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**THE EAST TIMOR AND MINDANAO INDEPENDENCE
MOVEMENTS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

BY

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ABSTRACT

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It was only after the end of World War II that most of the South East Asian countries gained their independence from western colonial rulers. After centuries under foreign dominion, these countries have to go through difficult processes of transformation to protect their new found sovereignty and territorial integrity especially against the threat of communism during the Cold War. More significantly, the peoples of the new independent states found greater incentives and opportunities to identify themselves with ethnic groups along common decent, shared experiences and cultural factors. This social dynamics led to the emergence of tensions and conflicts not only between ethnic groups and the state, but also between ethnic groups and other groups of society. The causes of such conflicts are complex and varied, such as discrimination, repression, political disenfranchisement and the like.

Two cases in South East Asia merit a study if only to derive useful insights on the complexity of ethnic conflicts. The first is the case of East Timor. For twenty-four years after the Indonesian invasion in 1975, the Indonesian military (ABRI) and militia created havoc in a scale and magnitude that shocked the world. This invasion resulted to the killing of one third of the population of East Timor. It was only in 1999 when the conflict was resolved after the United Nations mandated the deployment of the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) and the United Nations Transition Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). The second involves the aspirations of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to establish a separate Islamic state in the Southern Philippines. After more than three decades since the founding of the Mindanao Independence Movement (MIM), the Philippines is still confronting a costly guerilla war from the MILF which is seeking independence of a region from Philippine territory.

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EAST TIMOR AND MINDANAO INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENTS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Even in a world with Rwanda and Bosnia, the cruelty of this place has been horrifying: an invasion of a foreign country that has killed as much as third of the population. The place is East Timor, the killers - the government and the army of Indonesia.

—Anthony Lewis

In most countries of South East Asia, the end of the World War II signaled the end of colonial rule. The fact remains that it was only after the war when decolonization actually began in this region. This new era ushered the great task of nation building with emphasis on the strengthening of newfound sovereignty and the defense of territorial integrity against the threat posed by the spread of communism during the Cold War. This unprecedented transformation from many years of foreign subjugation created new opportunities for the peoples of the new independent states to identify themselves with ethnic groups whose people share a distinctive and enduring collective identity based on a belief on common descent, shared experiences and cultural traits.¹ Over the years, ethnic groups have gained more awareness on significant issues involving collective advantages and disadvantages resulting from perceived or real systematic treatment from states and other groups of society. In the process of this social change, ethnic groups tend to assert their ethnic and communal identities giving rise to new episodes of ethnic conflicts, both on interstate and intrastate settings. Because of its deep rooted historical settings and cultural characteristics, such conflicts pose a big challenge in the identification and application of long term settlements.

The political assertion of ethnic and other communal identities that spawned new episodes of ethnic warfare during the 80s and early 90s will continue, for two reasons. The politics of identity are based most fundamentally on persistent grievances about inequalities and past wrongs, conditions that are part of the heritage of most minorities in most countries. Moreover, movements based on identity have succeeded often enough in recent years to justify emulation and repetition.²

The Kosovo and the East Timor cases, which are the most recent examples of the civil strife, have become precedent cases of such conflict. The East Timor case, with its unique historical setting and features certainly provides insights on how this particular conflict was finally resolved. These insights however may not be applicable to resolve other conflicts with its own distinct peculiarities. The long and costly struggle of the people of East Timor for self determination had been systematically suppressed by the interplay of the various issues and interests of political groups and states until the UN finally interceded. For the leaders of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), a Muslim group in the Southern Philippines advocating the independence of Mindanao, the birth of East Timor as the world's newest nation may seem to provide encouragement to their aspiration.³

Towards shedding more light on the many aspects of the issue, the intent of this paper is to find out the historical background and unique characteristics of the East Timor independence movement as a precedent case vis-à-vis, the resolution of the Mindanao conflict.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

The luck of the East Timorese is to be born in tears,
to live in tears, and die in tears...

—James Dunn

EAST TIMOR

The island of Timor, a Malay word for "Orient", lies about 500 kilometers northwest of Darwin in Australia's Northern Territory. It is 457 kilometers long and 90 kilometers at its widest point. It forms a part of the chain of islands that make up the Indonesian archipelago.⁴ East Timor is roughly half of the island of Timor. It has a rugged terrain owing to the mountainous character of the land. Besides the thick tropical vegetation cover of the mountains, valuable spices like cloves, mace, nutmeg, and aromatic sandal wood are among the islands most valuable resources.⁵ These resources were among those which attracted Portuguese colonialism since the 16th century. East Timor's population is mainly indigenous, except for a few racial admixtures of African ancestry. The indigenous population is divided into four major divisions, which is distributed as follows: Melanesoids, 7.5 percent; Vedo-Australoids, 13 percent; Deutero-Malays, 19.3 percent; and Proto-Malays, 60 percent.⁶ This distribution accounts

for the wide variety of physical features which range from the shorter and darker skinned people on the western interior to the taller and fairer skinned on the eastern coast. Such ethnic heterogeneity of the population⁷ is further enhanced by a small *mestizo* group resulting from intermarriages between the indigenous population and the Portuguese from Goa, Africans from Portugal's five colonies in Africa and Yemen, and Chinese traders.

