regime succession and elite circulation. But a strong party and electoral system, however, can replace military coup as instrument of leadership changes.<sup>101</sup>

A weak electoral and party system reveals the fragility of existing democracy in the Philippines. Thus, there is a strong call for electoral reforms in the Philippines to strengthen democracy even in its minimalist expression. To pursue electoral reforms, the Philippine government is considering the following recommendations of former Chief Justice Hilarion Davide who was appointed by the President as the Presidential Adviser for Electoral Reforms:

- Fix the term of office of members of the House of Representatives and provincial, city and municipal elective officials to four years.
- De-synchronize elections and hold, as a consequence, national and local elections on different dates.
- Ban the appointment of elective local officials and members of the House of Representatives to any public office during the term for which they were elected.
- Ban the appointment of senators to any public office within three (3) years from their election for a particular term.
- Prohibit political dynasties (clear definition of which should already be made instead of definition being left to Congress) and to provide harsh sanctions for violations.

- Prohibit elective officials from changing their party affiliation during the term for which they were elected and provide harsh sanctions for violations.
- Adopt certain electoral reforms proposed by the Consultative Commission as follows:
  - Develop the party system.
  - Develop two major political parties.
  - Provide financial assistance to the political parties on the basis of their share of the votes cast, and
  - Prohibit financial contributions from foreign governments.<sup>102</sup>

There is also a lack of transparency in the security sector. The Philippines does not have a published national security white paper to inform the public of the government security policy and predicaments. Though the NSC attempted in 1999 to produce a white paper, it was never approved nor did it go through serious public scrutiny.<sup>103</sup> In 1998, the DND released its so-called defense white paper.<sup>104</sup> But this said defense white paper was also never circulated to the wider public for debate and discussions. Only few officials of the security sector obtained a copy of this so-called defense white paper. The 1998 defense white paper has already been made available in the internet for public viewing,<sup>105</sup> but the DND website does not have a link to this document as of this writing indicating a lack of interest on the subject.<sup>106</sup> The DND attempted to produce a defense white paper in 2002 and 2003. But all drafts never received approval because defense and military officials had a hard time

putting their minds together. Thus, the civil society has a narrow understanding of the government's defense and security perspectives because of a lack of transparency documents on defense and military issues. Among its neighbors in Southeast Asia, the Philippines is one of the few that has not produced its defense or security white paper.

Finally, accountability of officials is also a major challenge confronting good governance and transformation of the country's security sector. There is a general failure to make erring officials in the security sector accountable for their mistakes and lapses in judgments, particularly those who have participated in coups and military rebellions as well as those who have committed graft and corruption. This reinforces a sense of impunity among some military officers and public officials.<sup>107</sup> In fact, this problem is one of the major observations of the Feliciano Commission, which urges the Philippine government to enforce the law against violators. The Feliciano Commission contends that erring officers, troops and civilian partners "must be treated in accordance with law to control and reverse the culture of impunity."<sup>108</sup>

### **The Imperative for Security Sector Transformation: Recommendations for the New Aquino Administration**

Though existing legal mechanisms uphold the supremacy of civilian authorities over the military, this principle is being undermined by the continuing appointment of retired military officers to inherently civilian posts. Civilian authorities, on the other hand, continue to rely on the political support of

the military for the stability of the civilian government. Thus, the transformation and governance of the Philippine security sector is problematic because of the limited capacity of the civilian government and other challenges mentioned in the previous section of this paper.

To overcome these challenges, it is imperative for the Philippine government under the presidency of Benigno Aquino III to really pursue a comprehensive security sector transformation (SST).

Though the Philippine government is already implementing the PDR, this initiative is incomplete because it is only confined with defense and military sectors. The primordial aim of SST is to go beyond defense and military reforms. It aims to transform the wider security institutions so that they play an effective, legitimate and democratically accountable role in providing external and internal security for their citizens.<sup>109</sup> Reform of the security sector requires broader and more comprehensive consultation with the goal of strengthening civilian control and oversight, professionalization of the security forces with concomitant demilitarization and peace building and more importantly, the strengthening of the rule of law.<sup>110</sup>

One step for conducting SST is for the Chief Executive to initiate the holding of Security Sector Summit with the participation of all members of the security sector described in this paper. The Philippine government's experiences in holding economic and political summits can provide useful lessons for

the holding of Security Sector Summit, which can set the agenda and direction of SSR.

Because the Philippines is facing internal armed challenges posed by local communist insurgency, Muslim separatism and radical Muslim terrorism affecting the good governance of the security sector, the Philippine government has to address the structural causes of internal armed conflicts, insurgency, terrorism and political unrests. Thus, comprehensive structural reforms are imperative for SSR. Structural reforms shall include the following:

- Improving the country's distribution of wealth. This entails a serious implementation of economic reforms that aim to address the interconnecting problems of poverty and unemployment. Though there are various causes of internal armed conflicts and terrorism in the Philippines, poverty and unemployment have been identified as some of the major causes.
- Strengthening political representation. This requires the reform of the country's electoral and party systems. The legitimacy of civilian authorities remains vulnerable to various political challenges because results of elections are often contested. Political parties, on the other hand, are facing enormous difficulties in truly representing the will and interests of the people because of the lack of concrete party programs. Philippine political parties

are highly “personalistic” rather than programmatic in orientation. A weak electoral and party system distorts the main essence of representative democracy in the Philippines.

There is also a need to pursue reform of Philippine institutions to strengthen democratic governance of the security sector. The three branches of the Philippine government have to undergo the following reforms:

- Strengthening Philippine bureaucracy. The rationalization of the functions and agencies of the Executive Branch under EO 366 is in the right premise as it intends to make government “do the right things in the best way within affordable levels and in the most accountable manner.”<sup>111</sup> But to sustain this reform effort, there is a need to really strengthen the Philippine civil service system by building a professional and motivated workforce with a new work culture “that emphasizes a strong client orientation and excellence, integrity, and management that is knowledge based.”<sup>112</sup>
- Enhancing legislative oversight. An ADB study underscores that as the principal policy-making branch of government, “the Legislature performs a crucial role in the pursuit of good governance. Laws create the legal and institutional frameworks through which transparency, accountability,

participation, and predictability of rules and regulations can be ensured in government.”<sup>113</sup>

Moreover, the Legislature performs oversight functions of the security sector. But the Philippine legislative system lacks the capacity to perform this oversight function.

- Improving administration of justice. To establish judicial control of the security sector, there is a need to strengthen the country’s civilian justice system through the enhancement of judicial integrity and competence. The lack of justice is often cited as one of the major causes of political unrests, internal armed conflicts and military intervention in the Philippines.

Aside from structural and bureaucratic reforms, there is also a need to encourage “public control” of the security sector and accommodate external support for SSR, to wit:

- Encouraging “public control” of the security sector. Because the military continues to shape the agenda of Philippine security sector, much information on “national security issues” remains restricted, confidential, or secret. Only propaganda information on national security is made available to the public. Confidentiality and secrecy of information fail to nurture an informed national debate on multifaceted security issues facing the

Philippines, particularly those pertaining to internal armed conflicts. Though the Philippines has a vibrant civil society, its ability to exercise democratic governance of the security sector is constrained by its lack of understanding of defense and military issues and concerns. Most members of the Philippine civil society, in fact, have pejorative view of the military establishment due to the historical baggage of martial law and the human rights abuses committed by some soldiers.

This situation widens the cleavage between the public and the military sector.

- Accommodating external support for SST. Some literatures have already demonstrated the vital role of international community in SSR.<sup>114</sup>

External support must therefore be encouraged in the reform process. The PDR is an excellent example of a reform process with the external assistance of the US. But the reform process must be extended to wider security sector and to more external partners like Australia, Canada, China and the European Union.

## **Conclusion**

The foregoing discussions have illustrated the complexity of security sector governance in the Philippines. It is therefore imperative for the government of President Benigno

Aquino III to implement a serious transformation of the security sector in order to improve the country's security sector governance. Good governance of the security sector is an effective weapon against military rebellion, insurgency and terrorism that have enormously impeded the country's long desire for economic development and nation-building. Implementing security sector transformation will be a litmus test of the new Aquino government's sincerity to make a difference in overall governance of the country.

## **End Notes**

\*This is a revised and updated version of a paper originally entitled "Security Sector Governance in the Philippines" presented to the international workshop on "Challenges of Security Sector Governance" organized by the Friedrich Ebert-Stiftung (FES), Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS) and Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of the Armed Forces (DCAF) at Hotel Plaza Parkroyal, Singapore, 14-15 February 2006.

<sup>2</sup>Armed Forces of the Philippines, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, January 2010.

<sup>3</sup>Heiko Borchert and Daniel Orieseck, *Security Sector Transformation: Why New Risk Demands for New Kind of Security Governance* (USA: Booz Allen Hamilton, Inc., 2004), p. 2.

<sup>4</sup>Rommel C. Banlaoi, "An Overview of Security Sector Transformation" (Delivered at the Training on Security Sector Transformation for the PNP, AFP, CSOs and select LGUs of the 2<sup>nd</sup> District of Maguindanao organized by the Institute for Autonomy and Governance (IAG) and the Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung (KAF) at the Grand Men Seng Hotel in Davao City on February 25, 2010)

<sup>5</sup>See Barry Buzan, "National Security and the Nature of the State" in his *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security*

*Studies in the Post Cold War*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), Chapter 2.

<sup>6</sup>The most popular textbook on realism in the Philippines is Hans Morgenthau, *The Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1948). For a classic book on realism, see E.H. Carr, *The Twenty-Year's Crisis, 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (London: McMillan, 1939) and Schwarzenberger, E., *Power Politics* (London: Cape Publishers, 1941).

<sup>7</sup>K Krause, and M. Williams, "Broadening the Agenda of Security Studies: Politics and Methods", *Mershon International Studies Review*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (October 1996), p. 227-254.

<sup>8</sup>See Muthiah Alagappa, "Rethinking Security: A Critical Review and Appraisal of the Debate", Alagappa, M. (ed.), *Asian Security Practice: Material and Ideational Influences*, (Stanford California: Stanford California Press, 1998).

<sup>9</sup>International Alert, *Towards a Better Practice Framework in Security Sector Reform: Broadening the Debate* (Amsterdam: Netherlands Institute of International Relations "Clingendael", 2002).

<sup>10</sup>Ibid. Also see H. Dylan, *A Review of the Security Sector Reform* (London: The Conflict, Security and Development Group, Center for Defense Studies, King's College London, 1999), p. 29.

<sup>11</sup>See for example Rommel Banlaoi, "The ASEAN Regional Forum and the Management of Conflicts in the South China Sea" in James Chin, and Nicholas Thomas, (eds), *China-ASEAN: Changing Political and Strategic Ties* (Hong Kong: Centre of Asian Studies, the University of Hong Kong, 2005), pp. 181-209; Aileen Baviera, , *Bilateral Confidence Building with China in Relation to the South China Sea Disputes: A Philippine Perspective* (Ontario, Canada: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 2001); Ian Storey, , "Creeping Assertiveness: China, the Philippines and the South China Sea Dispute", *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (April 1999); D. Dzurek, *The Spratly Islands Disputes* (Durham: International Boundaries Research Uni, 1996)Chen Jie, "China's Spratly Policy: With

*Challenges of Security Sector Transformation in the Philippines:  
a Policy Recommendation for the New Aquino Administration* [59]

Special Reference to the Philippines and Malaysia”, *Asian Survey*, Vol. 34, No. 10 (October 1994).

<sup>12</sup>For an official perspective, see “Our National Security Strategy: A Reference Paper” (Prepared by the Office of the National Security Adviser and the National Security Council Secretariat, September 1999) and *In Defense of the Philippines: 1998 Defense Policy Paper* (Quezon City: Office of the Secretary of National Defense, 1998). For a scholarly analysis, see Noel Morada, and C. Collier, “The Philippines: States Versus Society”, Alagappa, M. (ed), *Asian Security Practice: Material and Ideational Influences* (Stanford, California: Stanford California Press, 1998), pp. 549-578; and Aileen Baviera, “Security Challenges of the Philippine Archipelago”, *Southeast Asian Affairs 1998* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1998), pp. 213-221.

<sup>13</sup>Executive Order No. 115, “Reorganizing the National Security Council and Defining its Membership, Function, and Authority and for other Purposes” (24 December 1986). **Document available at:** [http://www.lawphil.net/executive/execord/eo1986/eo\\_115\\_1986.html](http://www.lawphil.net/executive/execord/eo1986/eo_115_1986.html).

<sup>14</sup>Alexander Aguirre, , “The Bureaucratic Politics of National Security Council System in the Philippines” (Lecture delivered at the National Defense College of the Philippines on 27 January 2005).

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, Section 1.

<sup>16</sup>P. Oquist, . “Mindanao and Beyond: Competing Policies, Protracted Peace Process and Human Security” (A Fifth Assessment Mission Report of Multi-Donor Programme for Peace and Development in Mindanao, 23 October 2002).

<sup>17</sup>See for example J.M. Collins, *Military Strategy: Principles, Practices, and Historical Perspectives* (Washington DC: Brassey's, Inc., 2002). Chapter 16 of this book discusses counterinsurgency strategies of Clear-Hold-Consolidate-Develop.

<sup>18</sup>See Walden Bello, *US-Sponsored Low-Intensity Conflict in the Philippines* (San Francisco: Institute for Food & Development Policy, 1987).

<sup>19</sup>Administrative Order No. 104, “Providing for Cabinet Groups to Enable the Government to Address Major Concerns in the Implementation of the Administration’s 10-Point Agenda” (7 September 2004), Section 2. Document available at: <[http://www.ops.gov.ph/records/ao\\_no104.htm](http://www.ops.gov.ph/records/ao_no104.htm)>

<sup>20</sup>Inter-Agency Anti-Terrorism Task Force, “Government Response to Terrorism” (undated).

<sup>21</sup> See Ibon Foundation, Inc., *A New Wave of State Terror in the Philippines* (Manila: Ibon Books, 2005). Also see Maris Diokno, “State-Civil Society Dynamics on the Anti-Terrorism Bill”, Marlon Wui and Glenda Lopez (eds), *State Civil-Society: Relations in Policy-Making* (Quezon City: Third World Studies Center, 1997), pp. 147-178.

<sup>22</sup>For official website of the Philippine Senate, see <<http://www.senate.gov.ph/Default.htm>>. For Philippine House of Representative, see <<http://www.congress.gov.ph/>>.

<sup>23</sup>For more information about the Commission on Audit, please visit its official website at: <<http://www.coa.gov.ph/>>

<sup>24</sup>For more information about the Office of the Ombudsman, please visit its official website at: <<http://www.ombudsman.gov.ph/index.php?pagename=Home&tag>>

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>For more information about the Commission on Human Rights, please visit its official website at: <<http://www.chr.gov.ph/>>

<sup>27</sup> Hernandez, , op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>For historical background, see *A History: the Ministry of National Defense, 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary* (Quezon City: Ministry of National Defense, undated).

*Challenges of Security Sector Transformation in the Philippines:  
a Policy Recommendation for the New Aquino Administration* [61]

<sup>30</sup>The Davide Fact Finding Commission, *The Final Report of the Fact-Finding Commission* (Makati: Bookmark, 1990), p. 29.

<sup>31</sup>R.J. Kessler, "Development and the Military: Role of the Philippine Military in Development", J.S. Djiwandono, and Y.M. Cheong (eds), *Soldiers and Stability in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1988), p. 217.

<sup>32</sup> The Davide Fact Finding Commission, *The Final Report of the Fact-Finding Commission*, op. cit., p. 30.

<sup>33</sup> See M. Rasmussen, "The Military Role in Internal Defense and Security: Some Problems", *The Center for Civil-Military Relations Occasional Paper*, No. 6 (Monterey, California: Naval Postgraduate School, October 1999), p. 1. Also see A. Stepan, (ed), *Authoritarian Brazil: Origins, Policies and Future* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973).

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>35</sup> Kessler, "Development and the Military: Role of the Philippine Military in Development", op. cit., p. 218.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid. Also see H. Waynard, "A Comparison of Military Elite Role Perceptions in Indonesia and the Philippines" (Ph.D. Dissertation: American University, 1976), p. 366.

<sup>37</sup>Ferdinand Marcos, "State of the Nation Address" (22 January 1968).

<sup>38</sup>David Wurfel, *Filipino Politics: Development and Decay* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila Press, 1988), p. 114.

<sup>39</sup>Manuel Caoili, "The Philippine Congress and the Political Order", *Philippine Journal of Political Administration*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (January 1986), pp. 1-35.

<sup>40</sup>Olivia Caoili, "The Batasang Pambansa: Continuity in the Philippine Legislative System", *Philippine Journal of Political Administration*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (January 1986), pp. 36-59.

<sup>41</sup> Wurfel, *Filipino Politics: Development and Decay*, op. cit., p. 143.

<sup>42</sup> Carolina Hernandez, “Restoring Democratic Civilian Control Over the Philippine Military: Challenges and Prospects”, *Journal of International Cooperation Studies* (Fall 2002).

<sup>43</sup> See Felipe Miranda and Ruben Ciron, “Development and the Military in the Philippines”, Djiwandono, J.S. and Cheong, Y.M. (eds), *Soldiers and Stability in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1988), p. 165. Also see Armando Gatmaitan and Gregorio C. de Castro, “Notes on the Role of the Military in Socio-Economic Development”, *Philippine Journal of Public Administration* (July 1968).

<sup>44</sup> See H. Maynard, “A Comparison of Military Elite Role Perceptions in Indonesia and the Philippines” (Unpublished dissertation, American University, 1976), p. 535. Also cited in *Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>45</sup> For a good account, see Alfred McCoy, *Closer Than Brothers: Manhood at the Philippine Military Academy* (Manila: Anvil Publishing, 1999); Wurfel, *Filipino Politics: Development and Decay*, op. cit, Chapter 5.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, Chapter 7.

<sup>47</sup> Maynard, “A Comparison of Military Elite Role Perceptions in Indonesia and the Philippines”, op. cit.

<sup>48</sup> For a detailed account of the Philippine military after EDSA, see C. Yabes, *The Boys from the Barracks: The Philippine Military After EDSA* (Metro Manila: Anvil Publishing, Inc., 1991).

<sup>49</sup> Ed Garcia, and Eric Gutierrez (eds), *Back to the Barracks: The Military in Democratic Transition* (Quezon City: National Institute for Policy Studies, 1992).

