

MUSLIM INSURGENCY IN MINDANAO, PHILIPPINES

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The opinion and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statements).

ABSTRACT

MUSLIM INSURGENCY IN MINDANAO, PHILIPPINES, by LTC Alan R. Luga, 137 pages.

This study deals with the historical evolution of the Muslim uprising in Mindanao and how the present Muslim secessionist groups; the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), evolved from this problem which started way back in the sixteenth century. It also discusses the peace initiatives of the Philippine government in trying to put a solution and an end to this problem. It aims to seek answers to the following questions: (1) How the three major threat groups historically evolved? (2) What are the reasons behind their armed struggle and quest for secession? (3) What measures were done and are still being done by the Philippine government to solve the Muslim insurgency problem?

The research indicates that the causes of the Muslim problem are deep rooted in the Philippines colonial past while the immediate and current causes are traced to government neglect and abuses, corrupt local/traditional Muslim leaders, agrarian discontent and land disputes and, the resurgence of the Islamic religion worldwide.

The study reveals that the Philippine government is sincere in finding a solution to the problem for they have been initiating peace negotiations with the insurgents. The negotiations or peace talks the government participated in were always along the provisions of the Tripoli Agreement and within Philippine constitutional bounds.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

This study deals with the historical evolution of the Muslim uprising in Mindanao and how the present Muslim secessionist groups evolved from these decades long problems. Mindanao today is still a zone of conflict as it was during the sixteenth century. Muslim secessionist groups at present continue to rebel against the Philippine government under the banner of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). This thesis aims to answer the following specific questions:

1. How the three major threat groups historically evolved?
2. What are the reasons behind their armed struggle and quest for secession?
3. What measures were done and are still being done by the Philippine government to solve the Muslim insurgency problem?

For more than three centuries dating back as far as 1521 the Spanish attempted to subjugate the Muslims in Mindanao. The Americans continued this subjugation when Spain included Mindanao in the transfer of sovereignty to the United States in 1898 by virtue of the Treaty of Paris. Both attempts in subjugation were in vain. In 1946, when the Americans granted independence to the Philippines, there was a strong objection by the Muslims in Mindanao for the inclusion of Mindanao into the Republic of the Philippines. Since then the Muslim's quest for secession from the Philippines and rebellion against the Philippine government has continued.

Mindanao, the Sulu Archipelago, and Palawan have been the traditional indigenous territory to thirteen Muslim ethnologist groups with the Maguindanaoans, the Maranaws, and the Tausugs as the most numerous and more influential in both local and national politics in present times. Prior to the arrival of the Spaniards in the sixteenth century, these groups already had their own distinct cultural, social, and political institutions. Importantly, they were free to run their own lives.

For several centuries, Mindanao and the rest of the Philippines were, in effect, separate countries. Islam, which was introduced in 1460, developed the various communities in Mindanao into sultanates and principalities while the other Filipino tribes in Luzon and the Visayas were scattered and unconsolidated. These sultanates and principalities participated in an expansive maritime network of trade with Southeast Asia, India, Japan, and China. Jolo and Maguindanao served as international trading ports, frequented by Arabs, Chinese, and other Asian traders. Diplomatic relations linking these sultanates and principalities with Spain, France, the Netherlands, and Britain occurred during the pre-Spanish period.

When the Spanish colonialists extended their military and missionary conquests to Mindanao and Sulu the Muslims resisted, resulting to what historians refer to as the “Moro Wars.” For more than three hundred years the expeditions launched by Spain against the Muslim states to conquer them ended without any success. During the long years of Spanish colonization, the lands of Mindanao and Sulu were not covered by the Spanish agrarian system and its other Spanish land tenurial arrangements in the Visayas and Mindanao.

The signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1898 arrogated to the American colonial government the control and the ownership of all lands in the Philippine archipelago. Thus, the Americans inherited from Spain the Moro problem. Like its predecessor, the United States policy was to annex Mindanao and Sulu to the political entity. The Philippine colonial government passed laws concretizing American control in the country, especially with regards to land ownership.¹

Some of these laws were the following: the Land Registration Act of 1902, the Philippine Bill of 1902, Public Land Act of 1903, and the policies implementing resettlement programs of Christianized Filipinos to areas in Mindanao once dominated by the Islamized natives. Such policies started to take effect in 1913.²

When some sultans entered into negotiations with the Americans, the Muslim masses opposed the talks because they were perceived as a prelude to capitulation. They staged fierce attacks from their mountainous and forested enclaves against American forces and military installations. Individual Muslims sometimes showed their extreme defiance to American rule by staging “juramentado” attacks against the Americans when they perceived that their sultans and datus had abandoned the jihad against the American infidels.

The strong feeling among the Muslims that they constitute a distinct and separate nation from the Philippine nationhood and that the Philippine government is a colonial government engendered a strong desire for freedom and independence resulting in the organization of the resistance movement in the 1960s. Some Muslim political leaders, students from Mindanao and Sulu studying in Cairo, and Muslim students in Manila,

although initially they worked separately, clandestinely planned and organized the movement.

Although the Moro resistance was already widely established during and immediately after colonial rule, it was not until the early 1970's that the Moro revolutionary movements started to formalize.

The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) surfaced as the very first revolutionary group among young Muslim radicals. Its emergence came in the wake of a growing Islamic consciousness among Philippine Muslims. The MNLF was in the forefront of the separatist movement among the Moros. It was representing the general sentiments among the Moros of national oppression in the hands of a Christian-dominated Philippine government.³

A peace breakthrough came after five years of bloody confrontations with the signing of the now famous Tripoli Agreement in December 1976. Among other things, the agreement provided for an establishment of an autonomous region in thirteen provinces in Mindanao and Sulu. In April 1977, a referendum was held to ask the voters in the thirteen provinces of Mindanao whether they would opt to be organized into a single autonomous government. Three of these provinces in Region 4 and 11, Davao del Sur, South Cotabato, and Palawan refused to join the referendum and those who voted in the nine other provinces in Regions 9 and 11 rejected the proposal and would rather like to remain in their respective regions. In effect two autonomous regions were established that of Region 9 and 11.⁴

While the two autonomous regions were slowly put in place in Zamboanga and Cotabato cities, the MNLF leadership was seriously rocked by disputes allegedly due to

the inter-ethnic differences among its top officials. As a result of such divisions, the MNLF broke into different factions. In 1979, Ustadz Hashim Salamat, a Maguindanaoan and former vice-chairman of the MNLF, formed the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

The ascendancy of Corazon Aquino to the presidency in 1986 marked a new round of government-Moro revolutionary interactions. Aquino decided to talk directly with Nur Misuari in Jolo. Subsequently, the new round of negotiations led to the establishment of a new structure of another form of autonomous government, the autonomous region in Muslim Mindanao comprising the provinces of Lanao del sur, Maguindanao, Sulu, Tawi-tawi, and the lone city of Marawi.⁵

When General Fidel V. Ramos assumed the presidency, the painstaking negotiation process with the MNLF was continued. Eventually both peace panels reached a historic and landmark peace agreement on 2 September 1996 when they mutually signed the government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP)-MNLF peace accord in Malacanang Palace. The secretary general of the organization of Islamic conference and other member countries witnessed this meaningful occasion.

It was also during President Ramos' incumbency that the exploratory talks with the MILF began. The incumbent president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is now pursuing the same peace talks.