PORTUGUESE COLONIZATION

Two years after the fall of Malacca, the Portuguese occupied the island of Timor in 1513 to serve as a colonial outpost. Palpable Portuguese presence came only in 1566 with the arrival of the Portuguese Dominicans. Thereafter, Portuguese sovereignty was challenged by the Dutch for 347 years, until the island was divided into two in 1913. East Timor was placed under the Portuguese and West Timor under the Dutch. In the last score of the 18th century, Portuguese rule was resisted for seventeen years by the East Timorese led by Dom Boaventura, who succeeded in seizing the governor's palace and established a government in central Manufani region.⁸ The rebellion was eventually crushed by government troops to the toll of 3,000 rebel prisoners and thousands of casualties. During WW II and despite Portugal's declaration of neutrality, Japan invaded East Timor as a strategic linkage in her drive to acquire the Dutch East Indies territory. To prevent the Japanese advance to Australia from Timor, the occupation forces met stiff resistance from joint Australian and Dutch forces under the Allied Command in the Pacific. After the war, The Netherlands granted Indonesia her independence in 1949 and ceded West Timor to the latter. On the other hand, Australia, The Netherlands and the rest of the Allied forces handed East Timor back to Portugal under the fascist Salazar regime. Since the early 1950s, the UN exerted pressure on Portugal to lay down the ground works for decolonization of its overseas territories. Rather than acceding to the UN, Portugal opted instead for a federal framework whereby the former colonies were integrated into Portugal as "overseas territories".⁹ As this did not satisfy nationalist ambitions for independence, Portugal soon faced opposition and costly battles against resistance forces in many of its colonies - East Timor for one. While the policy of "peaceful co-existence" was conceivably benevolent, Portugal was not intent on pursuing it to the letter for lack of pressure from the UN.

INDONESIAN INVASION

Portuguese rule in East Timor ended in the mid 1970s when the conservative Portuguese government was overthrown by a military revolt in Portugal as a result of the *Revolucao dos Cravos* or the Carnation Revolution. The collapse of the regime led to the emergence of indigenous political groups in East Timor. Among these were the anti-Indonesian FRETILIN and the pro-Indonesian APODETI. The confused political situation and the fear of an Indonesian takeover, forced the last Portuguese Governor of East Timor to abandon the capital town of Dili for the island of Atauro in August 1975. In the struggle among the political parties that ensued, the radical FRETILIN found itself in a de facto control of East Timor. Despite the cessation of hostilities among the guerrillas and repeated calls from the FRETILIN for an orderly transfer of power, Portugal turned a deaf ear.¹⁰

The time was most opportune for the Indonesian expansionist adventurism. The FRETILIN was pictured as a communist organization that threatened the spread of communism in the region. In September 1975, Indonesian troops conducted covert operations in East Timor to create the impression that instability existed from hostilities between warring guerrilla fronts.¹¹ Faced by repeated calls for aid from the FRETILIN, Portugal through its Foreign Minister Melo Atunnes, met with Indonesia's Adam Malik in Rome in November 1975. Planned follow-up talks did not materialize due to preconditions set by Indonesia that excluded the FRETILIN and the UN.¹² The FRETILIN, in its effort to prevent Indonesian aggression, ceased its guerrilla activities. Meanwhile, it declared the independence of East Timor which Portugal rejected. Indonesia on the other hand, had its allied political groups in East Timor - the Apodeti, UDT, Kota and Trabalhista sign the "Balibo Declaration of Integration". Although Portugal informed the UN about these developments, the UN barely responded until the ABRI invaded Dili on December 7, 1975.¹³ Indonesia through its military (ABRI) colluded with the militias and wrecked havoc in a scale and magnitude that horrified the world. The invasion, the guerrilla war for national liberation that ensued, and the gross violation of human rights committed by Indonesian military forces in its effort to crush the resistance were ignored for sometime by the international community of nations. As the rampage went out of control, peace and order collapsed making East Timor a nation in distress. The situation in East Timor worsened as Portugal failed to peacefully resolve the issue. For twenty four years, from the invasion until the victory of pro-independence forces in the August 1999 referendum, East Timor was a contested territory pitting the secessionist FRETILIN against the ABRI. The East Timor issue was not addressed due to the fear of many countries of straining their diplomatic relations with ASEAN powerhouse Indonesia. Finally in 1999 and by virtue of Security Council

Resolution Number 1264, the United Nations intervened by creating the United Nations Transition Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) and the multi-national peacekeeping force, the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET).