<sup>50</sup> Yabes, *The Boys from the Barracks*, op. cit., p. vii.

<sup>51</sup> *The 1987 Philippine Constitution*, Article XVI, Section 6.

*Challenges of Security Sector Transformation in the Philippines:  
a Policy Recommendation for the New Aquino Administration* [63]

<sup>52</sup>Executive Order No. 246, “Providing for the Creation of the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency and for other Purposes” (24 July 1987).

<sup>53</sup> Yabes, *The Boys from the Barracks*, op. cit., p. vii.

<sup>54</sup>The Davide Fact Finding Commission, *The Final Report of the Fact-Finding Commission*, op. cit., p. 118.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., pp. 470-471.

<sup>56</sup>Republic Act 6965, otherwise known as “The Department of Interior and Local Government Act of 1990).

<sup>57</sup>R. Cuaderno, “Towards Developing a Civilian Culture in the Philippine Police Service”, *Public Safety Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (September 2000), p. 223.

<sup>58</sup>For an excellent historical analysis, see Cesar Pobre, *History of the Armed Forces of the Filipino People*. (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 2000).

<sup>59</sup>Renado de Castro, “Adjusting to the Post-US Bases Era: The Ordeal of the Philippine Military’s Modernization Program”, *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Fall 1999), pp. 110-137.

<sup>60</sup>Renado de Castro, “The Dilemma Between Democratic Control Versus Military Reforms: The Case of the AFP Modernization Program, 1991-2004”, *Journal of Security Sector Management* (March 2005). Document available at: <[http://www.jofssm.org/issues/jofssm\\_sp\\_03\\_asia\\_decastro.pdf](http://www.jofssm.org/issues/jofssm_sp_03_asia_decastro.pdf)>

<sup>61</sup> Gloria, *We Were Soldiers*, op. cit.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>63</sup>For more discussions on the topic, see Carlos, C.R., “New Roles of the Military: Perspectives from the Philippines” (Paper presented during the Fifth ARF Meeting of Heads of Defense Universities/ Colleges/Institutions held on 27-31 August 2001 in Tokyo, Japan).

Document available at: <[http://www.nids.go.jp/english/exchange/arf/pdf/philippines\\_paper.pdf](http://www.nids.go.jp/english/exchange/arf/pdf/philippines_paper.pdf)>

<sup>64</sup>See Amado Doronilla, (ed), *In Between Fires: Fifteen Perspective on the Estrada Crisis* (Pasig City: Anvil Publishing, 2001) and A. Laquian, and E. Laquian, *The Erap Tragedy: Tales from the Snake Pit* (Pasig City: Anvil Publishing, 2002).

<sup>65</sup>These grievances are also articulated in Trillanes Paper. See A. Trillanes, “A Study on Corruption in Philippine Navy” (October 2001). Document available at: <<http://www.pcij.org/HotSeat/trillanes.html>>. Trillanes is one of the leaders of the Oakwood mutineers.

<sup>66</sup>*The Report of the Fact Finding Commission* (17 October 2003), p. 33.

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>68</sup>Karl B. Kaufman, “Weak’ Intel Blamed On Overzealous Spy Units”, *The Manila Times* (26 March 2004) at [http://www.manilatimes.net/national/2004/mar/26/yehey/top\\_stories/20040326top6.html](http://www.manilatimes.net/national/2004/mar/26/yehey/top_stories/20040326top6.html) <accessed on 30 August 2004>.

<sup>69</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup>Department of National Defense, *The Philippine Defense Reform Program* (2003). Document available at: <[http://www.dnd.gov.ph/DNDWEBPAGE\\_files/html/pdrpage.htm](http://www.dnd.gov.ph/DNDWEBPAGE_files/html/pdrpage.htm)>

<sup>72</sup>Department of National Defense, *Philippine Defense Reform: Information Briefing* (Quezon City: Office of the Undersecretary for Philippine Defense Reform, December 2005). The author is grateful to Undersecretary Ernesto Carolina for providing this briefing.

<sup>73</sup>For more discussion, see Banlaoi, R.C., “Identity Politics and National Security in the Philippines”, *Pilipinas: A Journal of Philippine Studies*, Nos. 42-43 (2005).

*Challenges of Security Sector Transformation in the Philippines:  
a Policy Recommendation for the New Aquino Administration* [65]

<sup>74</sup>Asian Development Bank, *The Philippines: Country Governance Assessment* (Manila: Asian Development Bank Manila Office, 2005). Document also available at: <[www.adb.org/Documents/Reports/CGA/pga-feb-2005.pdf](http://www.adb.org/Documents/Reports/CGA/pga-feb-2005.pdf)>

<sup>75</sup>Ledivina Carino, *Bureaucracy for Democracy* (Quezon City: College of Public Administration, University of the Philippines, 1992).

<sup>76</sup>Sheila Coronel (ed), *Pork and other Perks: Corruption and Governance in the Philippines* (Quezon City: Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, the Evelio B. Javier Foundation and the Institute for Popular Democracy, 1998).

<sup>77</sup>D. Dumlao, “RP No. 2 on corruption list: ADB Survey”, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 20 January 2005 at [http://news.inq7.net/nation/index.php?index=1&story\\_id=24830](http://news.inq7.net/nation/index.php?index=1&story_id=24830)

<sup>78</sup>For an excellent study, see M. Mariano, et.al., *The Power of Reform in the AFP LogCom: A True Story, The Struggle Continues* (Quezon City: HHP Cooperative Development, Inc., 1992).

<sup>79</sup>Alex Pabico, “Ex-AFP Comptroller Guilty of Corruption” (2 December 2005). Document available at: <<http://www.pcij.org/blog/?p=512>>

<sup>80</sup>Smauel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil Military Relations* (Cambridge and London: The Balknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957).

<sup>81</sup>For more information, see *The 2005 Accomplishment of the Arroyo Administration*. Document available at: <http://www.news.ops.gov.ph/accomplishments2005.htm> .

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

<sup>83</sup>Temario Rivera, “Democratic Governance and Late Industrialization”, Sta. Ana III, F. S. (ed)., *The State and the Market: Essays on Socially Oriented Philippine Economy* (Quezon City: Action for Economic Reforms, 1998), p. 257.

<sup>84</sup>"Enough Jobs But no Taker Says DOLE", *Philippine Star*, 15 February 2005.

<sup>85</sup>The "Hello Garci" tape controversy refers to the alleged telephone conversation between President Arroyo and COMELEC Commissioner at the height of the May 2004 elections. For more stories about the controversy, see "Tale of the Tape" at <[http://www.time.com/time/asia/2005/phil\\_arroyo/phil\\_tape.html](http://www.time.com/time/asia/2005/phil_arroyo/phil_tape.html).>

<sup>86</sup>Executive Order No. 366, "Directing a Strategic Review of the Operations and Organizations of the Executive Branch and Providing Options and Incentives for Government Employees Who May Be Affected by the Rationalization of the Functions and Agencies of the Executive Branch", 4 October 2004. Document Available at: [http://www.ops.gov.ph/records/eo\\_no366.htm](http://www.ops.gov.ph/records/eo_no366.htm).

<sup>87</sup>For detailed discussion, see The Diliman Governance Forum, "Reinventing/Reengineering & Reorganizing the Bureaucracy in the Philippines: Why We Should be More Hopeful" held at NCPAG Assembly Hall, UP Diliman 15 September 2004. Highlights of the proceedings available at: <http://www.upd.edu.ph/~ncpag/dgf/archives/highlights091504.html>.

<sup>88</sup>Asian Development Bank, *The Philippines: Country Governance Assessment*, p. 55.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid.

<sup>90</sup>Hernandez, "Institutional Responses to Armed Conflict: The Armed Forces of the Philippines", op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>91</sup>Coronel, (ed), *Pork and other Perks*, op. cit., pp. 32-55.

<sup>92</sup>Asian Development Bank, *The Philippines: Country Governance Assessment*, op. cit., p. 97. Also see La Vina, A.G.M. and Arroyo, D.M., *The Public Verdict on the Performance of the Judiciary* (Makati City: Transparent Accountable Government, 1993).

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid.

<sup>95</sup>For more information, see "Judicial Reform Support Project". Document available at <http://www.projectmaps-worldbank.org.ph/Projects1-JRSP.htm>.

Challenges of Security Sector Transformation in the Philippines:  
a Policy Recommendation for the New Aquino Administration [67]

<sup>96</sup>Ibid.

<sup>97</sup>Carlos, and Banlaoi, , *Elections in the Philippines*, op.cit.

<sup>98</sup>Gloria Gloria, “Split Loyalties”, *Newsbreak* (21 June 2004), p. 25.

<sup>99</sup>Rommel Banlaoi, “2004 Philippine Election: Thinking Outside the Ballot Box?”, *Asian Affairs*, No. 22 (Year 2004), pp. 31-47.

<sup>100</sup>Co. E.A; et.al. *Philippine Democracy Assessment*, op.cit.

<sup>101</sup>See Paul Hutchcroft, and Joel Rocamora, “Strong Demands and Weak Institutions: The Origins and Evolution of the Democratic Deficit in the Philippines,” *Journal of East Asian Studies*, Vol. 3 (2003), pp. 259-292.

<sup>102</sup>G. Cawthra, and R. Luckham, (eds), *Governing Insecurity: Democratic Control of Military and Security Establishments in Transitional Democracies* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2003), p. 7.

<sup>103</sup>Official Website of the Republic of the Philippines, “Davide’s recommendations on electoral reforms will be seriously considered – PGMA”, 10 April 2006. Document available at <http://www.gov.ph/news/?i=14895>.

<sup>104</sup>“Our National Security Strategy: A Reference Paper” (Prepared by the Office of the National Security Adviser and the National Security Council Secretariat, September 1999).

<sup>105</sup>*In Defense of the Philippines: 1998 Defense Policy Paper* (Quezon City: Office of the Secretary of National Defense, 1998).

<sup>106</sup>Document available at: <<http://www.resdal.org.ar/Archivo/d000006b.htm>>.

<sup>107</sup>See DND website at: <<http://www.dnd.gov.ph/>>.

<sup>108</sup>Hernandez, C. G., “Institutional Responses to Armed Conflict: The Armed Forces of the Philippines”, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>109</sup> *The Report of the Fact Finding Commission*, op. cit., p. 43.

<sup>110</sup> International Alert, *Towards a Better Practice Framework in Security Sector Reform*, op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> Karina Constantino-David, “Current Efforts on Reinventing/ Reengineering & Reorganizing the Bureaucracy” (Paper presented to the Diliman Governance Forum, “Reinventing/Reengineering & Reorganizing the Bureaucracy in the Philippines: Why We Should be More Hopeful” held at NCPAG Assembly Hall, UP Diliman 15 September 2004).

<sup>113</sup> Asian Development Bank, *The Philippines: Country Governance Assessment*, op. cit., 35.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. ix.

<sup>115</sup> See T. Winkler, *The Reform and Democratic Control of the Security Sector and International Order* (Geneva: Geneva Center for Democratic Control of the Armed Forces, 2002); Kummel, G., *Why Engage in Security Sector Reform Abroad: International Norms, External Democratization and the Role of DCAF* (Geneva: Geneva Center for Democratic Control of the Armed Forces, 2002).

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

*Rommel C. Banlaoi is the Executive Director of the Philippine Institute for Peace, Violence and Terrorism Research, an independent think-tank. He was professor of political science and international relations at the National Defense College of the Philippines and a consultant at the Department of National Defense and National Counter Terrorism Action Group of the Philippine Anti-Terrorism Council. He served as instructor in political science at the University of the Philippines (Los Banos), assistant professor in international studies at De La Salle University, Manila, Fellow at the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies (Hawaii), Visiting Fellow at the University of Leiden (The Netherlands) and Director for Research and Publications at the World Citi Colleges. He is currently lecturing at the Command and General Staff College of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and a Senior Fellow at the Yuchengco Center of De La Salle University. He is the author of more than 100 journal articles and book chapters as well as 11 books and monographs on various issues of politics, peace-building, security, terrorism, international relations and foreign policy. His latest book is *Philippine Security in the Age of Terror* (2010) published by Taylor and Francis, USA/UK.*

**Towards a Holistic Understanding  
of the Peace Process**

## **Towards a Holistic Understanding of the Peace Process**

Fr. Eliseo Mercado, OMI

### **Background**

The paramount question on the issue of peace process is the framework that should guide national government, in general, and the security sectors and local government units, in particular.

The peace process in the Philippines has a long history beginning with the Magsaysay Administration in the 50's when the popular President decisively dealt with the HUK insurgency and Muslim uprising under the leadership of Hadji Kamlon in Sulu Archipelago.

Six socio-economic zones known as Economic Development Corporation (EDCOR) were established – two in Luzon (one in Isabela and the other in Quezon Province) and four in Mindanao to resettle and re-integrate the HUK insurgents that embraced the amnesty offer of the Magsaysay government.

The four EDCOR's in Mindanao were (1) EDCOR Arevalo in Kapatagan, Lanao del Norte (1951); (2) EDCOR Genio in the present municipality of Alamada, North Cotabato (1954); and (3) EDCOR Gallego in Buldon, Maguindanao (1951); EDCOR Tawi Tawi (Batobato) in 1955 but this last one was abandoned in 1958.

By 1955, the Magsaysay government was able to resettle and re-integrate about five thousand peasants or 1,200 families in Luzon each owning their own farm of about 6-9 hectares. In Mindanao, the peasants (HUKS and sympathizers) re-settled and re-integrated were 8,508 with no data on the EDCOR Tawi Tawi.

In the four Mindanao EDCORS, there were about 8,508 HUK peasants and sympathizers resettled and re-integrated: 690 peasants or 115 families in Arevalo, 1,398 peasants or 223 families in Gallego, 6,420 peasants or 1,070 families in Genio, and unknown numbers in Tawi-Tawi. (Source: Maynard Weston Dow, *Nation-Building in Southeast Asia*; Boulder, Colorado. Pruett Press, 1965 pp 102-103).

The re-organization of the HUK movement that was weakened by the amnesty and resettlement program took place on December 26, 1968. This date marked the re-birth of the new Communist Party of the Philippines and its New People's Army (CPP-NPA). The CPP-NPA struggle is anchored on political and ideological beliefs with the peasants in the countryside and the workers in the urban areas as the backbone of the struggle.

The Bangsamoro struggle in the south centers on ethnicity and nationality issues. Though the Philippines is characterized by diversity of cultures, faiths, and beliefs, the government's 'mono' system of governance and transactions discriminate and marginalize the minority cultures and beliefs.

In time these discrimination and marginalization coupled by poverty and neglect would lead to conflict and misunderstanding.

Moreover, in Southern Philippines, the ethnic and religious conflicts are rooted deeply in history dating back from the era of the Sultanates in the southern Philippines.

### **The Contemporary Rebellions**

The **first** rebellion is the one being waged by the National Democratic Front (NDF). This is an ideological rebellion dubbed as national democratic revolution. It is often labeled as NDF-CPP-NPA to show the dynamic relations between the United Democratic Front, the Party and the Army. It has adopted Mao Tse Tung's strategies of people's war and protracted arm struggle. It follows the classic guerrilla warfare that organizes the countryside to squeeze the urban centers.

At its height prior to the presidency of Corazon Aquino, the NDF had nine liberation fronts which were present in practically all urban centers including Davao City. The internal ideological divides within the 'National Democrats' and the democratic space provided by the post Marcos governments weakened the otherwise strong and highly politically motivated front.

Contrary to the AFP's claim that the backbone of the Communist insurgency has been dealt with, the NDF-CPP-

NPA claims that it has re-claimed and consolidated the lost fronts. The new cadres from the youth wing and the professionals have also beefed up the resurgence of the mass movements, particularly during the Arroyo administration.

The NDF-CPP-NPA armed presence is no longer as strongly felt as in the 80's. However, their electoral influence is felt during elections, particularly in national elections where party list groups are elected. Their kindred political parties have won a major part of the seats in Congress allotted for party list representation.

The GRP and the NDF has inked the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights Law and the International Humanitarian Law or CAHRIHL, whose implementation has remained contested. Except for establishing joint and respective secretariats, the agreement has largely remained only in paper.

The suspension of the peace talks, because of the Visiting Forces Agreement and the inclusion of Jose Ma. Sison and the CPP-NPA in the US list of foreign terrorist groups froze the discussion on the economic, social and political reforms that would be the main agenda for the comprehensive peace agreement between the GRP and the NDF.

The **second** rebellion is the contemporary Bangsamoro separatist war. The Moros have lost much of their ancestral lands to the settling Christians. The annals of history tell of their painful struggle to keep Mindanao a *Dar al-Islam*, a house of

Islam and abode of peace. Blood has been shed in battles to regain control over their *Bangsa*, their land where erstwhile, as early as the 13th century is already a set of bustling commerce and functional governance.

The word Moro refers to the *Bangsamoro* or the 9 million Muslim Filipinos in Mindanao who comprise 10 percent of the Philippine population. They comprise thirteen ethnic groups distributed in their traditional territories in the provinces of Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga Sibugay, Cotabato, Davao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Palawan, Sarangani, South Cotabato, and Sultan Kudarat.

The Moro people consider Mindanao as a Moro homeland. This claim is contested by the Indigenous Peoples and migrant settlers from the northern and central parts of the country who came to Mindanao via government programs opening vast tracts of land in the region for migrant occupation. In time, Mindanao became a melting pot of cultures, with the Christian population fast becoming predominant.

The Moros realize that they have gradually lost not only Mindanao as their ancestral domain but also their identity as a distinct people, as well. Relationships and dealings with other cultures have not been harmonious all the time, feeding even more the growing resentment against a government perceived to have neglected the Moro peoples and their territories.

The secessionist war was first waged by the MNLF beginning in the early 70's. From 1976 (with the signing of the Tripoli Agreement on December 23, 1976) the Moro struggle has moved from secession to a struggle for genuine autonomy. The renewed negotiation between the GRP and the MNLF under the Ramos government was meant to bring final closure to the 1976 Tripoli Agreement. After almost four years of negotiation (1992-1994), The GRP and the MNLF signed the historic Final Peace Agreement (FPA) on September 02, 1996.