The advent of the 1990s witnessed the establishment of another Muslim armed group known as the Al Harakat al Islamiya (AHAI), commonly known as the Abu Sayyaf Group (bearer of the sword) led by Ustadz Abdurajak Abubakar Janjalani, a former MNLF member who was indoctrinated in Islamic extremism. When the Soviet-Afghan

war erupted in the early 1980s, Janjalani joined the Third International Islamic Brigade to help the Afghan mujahideen repel the Soviet invaders. It was in that country where Janjalani was educated on the extremist side of Islam and on his return to Mindanao he organized his own group to fight for the Islamic cause patterned after the Shi'ite guerrillas in the Middle East. After the death of Janjalani in 1998 however, the ASG members became disgruntled and suffered a leadership vacuum. As an effect, its organization crumbled. Under Janjalani, the ASG has a central committee with different functional committees responsible for planning and formulating programs, and controlling and directing the activities of all sub-groups in its entire operational area (Basilan, Sulu, General Santos, Zamboanga peninsula including Palawan). At present, the ASG is a collection of various armed groups that have their own respective leaders. The formal organization disappeared and what are left are groups of bandits and criminals who are after money hiding behind jihad and the fight for an Islamic state. Because of this the government does not intend to have peace settlements with the group. Government forces, with some technical help from US Pacific Command forces, are now in pursuit of this band of terrorists.

Review of Related Literature

Lt. Gen. Ismael Villareal, a retired Philippine Army general who served most of his time in service in Mindanao, wrote a book titled *Conflict Resolution in Mindanao*. In this book he touched on the historical background of Muslim rebellion in the Philippines, the contemporary conflict environment in the area, the past conflict resolution strategies applied, and he proposed a conflict resolution of the Muslim problem from the twenty-first century. He analyzed why Muslims in Mindanao rejected the colonization of the

Spaniards and the Americans and why they continue to rebel against a government at the present time. He touched on the contemporary solutions made by the Philippine government to solve the problem and why these solutions continue to fail.

Mariano A. Dumia submitted a thesis titled, “The Moro National Liberation Front and the Organization of the Islamic Conference: Its Implications to National Security” to the National Defense College of the Philippines in 1991. The thesis tried to determine the root causes of the Muslim problem that gave rise to the MNLF struggle against the government. He discussed extensively how the Tripoli Agreement signed by the government and the MNLF came into being and how it was implemented. The thesis also answered how the OIC support the MNLF struggle against the Philippine government and how this cooperation affects national security. The paper gave a comprehensive historical account of the Muslim uprising in Mindanao. The paper was my main source of MNLF and Mindanao historical data.

A website of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, Morojihad.com extensively covered the history of the Muslim problem in Mindanao. It also discussed the history and origins of the MILF. The MILF ideology, objectives, and their means to achieve these objectives were also taken up. The rebellion as seen by the MILF Muslim rebels is manifested in this site. This website is as an MILF propaganda medium to gain international recognition. Accounts of armed conflicts with government forces were reported in this site are distorted from what actually happened and resulted to favor their cause.

Marites Danguilan and Glenda Gloria also wrote a book titled *Under the Crescent Moon: Rebellion in Mindanao*. The authors researched extensively the origins of the

Muslim war in the southern Philippines beginning with the unwritten Jabidah Massacre in 1960 to the signing of the Peace Accord with the MNLF in 1996 that brought some quiet in Mindanao. They wrote on the sources of conflict in Mindanao and retraced its path to the present. Also it touched how Mindanao, the Philippine government, and the rebels relate with Malaysia and other Muslim countries. The authors held several interviews before writing this book. It is one of the most reliable sources of information regarding the contemporary history of Muslim rebellion in Mindanao. The book does not however cover the conflicts of Muslim rebellion in Mindanao before the sixties.

John Harber, a student of the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, wrote a thesis titled “Conflict and Compromise in the Southern Philippines: The Case of Moro Identity in 1998.” The thesis examined the ethnic Moro conflict in the Southern Philippines. As a result of his research, he concluded that the conflict between Muslim Filipinos and the ruling governments, both colonial and independent, is not caused by religious or ethnic intolerance or difference. Rather, he thinks, it is the result of a historical politicization of Moro identity, when combined with the centralization processes of President Marcos, ignited a guerilla war that prevented economic growth and social stability. The analysis also suggests that the decentralization policies of the Ramos administration and the compromise between his administration and the Moro National Liberation Front may have fully resolved the conflict.

Samuel K. Tan, a Filipino author, wrote a fully documented and comprehensive history of the Muslim armed struggle starting from the American colonization of the Philippines to the early stage of the Mindanao conflict in 1972 in his book titled “The Filipino Muslim Armed Struggle 1900 to 1972.” The parents of the author were from

Mindanao and for this reason he presented authoritative explanations of the various issues in the armed conflict as well as the divisions and violence within the Muslim society.

There are many books about the history of Islam and the Muslim Filipinos in general but among the outstanding and more comprehensive ones are Cesar Adib Majul's *Muslim in the Philippines* (1973); Peter Gowings *Muslim Filipinos* (1979) and *Mandate in Moroland* (1983); and Peter Gowing and Robert Mc Amis *The Muslim Filipinos* (1974).

Aside from the foregoing publications, data on the study could be found in magazines, journals, and websites about Mindanao and intelligence and operational reports from the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Abu Sayyaf strategy and tactics were primarily sourced from military operational reports and studies.

Definition of Terms

Abu Sayyaf Group. Organized in the early 1990s by the late Abdurajak Abubakar Janjalani. This group also fights for the independence of Mindanao and patterned its cause after the Shi'ite guerillas in the Middle East. This group employs kidnap for ransom activities to finance its cause and they became more preoccupied with this criminality than the struggle for an independent state.

Bangsamoro. It means Moro people, how the present day Muslim Filipinos in Mindanao refer to themselves.

Datu. The Filipinos lived in settlements called barangays before the colonization of the Philippines by the Spaniards. As the unit of government, a barangay consisted from 30 to 100 families. It was headed by a *datu* and was independent from other groups.

Jihad. The Islamic idea of *jihad*, which is derived from the Arabic root meaning to strive or to make an effort, connotes a wide range of meanings, from an inward spiritual struggle to attain perfect faith to an outward material struggle to promote justice and the Islamic social system. Today it means the struggle to propagate the Islamic faith worldwide. The goal is to overthrow non-Islamic regimes that corrupt their societies and divert people from service to God.

Juramentado. Term given by the Americans to Islamized natives of Mindanao who were armed with simple bladed weapons and attacked American personnel since they were convinced they were unbelievers and trespassing in their world. Juramentado comes from the Spanish word jurar meaning to take an oath. It is akin to the English equivalent with the difference that it is done with conviction of righteousness in a belief. The oath to become a martyr is a degenerate form of the holy duty called jihad, to defend the home of Islam (dar ul-Islam), which promises heavenly reward for doing so. Death is of no consequence and is expected. To others it is simply a suicidal killing spree.

Mindanao. The Philippines is politically subdivided into three major island groups, Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao (see Appendix A for map of the Philippines). Mindanao is in the southern Philippines comprising the islands of Mindanao, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, and Palawan. The total land area is 96,438 square kilometers and contains twenty-three of the Philippines seventy-three provinces. About 20 percent of the total population of Mindanao are Muslim Filipinos.

Moros. First used by the Spaniards to refer to the Islamized natives in the Southern part of the Philippines. The fierceness of the resistance of the Islamized natives

of the southern Philippines reminded the Spaniards of the Moors of Morocco, hence the name Moros.

Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). The Muslim secessionist movement established in 1969 under the leadership of Nur Misuari. It aims to gain freedom and independence for the Bangsa Moro Republic through armed struggle against the Philippine government.

Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The Muslim secessionist movement established by Hashim Salamat in 1977. It openly continued the fight for the independence of Mindanao after the MNLF agreed to a peace agreement with the Philippine government. It aims to get the independence of Mindanao and run it as an Islamic state and government.

Organization of Islamic Conference. An organization of Islamic countries established in 1971 with the aims of promoting solidarity among member states; consolidating cooperation among member states in the economic, social-cultural, scientific, and other fields; endeavoring to eliminate racial segregation and discrimination and eradicate colonialism in all its forms; supporting international peace and security founded on justice; coordinating all efforts for the safeguarding of the holy places and support of the struggle of the people of Palestine; and strengthening the struggle of all Muslim people with a view to safeguarding their dignity, independence, and national rights.