THE MINDANAO INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENTS

The movement for Mindanao independence from the Philippines started in 1968 with the founding of the Mindanao Independence Movement (MIM) by former Muslim politicians, Congressman Rashid Lukman, Senator Domocao Alonto and Governor Udtog Matalam. This movement was a reaction to the intra-class struggle among members of Filipino Christian and Muslim elite and was triggered by the massacre of Muslim recruits in Corregidor Island. The Muslim recruits were to compose the *Jabidah*, a special commando unit tasked to implement the aborted *OPLAN Merdeka*. This covert operations involved the infiltration of the *Jabidah* into Sabah and influence its residents who are mostly Filipino immigrants to secede from Malaysia and ultimately join the Philippines¹⁴. Dissatisfied with the MIM's slow pace of pursuing its goal, Dr. Nur Misuari, a former Professor of the University of the Philippines and some members of the MIM founded the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in 1971. From then on, the MNLF expanded its organization in Muslim dominated provinces of Mindanao and confronted the government in a guerilla war.

In 1973, the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) initiated the peaceful settlement to resolve the conflict in Mindanao. The GRP's approach was to provide the Filipino Muslims greater roles in the state of national affairs by agreeing to create among others an autonomous region in Mindanao. On December 26, 1976, the MNLF and the GRP signed the Tripoli Agreement which provided for the framework to attain an enduring peace and stability in Southern Philippines. This agreement was reached through the mediation by the Quadripartite Ministerial Commission¹⁵ under the auspices of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). It is significant to mention that the OIC did not support the MNLF's bid for independence but advocated autonomy for Filipino Muslims in Mindanao. This peace pact however did not produce the immediate desired results. For one, it led to the emergence of the MILF from disgruntled members of the MNLF led by Islam fundamentalist Hashim Salamat who did not favor autonomy as a settlement and decided to pursue the independence of Mindanao. On the other hand, the GRP and the MNLF had different views and perceptions on the implementation of the agreement. Misuari wanted outright autonomy for the whole Mindanao-Sulu-Palawan (Minsupala) region without the benefit of a plebiscite. The GRP wanted that the granting of

autonomy should be within the framework of the Philippine Constitution. Thus, the MNLF opted to continue to confront the government.

Talks for a negotiated settlement continued during the term of President Corazon C. Aquino. Informal negotiations were conducted with the MNLF in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia from September 1986 to January 1987. Misuari's refusal to agree for the holding of a plebiscite however stalled the negotiations. Despite this setback, President Aquino signed Republic Act Number 6734 on August 1, 1989 creating the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (AARM). After the holding of a plebiscite, four Muslim populated provinces of Mindanao, namely: Lanao del Sur; Maguindanao; Jolo; and Tawi-Tawi voted for inclusion under the ARMM. Nine other provinces which are predominantly Christian populated voted for exclusion. These are: Basilan; Davao del Sur; Lanao del Norte; Palawan; North Cotabato; South Cotabato; Sultan Kudarat; Zamboanga del Norte and Zamboanga del Sur.

Twenty years after the signing of the Tripoli Agreement during the administration of President Fidel V. Ramos, a negotiated settlement had been finally reached between the GRP and MNLF panels. This agreement, called the Jakarta Accord of August 30, 1996, was brokered by Indonesia with the participation of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) Ministerial Committee of Six and the Secretary General of the OIC.¹⁶ This settlement provided for the amendment of the R.A. No. 6734 creating the ARMM. It called for the holding of a new plebiscite scheduled on September 2000, but was rescheduled one year later, to finally determine which provinces in Mindanao are to be placed under the coverage of the ARMM. Moreover, the agreement provided for the establishment of the Southern Philippines Council of Peace and Development (SPCPD) and the Special Zone of Peace and Development (SZOPAD). A significant provision of the agreement is for the integration of 7,500 MNLF members into the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police. Misuari eventually ran for the position of a governor of the ARMM unopposed and became the Chairman of the SPCPD. Meanwhile, the MNLF kept its aspiration to establish an independent Islamic State in Mindanao. It also continued to confront government forces and commit acts of terrorism if only to gain international recognition and get the necessary support from the OIC, but with no apparent success.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EAST TIMOR EXPERIENCE

To many defense and security strategists in the military, conflict resolution equals "think tanks," and peace advocates alike, the East Timor case remains to be of significant interest for many reasons. One of these deserves particular mention. It showcases not only the first invasion in contemporary history of Southeast Asia but also the first successful struggle for self-determination in this part of the world. It relates to conflicts in the region like the Karens' struggle for independence in Myanmar and the Achenese' independence movement in Northern Sumatra in Indonesia.