It is sad to note that notwithstanding the various attempts to implement the 1996 FPA in the last 14 years, there has been little impact on resolving the root causes of the conflict. With differences in understanding of the proper implementation of the peace agreement, the principals (MNLF and GRP) have more than ever become estranged to each other, particularly in the actual implementation of the agreement. Accusatory finger blaming one or the other only exacerbates the existing divide that has separated the two parties. In the last 14 years since the FPA signing, the gap continues to widen and hound both the GRP and MNLF sides on the issue of the implementation or non-implementation of said agreement.

The other Bangsamoro Front is the Moro Islamic Liberation Front or MILF. It has gained much prominence after the promised peace and development has remained unfulfilled. The failure to deliver basic services and reconstruction of the conflict areas has, in a very subtle way, created a new niche for the MILF. Today, the MILF is perceived, rightly or wrongly,

as the ‘Vanguard’ in the struggle to pursue the ‘unfulfilled promises’ to the Bangsamoro. Notwithstanding the success or failure of the on-going peace negotiation, the MILF has assumed the role of ‘leadership’ in the Bangsamoro struggle. And no negotiated peace settlement is deemed possible without MILF’s active participation.

### **The Roots of Conflict**

In the Southern Philippines, there are four (4) factors that breed the conflict with the Bangsamoro. The three are textbook or “classic” roots of conflict all over the world. These are (1) poverty, (2) political exclusion and (3) injustice. The fourth source of conflict is particular to Southern Philippines where the Bangsamoro asserts her unique ethnic and religious identity.

There is little doubt that **poverty** and the inability to meet the community’s basic needs is a prescription for conflict. Conflict mapping shows that of the 34 countries on the bottom of the UNDP’s human development index, 22 are in or emerging from conflict. In the Philippines, the five provinces that compose the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) are found in the ten poorest provinces nationwide.

Moreover, the Bangsamoro peoples feel that they do not matter in the national governance. There is a real or perceived “**politics of exclusion**” of the Bangsamoro in the national governance. Notably, they lack representation in the

national government (there are no senators or cabinet secretaries who are Muslims). In short they do not sit at table where their affairs are debated and discussed.

The other classic source of conflict is **injustice**. It does not matter whether the injustice is real or perceived. But the very fact of their marginalization and minoritization in their traditional homeland points to anomaly. Injustice includes loss of their lands, non-provision of basic social needs and violation of their human rights.

The fourth source is identity. For the Bangsamoro, identity matters. It is an identity often defined along the line of nationhood. The loss of this 'bangsa' and the felt discrimination because of their ethnicity and religion fuel the aspiration and dream of separate 'bangsa' within the Republic of the Philippines.

## **Legacies and Groaning**

There are two ways of framing the Bangsamoro feeling of injustice. The first consists of the memory of what they label as historical injustice and its consequences. The second frame consists of the present state of the 'bangsa'.

### *Legacies*

- Painful memory of "Annexation"
- Loss of Dar al-Islam & Ancestral Domain
- Corruption & Moral Decay

- Loss of Cultural and Bangsa Identity (Land, Bangsa and Agama)
- Years of neglect and marginalization
- The “Minoritization” of the Bangsamoro
- Loss or Fear of Losing Identity
- Politics of Exclusion

### *The Groaning*

- Longing for the perceived “Golden” Era
- To be on their own (self-determination ) and chart their destiny
- Retrieval of their traditional ‘ancestral domain’
- To be governed according to their own sets of belief (Shari’a)
- Prosperous Bangsa

## **Events that beg for a reframing of Peace and Security Paradigm**

It is important to situate the struggle for freedom in the wider context of events that ushered in a new paradigm in considering peace security.

The major event in the change of paradigm is symbolized by the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989

that marks the end of the East vs West Paradigm on Peace and Security. The world is no longer seen as an ‘ideological battle’ between East and West (Iron Curtain or Bamboo Curtain).

After the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the North/South division has gained prominence. It is an economic paradigm that shows the colliding interests between the developed North and the under-developed South. This reality leads to a new struggle that demands for more equitable partnership between the rich countries of the Northern Hemisphere and the under-developed countries of the Southern Hemisphere.

A new understanding of peace and security has also emerged. This new paradigm is basically based on the a holistic understanding of Human Security and in making the planet safe again not only by dismantling nuclear arsenal but also in preserving the environment from the threat of climate change.

In its 1994 Human Development Report (HDR), the United Nations defines human security as “safety from chronic threats of hunger, disease, repression and hurtful disruptions to people’s lives.” The HDR says security is about people not territories. It is about development, not arms.

Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations from 1997 to 2006, has defined human security as “freedom from fear, freedom from want and freedom for future generations to sustain their lives.”

The new paradigm on human security entails that nations redirect their energies on more pressing issues. There are seven (7) of these, according to the UN, and they are economic, environmental, personal, community, political, health and food security.

In the Philippines, the National Unification Commission (NUC) that was established in 1992 under the administration of Fidel Ramos, conducted a nationwide consultation in a bold attempt to find out the Filipino peoples' perceived root causes of conflict and insurgency. The first national consultation on the roots of conflict paved the way for a more participative peace process that resulted to the formulation of the national peace policy.

The word “**process**” is highlighted. **Peace is a process.** Peace is a process, because it involves the whole person, the whole community and the whole country.

The new peace paradigm is contained in President Ramos' **Executive Order 125**. The said EO is re-issued by President Arroyo in her Administrative Order 03. There are three basic principles that shape the new framework of the peace process:

First, the peace process must be community-based, defined not by government alone, nor by the armed rebels, nor any single sector, but by Filipinos as a community.

Second, it must lead to a new social compact for a just, equitable, humane, and pluralistic society, and ensure free and fair political “competition.”

Third, it must seek a principled and peaceful resolution of the armed conflicts, with dignity for all concerned. Military pacification campaigns do not work. It leads to nowhere but more rebellion and insurgencies. Negotiated political settlement is the way to address conflict where there is compromise and dignity.

The same EO and AO identify “six (6) steps/ paths to peace:” These 6 paths do not constitute a sort of food menu that one can select one or two depending on likes and tastes.. No! The six constitute ONE movement that have to be undertaken by all units in the society, country, municipality, barangay, family, etc. The six paths to peace are the following:

1. Implementation of social, economic and political reforms to address the root causes of rebellion and social unrest;
2. Consensus-building and empowerment through mobilization and facilitation of people’s participation and support for community peace initiatives
3. Peaceful, negotiated settlements with rebel groups;
4. Reconciliation with and re-integration of former combatants and civilian victims;
5. Continued protection of civilians caught in the midst of armed conflict, reduction of violence in conflict areas and prevention and management of conflict;

6. Building and nurturing a climate for peace including peace advocacy and education.

In short, the six paths seek to achieve the implementation of social, economic and political reforms to address the root causes of rebellion and social unrest; consensus-building and empowerment through mobilization and facilitation of people's participation and support for community peace initiatives; peaceful, negotiated settlements with rebel groups; reconciliation with and re-integration of former combatants and civilian victims; continued protection of civilians caught in the midst of armed conflict, reduction of violence in conflict areas and prevention and management of conflict; and building and nurturing a climate for peace including peace advocacy and education.

The six paths need to be undergirded by five (5) components of the peace process. They are the following:

1. Governance and empowerment.

It is the process of establishing or rehabilitating political systems that are supportive of peace-building. The concern is to sustain and consolidate a long-term peace, the conduct of elections and establishment of institutions of governance that is accountable and participative.

2. Process of development and economic rehabilitation.

Rehabilitation and reconstruction to be effective

must be undertaken on wholesale, not on the retail basis.

3. Healing and reconciliation.

It must be recognized that the process of transformation must address not only the visible, tangible and physical effects of war, conflict or violence but also the impact on the individual as a victim of violence and his relations with his fellow human beings.

4. “Enculturation” for peace.

Schools/madaris/churches/temples/mosques need to introduce peace programs that engender a culture of peace and dialogue. In fact, the same peace education needs to be introduced also in the non-formal education, particularly geared to out of school youth.

5. Continuing management of conflict.

The praxis of peace process in the Philippines is very complex given the multi-faceted factors confronting its landscape which proves volatile depending on the hands of political actors that hold it.

Wars are very costly both in terms of economic losses and human suffering. For this reason alone, every road however difficult must be painstakingly

taken to prevent escalation of conflict. In a 35 year period, the UNDP 2006 Policy Paper Report puts the fatalities of conflicts in the Philippines from 140,000 to 220,000. For the period 1969 to 2004, total military expenditures amount to 24 billion US dollars. Impact on the economy is estimated conservatively at 17.5 billion US dollars in lost Gross Domestic Product (GDP). There is no wonder that ARMM, the region most prone to intense conflicts trail behind the rest of the Philippine regions in terms of human development.

Realizing the cost of war, governments worldwide prefer to take peaceful negotiated settlement. President Benigno Aquino III mentioned in his SONA the four (4) pillars of emerging national peace and security plan of his presidency. These are the following:

- 1) Good governance. Government must be present and accountable to the citizens. Leaders are democratically elected. They must be transparent in all their transactions. **‘Kung walang corrupt, walang mahirap’**;
- 2) Delivery of basic social services particularly in health and education;
- 3) Economic re-construction and sustainable economic development; and

- 4) Security sector reform (training and professionalization)

## **Our Tasks**

The first task is to generate partnerships between and among all stakeholders. Their cooperation is an essential element in achieving peace and security in the community.

Second is to create or introduce mechanisms for stakeholders to meet. There should be more public spaces, parks and sports field for people to interact and engender social cohesion among all stakeholders.

Third is to organize healing and reconciliation sessions in the communities. In fact, trauma healing and reconciliation sessions encourage people in the communities to talk about their woundedness and their differences.

In a comprehensive and holistic understanding of peace process, no one can simply be a bystander. All are participants in the peace process. There must be a sense of urgency to break new common ground. Together, there is a need in learning and re-learning all over the peace process. The tasks ahead are great. Patience and perseverance are needed because peace takes time.

Partners and stakeholders must intensify their participation and involvement. Reconciliation and healing must unfold and give way to the dawning of a common thinking that war is not the answer to all the centuries of conflicts in Mindanao.

The solution to the problem is on the table not on the battlefield.

Moreover, important actors must return to the negotiating table and sustain all reconstruction and disarmament, demobilization, reintegration (DDR) efforts. DDR is part of the economic reconstruction. Armed groups must be integrated to the mainstream society.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, I simply wish to cite a bold step undertaken by President Anwar Sadat by undertaking the visit to Jerusalem in his pilgrimage of peace. This was a historic journey in Israel that was NOT recognized by its Arab neighbors and after fighting continued war since 1948. In his address to the Parliament of Israel (Knesset), he said:

*“... Yet, there remains another wall. This wall continues and constitutes a psychological barrier between us, a barrier of suspicion, a barrier of rejection, a barrier of fear, of deception, a barrier of hallucination without any action, deeds or decision. It is a barrier of distorted and eroded interpretation of every event and statement. It is this official statement as constituting 70% of the whole process. Today, through my visit to you, I ask why we don't stretch out our hands with faith and sincerity so that together we might destroy this barrier.”* – Words of President of Egypt Anwar Sadat at the Knesset during his historic visit of the Holy City of Jerusalem on November 20, 1977.

(Muhammad Anwar El Sadat, or Anwar El Sadat (25 December 1918 - October 1981), was the [third President of Egypt](#), serving from 15 October 1970 until his assassination by fundamentalists on 6 October 1981. He was a senior member of the [Free Officers](#) group that overthrew the [Muhammad Ali Dynasty](#) in the [Egyptian Revolution of 1952](#), and a close confidant of [Gamal Abdel Nasser](#), whom he succeeded as President in 1970.

His visit to Israel and the eventual [Camp David Accords](#) won him the [Nobel Peace Prize](#), but was an act enormously unpopular amongst Egyptians and other Arabs, and resulted in Egypt being suspended from the [Arab League](#). The peace treaty was the primary reason given by [Khalid Islambouli](#), one of Sadat's assassins, for his opposition to Sadat. (Source: Wikipedia)

Another fitting quote to conclude this piece is taken from the great French philosopher and Jesuit priest, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: “*The age of nations is past. It remains for us now, if we do not wish to perish, to set aside the ancient prejudice, and build the earth.*”

There is a need to look at the big picture to move forward in our quest for peace and security. There's no other way and no other option. War is not an option! War is never an answer. Ultimately, the solution to our conflict and differences is going back to the negotiating table. It's not to vanquish our opponent and those who differ from us but to become partners in the journey to move forward to a progressive, peaceful and equitable Philippines, our land.

*Interaction Session*

CPT Mark Anthony Arabe said the Philippine Marines have undergone many workshops and seminars on good governance. The marines have realized that the big part of the problem lies on governance. He expressed discouragement over how the local government unit confronts the issue on governance.

Fr. Jun said there shouldn't be room for discouragement. To get discouraged is suicide. Transformation in governance will take some time because it is a process. There are already attempts to make good governance a reality under the leadership of PNoy. There are attempts at transparency like the campaign against *tong*. In Naga in Bicol, former mayor and now DILG Secretary Jessie Robredo published the Internal Revenue Allocation (IRA) of his city. The first step towards good governance is the publication of IRA. It will deter corruption. The second step is accountability. To have good governance, political will is very important.

2LT Carl Roy Catalan asked on the state of the peace process.

According to Fr. Jun, the peace talks between the government and the National Democratic Front (NDF) is frozen. In his SONA, PNoy said there must be a ceasefire before the talks. NDF does not want any condition for the talks. Ceasefire should not be a condition. It is one point for discussion on the table. It remains frozen until the government names a panel to negotiate with the NDF.

Peace talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the MILF: Major gains under Ambassador Seguis (before the suspension of the panel):

1. Agreement on Civilian Protection (International Monitoring Team (IMT) focuses not only on the ceasefire between the GRP and MILF but also in civilian protection)
2. International Contact Groups (International NGOs and countries facilitating in the negotiations)

The Philippines is now reconstituting its peace panel. The new panel is composed of the following: Atty. Marvic Leonen, Dean at UP College of Law has been named chair of the panel, replacing Seguis. The members of the panel are Prof. Miriam Ferrer, Senen Bacani, Hamid Barra and Ramon Piang.

Fr. Jun posed these three burning questions to the Marine Officers Corps:

- Why is there conflict in your area of responsibility?
- What are the solutions to the conflicts?
- What is my role to the realization of the solutions?

The answers to the three questions are elusive without a holistic appreciation of the realities confronting Mindanao and its 22 million inhabitants. There's a painful groaning that must be heard first before giving a prescription to a systemic conflict that is rooted in centuries of history.

The three questions said earlier will kindle a new knowledge if not an entirely new understanding of the conflicts that have hampered growth and nation-building in Mindanao.

Workshop outputs:

1. - Sources of Conflicts:
  - rido
  - Abu Sayyaf Group
  - lack of education/ illiteracy
  - poverty
  - ”culture of war” thinking
  - harassment of civilians by armed groups
  - lack of basic amenities and social services
  - inappropriate use of funds by the LGUs
  - political conflicts
  - health problems such as malnutrition
  - absence of livelihood opportunities
  - kidnapping
  
2. - Attempts and Initiatives carried out to solve these conflicts
  - dialogue with stakeholders, “pulong-pulong”
  - dialogue with political parties
  - people empowerment programs, community organizing, community-building
  - civilian military operations (med, dental, engineering)
  - combat operations
  - small-scale water well projects
  - livelihood seminars and small livelihood projects

-child literacy and feeding programs

3. - More things to do

-activation of small farmers cooperative for livelihood

-coordination with NGOs for infrastructure projects  
(water system, health centers, school buildings, barangay  
halls)

-development projects with women and youth

-literacy programs

-provision of district hospital for community health needs

-forging peace pacts with rogue groups

-information campaign

-engage with LGUs

-combat patrols

**SOLDIER AS A BRIDGING  
LEADER**

## **Soldier as a Bridging Leader**

Fr. Jonathan R. Domingo, OMI

### **Why Bridging Leadership?**

There are divides that separate us. Poverty, illiteracy, and diseases are threats to human security, peace and human development. The increasing marginalization, exclusion and inequities in the populace have caused the emergence of DEEP SOCIETAL DIVIDES, resulting to conflicts.

There is a need for a new style of leadership that can address inequities. According to World Bank Development Report 2006, “Inequities refer to differences in the availability of opportunities to different individuals. In an inequitable society, individuals have varying access to opportunities that are important to pursuing a life that is spared from deprivation in all of its forms (economic, social, cultural & political).

The inequities are so complex. The common approach is leader-dominated, non-collaborative, non participative, non sustainable. Bridging leadership offers an alternative approach to address inequities and complex issues and achieve societal change.

Bridging leadership is defined as an approach to leadership characterized by the capacity to initiate and sustain a collaborative process. It is designed to achieve meaningful social change through the collective action of multiple and diverse stakeholders.

The *Bridging Leader* serves as the catalyst that connects and harnesses the interactions among the government, the private sector, and civil society, focusing on the societal divides and complex issues to be addressed.

The Bridging Leaders are *animateur*, a French word for people who seek to create systemic change. Peter Senge writes: “An *animateur* (from the root *animer*) is someone who “brings to life” a new way of thinking, seeing, or interacting that creates focus and energy.” Leadership is strongly associated with inspiration, (inspire—from the Latin root/*inspirare*—mean “to breathe life into”). “

The Bridging leader inspires. He seeks the creation of life and energy in organizations and promotes sustainable solutions that are inclusive, accountable and transparent and establish more participative citizenry and responsive institutions supported by new arrangements bring about by societal equity.

### **What are the traits of a bridging leader?**

1. exhibits values of trust, integrity, credibility, and commitment;
2. understands the complex issues or societal divide, and analyze its causes, stakeholders, and make a personal response to address the divide;
3. convenes and engages stakeholders to own the problem and its solutions;
4. seeks and facilitates program interventions that will bridge the divides.

5. listens and understands deeply and from the perspective of the person sending the message;
6. engenders trust and helps to build trusting relationship among others;
7. respects and be able to relate to and be respected by individuals and groups from a wide variety of cultural, national and social backgrounds;
8. helps to identify and develop common ground among diverse individuals and groups;
9. inspires and facilitates joint concrete actions, in response to difficult situations;
10. builds and helps others to build networks of people and groups toward common goals;
11. grasps complex situations and helps others understand and cope with them; and
12. understands and relates to individuals and groups from a wide variety of cultural, national and social backgrounds.