Tripoli Agreement. An Agreement signed in 1976 between the Philippine Government and the MNLF in Tripoli, Libya. The agreement set forth the processes for

the implementation of the ceasefire between government and MNLF forces and for the establishment of autonomy in the thirteen provinces in the southern Philippines.

¹Ismael Villareal, *Conflict Resolution in Mindanao* (Mandaluyong City: Raintree Trading and Publishing, Inc., 1998). 4.

²*Ibid.*, 7.

³T. J. S. George, *Revolt in Mindanao* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1980), 84.

⁴Mariano A. Dumia, “The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference: Its Implications to National Security” (M.A. Thesis, National Defense College of the Philippines, 1991), 130.

⁵Joel David Steinberg, *The Philippines: A Singular and Plural Place* (Colorado: Westview Press), 175.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF MINDANAO

The Arrival of Islam in the Archipelago

Various types of people inhabited the Philippine archipelago long before the thirteenth century. They spoke many different languages and dialects, worshiped spirits, and were grouped into a large variety of regional social structures. Each grouping was essentially independent but when interaction did occur, so did war and conflicts. The primary causes of conflict were the same as those existing today: to grab land, resources, or anything else of economic value. Furthermore, each in-group disliked those who did not belong to their class, group, race, or who did not look or behave like them, or who did not have beliefs identical to theirs.¹

The earliest Muslims to reach the Philippines were the Arab traders who dominated the Red Sea-Indian Ocean-South China Sea trade route from the ninth to the eleventh centuries. They established their first foothold in Sulu and frequented the Borneo-China trade route via Sulu, Palawan, and Mai-i (Mindoro). Muslim missionaries from Malacca and Borneo also arrived in Sulu and Maguindanao to reinforce Islam among its followers and convert the non-Muslim inhabitants.²

Graves and tombstones of Muslim colonies dating in the late thirteenth-early fourteenth centuries were found in the southern portion of the Sulu archipelago indicating that Islam has been established in the area during this period. To be specific the tomb of Tuhan Magbalu, a foreign missionary who died in 1310 A.D., was found in Bud Datu, Jolo.³

By 1500 Islam was established throughout Sulu, and with no central government to resist the northward push of the sultans, Islam easily spread, and reached Manila by 1565. Islam was easily integrated into the islands' societies as the indigenous peoples were divided into barangays (group based upon kinship), and Muslims brought with them an organized political concept of territorial states ruled by rajas or sultans. The Muslim leaders exercised suzerainty over the village chiefs and, eventually, Arabic language, writing, culture, and government became a way of life in the archipelago.⁴

Thus, by the start of the sixteenth century, Sulu and Maguindanao were the leading centers of Islam from which it spread to the neighboring islands and settlements in the interior and coastal communities of Mindanao (see Appendix B for the map of Mindanao). The Sultanate of Sulu extended its powers over Basilan, Palawan, and some coastal settlements in Zamboanga and Borneo. The Sultanate of Maguindanao extended its influence over Mindanao. These sultanates consolidated their powers through military alliances and inter-marriages between and among the ruling families. Later, more trade and religious contacts and inter-marriages between royal families of these sultanates with those of Borneo and the Moluccas followed. In the last quarter of the sixteenth century, the Muslims of the Southern Philippines became aware of their relations with those from insular Malaysia. The sense of community with the rest of the Islamic world was likewise developed.⁵

The degree to which Islam and its tenets were accepted among the people is quite varied. Filipinos were divided by language, family, and tribal ties, and as such adopted Islam with varying degrees of enthusiasm and devotion. Muslim Filipinos have traditionally lacked any degree of solidarity beyond tribe or clan; even in modern times,

thirteen subgroups of Muslim Filipinos can be found in the southern islands. Because the clan and family identities are the strongest loyalties among the Moros, different clans and tribes frequently have gone to war against each other. The Moros have historically been fiercely proud of their separate identities, and conflict has been endemic for centuries.⁶ These tribal and clan loyalties had a two-pronged effect: first, Islam in the Philippines did not generate the same cultural and institutional sophistication found in other parts of the Muslim world. Second, the distinct tribal differences and absence of a shared ethnologic or religious identity ultimately would prevent Moro unity of effort against colonizers and the eventual independent government.⁷

Despite the tribal differences, the Islamization of Mindanao and Sulu resulted in an ideological bond among these groups of people in the region that led to the emergence of a new sense of ethnic identity that distinguishes the Muslim from the non-Muslim population. Islam emerged as a rallying religious, political, and historical force that enabled the Muslims to resist the onslaught of Spanish colonization and later American imperialism. Islam and its survival is still the underlying factor for the animosity between Muslim and Christian Filipinos.⁸

Spanish Colonization

Demands for the spices and other products of Southeast Asia by the Europeans and the Catholic Church's push for conversion in the fourteenth century led to worldwide competition for colonies and trading bases in Asia. When Portugal captured trading bases in the lower Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, and the Spice Islands, King Charles V of Spain also financed the expedition of Ferdinand Magellan in 1518. Magellan tried a westward approach to the Far East and promised to bring the king the wealth of the

Orient. In 1521 his expedition discovered islands in the Far East that became known as the Philippines. Magellan was later on killed by a Muslim chieftain named Lapu-lapu on one the islands named Mactan and only two of his original five ships returned to Spain.⁹

Spain neglected the islands discovered by Magellan until King Charles' son, Philip, assumed the throne in 1556. Philip was determined to stop Portuguese control of trade in the Orient, and in 1564 directed Spanish authorities in Mexico to return to the islands as part of a grand strategy to do this.¹⁰

The first permanent Spanish settlement that was made in the Philippine islands was made in Cebu by Miguel Lopez de Legaspi in 1565. When the Spaniards arrived in the Philippines in 1565 for their mercantilist and religious expansionism, Islam was already developed among the people of the Southern Philippines, particularly in the Sultanates of Sulu, Maguindanao, and Buayan and their respective areas of jurisdiction. In the Muslim settlements in Manila, Southern Luzon, and in the Visayan Islands, Islam was still in its early phase of development.

The Spaniards referred to the Muslims of Sulu, Mindanao, and Borneo as "Moros" while the non-Muslim inhabitants of the Philippines who were later converted to Christianity were called indios. The Moros called themselves "Muslim."¹¹

Through the sword and the cross, the Spaniards succeeded in colonizing Luzon and the Visayas islands and Christianizing the people, but their attempts to expand their conquest and implant the Christian faith on the Muslims of the Southern Philippines met with strong and bloody resistance from them at the very start. This series of "battles" fought between the Muslims and Spaniards aided by Christian Filipinos, which spanned for more than three centuries from 1569 to 1898, is popularly known as the Moro Wars.¹²

The Spaniards justified these “wars” as means to check Moro piracy and their constant raids on Christian settlements. The Moros, however, considered the “wars” as their defensive actions against Spanish invasion of their homeland. They fought back to preserve and maintain their independence, their religion, customs, traditions, and natural resources. The use of Christian Filipinos by the Spaniards in their military attempts to subjugate and Christianize the Muslims has caused the lingering animosity and conflict between Muslim and Christian Filipinos.¹³

The Spanish imperialistic and evangelistic thrusts in the Southern Philippines consequently brought about the necessity of unity among Muslim leaders to fight against the Spanish colonizers who threatened their common existence. The previously independent sultanates began to coordinate their actions against their common enemy through verbal agreements although they did not really attain lasting unity. Because of their ethnic differences and political rivalries, they often fought one another. But in the name of Islam, they had realized that they belong to the same “Islamic brotherhood.”