As the Philippines is now confronting a similar situation in the Southern Philippines which is the subject of this study, a question may be posed: "Does the MILF's struggle merit the creation of a separate independent Islamic State in Mindanao?" In the face of such an issue, it is important to determine the distinguishing characteristics of the East Timor case vis-à-vis the situation in Southern Philippines. It is only by first drawing out the features unique to East Timor that lessons culled from it could have relevance to the MILF's struggle. Much as Indonesia tried to justify its claim over East Timor, historical events, provide inconvertible historical, cultural and political facts of the study.

HISTORICAL FACTORS

Indonesia's claim over East Timor has no historical basis. From pre-colonial times to the Indonesian invasion, East Timor was a distinct and separate region from Indonesian territory. East Timor was an overseas territory occupied by Portugal since 1513 until it was abandonment in 1975. This was never contested by Indonesia.¹⁷ East Timor was not a part of the territory ceded by Holland to Portugal in 1913 and in the process of nation-building thereafter, Indonesia never claimed it as a part of her territory.

In the case of the Southern Philippines, the Philippines has rightful claim over the Mindanao-Sulu-Palawan (Minsupala) region. The demarcation of the Philippine territory, was exactly in its entirety when it was ceded by Spain to the United States under the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898.¹⁸ Minsupala was already an integral part of the Philippines under Spain, where Spanish sovereignty was strongly established. All strategic points in Mindanao and Sulu were effectively under Spanish control including the provinces of Jolo, Zamboanga, Cotabato and Lanao.¹⁹ The strength of Spanish resolve was demonstrated by the fact that

Spain was able to crush numerous revolts in the region with dispatch.²⁰ The integration of the Muslims into the national body politic, which was partly an American achievement, contradicts what the MILF claims that the Muslims were never conquered and the region was never a part of the Philippines during the colonial times. The different constitutions of the Philippine Republic, from the 1899 Malolos Constitution to the 1987 Constitution of 1987, show that the region is an indivisible part of Philippine territory.²¹

CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS FACTORS

By all ethno-national indications, the East Timorese are people distinct from the Indonesians. They are heterogeneous with varying physical traits derived from different racial stocks. There are Melanesoids, Vedo-Australoids, Deutero-Malays and Proto-Malays.²² They are so unlike the Indonesians who are predominantly of the Malayo-Polynesian stock. The East Timorese speak Tetum,²³ an indigenous language which is entirely different from Bahasa, the national language of Indonesia. By language alone, which is used as a universal index in the determination of ethno-national identity, East Timor is a nation culturally unrelated to Indonesia. As a result of Portuguese colonialism, some East Timorese are Catholics and others are animists while the emergent East Timor national culture is a mosaic of indigenous and Catholic belief. Significantly, Indonesia is known today as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world. East Timor is predominantly Timorese in population and did not have a significant Indonesian population until the invasion. The East Timorese's claim to a homeland is demographically incontestable, with every vast area of the land inhabited predominantly by indigenous Timorese people. It does not have the complications posed by the juxtaposition of peoples other than their own. As a homeland, Timorese actual occupation of the land is solid, compact, unfractured and unchallenged by overlapping claims of other groups like the Indonesians. All these indicate that Indonesia never had a cultural and religious influence over the East Timor society.

In Southern Philippines, the thirteen Muslim ethno-linguistic groups share so many traits with the rest of the Filipinos, both in physique and culture. Filipino Muslims and Christians alike descended not only from a common Austronesian (formerly Malayo-Polynesian) racial stock but also evolved a culture from the same ancient cultural base.²⁴ This explains the wide distribution of common and similar cultural traits throughout the country, not the least of which are language traits.²⁵ For example, the language of a Muslim group, the Kalibugans, is basically Subanon, which is Malay and a form of ancient Visayan.²⁶ The Visayan dialect is widely spoken by Filipino Christians in many islands of the central region of the country.