(Source: *LEADERSHIP PLANNING MEETING*,  
*Pocantico, New York*)

**Bridging leadership understood as connecting,  
harnessing and facilitating interactions**

Bridging leaders organize and enable the participation and contribution of the government, private and civil society organizations towards achieving sustainable human development. They share information, build awareness and mobilize the three abovementioned sectors in the building of a

good society. As such bridging leaders actually facilitate the government, private and civil society partnership as stakeholders to the community.

Furthermore, bridging leaders engender trust between and among the three sectors. They promote and enhance access to information needed for greater participation of all stakeholders in the community. They welcome opportunities for wider exposure beyond their immediate context. This exposure program enables them to compare their own reality with other contexts, share experiences with other stakeholders, and learn about ways of doing things.

*(Source: Ernesto Garilao, Dinky Juliano-Soliman, Evangeline Lopez, Pamela Asis, Marge Barro)*

### **What are the bridging leader's core values?**

Values serve as the bridging leaders' guiding principles. The development of core values enables the bridging leader to carry out the challenge of crossing cultural borders in order to unify various stakeholders in the community. Striving to live the core values provide the impetus for unified action. These core values are the following:

- EXCELLENCE: (Being the best one can be)
- HAPPINESS (Fulfillment of needs)
- HARMONY (Making the world a better place)
- RESPECT (Specifically for life, individuality and culture)

- LIBERTY (Freedom from economic, social, political and ecological ills)
- JUSTICE (Equality for all)
- UNITY (Oneness amidst diversity)
- EMPOWERMENT (Enabling the people)
- TRUTH ( Being consistently honest, accountable and transparent)
- CHANGE ( Openness and innovation to constantly changing environment)
- COMMITMENT (A compelling drive to see things to the finish)

### **Can bridging leadership be learned?**

Yes, bridging leadership can be learned. There are bridging processes and methods that guide the learners through the journey.

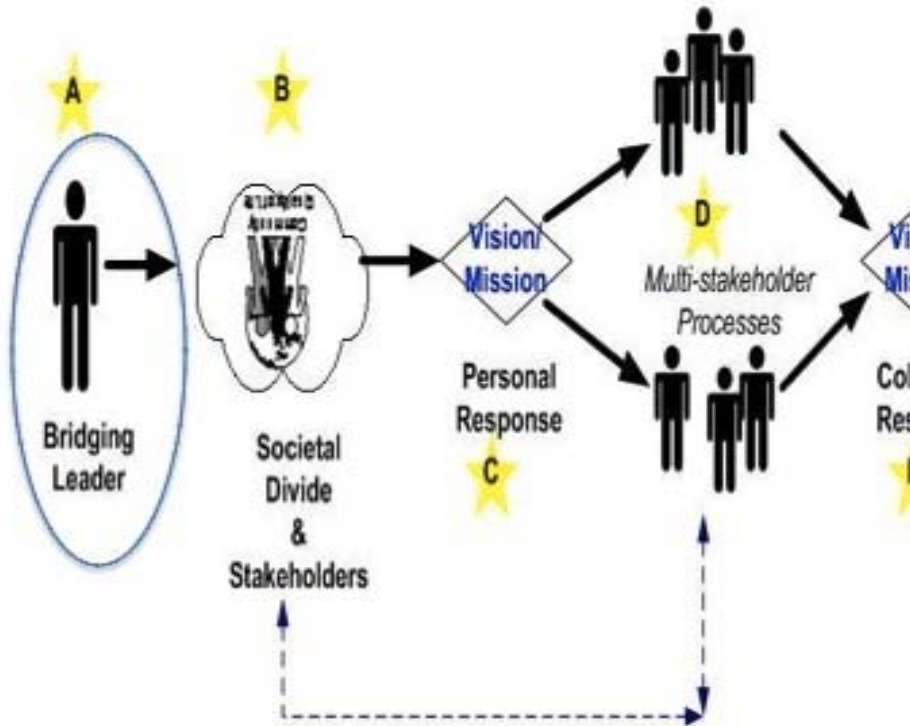
The first step in the journey is cultivating **OWNERSHIP** of the concept of leadership. This is done through the following:

1. reflects on his/her Leadership Life- Journey;
2. understands his/her Bridging Leadership Capital;
3. studies the societal divides and complex issues;
4. analyzes recognizes the interests of many stakeholders in the community; and
5. makes a personal and appropriate response to the issues in the community.

# The Bridging Leader

OWNERSHIP

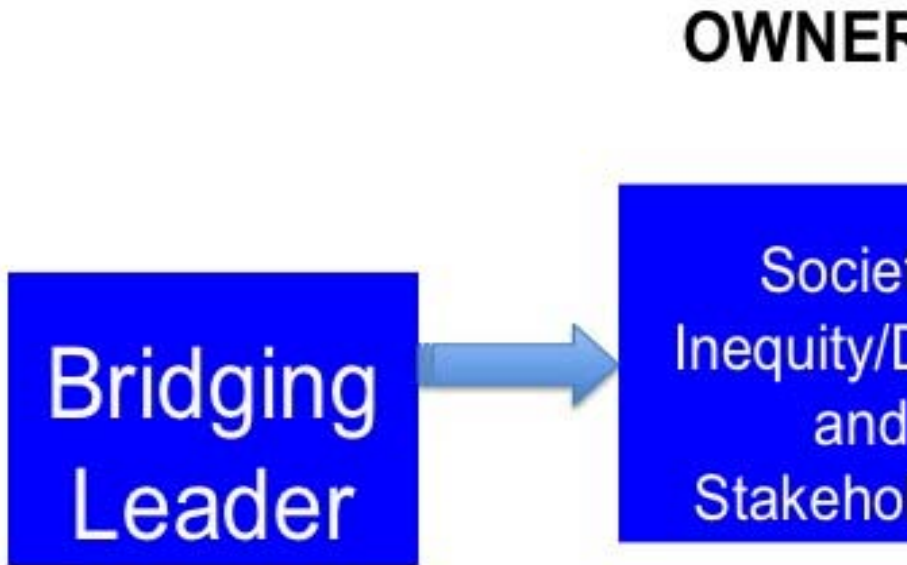
CO-OWNERSHIP



# Leadership Process

## CO-CREATION





***THE BRIDGING LEADER***

*-reflects and owns his/her Leadership Life- Journey and understand his/her Bridging Leadership Capital*

*- understands the divides and complex systemic analysis (Thinking) and re interests of many (Stakeholder Analysis)*

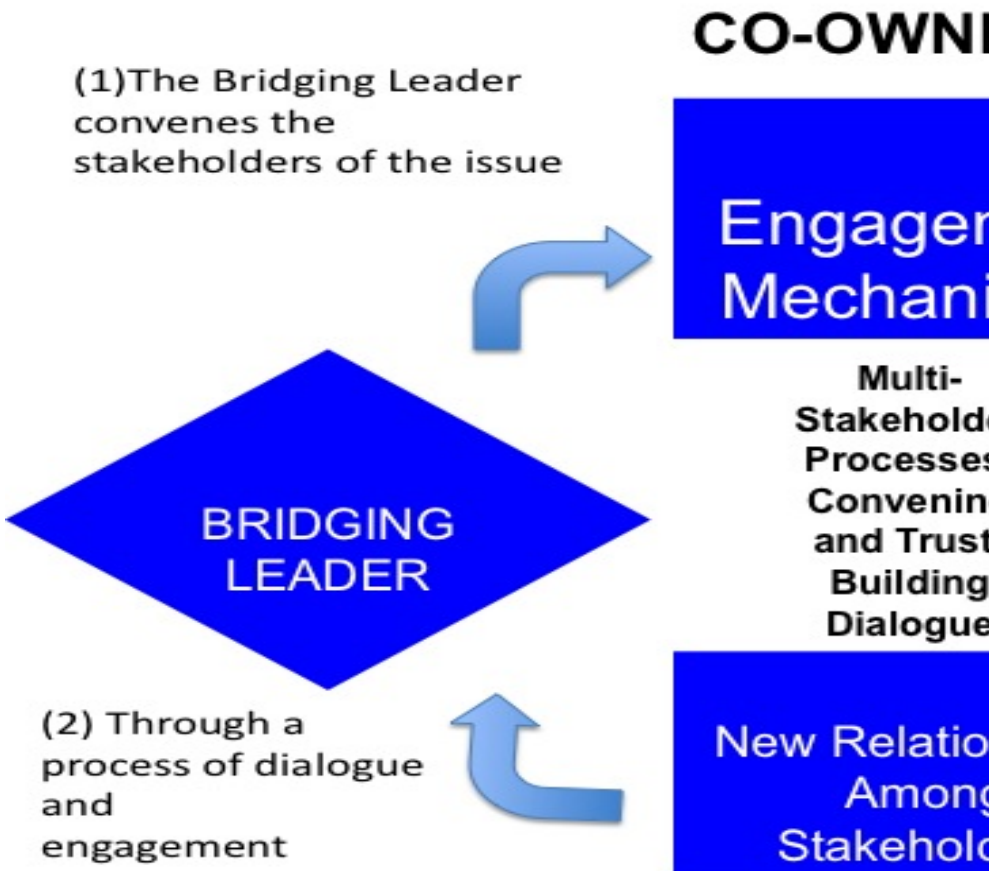
# LEADERSHIP



*the societal  
complex issues- its  
Systems  
recognize the  
stakeholders  
analysis)*

*-makes a personal response  
to the issue*

The second one is promoting **CO-OWNERSHIP** among all stakeholders. This is achieved through a process of engagement and dialogue that involves the multiple and diverse stakeholder.



The engagement and dialogue aim to shape a shared response and shared vision vis-à-vis the issues confronting the community.

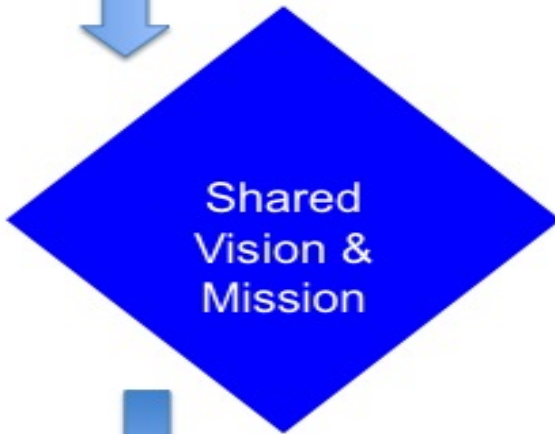
## ERSHIP

ment  
isms

er  
s/  
g  
-  
e

nships  
g  
ders

(3) the stakeholders arrive at a shared vision and shared response



(4) The vision becomes the societal outcome aspired for by everyone

The third step is often labeled as the process of **CO-CREATION**. The engagement of stakeholders must lead to collaborative or collective action/response. The desired responses would shape the concrete strategies and programs suitable to the resolution of the issues/conflict that the community faces. The concept of co-creation indicates new institutional arrangements and innovative rules for ways of doing things. Whatever new institutional arrangements are made they are inclusive, accountable, and transparent which are the marks of more empowered citizenry and more responsive institution. An empowered citizenry and responsive institutions supported by new arrangements bring about societal equity.

*The Soldier as a Bridging Leader reflects on his/her  
Leadership Life- Journey and understands his/her  
Bridging Leadership Capital*

## **A. Begin the LEADERSHIP JOURNEY**

### **MY LIFE MAP AS A LEADER:**

The Life Map is a visual representation of certain events in our lives that we think are important in contributing to who we are right now. It is a tool to help us remember. We begin by following these steps (with illustration chart):

1. Identify four events in your life that you consider important for you to reach this point in your life as a Leader.
2. Why do you think these events are important to you?

## ***My Life Map***

**Event 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Why is this event important?*

**Event 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Why is this event important?*

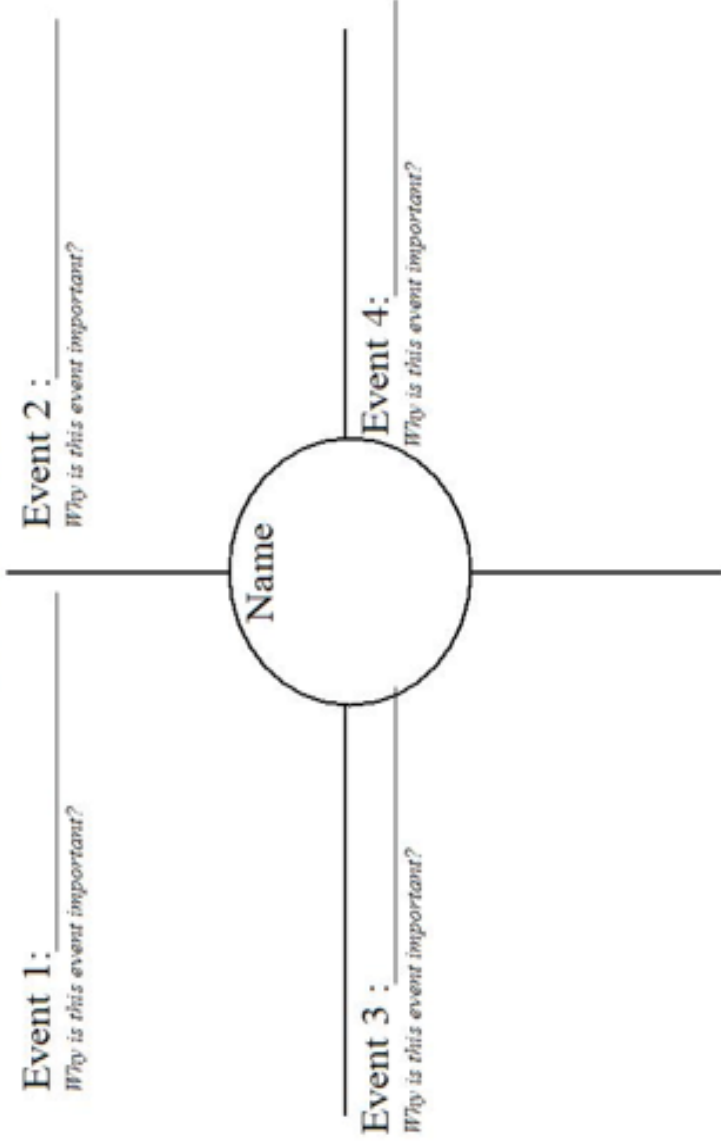
Name

**Event 3:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Why is this event important?*

**Event 4:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Why is this event important?*



## Why it is Important to Verbalize One's Leadership Journey?

1. It allows the discovery of what **motivates** one to lead; allows the discovery of the source of the passion for leadership; and
2. It allows one to draw the **connections** between leadership potential/ preferences and life experiences in terms of relationships, memories, difficulties.

*In his book, True North, Bill George* has a simple premise for leadership: **understand your own life story.**

“Your truth is derived from your life story, and only you can determine what it should be,” writes George. “When you are aligned with who you are, you find coherence between your life story and your leadership.” That alignment is your “true north,” an internal compass. “What emerges from these stories is that virtually all the leaders interviewed found their passion to lead through the uniqueness of their life stories,” he writes. “Not by being born as leaders. Not by believing they had the characteristics, traits, or style of a leader. Not by trying to emulate great leaders.”

To become authentic leaders, we must discard the myth that leadership means having legions of supporters following our direction as we ascend to the pinnacles of power. Only then can we realize that authentic leadership is about empowering others on their journeys,” he writes.

This transformation in thinking from “I” to “we” is “the most important process leaders go through in becoming authentic,” he writes.

“Only when leaders stop focusing on their personal ego needs are they able to develop other leaders. They recognize the unlimited potential of empowered leaders working together toward a shared purpose.”

Questions to be asked...

- What is important in introspection and in discovering one’s own authentic leadership is the framework of the story.
- How do you tell your story?
- Is it a story of regret? Of suffering? Of pain? Of sadness?
- Or is it a story of joy? Of discovery? Of triumph over obstacles?
- The leadership story that we tell is the story of how we view ourselves as leaders.
- We will believe the story we tell.

Our stories will determine how we play our roles at present and in the future.

Bill George claims that “by understanding the formative experiences of their early lives, they have been able to reframe their life stories and their leadership around fulfilling their passions and following their true north”. In the case “many people with painful stories, they see themselves as victims, feeling the world

has dealt them a bad deal”. The lack the introspection will obfuscate the connection between their life experiences and the goal they are pursuing now. Some get so caught up in chasing the world’s esteem that they never become genuine leaders.

### **Going deeper into our leadership story**

1. Authentic Leaders consistently say they find their motivation through understanding their own stories.
2. The stories of authentic leaders cover the full spectrum of life’s experiences.
3. Many leaders find their motivation comes from a difficult experience — a crucible.
4. The difference with authentic leaders lies in the way they frame their stories.

One of the findings put forward in the book, says that when asked what motivates leaders to lead, authentic leaders consistently say they find the motivation through understanding their own stories. The stories enable them to know who they are and to stay focused on their True North.

### **True North** (excerpt) by Bill George

There is an enormous vacuum in leadership that exists today – in business, politics, government, education, religion, and nonprofit organizations. Yet there is no shortage of people with the capacity for leadership. The problem is that we have a

wrongheaded notion of what constitutes a leader, driven by an obsession with leaders at the top. That misguided standard often results in the wrong people attaining critical leadership roles.

There are leaders throughout organizations, just waiting for opportunities to lead. In too many organizations, however, people do not feel empowered to lead, nor are they rewarded for doing so. The purpose of True North is to enable you to discover your authentic leadership so that you can step up and lead. There is a dramatic shift taking place in the caliber and character of the new leaders and in their commitment to build lasting value for all their stakeholders.

Led by General Electric's Jeff Immelt, IBM's Sam Palmisano, Avon's Andrea Jung, and Procter and Gamble's A. G. Lafley, these leaders recognize that leadership is not about their success or about getting loyal subordinates to follow them. They know that the essence of their leadership is to motivate people throughout their organizations to lead.

Authentic leaders not only inspire those around them, they empower them to step up and lead. They know that the key to a successful organization is having empowered leaders at all levels, including those that have no direct reports. Thus, our definition of a leader is: The leader brings people together around a shared purpose and values and empowers them to step up and lead authentically. Becoming an authentic leader is not easy. First, you have to understand yourself, because the hardest person you will ever have to lead is yourself.

Once you have an understanding of your authentic self, you will find that leading others is much easier. Second, to be an effective leader, you must take responsibility for your own development. Like musicians and athletes who are born with great abilities, you must devote yourself to a lifetime of development in order to become a great leader. By dedicating yourself to your development, you will discover your authentic leadership. True North gives you a roadmap and a compass for your journey.