Thus, the “Moro Wars” were the results of the Spanish fanatical hatred of Islam in general and zeal to Christianize the Muslims. The ruins of many watch towers scattered along the coast of islands in the Visayas and Luzon from which lookouts scanned the horizon for the sails of marauding Moro vintas stand as mute testimony to the destructive Moro Wars that brought about so much suffering and destruction for both Moros and Christian Filipinos. The Spaniards forced the Christians to build ships and man the galleys and pay heavy taxes to finance Spanish military expeditions. Moreover, the Moros subjected thousands of Christians, including women and children, to unspeakable indignities while others were sold as slaves. On the other hand, the Spaniards, aided by

Christian Filipinos, plundered and burned Moro villages and at times hanged captives from trees.¹⁴

The earliest clash between the Spaniards and Christian Filipinos against the Muslim of Sulu and their Bornean allies occurred in 1569 near Cebu, which saw the defeat of the Muslims. This was followed by the conquest of Manila by Miguel Lopez de Legaspi in 1571. Brunei's trade activities in the Visayas and Mindanao as stopped and in 1578 Brunei itself was attacked by the Spaniards.¹⁵

The first Spanish military expedition to Mindanao and Sulu was sent in 1578 on the orders of Mindanao Governor Francisco de Sande. Captain Esteban Rodriquez de Figueroa, the commander of the expedition, was ordered to see to require Muslims to acknowledge Spanish sovereignty over their territories, stop Moro "piracy" against Spanish shipping, and end Moro "raids" on Christianized settlements in the Visayas and Luzon. He was also tasked to begin the Hispanization and Christianization of the Moros in line with the pattern followed with respect to other Filipino groups.¹⁶

Furthermore, Captain de Figueroa was ordered to arrest the preachers of Islam, destroy their mosques and punish the Moros as deemed necessary and take special care not to trust them. This Spanish policy on Christianization definitely is one of the root causes of the hostility and animosity between the Muslims and Spaniards and their Christian Filipino allies.¹⁷

Captain de Figueroa, who signed a contract with the Spanish government making him "governor" of Mindanao and dividing profits from the exploitation of the Island and booty from the natives before embarking on the expedition, was killed in an ambush in

Tampakan by the Muslims of Maguindanao on 25 April 1596. His men retreated to an island off Zamboanga which the Spaniards called La Cardera.

The early seventeenth century saw the conflict between Spaniards and the Sultanate of Maguindanao over the issue of whether the Visayan Islands should pay tribute to the Spaniards or to the sultanate. The Maguindanao raided the coastal settlements in the Visayas and captured large numbers of Visayans as slaves.

Spain was also determined to conquer the Sulu and Maguindanao Sultanates and establish Christian missions in the areas during this century. The task of Spanish Governor Corquera was three fold: to capture Sultan Qudarat of Maguindanao, to capture the main camp of the Sultan of Sulu, and to invade Brunei once again to secure Spanish sovereignty. The Spanish adopted the policy of depopulating the Muslim areas by burning settlements, fields, plantations, and enslaving Muslims for service in the galleys. Maguindanao fell to Spanish arms in 1637 and a year later Jolo was also conquered.¹⁸

In 1718 the Spaniards re-occupied and rebuilt their abandoned fort at Zamboanga. A combined Sulu-ilanon attack on Zamboanga in 1719 was repulsed and the Sulu Sultan Azim ud-Din allowed the Jesuits to establish a mission in Jolo. As a consequence, Azim ud-Din was deposed by his brother and fled to Manila where he was baptized in 1751. The British invasion and brief occupation of Manila in 1762 reduced Spanish power in the southern Philippines and offered a hiatus in the hostilities between the Spaniards and the Moros.¹⁹

In 1843 the French initiated the establishment of a naval base in Basilan while the British sought to review their trade agreement with Sulu. Spain was alarmed over the developments in the archipelago and on the pretext of containing “piracy” in Sulu,

attacked Jolo in 1851 and a treaty was sealed with the sultan. By 1860 Moro resistance to Spanish domination was lessened and the government of Mindanao was subsequently established allowing the expansion of Jesuit missionary work in the island. Sulu was again attacked in 1876 and 1878 and a treaty was signed with the Sulu sultan acknowledging Spanish sovereignty over his domain. By this time, the main concern of the Spaniards was not Christian evangelization but how to get the Muslims to recognize Spanish sovereignty and how to win their loyalty in the face of the threat posed by rival European powers in the region.²⁰

Thus, after 329 years of Spanish colonization and Christianization, all that the Spaniards won from the Moros was control over a few garrison towns in Moroland without extending its influence in the interior areas. They failed to subjugate the Moros. They failed to alter the Moros' Islamic faith or their customs and way of life. The "Moro Wars" in the process successfully instituted the seeds of alienation between Muslim and Christian Filipinos.

When the Christian Filipinos revolted against Spain in the early nineteenth century, the Moros naturally did not extend their support. As expected, the Moros did not support the Christian Filipinos in their struggle against the Spaniards because they themselves had been fighting the Spaniards for their own freedom and survival for more than three centuries without help from the latter. The Christian Filipinos instead sided with the Spaniards.²¹

American Colonization

The Spanish-American War ended with the signing of the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898 whereby Spain ceded the Philippines to the United States. Thus, by

conquest and purchase, the Philippines became a colony of the United States. On 21 December 1898, President William McKinley issued his “benevolent assimilation” proclamation that stated America’s first official policy in the Philippines. President McKinley said that the Americans:

come not as invaders or conquerors but as friends, to protect the natives in their homes, in their employment, and in their personal and religious rights . . . that the mission of the United States is one of benevolent assimilation, substituting the mild sway of justice and right for arbitrary rule.²²

In his address to the American Congress, President McKinley defined what he perceived as America’s mandate in the Philippines: “The Philippines are not ours to exploit, but to develop, to civilize, to educate, to train in the service of self-government. This is the path we must follow or be recreant to a mighty trust committed to us.”²³

The primary concern of the American administration of Moroland was to secure the Moros’ acknowledgement of United States sovereignty over Mindanao and Sulu and to keep them neutral in the raging Philippine Insurrection (1899-1901). On 20 August 1899, American Brigadier General John C. Bates and Sulu Sultan Jamalul Kiram II signed an agreement declaring the sovereignty of the United States over the Sulu Archipelago and its dependencies. The United States pledged to respect the rights and dignities of the sultan and his clan leaders, the *datus*, and not to interfere in the Moros’ practice of their religion and their customs. With the initial American policy of non-interference in internal Moro affairs, the Moros thought that their way of life was guaranteed. The main task of the Americans was to keep the Moros peaceful and no efforts were made to “educate” and “civilize” them.²⁴

However, after the Philippine Insurrection in 1901, the Americans became eager to carry out their mandate by establishing all over the country schools and hospitals, and constructing roads, bridges, and trails. Moreover, customs regulations were imposed, taxes levied, lands surveyed, and a census was conducted in 1903. These American troops in Mindanao evoked Moro suspicion and fear about the security of their religion and way of life. This uneasiness and suspicion soon erupted into violence and the Americans interpreted Moro hostility as defiance of United States sovereignty. In March 1902, the first major American-Moro military confrontation took place in Southern Lanao and this started the American-Moro conflict.²⁵

With the passage of the Philippine Bill of 1902 providing for the eventual grant of independence to the Philippines, American authorities decided to abandon the United States' policy of non-interference to "direct rule" over the Moros to prepare them for integration into the body-politics of the Philippines. This change of policy was due to the insistence of Christian Filipino nationalists that Moroland was inseparable from the Philippines and that both Americans and Filipinos fully realized the importance of the rich natural resources of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago for the economic development of the country. With the new policy of direct control of the affairs of the Moros, the Bates Treaty was consequently abrogated unilaterally by the United States in 1904.²⁶

Following the Spanish "politico-military district" system, the Philippine Commission on 1 June 1903 organized the "Moro Province" with the provincial governor of Zamboanga as head. The successive governors of the Moro Province from 1903 to 1913 were of exceptional ability. They were Brigadier Generals Leonard Wood,