POLITICAL FACTORS

The East Timorese determination was a united front post-colonial struggle for independence. East Timorese aspiration for independence was originally an anti-colonial struggle against Portuguese rule.²⁷ From 1974 to 1975 prior to the Indonesian invasion, East Timor was on the process of decolonization,²⁸ a situation analogous to a republic on the throes of birth, which the invasion thwarted with the greatest harm. The invasion and the attempted integration of East Timor as Indonesia's 27th province, rather than diminish the will for independence, only added the much needed impetus for separatism.²⁹ Because of the invasion, the resistance was converted from an anti-colonial struggle to a post-colonial one.³⁰ The deep anti-colonial roots of the struggle have not only given greater strength and motivation to post colonial resistance but also imbued it with a clear political goal - self-determination. The issue against Indonesian rule was neither integration nor development or even the more specific issues like government neglect, social inequity, political disenfranchisement or special treatment,³¹ but independence - the self-defining trait of the East Timorese nation at war, against which anything less was unacceptable. The resistance was concertedly sustained and determinedly pursued consistent in its goal of independence.

The concept of secession admits conquest, which runs counter to the claims of the MILF that they were never conquered. While Muslim revolts indeed occurred from the 15th century up to the turn of the 20th century, these were anti-colonial resistance movements and were neither concerted nor consistently sustained. During the Spanish occupation of the Philippines for example, the three major Muslim groups, namely: the Joloanos; Maguindanaos; and Maranaos, resisted the colonial rule as tribes at different time intervals. If ever revolts occurred simultaneously, these were never planned and had no semblance of unity under a common leadership.³² At the turn of the twentieth century, the American colonizers capitalized on the Muslim's lack of unity by dealing with the resistance separately with success. To address the Joloanos, the Bates Treaty was signed by Sultan Jamalul Kiram of Sulu.³³ The American volunteer forces crushed Muslim resistance in Lanao and they separately neutralized Datu Piang in Maguindanao.³⁴ Under the Americans, the Muslim apprehension of a greater Christian influence in national affairs, caused some of their leaders to resist the gradual Filipinization of the colonial bureaucracy. For fear of the eventual dominance of the Christians in an independent Philippines, many Muslims wanted to remain as American subjects and Mindanao is made a US state.³⁵

These events illustrate that the Muslim resistance movement in Mindanao does not only lack unity, but also lacks the consistency of purpose. Its political goal, for example, was rather uncertain - swinging from independence to autonomy and back, depending on the attendant circumstances and the affiliation of the leadership at the helm. From the late 1960s until the first half of the 1970s, the MNLF fought a war of independence, but abandoned the cause for autonomy following the Tripoli Agreement on December 26, 1976. Dissatisfaction with the Tripoli Agreement as implemented by President Marcos through a constitutional process caused the MNLF under Nur Misuari to revert back to the cause for independence.³⁶ The MNLF again refused political settlement during the Aquino administration, even as the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) was established.

Most parts of Mindanao where the MILF intends to establish an independent Islamic state is predominantly Christian populated and with significant tribal Filipino inhabitants. Of the fourteen provinces that the MILF tries to claim, the Muslims are dominant only in four, namely, Tawi-Tawi and Jolo in Western Mindanao and Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur in Central Mindanao. The demand for independence covering a territory of fourteen provinces and the contemplated rule of the minority group over the majority is politically unsound and not viable.

CONCLUSION

The lessons that could be gained from the East Timor experience are many. Prudence requires a more cautious attempt at drawing lessons from East Timor by way of a comparison with the situation in Mindanao. Valuable lessons that can be derived from the East Timor experience may have relevance to the conflict in Mindanao or none at all. Three significant lessons have been derived in this study.

First, the East Timorese secession movement from Indonesia was a reaction to Indonesian invasion. The invasion in 1975 aborted East Timor independence from Portugal. Consequently, the secessionist resistance under the FRETILIN which later united with the UDT against Indonesia was in effect, a continuation of the unfinished task of achieving independence. There were clear strategic interests for the invasion and anticipated economic benefits from the annexation. East Timor is believed to hold a large deposit of oil in Southeast Asia, which a consortium of Indonesians and Australians hoped to exploit. The vast lands could also be tapped for export crops like coffee and coconut by the Indonesian elite. The suppression of the resistance in East Timor through total war proved costly. Initial social and

economic programs involved the diversion of resources into basic services like education, health, water, transportation and communication, as well as agricultural development. The cost of maintaining East Timor was far greater than the expected benefits to the Indonesian government. Had Indonesia desisted from invading East Timor and respected the East Timorese's will for self-determination instead, she would have been spared of the cost of maintaining the territory.