### **Bridging Leadership and Relationship Capital**

*Leadership capital* is the ability to get things done. It puts particular emphasis on both the soft and hard skills that make up the bridging leader. It traces his/her personal history and values, leadership approaches, skills, mental models, and biases. Leadership capital is shaped by one's personal values, experiences, and expertise within the family and society, education, and upbringing.

Leadership capital includes relationship capital. *Relationship capital* is built when you are creating results that impact people. It is your social network composed of people who trust you, and whose resources you have access to due to this trust relationship.

#### *Guide Questions:*

1. What are the personal values that drive or hamper my leadership?
2. What in my education, experience, and/or expertise has the most positive or negative impact in my becoming a leader?

3. What are the family experiences and connections that made me who I am now?
4. What is my relationship capital in terms of the impact I have on the people around me?
5. What is my action capacity?

## **REFERENCES:**

Asian Institute of Management Team Energy: Bridging Societal Divides: Learning Materials for Trainers and Coaches of Bridging Leadership, Makati City, 2006

Brinkerhoff, Derick and Benjamin Crosby. *Managing Policy Reform: Concepts And Tools For Decision-Makers In Developing And Transitioning Countries*. Bloomfield, CT:

Kumarian Press, 2002.

De Guia, Katrin. *Kapwa: The Self in the Other*. Pasig City, Philippines: Anvil Publishing, 2005.

George Bill, True North, Discover Your Authentic Leader: USA, Jossey Bass, 2007

Bill George, Peter Sims, Andrew N. McLean, and Diana Mayer, Discovering Your Authentic Leadership, Harvard Business Review, 2007

Senge Peter, Brian Smith, Nina Kruschwitz, Joe Laur, Sara Schley, *The Necessary Revolution*, , USA, Double Day, 2008

World Bank. (2004) *World Development Report: Making Services Work for Poor People*. Available online.

World Bank. (2006) *World Development Report: Equity and Development*. Available online.

**Breaking Barriers, Building  
Partnerships and Helping  
Make New Societal  
Arrangements**

---

## **Breaking Barriers, Building Partnerships and Helping Make New Societal Arrangements**

*Lt. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino*

*Commander, AFP Western Mindanao Command*

In January 2008, civil military operations (CMO) were launched with a clear understanding that the battlefield rests in the hearts and minds of the people. Winning the war without firing a gun is possible. The war can be won by making insurgency irrelevant.

A clear appreciation of the spectrum of conflict helps us understand the utility of force. Conflicts are categorized as low-intensity, mid-intensity and high-intensity situations. Internal security problems are low-intensity conflict situation. Unlike a high-intensity war, which is purely a war between nations, low-intensity war is a war among the hearts and minds of the people. The government's response should be characterized by less use of force and means other than war to address the root causes of the problem.

In the 1970s, the military used to shoot everything that moved. They burned down houses. The military was trained that way. We employed the western way and this is still being done in Central Mindanao. But not all wars are the same. The collateral damage and displacement must be lessened.

The traditional military role is to be a warrior. But confronted with the complexities of the internal security

problems, the military has deftly adapted to the peculiarities of the operational conditions and the soldiery roles have been re-engineered especially with the CMO.

The military is in the midst of a radical paradigm shift in the way internal security operations (ISO) are being conducted. Quoting a senior marine officer, “We are now at the tail-end of our internal security operations. Under my command, it is 15 percent intelligence-driven combat operations and 85 percent CMO through inter-agency partnership and development efforts.”

It must be noted that out of the six lines of operation, only one line uses military force. If ever there is a need to use military force, it should be conducted with an intelligence-driven and precise combat operation to neutralize key enemy groups and personalities with minimal collateral damages and disturbance to civilians. The days of large and prolonged sweeping military operations that only do more harm to civilians than the enemies of the State are gone.

Nowadays, marines are not only warriors. The marines are also bridging leaders, facilitators of good governance, facilitators of socio-economic development, peace builders, conflict managers, environmentalists and information specialists as well. They lead the way to peace and development in the communities.

Why do the people love the marines? Why do they cry when the marines leave? It's because the framework of the marines is human security. The marines win the war without the use of guns. The marines are aware of the problem. They know the solution.

**Establishing a Safe and  
Secure Environment for  
all Parties in Conflict**

## **Establishing a Safe and Secure Environment for all Parties in Conflict**

*Lt. Gen. Raymundo Ferrer*

*Commander, AFP Eastern Mindanao Command*

Military operations alone cannot solve the conflict. The marines must engage all stakeholders to play a role. A soldier nowadays should not just be a warrior. The soldier must also be an information expert, a development worker and a peace builder.

The military is not an invading force. The military confronts several and different groups. To an ordinary civilian, a “special operation” could mean abduction. Thus, our efforts must be communicated to the civilians. It is part of the soldier’s job to speak a language that can be understood. As leaders, we bridge the gap between the military and the other sectors.

The challenges of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) are varied. Last year, when the Supreme Court issued a temporary restraining order (TRO) that ordered the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) to cease and desist from formally signing the GRP-MILF Peace Panel Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD), conflict erupted in Central Mindanao. It became a matter of drawing up a plan of action using a red pen to indicate where the enemy was, a blue pen to draw an arrow to indicate where to attack, and a black pen for the boundary. But that is just fighting; managing conflict is another matter. The

challenge is to uphold the peace process and at the same time address the conflict head on. It is difficult to reconcile the two.

When the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) Commander Umbra Kato invaded North Cotabato, his group stole the animals and burned down houses. The Muslim houses were spared. This was an instance that the military chose not to highlight in the media because the war is not a religious war or a war on ideology. The war is about poverty.

When skirmishes erupted after the junking of the MOA-AD, it was so easy to shift from peace building to fighting. But then the government started talking about DDR (*the main vehicle for dissolving the militias; the first step in the transition from war to peace*). This is the conventional framework used in other countries. In Nepal, for example, DDR is the process of managing the arms of the army.

In the Muslim culture, however, they do not like the concept of disarmament. DDR needs a security sector reform component. This involves not just the military and the police but all parties. If these stakeholders will not come together, conflict will just be a cycle, like what happened with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) wherein the social and economic reintegration was missing. The recourse of such groups was to join groups such as the Abu Sayaff.

Conflict results into displacement, like the lumads being displaced from their natural habitat. There are already Maranaos

in Baguio and Greenhills. There are Moros in Manila who now refuse to come home and help in their areas.

The young Moros have a radical way of thinking. They are very frustrated with the situation. Before, improvised explosive device (IED) attacks were used to pressure the government to resume the peace talks but lately the attacks are designed to hurt people. They are staged in public places.

The nature and causes of conflicts in Mindanao are very complex, and there are many. There are historical injustices, cultural biases, religious intolerance, problematic land distribution, poor or lack of governance, lack of economic opportunities, poverty, ignorance, irreconcilable ideologies, competition for resource control and the proliferation of arms.

The historical injustices go all the way back to the laws enforced by the Spaniards. The laws then favored the landed elites. The lumads and the Muslims lost their lands. Consequently, they were marginalized.

Cultural biases also stem from the loss of their lands. But in Muslim communities, only one or two families own the area. It's the *datu* system that prevails. The situation is far from the democratic way of life. The *datu* system of governance contributes to poverty. The farmer is not emancipated so his child has no means to get education. The child joins the ranks of the armed because there is the promise of food. An ordinary fighter does not talk about the dream of an independent Islamic State. Only the scholarly leaders talk

about it. They are there to eat and to be employed. There are simply no economic opportunities.

In another instance, in Central Mindanao, the people wanted proper irrigation but the mayor who also owned a farm wanted the canal to be diverted to his. The other farms are owned by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) members so conflict ensued. They asked for a peacekeeping unit.

The Philippine National Police (PNP) has been perceived to be a party to the proliferation of arms. Allegedly, they even deliver it and yet the PNP talks about gun amnesty.

There are existing interim security mechanisms. These are the following: Interim Agreement on Security, Rehabilitation and Development, Joint Coordinating Committee on Cessation of Hostilities (Joint GRP-MILF CCCH), Ad Hoc Joint Action Group (AHJAG), International Monitoring Team (IMT), Local Monitoring Team (LMT), Civilian Peacekeeping Force (NPF), NGO Ceasefire Monitors (Bantay Ceasefire) and the Joint Monitoring and Action Teams (JMAT).

For the purposes of operations, the fighting must be contained. Soldiers do not only manage the fighting. They also manage the conflict. Hence the corps must take into consideration all these security mechanisms.

Managing the fighting is the job of the battalion commander, while managing the conflict is that of the brigade

commander. The tactic must be political and strategic. *Hindi lang tayo utak pulbura* (We are not war freak).

At the end of the peace process, only the AFP and PNP are armed. But this is a long process. It's not just a matter of taking the guns from their hands. Restoring law and order requires a transition phase. Again, it's a long process.

At the heart of DDR planning are these key issues that have to be considered: local culture, traditions, resistance from other armed groups (CAFGUs, CVOs, PAGs), restoring law and order, local ownership, representation of all parties to the conflict in the decision-making process, timing and sequencing of DDR process, incentives for those who will voluntarily turn in their firearms, safe and secure environment for the disarmed combatants, provisions for child soldiers and advising the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) people what areas need roads. This is the bridging leadership concept-to get the leaders to help the community. The trainings are for the younger commanders to be armed with tools and knowledge so duties are better performed.

To achieve peace, it is important to develop a local peace agenda. The solution must be localized. Manila cannot address it. The marines should be prepared to engage the stakeholders. The youth sector and the religious sector must be engaged. There are local agendas but they are not integrated. The job of the marines is the groundwork, to convince the community that engaging in conflict is not the way.



**Forging the Peace in Buliok:  
Colonel Ben Deocampo  
Dolorfino and the  
2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Brigade**

---

## **Forging the Peace in Buliok: Colonel Ben Deocampo Dolorfino and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Brigade\***

To lead successfully, a person must demonstrate two active interrelated traits: expertise and empathy.  
~William G. Pagonis in *Leadership in a Combat Zone*~

Dark heavy clouds marred the sky as military trucks transporting the soldiers and equipment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Brigade (2MBDE) traversed the highway from Cotabato City to Pikit, North Cotabato. At the head of the convoy were military tanks and howitzers. It was the summer of 2003 and the brigade had just been pulled out from Tawi-Tawi and relocated to North Cotabato to maintain peace and order in the barangays (villages) bordering the 3,000-hectare Liguasan Marsh, the stronghold of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). Before the arrival of the 2MBDE, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the MILF had been engaged in battle at the Buliok Complex in the last three months. The armed conflict was triggered by several bombing incidents in different metropolises in Southern Philippines and by the brazen kidnapping of teachers and students in Basilan by the Pentagon Gang<sup>1</sup> in 2002. Government troops conducted offensive pursuit operations in Basilan to rescue the victims and capture the

---

\*This case study was written by Cecilia T. Ubarra, under the supervision of Prof. Jacinto C. Gavino of the Asian Institute of Management. Copyright 2005, Asian Institute of Management, Makati City, Philippines. <http://www.aim.edu.ph>, email: [webco@aim.edu.ph](mailto:webco@aim.edu.ph). Reprinted with permission.

kidnappers. Unfortunately, the leaders of the group escaped the dragnet of the military. A few months after, on January 2003, Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo approved the deployment of troops to Central Mindanao to pursue members of the Pentagon Gang, which the government believed to have sought shelter in the 200-hectare Buliok Complex.<sup>2</sup> Among those being pursued were Pentagon Gang leader, Tahir Alonto, and commanders only known by their first names as Rambo and Gary, both suspects in the bombings in Kidapawan and Shariff Aguak in 2002. Just days after the President's pronouncement, the AFP deployed a 2,000 strong military contingent to Central Mindanao to "neutralize and pursue lawless elements" in the area. According to General Senga, then chief of the Sixth Infantry Division, the military's mission in North Cotabato were to:

- deny the use of the sanctuaries in Central Mindanao by criminal groups;
- physically eliminate criminal groups; and,
- secure the Buliok Complex.

The MILF protested against the government's declaration of combat operations in Buliok Complex, but at the same massed up in preparation for the government's troops attack. Tension gripped the area and civilians trooped *en masse* to evacuation centers as government troops prepared for battle. On February 11, 2003, intense fighting between government troops and the MILF broke out. For two weeks, the combating

groups fought it out, displacing people and destroying properties in the Buliok Complex and surrounding communities. Air Force bombers and gun ships pounded the Buliok Complex, forcing more than 1,000 MILF members to split into smaller groups. Media reported that some of the MILF groups took civilian hostages as human shields against military troops who were hot on their trail. The large-scale attacks caused the evacuation of up to 91,000 people from Pikit and the neighboring villages.

After several weeks of intense fighting, government troops took control of the Buliok Complex and other MILF-controlled villages such as Kabasalan, Rajamuda and Pikit. The military reported that 145 MILF and Pentagon members were killed in battle. Government troops also recovered voluminous intelligence documents of the MILF, ammunitions for rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), M16 and M14 rifles, and communications equipment. Different units of the AFP and Special Action Force (SAF) of the Philippine National Police (PNP) established detachments in Pikit and neighboring municipalities to stop the MILF from re-occupying their former camps and to protect the government projects under the Mindanao National Initiatives<sup>3</sup> (Mindanao Natin) being put up in Buliok. Three months after the height of the battle in Buliok, the 2MBDE and other peacekeeping forces were redeployed to Pikit.

The 2MBDE general mission was to maintain peace and order by containing the MILF in agreed-upon areas in the Pikit side of the Buliok Complex. These areas consisted of Barangays Gli-gli, Bulod, Bagoinged, Buliok, Barungis and

Kabasalan. The 2MBDE's immediate task, however, was to convince the evacuees that it was safe to return to their respective barangays. This task was made more urgent by the fact that the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and non-government organizations (NGOs) could no longer sustain relief operations in the evacuation centers. For every day that passed, medical and food supplies could not cope with the spread of disease and the increasing number of deaths, especially among the old and the very young. Aid workers and volunteers, desperate and weary themselves, were eager to go home. Most of the remaining 40,000 evacuees, however, were not ready to return to their villages.

The residents worried about being caught in the crossfire since there were military detachments inside their villages. Another immediate and serious threat to the returning evacuees were the life-threatening residues of the combat operations, among them unexploded bombs, land mines, ordnance and booby traps in the communities. Hadji Faisal, Intelligence Officer of the 105<sup>th</sup> Base Command of the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF) revealed in an assessment mission that there were unexploded 105 mm., 81 mm. shells and bombs dropped from OV-10 Bronco air force planes in Kudal, Pagalungan; and in barangays Bagoinged and Kabasalan, both in the Pikit and the Pagalungan sides. As such, he advised that these communities be scoured for unexploded bombs and landmines before allowing civilians back to their homes. His report was backed up by various incidences involving civilians accidentally triggering leftover war implements such as unexploded howitzer

shells and booby traps in barangays Talitay and Kabasalan in Pikit.<sup>4</sup>

Other than these immediate dangers, MILF leader Hadji Murad also advised the villagers not to return to their communities just yet because there were members of armed lawless groups (ALGs) suspected to be roaming the area, waiting for an opportunity to destabilize the ongoing ceasefire negotiations.

Tension mounted in the evacuation centers as the Pikit local government increased the pressure on the evacuees to return to their villages. In interviews with media, residents claimed that the government was employing a host of strategies just to force them to go home. These included promises of continuous aid, to threats of stopping relief supply in the evacuation centers, to bulldozing the centers, the non-provision of core shelters and even physical harm. Unfortunately, despite their best efforts, more than half of the 91,000 evacuees remained in evacuation centers. They rationalized that their chances of survival were stronger if they stayed in the evacuation centers where they ate at least once a day, rather than if they returned to their villages, some of which were razed by fire. This situation was the first tough challenge for Col. Ben Dolorfino, a veteran of the Mindanao conflict.

### **Personal background: Col. Ben Deocampo Dolorfino**

Ben Deocampo Dolorfino was born on 10 November 1954 in Dumangas, Iloilo. His parents, Agustin Dolorfino and

Amalia Deocampo, were elementary school teachers who later on retired as district supervisors. His father, Agustin, wanted to join the military but did not qualify due to physical impediments. When his sons were of age, Agustin tried to convince his eldest son to enroll in the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) rather than in medicine, but he was unsuccessful. Ben, being next in line, pitied his brother who was being cajoled into joining the military. To resolve the dilemma, Ben volunteered to take the entrance examinations for the PMA. In preparation for the exams, he enrolled for one semester in an engineering course. He was later on accepted to the PMA.

His experiences inside the PMA were tough and challenging. After the summer camp training, his parents visited him in the PMA campus but failed to recognize him. “I was already standing in front of them but they just passed by me. I called out to my mother and when she turned around she was so surprised at my appearance that tears fell down her cheeks.” Because of the rigid schedule and tough exercises, Ben had lost a lot of weight and was almost as brown as dark chocolate. “My mother wanted me to resign right there and then. I was very thin and was coughing a lot. I thought to myself, ‘But isn’t this what my father wanted?’ I refused to resign and carried on with my training.” Over the years, Ben rebelled against his parents’ wishes for him to resign. “I was determined to see it through.”

In 1976, he graduated with the Philippine Military Academy “Magilas” Class and started his field career as Mess

and Supply Officer of RPS Datu Kalantiaw (PS-76), Naval Defense Forces in 1977. Colonel Dolorfino recounted:

My parents gave me strict instructions not to join any other unit other than the Philippine Navy. At that time, the Philippine Constabulary was mired in corruption charges and so my mother did not want me to join that unit. She also did not want me to join the army and air force because she thought that their assignments were too dangerous. So she said, “You can only join the navy.” While I was in the navy, my superiors recommended me for flight training in the Naval Air Group. I only told my mother about it when I graduated from the training and became First Pilot. That was in 1977 and it was the height of rebellion in Mindanao. As a pilot for the naval air group, I flew the helicopter for the marines in Mindanao. My group’s task was to evacuate the marine casualties and to bring food and supplies to wherever they were assigned.

He moved on to be the Administrative Officer of Headquarters and the Headquarters Support Squadron, Naval Air Group in 1978 after being on an official flying status for a year. In 1979, while on an assignment in Zamboanga, Colonel Dolorfino met and became engaged to a Muslim woman by the name of Ann, whose lineage was part Chinese and part Tausug.<sup>5</sup> To be able to marry her, Ann’s mother required that Colonel Dolorfino convert to Islam.