Tasker Bliss, and John J. Pershing. Under this political setup, the American mandate in Moroland was implemented. Slavery was made illegal, the common people were protected from the “tyranny” of their traditional leaders, the American concept of justice was introduced, and public works expanded. To “civilize” the Moros and at the same time exploit the natural resources of their homeland, the American authorities encouraged Christians to migrate to Mindanao with the idea that the industriousness and agricultural know-how of Christian immigrants would provide the example and incentive for the Moros to improve their farm productivity. The organized non-Muslim settlements were meant to be models of well ordered and democratically governed “civilized” communities for the Moros to emulate. The Americans also imposed the payment of taxes such as road tax, property tax, head tax, import and export taxes.²⁷

The Moros reacted adversely to the implementation of the American mandate. They considered direct rule to be against the powers and dignity of their sultans and datus. The American mandate “to civilize” would in effect allow the imposition of strange laws and infidel customs and the laws against slavery threatened the politico-economics of Moro society. They disliked paying taxes to an infidel, foreign government and they resented parceling of their lands to Christian Filipinos. The American education system was seen as means to alienate the youth from Islam and their traditional way of life. The separation of church and state is for them a Christian idea and it is to their belief that the two are indivisible. They believed that the laws and customs were inconsistent with the precept of the Holy Koran.²⁸

All these changes imposed by the Americans were considered by the Moros as challenges to their religion and culture. For the Moros, direct rule and integration with the

Christian Filipinos constituted serious threats to their existence. For this reason, the Moros were determined to resist and fight the American colonizers and the Christian Filipinos whom they favored. Indeed, the less than half of a century of American rule had carried the thrust of divide and rule further than did Spain's three centuries.²⁹

Among the major military engagements fought between the Americans and the Moros during the early American occupation of Mindanao and Sulu were those against Datu Ali of Kudarangan, Cotabato; Taraca Moros of Lanao; Sulu Datus Panglima Hassan and his supporters; Datus Laksamana Usap; and Palal. The Americans, led by Governors Leonard Wood and John J. Pershing, relentlessly pursued their offensives against the Moro leaders because of slavery, banditry, and the people's refusal to pay their tax.³⁰

The fiercest and strongest defense put up by the Moros against the Americans was the Battle of Bud Dajo, Sulu, on 6-8 March 1906. The combat between the 800 disciplined American troops armed with modern weapons and more than 1,000 Moros including women and children armed with crises, spears, and a few rifles was a total slaughter for the latter. The Moros fought fiercely and at the end of the third day, more than 600 of them were killed while only twenty-one American lives were lost.³¹

As details of the battle at Bud Dajo reached the United States, Brigadier General Wood was severely criticized for the massacre, particularly the deaths of women and children. The Washington Post pictured Wood as bloodthirsty while the New York World showed him standing over his victims with a sword dripping with blood. Bud Dajo was the last, most dramatic, and most publicized of a long list of military operations Wood had authorized as commanding general of the Department of Mindanao.³²

The other major military engagement came on 11-15 June 1913 at the Battle of Bud Bagsak, Sulu, between the Moros under Datus Amil and Jamir and the Americans under Brigadier General John J. Pershing. The battle resulted in the annihilation of nearly 500 Moro defenders, including the two Datus. No other battle of this magnitude was fought in Sulu throughout the remaining period of American administration of Moroland.³³

When Frank W. Carpenter succeeded General Pershing as the first civil governor of the Moro Province, the pressing issues at the time were the clamor of Christian Filipino nationalists for the granting of a regular province status for Moro Province to be able to be represented in the Philippines Assembly and the clamor of American residents in Zamboanga to create Mindanao and its adjacent island as “territory of the United States” for commercial and security purposes. During a meeting in Zamboanga, Christian Filipinos stated that there were nearly 70,000 “civilized” and educated Christians who are capable and ready to govern Moroland.³⁴ On 15 December 1913, Frank W. Carpenter succeeded General Pershing as Governor of the Moro Province and five days later the name Moro Province was changed to Department of Mindanao and Sulu. Governor Carpenter is credited with having rendered great service in his post as governor. He was responsible for the enactment of the Organic Act creating the Department of Mindanao and Sulu that was passed by the Philippine Commission on 23 July 1914. The Organic Act extended to the inhabitants of Moroland “the general laws of the country” and the “general forms and procedures of government followed in other provinces.” The Organic Act therefore extended the jurisdiction of nearly all bureaus of the government to the Moros.³⁵

In 1916, the Jones Law established the “Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes” which took over the jurisdiction of the abolished Department of Mindanao and Sulu. The bureau also had jurisdiction over Mountain Province and Nueva Viscaya. Thus, for the first time, the Moros were placed under the direct control of the Manila-based Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes.³⁶

The most important achievement of Governor Carpenter was the extension of government control in the whole of Mindanao and Sulu. Specifically, Governor

Carpenter and Sulu Sultan Jamal-ul Kiram II signed the March 1915 memorandum of agreement whereby the sultan recognized the sovereignty of the United States in the Sulu Archipelago with “all the attributes of sovereign government that are exercised elsewhere in American territory and dependencies.” The sultan in effect unequivocally abdicated all his powers including his prerogatives associated with the courts and collection of taxes while the United States recognized the sultan as the “titular spiritual head of the Mohammedan church in the Sulu Archipelago,” that the Moros “shall have the same religious freedom . . . and the practice of which is not in violation of the basic principles of the laws of the United States of America.” The American mandate in Moroland was only partially fulfilled when said responsibility was transferred to Filipino administration in 1920.³⁷

Soon, Moro-Christian conflict re-emerged. Moros complained of inexperienced Filipino officials who abused their powers; harsh suppressive measures of the Philippine Constabulary; mysterious deaths of Moro leaders who opposed Philippine independence; reluctance of Muslims to recognize the government in Mindanao and Sulu and the continued immigration of Christian Filipinos into Moroland. Many Moros wanted to

return under direct American rule or be separated from the Christian Filipinos of Luzon and the Visayan islands. From here on, the destiny of the Moros was in the hands of the politicians in Manila.³⁸

Filipino leaders who sympathized with the Muslims proposed alternatives for the government's policy of assimilation that was considered impractical. Pro-Muslim measures such as agrarian reform, the teaching of Muslim culture, and the codification of Muslim laws were positive steps toward winning the goodwill of the Muslims. Teofisto Guingona, who became the first Filipino to head the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes in 1930, introduced the "New Deal Policy" for Mindanao aimed at preventing unrest and promoting the integration of Muslims into Filipino society.³⁹

Some American lawmakers, however, supported the Moros' clamor for permanent American rule. In 1926, the Bacon Bill was introduced in the US Congress, which proposed that independence be granted to Luzon and the Visayan islands but that Moro Province be retained under American rule. The Cooper Bill which proposed the retention of Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan and their eventual federation with the United States followed this bill. Both bills however, failed due to the strong protest of nationalist Filipino leaders in Manila.⁴⁰

President Woodrow Wilson signed the Jones Law in 1916 and into effect it stated the United States was determined to relinquish sovereignty over the Philippines as soon as a stable government was established. And, in 1934, the US Congress passed the Philippine Independence Act, which provided for a ten-year commonwealth period prior to complete sovereignty.

On 18 March 1935, a mass marching of Moros was held in Dansalan (Marawi). The marchers opposed the inclusion of Moroland into the Philippines. The protest reached the US Congress but Washington simply could not ignore the pressure exerted by the Philippine independence movement headed by Manuel L. Quezon, Sergio Osmena Sr., and Filipino nationalists who wanted Mindanao and Sulu to be part of an independent Philippines.⁴¹

Mindanao Under the Philippine Commonwealth

In 1935 the Philippines became a self-governing commonwealth by electing Manuel Quezon as the first president. Quezon and his Nacionalista Party dominated Philippine nationalism from then until the outbreak of World War II.