The experience draws some parallels with the Philippine Revolution in 1898. After the declaration of Philippine independence on June 12, 1898 by Filipino nationalist General Emilio Aguinaldo and with victory from Spain in view, the Americans stepped in. By virtue of the Treaty of Paris of 1898, the US annexed the Philippines and occupied the country for almost half a century. However, the East Timor case does not draw parallels with the MILF secessionist movement because of the following reasons:

- a. The clamor of the MILF for independence is not a reaction to an invasion but a calculated act to prevent the smooth and successful implementation of the Jakarta Accord for which the MILF is not a party of interest.
- b. The MILF's efforts are aimed to disrupt the holding of a plebiscite where Filipino Muslims and Christians in the fourteen provinces of Mindanao will decide whether they would prefer to be under the ARMM or not.
- c. The conflict between the GRP and the MILF is not an invasion by the former, but an assertion of Philippine sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Second, repression of a secessionism by the military alone is, at best, a temporary solution which raises the issue of genocide and human rights. The gross human rights violation in East Timor was a result of an "all-out-war" policy of Indonesia in an attempt to crush the independence movement. It was the deadly result of the combination of the authoritarian nature of Indonesian politics, the dominant influence of the military in the Indonesian Parliament and the anti-integration sentiments in Indonesia, particularly in the military.³⁷ More than anything, it was the issue on human rights that brought greater awareness of the situation in East Timor. This began after the FRETILIN had established a radio link-up with Northern Australia during the peace process in 1985.³⁸ Mass murders, like the Dili and Santa Cruz massacres which were among the bloodiest, made East Timor the focus of the international community. The 1980 *Operasi Keamanan*,³⁹ the largest mopping up operation against FRETILIN guerrillas and their families including women and children was a military success but also had the effect of

broadening the mass base of the resistance. The magnitude and scale of annihilation in twenty-four years significantly decimated East Timor's population and was taken as proof of genocide. The last nine months before the August 1999 referendum was the most gruesome and macabre as militiamen went on a rampage. An independent fact finding mission by the Amnesty International, for example, painted a bad picture of the ABRI.⁴⁰

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has yet to be accused for gross human rights violations by the community of nations and international institutions and NGOs. This is due in part to the cautious means by which AFP operations against the MILF were conducted, the sensitivity of the Philippine government to public opinion,⁴¹ and more importantly, the existence of a free media.⁴² A civilian leader at the helm of the Department of National Defense who ordered the strict observance of the rules of war⁴³ also ensured that "civilian supremacy over the military" was always upheld. While there were indeed isolated cases of human rights violations in Mindanao, these were in no scale closer to that in East Timor and expeditiously dealt with accordingly by the AFP justice system and the Philippine Commission on Human Rights. Much as the MILF would want to use these cases as propaganda issues against the GRP, actual conditions have not warranted international indignation, except for the OIC's call for a truce.⁴⁴

Third, secessionism could be avoided through a negotiated political settlement with the participation and consent of the parties involved within a comprehensive peace agenda. The Indonesian policy towards East Timor was assimilationist and integrationist.⁴⁵ It was premised on the conviction that the East Timorese wanted to be part of the Indonesian nation. The Indonesians believed that an improvement of their quality of life of the East Timorese would engender loyalty. The appointment of a Governor for East Timor, the education of the youth in Indonesian colleges and universities, the appointment of qualified Timorese to government positions, were among the steps towards integration. This policy of benevolence however was met with stiff resistance and rejection among Indonesians. The East Timorese on the other hand, including those exposed to Indonesian culture remained loyal to their Timorese ethno-national beliefs. Development projects aimed at bringing to the masses better education, public health, potable water and the laying down of communication and transportation infrastructures and services did not diminish the aspiration for independence.⁴⁶

In the Philippines, an assimilationist policy was resorted to by the Spaniards through the creation of Christian communities, whose progress would encourage acceptance of Spanish sovereignty and openness to Hispanization.⁴⁷ On their part, the Americans enunciated an assimilationist and integrationist policy by paving the way for the rise of the Muslim elite in the

colonial bureaucracy. Compulsory primary education, improvement in public health and the breaking down of walls of isolation through an efficient communication and transportation systems hastened the integration of the Muslims into the national body politic.⁴⁸ During the later years of American occupation, their program included the organization of the government bureaucracy and preparing the Filipinos for public governance and the eventual granting of independence. The Philippines, learning from both the Spanish and American policies, combined assimilationist and integrationist policies. From the Commonwealth years in the mid 1930s to 1976, the government's policy was remarkable for its treatment of the Muslim Filipinos fairly without any special treatment.⁴⁹ During the early part of the Mindanao conflict, President Ferdinand E. Marcos recognized the need for a peaceful negotiated settlement of the conflict through the mediation of Muslim countries under the OIC. On December 26, 1976, the Tripoli Agreement between the GRP and the MNLF was signed to provide the framework of a regional autonomous government to attain lasting peace and stability in Mindanao. President Corazon C. Aquino on the other hand institutionalized the ARRM in June 1989 to provide Filipino Muslims greater roles in national affairs and governance. On August 25, 1993, President Fidel V. Ramos issued Executive Order No. 125, defining the government peace efforts. The comprehensive peace process include the following three major underlying principles:

- a. The comprehensive process should be community-based, reflecting the sentiments, values and principles important to the Filipinos. Thus, it shall not be defined by government alone nor by the contending parties only but by all Filipinos in the community.
- b. A comprehensive peace process aims to forge a new social compact for a just equitable, humane and pluralistic society. It seeks to establish a genuinely pluralistic political society whose individuals or groups are free to engage in peaceful competition for predominance of their individual programs without fear, through the exercise of rights and liberties guaranteed by the constitution and where they may compete for political power through an electoral system that is free, fair and honest.
- c. A comprehensive peace process seeks a principled and peaceful resolution of the internal armed conflicts with neither blame nor surrender but with dignity for all concerned.

Finally on August 30, 1996, the Jakarta Accord had been agreed upon by the GRP and MNLF panels. This accord provided not only for the implementation of the ARMM but also

established the SPCPD and the SZOPAD. A feature of this agreement is the integration of 7,500 MNLF members into the AFP and the Philippine National Police. Misuari became the governor of the ARMM and chaired the SPCPD.

To the MILF, it has two options – whether it will accept and participate in the autonomous government of Mindanao along the Philippine Government's underlying principles of a comprehensive peace or continue its aspiration to establish a separate Islamic State in Mindanao. If it chooses the second option, the MILF will certainly not get the support and sympathy of the OIC composed of the Muslim countries in the world and the members of the international community. Neither will its aspiration prosper over time because the majority of Muslim Filipinos have embraced the principle of integration and plurality in the Philippine society.

WORD COUNT = 5,416

ENDNOTES

¹ Gurr, Ted Robert, Peoples Versus States, (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2000), 4.

² Ibid., XIV

³ Marites Danguilan Vitug and Glenda M. Gloria, Under the Crescent Moon: Rebellion in Mindanao (Quezon City: Philippines, 2000), 302.

⁴ Sonny Inbaraj, East Timor: Blood & Tears (Chiang Mae: Silkworm Books, 1995), 1.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ George J. Aditjondro, In the Shadow of Mount Ramelau - The Impact of the occupation of East Timor (Leiden: Indonesian Documentation and Information Center, 1995), 30.

⁷ Shephard Norman, Human Rights in East Timor - Hearings in the House Subcommittee on International Organizations, US House of representatives, Washington DC, June -July 1977, cited in Sonny Inbaraj, East Timor (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1995), p. 3.

⁸ Jose Ramos Horta, Funu - The Unfinished Saga of East Timor (New Jersey: Red Sea Press, 1987), 32.

⁹ John Taylor, Indonesia's Forgotten War: The Hidden Story of East Timor (London: Zed Books, 1984), 18.

¹⁰ Carmel Budiardjo and Liem Soei Liong, The War Against East Timor (London: Zed Books, 1984), 6.

¹¹ Geoffrey Gunn, A Critical View of Western Journalism and Scholarship on East Timor (Manila: Journal of Contemporary Publishers, 1994), 99.

¹² Inbaraj, East Timor, 42.

¹³ Gunn, Critical View of Western Journalism, 105.

¹⁴ Danguilan, Under the Crescent Moon, 7.

¹⁵ The member countries of the Quadripartite Commission were Libya, Saudi Arabia, Senegal and Somalia, Appendix A: "Tripoli Agreement" in Jimmy Baculit, Muslim Rebellion in the Southern Philippines, Mindanao Forum, 10/1 (June 1995), 37.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ See for example, Sonny Inbaraj, East Timor: Blood and Tears in ASEAN, Preface by Walden Bello (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1995), 1-2.

¹⁸ Peter Gordon Gowing, Mandate in Moroland: The American Government of Muslim Filipinos, 1899-1920 (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1977), 14-15.

¹⁹On Spanish success in Mindanao in the second half of the 19th century and progress in *Hispanization*, see Jesuit Missionary Letters from Mindanao, ed., trans. and annotated by Jose S. Arcilla, S.J., 3 vols. The first two volumes, The Rio Grande Mission and the Zamboanga-Basilan-Jolo Mission respectively, were published in Quezon City by the Archives of the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus in 1990-1993. The third volume, the Davao Mission, was published in Quezon City by the University of the Philippines, Center for Integrative and Development Studies, the National Historical Institute, the University of the Philippines Press in cooperation with the Archives of the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus in 1998.

²⁰See for example, Rolando C. Esteban, "Lanao During the Revolution, 1896-1898", *Ongangn* 1/2 (January-June 1999).

²¹The Philippines had three ratified constitutions. The first was the Malolos Constitution (1899), the Commonwealth Constitution (1935) and the 1987 Constitution. The 1973 Constitution was not ratified.