In 1981, Colonel Dolorfino was promoted from First Pilot to Senior Pilot of the BO-105 helicopter. Thereafter he assumed various administrative and operational duties in the

Philippine Navy. Since he was doing well in his career, he proposed to his fiancé and got married in the same year. The couple was blessed with three (3) sons: Abraham, Jan Michael and Marvin. In 1985, he was invited to transfer to the Philippine Marines.

As a pilot for the Marines, Colonel Dolorfino received several awards including the Distinguished Service Star (DSS); the Distinguished Aviation Cross; the Bronze Cross; the Silver Wing Medal; the Military Merit Medal; the Military Commendation Medal and Military Civic Action Medals; the CBT Badge “Kagitingan” (bravery); and the Senior Naval Aviator’s Badge. He received one of his awards for the skill he exhibited in flying a helicopter while on a rescue mission in Corregidor. A boat had capsized because of stormy weather but some civilians were able to swim to the shore and cling to a cliff wall. Colonel Dolorfino flew the helicopter as near as possible to the civilians so that a rope could be lowered to them and to steady the helicopter against the storm so as not to crash into the cliff while the rescuers assisted the civilians in going up the rope.

From 1985, he climbed up the military career ladder, serving in various capacities in the Philippine Marine Corps. He excelled in many of his assignments. At one time, he was assigned to Infanta, Quezon where the main problem was illegal logging. In just one and a half months, Colonel Dolorfino was able to fill the battalion headquarters and the compound of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) with confiscated logs. He accomplished this feat by putting up

checkpoints near the three sawmills in the area such that loggers had no choice but to undergo inspection. Some illegal loggers tried to bribe him with P500,000 plus an undisclosed amount as monthly stipend, but he refused their offer. “I told them the good name of the Philippine Marine Corps was not for sale and cannot be bought,” narrated Colonel Dolorfino. Because of his unit’s excellent performance, the DENR awarded it P50,000 which he turned over to the battalion commander who came to replace him.

In his next assignment, Colonel Dolorfino was assigned to Palawan as the commander of the 6<sup>th</sup> Marine Battalion. When he arrived, the battalion was on the verge of mounting a mutiny against their commanding officer. He recalled:

Their camp was overrun with weeds, the personnel were no longer wearing their military uniforms during office hours, and everybody was disgruntled. I gave them a challenge. I told them that their unit’s personal mission was to win as best battalion in a year’s time.

The battalion failed to get the top award in their first attempt, but was first runner-up. In the next two years after their initial attempt, the battalion was recognized as the best battalion nationwide out of 10 Philippine Marine battalions. This feat did not come easy because there were no combat operations in Palawan. Normally a battalion was awarded the top prize when it performed well in a combat operation. But Colonel Dolorfino and his unit did not let this hamper them. Instead, they focused on stopping illegal logging activities in

their area of responsibility in Palawan and it was for this effort that they received the “Kahusayan” (best) Award from the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) for two consecutive years.

On September 11, 2002, Col. Dolorfino was promoted to the rank of brigade commander.

### **Being Muslim**

Colonel Dolorfino’s path to Islam began when he was very young. It was then that he sensed the prevalent prejudice against Muslims.

When I was growing up in Iloilo, Maranaos roamed around our town selling mats and blankets. Every time they would pass our street, my parents would call us to go inside the house to hide. This was a common occurrence because even my classmates did this. I asked my parents for the rationale behind their fear and suspicion against the Maranaos. They told me that when they were young, some Muslim tribes raided their village and burned down houses. From then on, my parents associated Muslims with violence.

Non-Muslim parents even used their prejudice against the Muslims to make errant children behave: “They would tell us that if we do not behave the *Moros*<sup>6</sup> will come and get us.”

When he was already in the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Colonel Dolorfino noticed that even the officers

and common soldiers were very prejudiced against the Muslims.

Christian Filipinos are brought up hating Muslims or, at the very least, having so many biases against them. So you cannot expect a Christian military officer with ingrained biases against Muslims to behave decently once they are assigned in Mindanao because in their mind, all Muslims are traitors because they were conditioned to think in that manner.

When he converted in order to be allowed to marry his Muslim girlfriend, Colonel Dolorfino did not automatically adjust to the requirements of his newfound religion. “At first I was not a practicing Muslim. I converted because I just had to. I did not even know how to pray their prayers even though the Muslim chaplain of the AFP had already indoctrinated me.”

It was in the United States, on a scholarship grant, that he learned how to practice the principles of Islam.

I had a lot of Muslim classmates from Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan. They taught me the principles and practices of Islam. It was there that I first learned how to fast and pray. When I got back, my wife was very surprised but happy. I started observing the Islam practice of praying five times a day. In 2002, I was able to go to Mecca as a pilgrim.

From a mere requirement, his faith became a way of life. When he became Commandant of Cadets at the Philippine Military Academy (PMA), Colonel Dolorfino planned to build a mosque and library on Islam inside the PMA to expose and

educate the future officers of the AFP about Islam beliefs and culture. He solicited some funds for a professorial chair on Islamic studies for the PMA academe to educate the future officers of the AFP on the real teachings of Islam so that they would understand that a real and devoted Islam was peace-loving and that only fundamentalists tended to exploit the teachings of Islam to sow violence and terror. Colonel Dolorfino was convinced that the mosque construction projects was one way to acculturate the cadets to Islam so that once they were assigned to Mindanao or any other Muslim territory, they would not feel so out of place and would be able to better communicate with the local residents.

Many of the cadets will be stationed in Mindanao and many of them do not know or understand the Muslim culture and faith. The mosque, which will include a library, will help them gain understanding. It will provide the cadets a socio-cultural awareness that would make their adjustment easier once they are stationed in Mindanao.<sup>7</sup>

He gave an example of an unfortunate event that happened in the 1980s as a result of ignorance of Islam culture.

If you remember, some army men were massacred in Pata Island in Sulu during the 1980s because they disrespected Islam. They slept in the mosque and slaughtered dogs. When they marched, they shouted *Allahu Akbar* (Allah is Great) without knowing why. Eventually, they were killed by the residents themselves.<sup>8</sup>

The Muslim cadets enrolled in the PMA shared Colonel Dolorfino's vision and welcomed the project. First Class Cadet Samsudin Lintongan, one of the ten Muslim cadets, said: "The mosque will greatly enhance everything that we are and do. It will help create awareness in the other cadets with regard to their Muslim brothers and sisters."<sup>9</sup>

The project, however, did not push through even though an Arab philanthropist had allocated funds for the project and the PMA had already set aside a 400-meter lot inside the campus where the Islam facilities could be situated. Colonel Dolorfino surmised:

The project was shut down by somebody at the top of the AFP's hierarchy. I find this strange because most of them have been assigned in Mindnao and could already judge for themselves which among their prejudices were true or false. I think it is a matter of being enlightened. We cannot hold the country hostage because of our personal prejudices against Muslims. We have to break down the walls of prejudice built over centuries in order to achieve a degree of peace in Southern Mindanao. The PMA could have been a very good starting point at that.

**Civil Military Operations: Beyond Propaganda  
"Winning back the hearts and minds of the people  
as the way to lasting peace."**

His understanding and empathy for the plight of Muslim Filipinos made Colonel Dolorfino look at civil-military

operations in a different manner. Instead of looking at civil-military operations as being merely a military strategy to placate civilians, Colonel Dolorfino looked at them as an opportunity to address the psychosocial aspect of the internal conflict in the hope of reaching a more sustainable solution to the problems of the community. This was the very same approach he used in the town of Pikit. Using the Comprehensive Approach framework (CLEAR-HOLD-CONSOLIDATE-DEVELOP) of the AFP, Colonel Dolorfino and the 2MBDE served as a bridge and a catalyst for meaningful change in the conflict-ridden communities of Pikit, North Cotabato and Pagalungan, Maguindanao.

### **Getting settled: CLEAR-HOLD**

Upon its arrival in Cotabato City, the 2MBDE established its headquarters inside Fort Pikit in Pikit, North Cotabato. The marine headquarters (HQ) was an old Spanish fort overlooking the entire town of Pikit. The Marine Brigade Landing Team (MBLT)-3 was deployed in Kabasalan, replacing elements of the 40<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> IB of the PA. The combat support units were stationed in Sitio Ninol, Gli-Gli. The unit's watercraft assets were co-located with the patrol base in Bagoinged. Other than establishing their HQ and detachments, the brigade launched OPLAN (mission) OMEGA to subdue the remaining elements of the MILF and other ALGs. This move resulted to three armed encounters with suspected MILF remnant groups in Kabasalan.

After securing their AOR, the next task of the brigade was to help return the evacuees to their respective barangays. Colonel Dolorfino convened a meeting with Pikit's mayor, Farida Malingco, and with the barangay chairmen of the seven war-affected villages of Pikit.<sup>10</sup> The barangay chairmen were aloof and uncooperative. "Some of them would not even meet my gaze," described Colonel Dolorfino. But Brgy. Chairman Edres Modale explained that their aloofness stemmed from fear. "When the marines first arrived here in Pikit, we were very scared because the marines are known for their fighting skill and we were convinced that the armed hostilities in Pikit would resume," Edres explained.

Colonel Dolorfino opened the meeting with an explanation of their mission in Pikit. He then attempted to draw out from the village leaders what their villagers needed to be able to move back to their respective communities. At first nobody spoke but later on each of the barangay chairmen voiced out their frustrations with the series of armed hostilities over a span of three years. The statement of Barangay Chairman Jon Malinco of Bagoinged represented the sentiments of the group. He said:

The people are very tired. We just want to be able to continue with our lives without the constant threat of war. Our children have stopped going to school because there are no schools to go to and there are very few teachers who are willing to teach in this area. Our homes have been razed by fire. Our farm implements have been stolen. When will these trials end?

The discussion dragged on for two hours without reaching any kind of agreement. Colonel Dolorfino remembered:

The discussion kept on going back to issue of military's total pullout from the Buliok Complex and the surrounding villages. They told us that they were afraid of the military. First, they demanded that the military detachments should be at least 200 meters away from the main villages. Later on, they would change their demand to total military pullout from the area. They did not even want to entertain the idea of us helping them move back.

Later in the afternoon, Colonel Dolorfino and his officers conducted an ocular inspection of their area of responsibility (AOR). The first barangay they visited was Gli-gli. Lieutenant Colonel Fetalvero described Gli-gli as an "MILF-infested area where support for the group was strong since almost everybody in the village had an MILF family member. The people there were die-hard MILF supporters."

Colonel Dolorfino, on the other hand, described the events that transpired in their visit to Gli-gli thus:

I went to Gli-gli to construct a detachment in the area. When we arrived there, the few people who were left approached us and pleaded with us to allow them to evacuate before we conduct combat operations. I told them that we were not there for battle but the people were frantic. They did not believe us. Some of them even tried to physically stop us

from entering their village. I immediately looked for a way to defuse the situation and one of the things that caught my attention was their mosque. It was overrun by cogon grass and in general disrepair. I asked them why they allowed their mosque to fall apart. The residents replied that they were afraid of the soldiers that used to man the detachment because every time they held prayers in the mosque, the soldiers would fire bullets in the air. Upon closer inspection, I saw that the soldiers had built foxholes inside the mosque. Hollow blocks were scattered everywhere and the ceiling had been torn down. The residents disclosed that the soldiers used the ceiling for firewood when they cooked inside the mosque.

To defuse the situation, I told my soldiers and the residents that we would clean up the mosque.

Colonel Dolorfino's statement caught the villagers off-guard. But he and his men were determined. They went inside the mosque and began to clean the debris. They inspected the repairs that had to be done inside the mosque. Since it was dark by then, Colonel Dolorfino decided to return to headquarters. Early the next day, he and his soldiers returned with plywood and other construction materials to repair the mosque. Col. Dolorfino recalled:

We spent the whole day cleaning up the mosque and repairing the ceiling and the holes in the walls. Even the women and children came to help with the clean-up. Fortuitously, it was a Friday and so I invited the residents to pray. I introduced myself as an Islam convert. Everybody was surprised. They

could not believe that a Muslim could be a marine colonel in the AFP. We concluded the day's activities with evening prayers.

The next day, Colonel Dolorfino and the marine soldiers went back to construct a marine detachment. They were surprised because the men of the village approached them with their machetes. For a moment, Colonel Dolorfino and his men thought that the residents had had a change of heart. But the tension was defused when Brgy. Chairman Casimiro Guerrero approached Colonel Dolorfino and said that they wanted to help the soldiers clear the area where the detachment was to be constructed. For the whole week, the residents and soldiers worked side by side. The soldiers were in uniform, but did not carry any arms. Oftentimes, they shared food and jokes to lighten the mood. By word of mouth, other evacuees heard about the soldiers' good deeds in Gli-gli. Mayor Malingco summoned Colonel Dolorfino and congratulated him for his work in Gli-gli. He said that the people were saying good things about the colonel and his men. After the incident, most of the residents of Gli-gli decided to return to their village. Battalion Commander Lieutenant-Colonel Fetalvero, who was in-charge of the marine detachment in that area, called for a meeting with the residents and explained to them the purpose of the military's presence in the area. They likewise explained the terms of the temporary truce and the rules that everybody had to abide by to maintain peace in the area.

Narrated one of the barangay chairmen, "Because of the good things we heard in Gli-gli, our fears slowly dissipated and were replaced by hope."

Colonel Dolorfino took advantage of the goodwill established in Gli-gli and organized a meeting with Mayor Malingco and the barangay chairmen. Once again, he explained the mission of the 2MBDE in Pikit and conferred with them with regard to the immediate need of their villagers in moving out of the evacuation centers. This time the barangay chairmen were more responsive to the colonel's queries. "We discussed how we could harvest our crops and resuscitate our livelihoods. We also talked of ways to systematically transport the evacuees and their belongings," narrated Brgy. Bagoinged Chairman Jun Malinco. The response was the same in all the villages. They asked for the immediate cessation of all combat operations and for the replacement of destroyed property such as homes, farm animals, and livelihood implements. They likewise appealed for livelihood assistance, the resumption of classes and health services.

Mayor Malingco and Colonel Dolorfino expressed that they would explore all avenues to provide the needs of the evacuees. In addition, Colonel Dolorfino reassured the barangay chairmen that it was now safe to go back to their villages contrary to what the MILF leaders had conveyed. The 2MBDE issued Identification Certificates to assure the residents of safe passage in checkpoints of the unit. The 2MBDE also provided 4x4 trucks to transport evacuees back and forth to their villages and evacuation centers. This provision allowed the evacuees to return to their homes to harvest their crops and clean their surroundings in preparation for their eventual return.

As further assistance to the evacuees, Colonel Dolorfino organized and conducted a weekly Community Service Day, which the unit had implemented successfully in Tawi-Tawi, another conflict-affected area in Southern Mindanao. Colonel Dolorfino and the marines in every detachment devoted their Saturday mornings working with the people in the nearest community on any activity that would improve the lives of the people. Colonel Dolorfino likewise called on other organizations such as LGU officials, NGOs/Peoples Organizations, and other AFP/PNP units to join in its cleanliness and beautification drives. Through the program, Colonel Dolorfino sought to develop the spirit of community service and to impress in the community that the security and development of their areas depended primarily on the villagers' effort and not on that of the outsiders'. This program was also intended as a psychosocial approach to promote harmony and understanding between the troops and civilians, in particular, and between the Christians and Muslims, in general. Moreover, Colonel Dolorfino wanted the other government agencies such as the Mayor's Office, representatives of national government agencies (NGAs), NGOs and peoples organizations (POs) to have a chance to interact closely with the evacuees to facilitate the succeeding rehabilitation efforts. Assisting the Office of the Mayor in relief and rehabilitation efforts were international and local NGOs and POs such as:

- Balik Kalipay and the Pikit parish Church under the leadership of Fr. Bert Layson;
- BALAY, which was involved in feeding and psychosocial intervention programs;

- OXFAM, a British NGO that was involved in providing potable water and other sanitation projects;
- Tabang Mindanao- livelihood projects;
- Handicap International- ran programs for the handicapped;
- Community and Family Services and the United Youth of the Philippines- youth development programs;
- Bangsa Moro Development Authority- implemented development programs for the MILF and their families; and
- Philippine Business for Social Progress- for livelihood assistance and micro-credit<sup>11</sup>

Other international NGOs in Pikit were the Italian NGO Movimondo, the Philippine Development Assistance Program (PDAP), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).<sup>12</sup>

The Community Service Day proved very effective in building good relations between the troops and the civilians. Within four weeks from the 2MBDE's arrival, 3,695 families with 18,475 dependents staying at 33 Pikit emergency shelters returned to their villages.<sup>13</sup> Secretary Dinky Soliman of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) was surprised at the speed by which Colonel Dolorfino was able to convince the residents to move out of the evacuation centers.

In turn, she maintained constant communication with Colonel Dolorfino with regard to any assistance that the DSWD could render to the former evacuees.

### **Long-term strategy: CONSOLIDATE-DEVELOP**

On 19 July 2003, the Philippine government and the MILF peace panels entered into a ceasefire agreement. From an offensive strategy, the 2MBDE shifted to an active defense posture in compliance with the ceasefire agreement. It maintained the relentless conduct of security patrols to prevent MILF incursions and other ALGs, and to secure the various government rehabilitation projects in Pikit and Pagalungan. Colonel Dolorfino regularly visited the barangays under his jurisdiction. The security situation became less volatile and skirmishes with the MILF or ALGs no longer occurred. The community leaders and villagers attributed the success of the temporary truce to the respect gained by Colonel Dolorfino and the 2MBDE. People felt comfortable about approaching Colonel Dolorfino to tell him their problems and needs. “This was something very new to us. Imagine before the highest military official we could talk to was a sergeant. Now we could talk directly to a brigade commander,” said one resident.