On 24 October 1936, the National Assembly enacted Commonwealth Act No. 75 which abolished the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes and created the Office of the Commissioner of Mindanao and Sulu. President Quezon first defined the Philippine Commonwealth policy for the Moros in a memorandum issued on 20 September 1938 to the secretary of interior authorizing the commissioner the following:⁴²

1. To direct the general development work in Mindanao and Sulu
2. To give impetus to the work of improving the condition of the people educationally, morally, and materially and of developing the resources of Mindanao and Sulu
3. Not to recognize the power of the datus, to protect the common people from the control or exploitation of the sultans, datus, leaders, etc, that the people should be heard and consulted, too; and that equality between the titled datus and the common people before the law and their rights must be recognized

4. To appoint civilian governors, formerly under the constabulary officers
5. To improve their agriculture and small trade, to ameliorate the hardships of their lives, to raise their standard of living, to combat diseases, to create sanitary conditions, and to protect them against abuses from evil persons.

In the eagerness of the Christian Filipino authorities to assimilate the Moros, focusing on racial and cultural factors showing that the Moros and Christians basically belong to one race, they failed to recognize that there were likewise basic differences in their religion, social organization, and history which should be considered in the pursuit of Filipinization. For the Moros, “Filipinization” meant being governed by their former enemies; the non-recognition of their traditional leaders; the discarding of Moro laws and customs, and their treatment as second-class citizens in their own homeland.⁴³

Meanwhile, continuous government neglect, indifference, and apathy toward the Moros led some Moro leaders to pursue their clamor for independence. Despite the protests of some Moro leaders, Moro Province became a part of the Philippine Commonwealth. For the first time, the Moros as “Mohammedan Filipinos” participated in the first nationwide Philippine electoral process in the election for delegates to the Constitutional Convention in July 1934.⁴⁴

The national policy priorities of the Commonwealth Government were economic development, strengthening of the security of Mindanao and Sulu, and the advancement and integration of the Moro population. Thus, the American regime’s centerpiece policy of “pacification” and “attraction” of the Moros was changed to political, economic, and social integration into the Filipino identity.⁴⁵

To solve the nation's economic and security problems, especially in the south, the Commonwealth Government through its Homestead Law (Act 691) encouraged the Christian Filipinos from Luzon and the Visayas to migrate to the rich and fertile Land of Promise, Mindanao. Lanao and Cotabato became the favorite destinations of Christian migration resulting in the resurgence and intensification of Moro-Christian Filipino animosity and conflict as Moro untitled ancestral lands were taken by the latter. Moros owned their lands without titles but recognized through Islamic law and mandated by customs and traditions. Lands and properties were passed from one generation to the other. The Christian settlers took advantage of the situation and mass land grabbing and exploitation ensued. Tension and violence between Moros and Christian Filipino settlers naturally followed. Other irritants in Moro-Christian relations during the Commonwealth period were the end of official recognition of civil titles and rights of sultans and datus and the non-recognition of any successor to Sultan Jamalul Kiram II of Sulu who died in 1936.⁴⁶

President Quezon explained that his government was duty-bound to protect the common people, whether Muslims or Christians, from the abuses and exploitations of sultans, datus, and landlords.⁴⁷

Other significant factors for Moro-Christian animosity were discrimination and favoritism in favor of Christians for appointment to government positions; meager economic and social development opportunities; taxation; compulsory military training in a "Christian" army; and non-recognition by the government of plural marriages and other interferences with Moro tradition and religious practices. These factors gave the Muslims the impression that they are second-class citizens of the Philippines.⁴⁸

Ralph Thomas, in his PhD dissertation, has summarized the condition of the Moros after five years under the Commonwealth Government as follows.⁴⁹

During the Commonwealth period, Muslims were structurally integrated. In the political sphere, they participated as well as minority could; in the economic sphere, they were assuming a secondary and dependent status in their own territory. Political and economic changes have increased contacts between Muslim and Christian Filipinos. It remained for the future to decide whether those relationships would be mutually beneficial and whether Muslim Filipinos will be assimilated by the Christian Filipino majority.

Mindanao under the Republic

Ten months after the Japanese surrender, on 4 July 1946, the Philippines gained independence from the United States under the provisions of the McDuffie-Tyding's Act of 1934. And in the years following the declaration of Philippine Independence, the Muslims experienced major difficulties in trying to identify themselves as Filipino citizens. For one, they could not acknowledge the primacy of the national laws of the country. Since they could not accept Western or Christian moral values alien to them, they continued to organize their lives according to Islamic values, often in conflict with Philippine laws. Muslims found it difficult to be convinced that the public educational system, with its uniform curriculum for both Muslims and Christians, was not intended to separate them from Islam. Because of this impression, the Muslims often hesitated to have their children schooled in the public education system, insisting that their own parochial schools be used instead.⁵⁰

A major reason for the Muslims' inability to consider themselves as Filipino citizens was their deep resentment and violent reaction to the increasing flow of Christian settlers to Mindanao. As stated earlier, the resettlement programs started during the American regime and continued by the Philippine government after 1946 resulted in their

gradual displacement from their traditional ancestral areas. Agricultural communities, established by the government in the heart of Muslim indigenous territories, created bitter conflicts in land distribution and ownership among Muslims and Christian settlers. The Muslims complained that they were displaced from their traditional areas and dispossessed of their communal property needed for their economic survival.⁵¹

Although there were bloody confrontations between Christians and Muslims particularly over land disputes, there were no organized Muslim revolts against the new Philippine Republic. Occasional breakdowns of peace and order occurred in some areas in Mindanao, mostly traceable to economic problems of both Christians and Muslims. In the early 1950s, Datu Hadji Kamlon led a revolt in Sulu, which continued for several years. Towards the 1960s, Christian and/or Muslim initiated-cattle rustling became widespread in Mindanao. Illegal logging also prospered. Often victimizing the Muslims, unsuccessful Christian settlers turned to banditry in order to survive.⁵²

To defend themselves, Christian communities formed armed groups and private armies. Similarly, Muslim groups organized themselves along clan lines. As the conflict persisted, Muslims complained that the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), particularly the Philippine Constabulary (PC), was arming the Christians to fight the Muslims. By the late 1960s, armed clashes between Christian settlers calling themselves Ilagas, and groups of Muslims known as Blackshirts and Barracudas escalated in Mindanao.⁵³

Mindanao turned into a troubled region under the central government in Manila. The Muslims felt alienated, neglected, and not part of the Filipino nation. This sentiment was boosted by the international resurgence of Islam. New mosques and madaris

(religious schools) were built in Mindanao; hundreds of Muslim students received scholarships offered by Islamic institutions and universities such as the Al-Azhar University in Cairo and the Islamic University of Medina. More preachers from the Islamic World, particularly from Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Libya came to Mindanao and Sulu to enhance the Islamic faith. Muslim organizations espousing Islamic unity, such as the Ansar El-Islam, the Muslim Association of the Philippines. The Union of the Islamic Forces and Organizations and the Sulu Islamic Congress were organized. Muslim leaders were invited to participate in international Muslim congresses while many performed their haj (pilgrimage) to Mecca. These activities have strengthened the Moros' sense of Islamic consciousness and solidarity. As a consequence, the term "Bangsa Moro" emerged as a nationalistic name for all Muslims in the Southern Philippines. Indeed, the revitalization of Islam enhanced religious solidarity among the Muslims and also widened the "difference" between them and the Christian Filipino.⁵⁴

In 1968, two months after Muslim military recruits were allegedly massacred in Corregidor under mysterious circumstance, the Muslim (later Mindanao) Independence Movement (MIM) was organized by a Muslim politician, Udtog Matalam, with Cotabato as the heart of the movement. The MIM political goal was to create an Islamic republic for the Muslims out of the Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan.⁵⁵

Despite the intervention of the Philippine government, the fighting between Christian settlers and Muslims continued into the 1970s. Massacres of Muslim and Christian civilians were reported in several areas of Mindanao. On 19 June 1971, for instance, a massacre occurred at Manili, Carmen, North Cotabato, where at least seventy Muslims, mostly women and children, were killed inside a mosque presumably by armed

Ilagas. This incident prompted thirty Muslim leaders, including a senator, high government officials, heads of Muslim associations, professionals, businessmen, and students to send a manifesto to the Philippine government demanding a stop to the armed depredations of the Ilagas, the protection of the Muslims by the Philippine government, and the respect of Islam and the Muslims as the basis for peace and harmony.⁵⁶

It was against this background that the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) was born in the early 1970s to take over the cause of the Muslims from the MIM and to launch the Bangsa Moro armed struggle against the Philippine government.