²²George J. Aditjondro, In the Shadow of Mount Ramelau -The Impact of the Occupation of East Timor (Leiden: Indonesian Documentation and Information Center, 1994), 30.

²³Inbaraj, East Timor, 114.

²⁴Felipe Landa Jocano, Philippine Pre-history (Quezon City: University of the Philippines, Philippine Center for Advanced Studies, 1973).

²⁵Teodoro Llamzon, Handbook of Philippine Language Groups (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1978).

²⁶Due to variations in Philippine orthography, Kalibugan is also spelled Kolibugan see Rolando C. Esteban, "The Kalibugans: The making of a Moro Tribe: An Inquiry into the Origin of the Kalibugans, and Indigenous Moro Group in Zamboanga Peninsula", paper in *History 327 - Ethnohistory*, submitted to Leslie E. Bauzon, 2nd Sem., A.Y. 1999-2000, University of the Philippines, Quezon City, pp. 72-74.

²⁷Inbaraj, East Timor, pp. 20-24.

²⁸Gerry van Kline, "The Contemporary Roots of East Timorese Resistance and the prospects for Peace", *The East Timor Project - Volume I, An Anthology: Essays on the Political Economy of East Timor*, ed. by Jao Mariano Sousa Saldanha, Series ed. Paul Webb, Monograph Series No. 3/95, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Northern Territory University, 1995, 1.

²⁹Geoffrey C. Gunn, "A Critical View of Western Journalism and Scholarship on East Timor", *Journal of Contemporary Publishers*, Manila (1994), 142.

³⁰On the anti-post-colonial traits of the resistance, see example Barbedo de Magalhaes, *East Timor - Indonesian Occupation and Genocide* (Oporto: President's Office, Oporto University, 1992), 40.

³¹From the Indonesian perspective, the development of East Timor would gradually wither secessionism, prompting the infusion of funds to the delivery of basic services and agriculture in East Timor. Much has been said and done about this prior to the turn of events that led to the 1999 referendum, see for example Rawdon Dalrymple, "Developing East Timor in the Indonesian Context: An Australian Perspective", Hadi Soesastro, "East Timor's Development Seen From Jakarta: Towards "Special Treatment of a Second Kind", and Armindo Maia, "Rural Development in East Timor: Present and Future, in *The East Timor Project - Volume I*, pp., 28-39, 40-48, 63-69, respectively.

³²Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland*, 1-25.

³³"Agreement Between General John C. Bates, United States Army, and the Sultan of Sulu, Together with Certain Sulu Chiefs, Signed at Jolo, August 20, 1899, from W. Cameron Forbes, *The Philippine Islands*, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin & Company, 1928), vol. 2, 470-471.

³⁴"Unpublished Memoirs (Unpublished, Draft)", John J. Pershing Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

³⁵Manuel Luis Quezon III, "Mindanao Matters: Tracing the Roots of Conflict", *Today*, 10 June 2000,

³⁶Luis Teodoro, "Mindanao; False Hopes and True Lies", *Today*, 10 June 2000, p. 8.

³⁷Inbaraj, *East Timor*, 57-83; Max Lane, "The East Timor in Indonesia", *The East Timor Project - Volume I*, 14-16.

³⁸Inbaraj, *East Timor*, 79.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 72-73.

⁴⁰"Amnesty Doubts Indonesian Report on Dili Massacre" *Bangkok Post*, 28 December 1991, cited in *Ibid.*, p. 98.

⁴¹See for example, Joel San Pablo, Manny B. Marimay and Ramil Bajo, "Troops to Spare Abubakar", *The Manila Times*, 13 June 2000, 1.

⁴²The outcomes of the campaigns are daily fare in Philippine newspapers. See for example Jose L. Guevarra's column, "Point of Order", *Manila Bulletin*, 7 May 2000, p. 10.

⁴³Charmaine C. Deogracias, Manny B. Marinay, Joel San Juan and Mirasol Ng-Gadil, "End War, OIC Urges RP", *The Manila Times*, 9 June 2000, p. 1.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*

⁴⁵Van Klinken, "The Contemporary Roots of East Timorese Resistance", *The East Timor Project - Volume I*, 7; Inbaraj, *East Timor*, 169-170.

⁴⁶See for example, de Sousa Saldanha, "The State of the Economy of East Timor"; Soesastro, "East Timor's Economic Development Seen from Jakarta", The East Timor Project - Volume I, pp. 40-48, 70-91, respectively.

⁴⁷See for example, Jesuit Missionary Letters from Mindanao, vols., 1-3.

⁴⁸The best source on the matter is Gowing, Mandate in Moroland.

⁴⁹Quezon III, Today, 10 June 2000, p.9.

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