### ***Gaining respect and trust-building***

It took some time before Colonel Dolorfino and his men gained the trust and respect of the people. Over the years, the villagers had undergone many unfortunate experiences with other military and police units which they enumerated to Colonel

Dolorfino in one of the Community Service Day activities of the 2MBDE thus:

- Pointing of rifles to civilians when talking to them;
- Not paying for items (e.g., household items, crops, or fish) taken from them;
- Butchering of farm animals;
- Random reconnaissance by fire of military detachments;
- Firing of firearms in nearby detachment when they are praying in the Mosque;
- Harvesting of their crops when they were in the evacuation centers;
- Burning of their houses during military operations;
- Looting of mosques and houses for construction materials; and
- Using of mosque as shelter<sup>14</sup>

Thus aware, colonel Dolorfino shared this information with the rest of the officers and together, they formulated strategies to counter the negative experiences. On August 14, 2004, Colonel Dolorfino and his officers organized the Pikit Area Coordination Center (ACC) to coordinate and integrate the efforts of government and NGO in addressing the problems of the people. One of the first programs initiated by the Pikit

ACC was the holding of People's Day in the villages of Pikit. "I first encountered the concept of People's Day when I was assigned in Malacanang.<sup>15</sup> Long tables were assembled at the Palace grounds, then ordinary people came in droves to seek assistance from representatives of different government agencies," narrated Colonel Dolorfino. He first tested the activity when the 2MBDE was deployed in Maluso and Sumisip, Basilan, Southern Mindanao. "People in conflict areas only sense the presence of government when there are government troops in their area. So their perception of government is not positive since soldiers are usually deployed for war. Worse, some of them commit abuses against the citizenry. I implemented the People's Day concept so that people would have a positive perception of government," shared Colonel Dolorfino.

The objective of the People's Day was to bring together civilians and officials of national and local government agencies and NGOs in one venue so that they could discuss the problems of the community and arrive at solutions. "By design, this is an effective strategy because it saves both parties a lot of trouble in having to coordinate separately. In this way, the agencies and NGOs could already decide among themselves how to allocate meager resources for rehabilitation. It avoids duplication of services and ensures that the resources are equally distributed among the war-affected communities," rationalized Colonel Dolorfino.

The People's Day was usually conducted simultaneously with a medical/dental civic action (CIVAC) to entice the people to attend the activity. Before the target date, Colonel Dolorfino

and his officers would personally pay a visit to the offices of the target government agencies and NGOs to explain to them the objectives of the activity and the target results. As the target day drew near, the CMO officer would follow up the invitation with a phone call.

The first two People's Day in Gli-gli and Kabasalan were successful. Representatives from the mayor's office, national government agencies such as the DSWD and DepEd, NGOs and POs attended the consultative meeting to dialogue with the residents concerning their needs. Colonel Dolorfino continued to organize a People's Day for the rest of the affected barangays but these did not go too well. Many of the agencies and organizations lost interest and failed to send representatives to organizational meetings. Colonel Dolorfino attributed their absence to indifference and lack of resources. Two more People's Day were conducted in Buliok and Barungis before the program was discontinued altogether. Colonel Dolorfino had this to say about the failure of the People's Day in Pikit:

Oftentimes, government agencies and local government units think that once evacuees have returned to their villages, they will be able to fend for themselves. But this is far from reality and that is the reason why I applied the People's Day concept here in Pikit. In the beginning, the program worked well but because of the ningas cogon mentality, one by one, the representatives no longer attended the assembly.

Colonel Dolorfino abandoned the People's Day idea, which had worked successfully in Tawi-Tawi and Basilan, and

instead resorted to coordinating directly with local government offices, NGAs, GOCCs, NGOs and private individuals residing outside Pikit. What made things more difficult was the expansion of their AOR with the redeployment of 1MBDE to Lanao del Sur on August 5, 2003. The 2MBDE unit took over the 1MBDE's AOR at the Pagalungan side of the Buliok Complex covering barangay Talitay in Datu Montawal, Maguindanao and barangays Bagoinged, Buliok and Kalbugan in Pagalungan, Maguindanao.

In the 2MBDE's expanded AOR, the unit continued its civil-military activities to "win the hearts and minds of the people." As many evacuees were afraid to return to their homes in the Pagalungan side of Buliok Complex, to coax them to return, Colonel Dolorfino implemented the concept of the Community Service Day in the barangays of Datu Montawal and Pagalungan.

Based on his experience in other provinces in Southern Mindanao, Colonel Dolorfino knew that it was not enough to establish detachments and patrol the villages to maintain peace. He had this to say about the problem in Mindanao:

The war in Mindanao has gone on for more than 30 years but no long-term solution has been formulated. Most of the solutions could be likened to giving an analgesic to a person with brain tumor. You are merely providing a temporary solution to the symptom, in this case a headache, but you are not addressing the root, or the cause, which is the brain tumor.

The causes of insurgency in Mindanao, whether it be the Abu Sayyaf group, the MILF or the New People's Army (NPA), are all the same. They all boil down to four serious interrelated problems, which are poverty, ignorance due to lack of access to education, injustice and disease.

If you analyze it, the rebels have been successful in getting support from the people because they promised to liberate them from these problems. For decades, they have retained their mass support because the people lacked the ability to discern the truthfulness and viability of the solutions offered by these rebels. Their desperate circumstances and lack of education makes them easy prey for anybody with a cause against the government, especially because they feel abandoned by the government.

It's like a tree. If we are going to use militarization in solving the problem, maybe we can solve temporarily the problem on the MILF, the Abu Sayyaf and communist rebels. But later, another generation of rebels will come out. However, if we prioritize solving the four roots of the problems I mentioned, it would be of great help in bringing peace to Mindanao.

If we are to solve the problems in Mindanao we need to address the psychosocial aspect and not only the political, economic and security aspects of the problem.

Guided by his personal beliefs and the AFP's doctrine on Comprehensive Approach, Colonel Dolorfino and his

officers actively consulted the people with regard to their needs. Most times, the peoples' needs were easy to discern and Colonel Dolorfino and the 2MBDE immediately acted on them. The psychosocial strategies they proposed focused on alleviating poverty, ignorance due to lack of access to education, injustice and disease.

### ***Mosque rehabilitation***

One after the other, the 2MBDE repaired the community mosques in Sitio Niñol, Gli-gli, Pikit, Cotabato; Sitio Sapakan, Buliok, Pagalungan and Sitio Balungis in Kalbugan, Pagalungan. In addition, Colonel Dolorfino and his officers were able to solicit some funds from private individuals in neighboring municipalities for the acquisition of important items for the conduct of Islamic worship such as the Qu'ran, linoleum flooring materials, and sound systems. In addition, they performed the following activities:

- In June 2004, the 2MBDE donated and installed five Jetmatic pumps in Sitio Kalbugan, Barungis; Barangay Buliok; and Sitio Balibut, Bulol all in Pikit, Cotabato. The Muslim community appreciated the gesture because it became convenient to practice cleansing before entering their mosques to pray.
- In July 2004, the Brigade donated five culverts for the Mosque renovation project in Sitio Niñol, Gli-gli, Pikit.

- On 07 August 2004, the unit conducted a thanksgiving prayer for the newly renovated mosque at Sitio Niñol, Gli-gli, Pikit. A medical/dental CIVAC hosted by MBLT-3 was conducted together with this activity. GMA Kapuso Foundation, Inc. provided 18 boxes of assorted medicines for the CIVAC.

***Shelter.*** Shelter was one of the evacuees' immediate needs. Colonel Alinas shared that after the DSWD compared the core shelters built by the local government and the military, the DSWD chose to give the remaining funds to the military because the shelters the military built were a little bigger and had a toilet, unlike the LGU-built houses which had none. Local residents were tapped to provide labor, while the brigade took charge of hauling the supplies and materials to the construction sites, and of supervising the construction activities. This strategy proved effective in winning the confidence of the people since there was constant interaction. Moreover, they saw the military engaged in the construction rather than the destruction of property. The women and children were excited about having a place to reside in, while the men were happy because they were compensated for their efforts and had money with which to buy food for the table.

***School rehabilitation.*** The education sector suffered greatly from the constant hostilities between government troops and the MILF. Very few schools were operational and fourteen barangays had no elementary schools. Very few children were attending classes as they were either in the evacuation centers or their parents chose not to enroll them anymore in order to

save money because classes were constantly disrupted anyway.<sup>16</sup> Some families transferred to other municipalities in order for their children to continue schooling without disruptions.

Schools in Pikit, especially in Pagalungan, were far from the ideal. Teachers were forced to hold classes under the shade of trees because there were not enough classrooms. From 2001 to 2005, Pikit lacked 17 school buildings or 51 classrooms as each school building normally housed three classrooms.<sup>17</sup> Scarcer than classrooms were blackboards. Moreover, children sat on the ground because there were not enough chairs. There were also very few schools with functional toilet facilities, resulting in the illness of teachers and children such as urinary tract infection.

Luckily, the 2MBDE found an education champion in GMA Foundation<sup>18</sup> which solicited the 2MBDE's assistance in a Christmas gift-giving activity in December 2003. The Foundation was then looking for a partner that could help them distribute gifts to children in conflict areas. Menchie Silvestre, Operations Manager of the GMA Foundation, shared:

It all started during the distribution activity of the *Unang Hakbang sa Kinabukasan 2003* (First Step Towards the Future) Project. The primary objective of this project was to encourage children to stay in school, and so we distributed school kits to incoming grade one pupils in the most depressed public schools nationwide. For 2003, we targeted the public schools in conflict areas in Central Mindanao. In our trips, we noticed that some schools were dilapidated and most students were displaced and forced to enroll in other schools.

In December 2003, we had another gift distribution project where, once again, we saw the state of school buildings in conflict areas in Mindanao. This was when we decided to expand the concept of the program to include school rehabilitation.

The Give-a-Gift project of the GMA Foundation with the assistance of the 2MBDE had a huge impact on the communities in Pikit and Pagalungan. Silvestre explained further:

We consciously targeted children in conflict areas to bring them some joy during Christmas time. Even though we knew that Muslims do not celebrate Christmas, the spirit of Christmas is sharing and we wanted them to be a part of our celebration.

For 2003, our target was a camp in one of the conflict areas. We specifically wanted to involve the military in the gift-giving project because we thought that it would dispel the civilians' fear of the military.

With children in tow, around 500 Muslim parents flocked to Barangay Bagoinged, Pikit to attend the Christmas party organized by the GMA Foundation and the 2MBDE on December 3, 2003. Menchie Silvestre recalled the fun during the party.

I was the emcee and we were playing the 'Bring me'<sup>19</sup> game. You could not play the game in the traditional manner because the community did not have many possessions so you

had to be creative in asking them what to bring you. At one point, I was feeling naughty and I wanted to liven up the game, so I asked the children to bring me a soldier's boot. It was a risk because I was not sure how the soldiers would react to being mobbed by children and adults alike. To my surprise, the children did not exhibit any hesitation but instead, readily grabbed the leg of the nearest soldier to remove his boots. The soldiers, themselves, were laughing hard because of the ruckus the children created. It was then that we, in the Foundation, realized that the 2MBDE would be a good partner for the next phase of our project because of their good rapport with the community. After the program, I was waiting for Colonel Dolorfino to scold me because I broke decorum when I asked for a soldier's boot; but he was a good sport and was very gracious.

The same kind of gift-giving activity was held in Barangay Buliok, Pagalungan and in Sitio Niñol, Brgy. Gli-gli, Pikit. A total of 1,600 children received assorted gifts amounting to P650,000. The gift packages included canned goods, milk, toothpaste, toothbrush, bath soaps, crayons, pencils and a coloring book. Other children got shoes.

In a conference at Davao City on December 30, 2003, the GMA Kapuso Foundation and the 2MBDE forged another partnership by embarking on a lofty project: the rehabilitation of the war-damaged school buildings in Pikit, Pagalungan and inside the Buliok Complex. Both parties believed that poverty and ignorance had been fueling insurgency in the area and the people could only be emancipated from these problems through

education. In pursuit of the joint project, GMA Kapuso Foundation hosted the “Unang Hakbang sa Kinabukasan” (First Step for the Future) Fun Run in Manila on February 29, 2004 in order to raise the necessary funds for the School Rehabilitation Project. With its purpose widely advertised in media, the fundraising activity received wide support from sponsors and runners. It netted P2.4 million.

On 21 May 2004, the partnership of the Marine Brigade and the GMA Kapuso Foundation implemented the School Rehabilitation Project. It utilized local laborers and the unit’s personnel. Personnel of the 548<sup>th</sup> Engineering Construction Battalion, PA provided technical supervision over the project. Project implementation was simultaneously conducted with the Barangay Immersion/Special Advocacy on Literacy/Livelihood and Advancement for Muslims (SALA’AM)<sup>20</sup> operations of SALA’AM students so that the impact of both activities would complement one another.

The project was completed and inaugurated on 21 June 2004. It resulted in the rehabilitation of nine schools for a total of 25 classrooms and the establishment of nine mini-libraries and seven playgrounds. The surplus construction materials were used to renovate the war-damaged mosque in Sitio Niñol, Gli-gli, Pikit.

***Literacy Program.*** A common problem in conflict-afflicted areas was the absence or lack of teachers because no teacher wanted to be assigned to an embattled area. Thus, the teacher-student ratio in Pikit was 1:50.<sup>21</sup>

Such was the problem of Mrs. Calima Balabadan, the Department of Education (DepEd) District Supervisor for Pikit, which she shared with Colonel Dolorfino. In turn, Colonel Dolorfino asked the battalion assigned in Bulol if they had personnel with a background in Education. MBLT-3 responded by assigning four marines who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education to teach at the Bulol Primary School. The DepEd gave them support by providing the volunteer teachers with lesson plans and reference textbooks.

Aside from becoming involved in teaching, the 2MBDE likewise conducted a feeding program for the children. The volunteer Marine teachers noticed that most of the children were listless and inattentive, traits they attributed to hunger and malnutrition. Colonel Dolorfino was able to solicit 100 sacks of rice from a multi-purpose cooperative outside of Pikit for distribution to the evacuees. Some of the rice went to the volunteer teacher's feeding program, which volunteer parents supported by cooking and serving food daily to the students. The rest of the donated rice was repacked by the 2MBDE into five-kilo bags which were distributed to the families in the three barangays of Pikit and Pagalungan.

On September 22, 2004, MBLT-3 capped its literacy program in Bulol Primary School by donating 50 armchairs.

**Impact.** Every time Colonel Dolorfino visited a village, he brought two sacks filled with snacks that children craved for. The soldier tasked to distribute the snacks was always in

complete uniform with bullet rounds strung across his body. “I did this to dispel the children’s apprehensions of the military,” disclosed Colonel Dolorfino.

Menchie Silvestre, GMA Foundation Operations Manager, noticed a marked difference in the children in the course of her trips in the area. She shared:

The activities and conduct of the 2MBDE had a huge impact on the children. If you go to Brgy. Bulod, you will see the children running to the shore to wave at the soldiers. We felt like we were in a tourist resort rather than a battlefield. They even traded stories and jokes with the Marines who taught them the latest hit songs that showbiz personalities danced to because the people there had no television sets.

Imam Piang shared that when Colonel Dolorfino noticed that a school had no blackboard, he immediately instructed his people to make one and deliver it as soon as possible. For schools without chairs, Colonel Dolorfino instructed his men to make simple benches for the students to sit on. The 2MBDE, likewise, provided a tent for a school’s graduation ceremony because the school had no serviceable building. Imam Piang articulated:

The soldiers respond very quickly. It doesn’t take them more than two days to respond to such requests. Their action had a huge impact on the children who slowly identified the soldiers with positive things like new blackboards, rehabilitated schools, playground equipment, etc. When people hear that

the schools in their community have been rehabilitated, it entices them to move out of the evacuation centers and back to their villages. Parents are usually concerned about their children's education and parents in conflict-afflicted areas are no different. It is one of the major factors that influence the direction of their lives.

**Health.** For the health care of the former evacuees, the unit conducted a series of medical and dental CIVACs utilizing medicines solicited from NGOs, drug companies and private individuals. One of the sites of these medical CIVACs was in Kalbugan, Pagalungan, where 934 local residents and 350 residents of Barungis, Pikit were served by military doctors and civilian medical volunteers.<sup>22</sup> United Laboratory Incorporated donated P56,194 worth of medicines. Other than medicines, the team distributed 130 bags of rice, eyeglasses for elderly people and toys for children.

To be more responsive to the actual health needs of the people and to extend the limited supply of medicines, the 2MBDE activated four "Libreng Botika sa Detachment" (Free Pharmacy at the Detachment). As compared to the conduct of the usual medical CIVAC where the supply of medicines was consumed or haphazardly distributed in one session, the program extended the utilization of the medicines by only giving them out as needed. For example, the P50,000 worth of medicines Colonel Dolorfino solicited from the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) lasted for four months instead of just a few weeks because of this program.

The medics in each detachment (Islamic Center, Buliok, Pagalungan and Barangays Buliok and Gli-gli) provided free consultation and medicines on a 24-hour basis. Most of the

consultations arose from accidents involving farm implements (e.g. cuts and wounds), respiratory diseases, and common colds and fever. Sometimes residents would request the soldiers to drive them to a hospital in emergency situations.

The “Libreng Botika sa Detachment” had a huge impact on the communities that rarely saw a medical practitioner in their lifetime. It added to their sense of security. A resident of Buliok 1 shared:

If anybody got sick and needed to be brought to the hospital, all you had to do was go to the detachment. No matter what time it was, the 2MBDE would wake up and would drive you to the hospital. They were unlike the soldiers before them whom we did not dare to wake up for any reason because most of the time they were drunk and we were afraid to get shot.

***Livelihood.*** Upon their return from the evacuation camps in March 2004, the people of Buliok Complex were faced with the problem of picking up the pieces of what was left of their livelihoods. For the farmers, the biggest problems were the lack of capital to buy corn seeds and missing or stolen farm animals and implements. After they approached Colonel Dolorfino with their dilemma, he sought the assistance of the municipal government; but the mayor said that her office did not have the resources to help them. Colonel Dolorfino then approached the provincial government of North Cotabato, prompting Governor Piñol to provide twenty-two tractors and 1,000 sacks of corn seeds on a “plow/plant now, pay later”

arrangement. In just a few months, Buliok was transformed from a barren marshland to fields of green corn stalks. Colonel Dolorfino said:

All they wanted was to have better livelihood opportunities so that they could start their lives all over again and live peacefully as productive citizens in their villages in the periphery of the Buliok Complex.<sup>23</sup>

Colonel Dolorfino made further representations with Governor Piñol for the repair of Buliok-Bagoinged and Bagoinged-Buliok roads in March 2004. According to the governor, although the repair of these barangay roads was not the responsibility of the provincial government, he funded the repair works for the sake of the development of the war-torn areas.