¹Dennis Bryce Fowder, "The Moro Problem: An Historical Perspective" (M.A. Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 1985), 42.

²Cesar Majul, *The Coming of Islam* (Manila: Lahing Filipino Heritage, 1977), 673.

³Peter G. Gowing and Robert D. McAmis, *The Muslim Filipinos* (Manila: Solidaridad, 1974), 2.

⁴Ronald E. Dolan, ed. *Philippines: A Country Study* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1993), 82.

⁵Mariano A. Dumia, "The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference: Its Implications to National Security" (Master's Thesis, National Defense College of the Philippines, 1991), 37.

⁶Dolan, "A Country Study," 82.

⁷David Joel Steinberg, *The Philippines A Singular and Plural Place* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1994), 90.

⁸Dumia, "MNLF," 39.

⁹Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines* (New York: Random House, 1989), 40.

¹⁰John D. Harber, "Conflict and Compromise in the Philippines: The Case of Moro Identity" (Master's Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 1998), 23.

¹¹Dumia, "MNLF," 40.

¹²Delor Angeles, *The Moro Wars: The Muslim Filipinos* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1974), 27.

¹³Dumia, "MNLF," 41.

¹⁴Peter G. Gowing, *Muslim Filipinos-Heritage and Horizon* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1979), 43.

¹⁵Dumia, MNLF, 43.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰*Ibid.*, 47.

²¹*Ibid.*, 49.

²²Teodoro A. Agoncillo and Oscar Alfonso, *History of the Filipino People* (Quezon City: Malaya Books, 1967), 274.

²³Gowing and McAmis, *Muslim Filipino*, 33.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 35.

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- ²⁵ Ibid.
- ²⁶ Dumia, "MNLF," 52.
- ²⁷ Ibid., 53.
- ²⁸ Gowing and McAmis, *Muslim Filipino*, 37.
- ²⁹ T. J. S. George, *Revolt in Mindanao* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1980), 68.
- ³⁰ Dumia, "MNLF," 53.
- ³¹ Peter G. Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1983), 164.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ Dumia, "MNLF," 56.
- ³⁴ Ibid.,
- ³⁵ Ibid., 58.
- ³⁶ Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland*, 269.
- ³⁷ Ibid., 328.
- ³⁸ Ibid.
- ³⁹ Dumia, "MNLF," 60.
- ⁴⁰ Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland*, 339.
- ⁴¹ Dumia, "MNLF," 61.
- ⁴² Ibid., 62.
- ⁴³ Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland*, 178.
- ⁴⁴ Dumia, "MNLF," 63.
- ⁴⁵ Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland*, 176.
- ⁴⁶ Dumia, "MNLF," 65.
- ⁴⁷ Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland*, 178.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., 179.
- ⁴⁹ Dumia, "MNLF," 66.
- ⁵⁰ Harber, "Case of Moro Identity," 43.
- ⁵¹ Dumia, "MNLF," 70.
- ⁵² Harber, "Case of Moro Identity," 44.
- ⁵³ Dumia, "MNLF," 72.
- ⁵⁴ Geoffrey Salgado, *Development Policies for Muslim Mindanao in pre-Martial Law Period, 1955-1971* (Iligan City: Moro Peoples Response Center, 1989), 15.
- ⁵⁵ Quijano de Manila, *Operation Might? Jabidah?, Merdeka?* (Ligan City, Moro People's Response Center, 1989), 4.
- ⁵⁶ Dumia, "MNLF," 71.

CHAPTER 3

MUSLIM SECESSIONIST GROUPS Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)

On 1 May 1968, less than two months after the massacre of 23 Muslim recruits at Corregidor, former Cotabato Governor Hadji Datu Udtog Matalam founded the “Muslim Independence Movement” (MIM) and issued a Manifesto creating an independent Islamic State called The Republic of Mindanao and Sulu out of the Republic of the Philippines. Later, the name “Muslim Independence Movement” was changed to “Mindanao Independence Movement” to accommodate the Christian majority in the island.¹

The MIM, which was envisioned to provide the final solution to the Muslim problem, abruptly disintegrated when Datu Udtog Matalam was appointed as Presidential Adviser for Muslim Affairs by President Marcos when they met at Mactan, Cebu on 11 October 1968.²

The massacre at Corregidor and the disintegration of the MIM led the young, militant, and intellectual members of the independence movement to continue their struggle underground. They believed that parliamentary methods were ineffective in attaining political and economic reforms for the welfare of the Muslims; that armed struggle was necessary to attain the centuries old cherished aspiration of the Muslims for independence. These Manila educated Muslim leaders hence developed an ideology that emphasized both Moro nationalism and social reforms.³

One of the active radical members of the MIM was a young intellectual named Nurlaji Misuari, popularly known as Nur Misuari, a Tausog by birth and a former

instructor at the University of the Philippines. Misuari, the son of a poor fisherman from the island of Cabingnaan, located East of the Tapul group of islands of the Sulu archipelago, pursued his education in Manila through government scholarship. As a student activist, he joined the Bagong Asya known to be the first politicized student organization in the country and became one of the founding fathers of the radical Kabataang Makabayan. In 1966, he was sent to study in China with Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) leader Jose Ma. Sison.⁴

In 1967, he founded the Muslim Nationalist League and was editor of its official organ, the Philippine Muslim News. With the formation of the Muslim Independence Movement in 1968, Misuari became one of the active proponents of the movement. During the height of student activism in the sixties, Nur Misuari, together with Abdul Kahyr Alonto and Abdul Hashim (popularly known as Hashim Salamat) envisioned the formation of a secessionist movement.⁵

Misuari espoused the necessity of armed struggle against the government. He realized the need for a well motivated, disciplined and trained guerrilla force to secure the goal of Moro independence. Thus, he pursued the task of training guerrilla fighters by qualified military professionals.⁶

Congressman Rashid Lucman and other well-connected datus with their friends and supporters in Malaysia, particularly Tun Mustapha, arranged for the foreign training of ninety deserving members of the MNLF. The training was to be at Pulac Pangkor (Pangkor Island), West Malaysia.⁷

The first batch of twenty members left Karungdung, Tawi-Tawi on 30 December 1968, by a big and powerful speedboat and the next day they reached Tawan, Sabah. The

group proceeded to Kota Kinabalu and after three weeks there, took a Malaysian military plane to Kuala Lumpur. From there, they went to Pangkor Island for guerrilla warfare training under Malaysian instructors. The training was made in four batches and Nur Misuari was in the third one that trained.⁸

The ninety trainees decided to organized themselves into a political organization and a Central Committee was formed with Nur Misuari as chairman, Abuldayer Alonto as vice-chairman and Jimmy Lucman, Caloy Bundaying, Utoh Salahuddin, Ramit Hassan, and Sali Wali as members. These officers and members of the Central Committee named their organization the Moro National Liberation Front.⁹

Although Misuari and his associates in the mid-1960s conceived the idea of secessionism, the name “Moro National Liberation Front” was only adopted by the Central Committee sometime in early 1969. The MNLF however, has adopted 18 March 1968, the date of the Corregidor massacre, as its birthdate and the MNLF celebrates its annual foundation day on this date.¹⁰

Even after the return to the Philippines of the ninety Muslim trainees in early 1970 after more than a year of training, nobody knew of the name and existence of the MNLF except the seven Central Committee members and officers. Even their patron, Congressman Lucman and the other traditional Moro leaders who arranged their foreign training, were not aware of the existence of the Front. Chairman Misuari and the other MNLF leaders wanted to dissociate themselves from the traditional, autocratic Moro elite leaders whose hereditary leadership they considered as feudal and a party to the continuous oppression being waged against the Muslims. The foreign guerrilla-trained