The Cotabato provincial government likewise donated five piglets. Two of the piglets were given to families in Barangay Inug-ug by the MBLT-3, while three families from Barangay Poblacion Pikit, Gli-gli and Ginatilan got one piglet each.

In the same manner, Colonel Dolorfino assisted the fishermen whose main problem was where to sell their daily catch. He thought that it would be helpful if the people had a nearby market to go to instead of having to commute to the town center. He instructed his men to build a row of market stalls in Brgy. Kudal, Pagalungan, situated at the shoreline of the Pulangi River.

Colonel Dolorfino regularly visited the different barangays to check on the situation on the ground. Whenever the people saw him, they did not hesitate to share their concerns with him. One of the residents of Buliok 2 mentioned:

One time during one of his regular visits, Colonel Dolorfino asked us what type of livelihood assistance we needed so that we would not be tempted to turn to criminal activities such as stealing or kidnapping for survival. We told him that we needed fishnets. Not long after, he gave our barangay chairman P10,000 for the purchase of 20 fishnets priced at P500 each.<sup>24</sup>

Col. Dolorfino recalled this incident and shared:

I gave the money directly to the chairman instead of us buying the fishnets ourselves because I wanted them to know that I trusted them. I was also curious as to how they would distribute the nets. I was happy to find out that they maximized the money by bargaining hard with a vendor in Cotabato City. Instead of just 20 fishnets, their barangay chairman came back with 30 fishnets and equitably distributed these to the communities. I feel happy because I proved that their leaders could be trusted with resources and that the men I spoke with did not hoard the nets for their own use. Presently, one of the local residents, whose father is a middleman, buys the bulk of the fishermen's catch and then sells these to fish traders in Davao. I heard that their business is doing well.

## **Security breaches**

Despite the good relations between the 2MBDE and the former evacuees, some incidents of security breaches occurred. In Kabasalan, one male teenager was arrested by the military after he was caught carrying a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG). The barangay chairman, at that time, narrated the incident:

In our experience, once the military catches a lawbreaker, that person is good as dead. The father of the teenager went to my house weeping. He wanted me to accompany him to the headquarters to get his son's body so he could give it a proper burial. Everybody was so tense as we rode a jeep going to the Marine HQ. When we got there, the soldiers respectfully ushered us in and to our surprise we saw the boy alive, eating supper. He looked okay and had no bruises on his body. Once again, the son's father wept, but this time, out of joy.

## **Two factors for success: Leadership and discipline**

The leadership style of Colonel Dolorfino and the discipline shown by the soldiers of the 2MBDE were two of the most critical factors that contributed to peace and order in Pikit. Below are some of the stakeholders' testimonies with regard to Colonel Dolorfino's leadership style.

### **Testimony 1: MILF Commander**

He really cares for the civilians. He does everything to ensure that hostilities in the area do not commence again. He is a genuine person, not only to the civilians but even to the MILF. He listens to the side of the MILF; he gives them the chance to explain. He relayed the MILF's message to the government. During the negotiation process, Colonel Dolorfino attended the meeting inside the Buliok Complex together with the rest of the negotiators without a gun nor military escort. He trusted that the MILF would not harm him inside the Buliok. In return for his trust, the MILF became more cooperative with the military and the negotiating panel. If he were a different commanding officer, he would not have joined the meeting without a military escort.

What we notice about him is that he is not afraid to take risks as long as it would help the civilians. His risk-taking has earned him our trust and respect. Every time he puts his life at risk for us, it is as though he is saying that we are worth dying for. When he entered Buliok without his escorts, it was like saying, here I am, I am all yours. You cannot help but respect him for his sincerity and bravery.

**Testimony 2:** A resident of Brgy. Inug-og

The MBDE that was assigned in Pikit is well-disciplined. I observed that they do not carry arms unless they are in uniform. This made people less afraid of them and it lessened the tension in the air.

**Testimony 3:** A resident of Brgy. Bagoinged

Colonel Dolorfino, together with his officers, came to our barangay regularly to coordinate with our leaders. Most of the time they were able to provide or assist in our needs. It is a big deal that they do not bring guns with them when they come here because the people really feel nervous when they see guns. It is almost like they get traumatized.

Presently, I think our place is one of the most peaceful places in Cotabato. You will not hear of any crimes compared to other places. I attribute this to the presence of marines.

**Testimony 4:** Imam Abduraham Datu Piang, Grand Imam of Pikit

Colonel Dolorfino is well respected in our community because he shows respect to other people. He is very approachable. When the children run to him, he ruffles their hair or pats them on the head. No matter whom he is talking to, even if the person is the lowliest in the community, he treats them with respect and courtesy. We have never seen him get angry nor have we heard him raise his voice on anybody. As a result, people feel comfortable sharing their concerns and problems with him. You won't feel as if you will be snubbed if you approach him.

His decision to repair the mosques had a huge impact on the people. It symbolized hope. It gave people the courage to start all over again. He does the same for Christians and their churches.

Dolorfino saved a lot of money from bullets because he had no enemies in Pikit.

**Testimony 5:** A resident of Brgy. Gli-gli

When the 2MBDE soldiers ask us to do something like, for example, clean up our community, they join us in the clean-up. Even Colonel Dolorfino holds a machete and cuts the cogon grass side by side with the residents. If the 2MBDE soldiers need anything from the barangay, whether it just be a plank of wood or a wooden bench, they first look for the barangay captain or any other village official to ask for permission to borrow the object. Then they return it promptly and in the condition they borrowed it. Unlike other soldiers who just get anything without permission.

In the past, soldiers would ask for some of our fish when we passed by the detachment or when they went to our market. The 2MBDE is different because not only do they buy the fish from us, they also do not ask for discount.

I salute them.

Father Bert Layson traced the maintenance of peace in Pikit and Pagalungan during Colonel Dolorfino's leadership to several factors.

First, the Marines addressed the other root causes of the problem aside from just thinking in terms of a rebellion, while the other units just addressed the threat through armed

force, purely from a national security framework. They did not engage with the people, while the marines approached them from a human development framework. They addressed the community's problems and needs that could not be solved through military operations.

When I attended the briefing meetings in barangays, I constantly heard them say that "We are not enemies. Our enemies are poverty, injustice, disease and illiteracy."

Another thing is that marines walk their talk. They do not abuse their power.

A barangay chairman shared Fr. Layson's observation:

In the past, if you were an MILF, even if you were not doing anything wrong or there was no evidence against you, as long as it was known by the military that you were an MILF, you would surely be arrested and beaten up. Colonel Dolorfino and his men are different because as long as you have not violated any rule, they just leave you alone. The marines are very disciplined and we admire and respect them for that.

The barangay chairman likewise explained why peace was maintained in the 2MBDE's AOR:

When people have gainful livelihoods, their minds are engaged on how to further improve their livelihoods and not on how to disrupt the peace. The people, themselves, will protect the peace if they have much at stake.

## **Pullout from North Cotabato**

On August 5, 2004, higher headquarters re-deployed the 2MBDE to Lanao del Norte. “The Philippine government has pulled out its troops in accordance with an agreement reached with the MILF during the 5<sup>th</sup> Exploratory Talks held in Malaysia last February,” said General Senga. On September 20, 2004, the 2MBDE completed its pullout from Pikit, North Cotabato and Pagalungan, Maguindanao. The pullout was one of the conditions that the MILF laid down before it would resume negotiations with the Philippine government.

The pullout of the 2MBDE came as a surprise to many of the residents. Most of them heard about it only a week before the complete pullout. Datu Imam Piang disclosed the sentiments of the people:

When the residents heard that Colonel Dolorfino and his brigade were being transferred to Lanao, many cried. The mothers were worried with regard to how their children would fare if there were nobody there to help them solicit food and medicines.

The people wondered why Colonel Dolorfino and the 2MBDE had to be pulled out of Buliok when they have done so much to help the evacuees. The people said that it did not make sense and complained that the government did not want them to have improved living conditions. I admonished them not to complain. I explained that Colonel Dolorfino was just

following the President's directives and the AFP command. He cannot do anything about their transfer.

The people feared that once Colonel Dolorfino went away, nobody would be around to help them coordinate with the government. When we approach the government by ourselves, they do not mind us. The government does not listen to us.

Dolorfino showed us how to be a real Muslim. I remember telling him when they were just new here. "The brotherhood in faith is stronger than the brotherhood by blood." Even if it was no longer their job, the 2MBDE walked an extra mile just to help us. For what they have done, we salute them.

### **Future plans**

Part of Colonel Dolorfino's future plans was to continue doing his share in resolving the conflict in Mindanao and to help alleviate the desperate conditions of the poor in Mindanao, whether they be Muslim or Christian. He explained:

In Islam, we are taught to take care of our fellowmen. It is an obligation especially if you are in a position to help. This is what motivates me. I am not only a Muslim; I am a military man as well. So my awareness and understanding of the problem in Muslim Mindanao is more thorough than others. I believe that war is not the solution. Unless we address poverty, ignorance, injustice, lack of livelihood opportunities and the worsening health conditions of the people in Mindanao, the

security threats in that region will never be resolved. As a Muslim and a military man, if I am able to help reach a peaceful solution in Mindanao, then I do not only help my fellow Muslims, but the Christians as well: peace in Mindanao means progress for the Philippines.

## **Epilogue**

After their pullout from North Cotabato, Colonel Dolorfino was tasked to lead Joint Task Force Lanao which took charge of security threats and the maintenance of peace and order in Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, and the cities of Iligan and Marawi. Under his command were two marine brigades, one engineering battalion and 34 CAFGU companies.

On November 9, 2004, just two months after being redeployed to Lanao del Norte, Colonel Dolorfino was immediately faced with a challenge. Kauswagan-based bandits kidnapped Andrea Cianferoni, an Italian aid worker of MOVIMONDO<sup>25</sup>, and Delabayan barangay chairman Kamlon Moner, a former MILF commander in Kauswagan town, Lanao del Norte. Colonel Dolorfino was part of the team that negotiated with the bandits for the victims' immediate release. Other members of the team were the mayor of Tagoloan town near Kauswagan, Maminta Dimakuta, and religious leaders who met with the gang led by Acmad Limbo and Ali Maute. Because of the cooperation of major stakeholders, the victims were released unharmed in 24 hours. Colonel Dolorfino disclosed that the negotiators' work was made easier by the help of MILF guerrillas who blocked the kidnapers' escape

route. In recognition of his peacekeeping accomplishments, the Sultan of Ditsaan Ragain, Lanao del Sur conferred on Colonel Dolorfino the royal title of Datu Sri Romapenet (peacekeeper) on December 29, 2004. Just a few days after, on January 9, 2005, Colonel Dolorfino was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General.

### **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> The military claimed that the Pentagon Gang was a breakaway faction of the separatist 12,000 MILF which was waging a 27-year armed rebellion for the establishment of an independent Islamic state in Southern Philippines. The Pentagon Gang first gained notoriety on October 17, 2001 when it abducted Italian Guissepe Pierrantoni who was saying mass in Dimatali town, Zamboanga del Sur. From that time on, the Gang has been implicated in over 50 kidnapping cases in Mindanao.

<sup>2</sup> The military viewed the complex as an “MILF camp hosting criminal elements, a communications center and a training ground for various criminal activities.” Before his death in 2003, it was the base of MILF Chairman Udstadz Hashim Salamat.

<sup>3</sup> The Mindanao National Initiatives (Mindanao Natin) Program was launched by President Macapagal-Arroyo during the Closing Ceremonies of the First Muslim Summit on 24 April 2003 to address the peace and order problem in Mindanao. It provides assistance for the rehabilitation of Muslim Mindanao, specifically to the conflict-affected and potential conflict areas. The Office of the Presidential Adviser for Peace Process (OPPAP) serves as the oversight agency and provides overall policy guidance/ strategic direc

tions for the implementation of the Program, while the Mindanao Economic Development Council (MEDCo) Secretariat serves as the secretariat of the Program. The projects included in this comprehensive program include infrastructure, livelihood, and immunization for the children and values formation for MILF rebel returnees.

<sup>4</sup> In Barangay Talitay, Pikit, a returnee named Tatuan Mamadra was injured when a 105 mm. howitzer shell exploded in his farm. Mamadra was burning dried grass to clear his farm for replanting when the blaze apparently set off the shell embedded on the ground. In Sitio Butilen, Kabasalan, Pikit, three civilians- Budsal Sambalang, Nards Maulana and an unidentified resident of Butilen- were injured when they accidentally stepped on booby traps (likely punji sticks) placed near a Marine camp.

<sup>5</sup> Tausug, which means “people of the current”, was a Philippine ethnic group which lived in the northern part of the Sulu province. One of their distinctive characteristics as a people was that they preferred to live near the sea with their houses on stilts. The Tausugs were known for their carvings, metalworks, woodworks, tapestry and embroidery, mat making and basketry, textile and fashion, pottery and other minor arts.

[http://www.pinoyfarmer/dti/people\\_tausug.html](http://www.pinoyfarmer/dti/people_tausug.html)

<sup>6</sup> *Moros was the derogatory term used by the Spaniards for the un-subjugated Muslim peoples of the southern sultanates in Mindanao. It was a label previously bestowed on Spain’s Muslim enemies from Mauritania and Morocco, “Moros” (Moors). They applied the term later on all Muslim communities, paying little attention to linguistic or political distinctions among various Muslim societies. The*

*Americans adopted the same label when they colonized the Philippines after Spain. They eventually subdued the Muslims in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and persisted in the usage of “Moro.” By then, the term had become a moniker among Catholic Filipinos to mean “savages” and “pirates.” (Malou Mangahas, 2005. “Peace in the Philippines and that Mindless ‘Muslim’ label.” in*

[www.bangsamoro.com](http://www.bangsamoro.com)

. Accessed March 2005)

<sup>7</sup> Frank Cimatu, “Mosque to be built inside PMA,” (2002), <<http://www.cyberdyaryo.com/features>>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Initially, the 2MBDE’s area of responsibility was limited to seven villages in Pikit namely Barangays Gli-gli, Bulod, Bulol, Bagoinged, Buliok, Barungis and Kabasalan.

<sup>11</sup> Roland M. Detabali, “Pikit: The Struggle Towards Freedom. A Development Strategy for Pikit, Cotabato,” Asian Institute of Management: Management Research Report, 2004, 62.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Philippine Information Agency, June 12, 2003 press releases, “18,475 evacuees returned home.” <

<http://www.pia.gov.ph/press/p030613htm>

> (accessed November 2004).

<sup>14</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Brigade, Philippine Marine Corps, After Deployment Report

<sup>15</sup> Malacañang Palace is the main office of the President of the Philippines in Manila, the national capital of the Philippines.

<sup>16</sup> Detabali, 40.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> This was the philanthropic unit of one of the country’s biggest television networks, GMA-Channel 7.

<sup>19</sup> A game where the emcee would ask the players to bring her or him a particular object.

<sup>20</sup> SALA’AM literally means “peace” in Islam.

<sup>22</sup> Jeffrey B. Maitem et al., “After medical mission, village folk say they want soldiers to stay,” *Mindanews*. September 16, 2003. <http://www.mindanews.com/2003/09/15nws-mission.html> (accessed October 2004).

<sup>23</sup> Sol. Jose Vanzi, 2003. “Special Action Forces to be deployed in Buliok Complex,” *Philippine Headline News Online*, <http://www.newsflash.org/2004/02/ht/ht004185.htm> > (accessed November 2004).

<sup>24</sup> Funding was sourced from the livelihood component of the Mindanao National Initiatives Program of the national government.

<sup>25</sup> MOVIMONDO was a non-government organization based in Rome. Funded by donations from the European Union, the Italian government, the United Nations and wealthy benefactors, MOVIMONDO implemented programs in poverty-stricken areas in 23 countries. These programs focused on health care, humanitarian aid, job creation and skills training.



# Photos



Eastern Mindanao Command Chief Lt. Gen. Raymundo Ferrer speaks on the challenges of DDR (Disarmament, Demobilization, and Re-integration) and SSR (Security Sector Reform) in Mindanao at the Security Sector reform training held in Davao City in February and March this year.



IAG Executive Director Fr. Eliseo Mercado delivers a passionate talk on the holistic understanding of the peace process in Mindanao. “That painful groaning must be heard,” says Mercado. He is referring to centuries. old conflicts rooted in historical injustices and ethnic and religious differences that have hampered economic growth and nation-building in Mindanao.



National Security expert Rommel Banlaoi presents the challenges confronting security sector transformation in the Philippines.



Police Director Felizardo Serapio Jr drives home a point during his presentation. Serapio is one of the speakers in the Security Sector Transformation training



Speakers, partners and organizers of the training get ready for the distribution of certificates to the participants of the Security Sector Transformation Training. (From L-R: IAG Exec Director Fr. Eliseo “Jun” Mercado, Police Director Felizardo Serapio, Jr, LtGen Raymundo Ferrer, Konrad Adenauer Foundation Philippine Desk Officer Dr. Kristina Eichhorst, Mayor Alexander Tomawis, Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) Country Representative Dr. Peter Koeppinger, and National Security expert Rommel Banlaoi.



PNP, AFP units, CSOs and LGUs coming from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> districts of Maguindanao comprise the participants in the Security Sector Transformation training held in Davao City in February and March 2010.



A participant engaging the speaker in a discussion



A participant reacting during one of the talks in the training



Participants in the Human Security Sector Transformation speaking their minds during the open forum.





The participants sharing their experiences in security sector reform in their respective communities and organizations.



*(From L-R) Pagalungan Mayor Norodin Matalam, LtGen Raymundo Ferrer, Talitay Mayor Cabile Sumagka and Police Director Felizardo Serapio, Jr pose during the sidelines of the Security Sector Transformation training.*



*Police Director Felizardo Serapio, Jr. and LtGen Raymundo Ferrer engage in a friendly chitchat. Ferrer and Serapio are the main partners of IAG in the training.*



KAF Philippines Desk Officer Dr. Kristina Eichhorst and KAF Philippine Representative Dr. Peter Koeppinger looking at the outline of the program before the start of the training.



Police Director Felizardo Serapio, Jr listens on as KAS Country Representative Dr. Peter Koeppinger gestures to make his point.



Organizers and partners giving out certificates and congratulating participants at the end of the training.



Iranon Development Council Exec Director Saipona Zaman is shown here with two female stakeholders listening intently to the lecture.



The training is designed for interactive and collaborative participation among and between the attendees.