Muslims returned to their respective provinces and later formed the nucleus of the Bangsa Moro Army (BMA), the military arm of the MNLF.¹¹

Before the declaration of Martial Law by President Marcos in 1972, the main MNLF activities were concentrated in secret recruiting, training and, to some extent, fighting in places where the Christian armed groups (Ilagas) are strong. The MNLF Central Committee likewise was able to send the next group of 300 recruits to Sabah to undertake military training.¹²

When president Marcos declared martial law on 21 September 1972, a subsequent government order was given for the surrender of all arms nationwide. The Muslims thought of it as a scheme aimed to disarm and kill them and to dispossess them of their ancestral lands and properties. As a reaction, rebels who later identified themselves as belonging to the “Mindanao Revolutionary Council for Independence” led by traditional and secular leaders commenced an armed uprising against the government by attacking Marawi City in Lanao del Sur on 21 October 1972. They seized the airport, the headquarters of the Philippine Constabulary and the Mindanao State University. Government forces arrived and reinforced the beleaguered city on 24 October and the rebels retreated to the hills from where they appealed for support from other Muslim groups and soon the Muslim armed struggle against the government spread throughout Muslim Mindanao and Sulu. Although the MNLF did not participate in the Marawi City uprising that resulted into the death of seventy-five people, the bloody incident hastened its timetable for the commencement of its armed offensive against the government.¹³

Soon after the attack at Marawi City, simultaneous large-scale assaults on military, civil government installations, and urban centers were made in Lanao del Norte,

Cotabato, South Cotabato, the Davao Provinces, the Zamboanga provinces, Sulu, and Basilan. About 800 Tausug young men who were trained to fight the Ilagas in Zamboanga joined the MNLF and later became the “storm troopers” of the MNLF’s Bangsa Moro Army. Now, the target of the Muslim fighters was not the Ilagas but the Armed Forces of the Philippines.¹⁴

As a start, the MNLF organized its fighting units in each area (see Appendix C for Organizational Chart of the MNLF), independent from the local units already in operation. MNLF membership expanded rapidly through discipline, dedication and organization, and the MNLF soon emerged as the chief voice for the grievances and aspiration of the majority of the Muslims. The MNLF who initially fought primarily against the Ilagas became a “household name” among the Muslims. The MNLF “revolt” has finally emerged openly attracting worldwide attention particularly in the Islamic world.¹⁵

The Muslim secessionist conflict peaked in 1974, with membership of 50,000 to 60,000 personnel. However, disunity started to rise again among the Muslim community as membership within the secessionist movement splintered into groups of locally educated youth, and foreign-trained and educated Islamic radicals. The diverse membership in the movement led to an unclear ideology, and ultimately curtailed any growth of Moro unity in future dealings with the government. This disunity also severed commonality of cause within the MNLF as differences in ideology and objectives would lead to an eventual splintering of the group. More radical elements later leaned toward the fundamental Islamic line, while the more secular MNLF made concessions and compromised with the government.¹⁶

In order to gain resources for its secessionist war, the MNLF successfully appealed for training, weapons, and funding from wealthy Islamic states for its fight against the government. In April 1974, the MNLF established a central committee in Libya, which had become one of the principal bankrollers of the group. The committee drafted a manifesto calling for political independence for the islands of Mindanao, Sulu, Palawan, Basilan, and Tawi-Tawi. Through the political expertise of Marcos (and some persuasion by Indonesia, which Marcos had courted), conferees at the 1974 Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in Kuala Lumpur voted that negotiations vice secession was the answer to the Moro problem.

The financial drain on the economy forced Marcos to negotiate and at least give an appearance of good will, for from 1973 to 1975, he had deployed seventy-five to eighty percent of the AFP's combat strength to Mindanao and Sulu. Warfare between the AFP and the Bangsa Moro Army had resulted in approximately 60,000 deaths and the displacement of more than one million persons, nearly a quarter of which had sought refuge in the Malaysian state of Sabah.

In July 1975, the OIC formally recognized the MNLF and granted it observer status. Facing newfound international support for the MNLF, the increasing costs of the rebellion, and the possibility of sanctions by its Middle Eastern oil suppliers, Marcos pushed into high gear negotiations to weaken foreign support for the Muslim rebels. His efforts were aided when the rebellion was temporarily curbed by an August 1976 earthquake and tidal wave that hit Mindanao and killed 8,000 persons.¹⁷

The lull in violence provided an opportunity for Marcos to push for outside assistance to solve the rebellion. It was no secret that primary financing for the MNLF

was coming from Libya and Malaysia and, as such, in 1976 Marcos sent First Lady Imelda Marcos to Libya to meet with Mohammar Quaddafi to request diplomatic assistance in ending the insurgency. Quaddafi agreed, and Mrs. Marcos returned to the Philippines with what has become known as the Tripoli Agreement. The agreement was brokered by the OIC and signed by the MNLF, the Philippine Government, and the OIC. The agreement promised autonomy for thirteen provinces on Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan islands following a “constitutional process.”¹⁸

The autonomy was to include Muslim courts, a legislative assembly and executive council, an autonomous administrative system, special regional security forces, and representation of the central government; control over education, finance, and the economic system; and the right to a reasonable percentage of the revenues of mines and minerals. The Manila-based government was to maintain responsibility for foreign policy and national defense. The role of the MNLF forces and the AFP, and the relationships between structures and policies of the autonomous region and central government, were to be discussed later.

Despite the agreement, lasting peace did not come to pass, and Qaddafi continued shipping arms to the MNLF. Marcos feigned support of the Tripoli Agreement, and proclaimed an autonomous Muslim region in March 1977. In April, a referendum was held in the southern provinces to determine which desired to become part of the autonomous region. As expected, only nine provinces voted for autonomy (the only nine provinces with a Muslim majority). In late 1977, the agreement collapsed. Misuari claimed that the Marcos administration had not adhered to the tenets of the agreement, and other Muslim groups claimed government insincerity and deception. Fighting

resumed, and the MNLF began to suffer additional splintering as some Muslims began to feel Misuari was being manipulated away from the core beliefs of Islam, and more toward Marxist-Maoist orientations. Misuari denounced a chief rival, Hashim Salamat, and consolidated his leadership hold. Salamat later formed the breakaway Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in 1984.¹⁹

Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)

Until 1976 the MNLF was a monolithic organization. The advocates of Islamic revivalism (Hashim Salamat's group) were cooperating with the nationalists (Nur Misuari's group) in order to unify the rank and file of the Muslims in Mindanao. Salamat and his group at that time were not bothering themselves about the existing ideological and methodological differences in their midst because of their optimism that they could be able to convince or influence the nationalists/secularists to rectify their outlooks and turn towards the Islamic line which they advocated.²⁰

While running the MNLF, Salamat occupied several positions. He was once elected as the chairman of the Kutawato State Revolutionary command (KSRC), covering the then undivided entire province of Cotabato. Then he was elevated into becoming a member of the central committee as the chairman of the front's foreign affairs bureau, and finally he became the MNLF's vice chairman.²¹

During the early years of the MNLF, Nur Misuari, and Salamat worked together harmoniously and they were at ease with one another. There were several occasions that Salamat was strongly urged to contest Nur Misuari in the chairmanship election but he refused for the sake of the unity of the group. He even helped Misuari to get the highest position in the MNLF. As a revolutionary “Alim” (learned man), one of the main

concerns of Salamat was that the struggle attains its proper perspectives, direction, and methods. He wanted every activity and program of the front be in line with Islamic precepts. It must be run according to the principle of Sharia (Islamic consultation). However, on this issue the two leaders could not agree. Misuari did not entertain other ideas and suggestions and he was not open to suggestion.²²

Being aware of the possible failure of the movement if it were to continue on this line, Salamat decided to separate from the MNLF in 1977, after the collapse of the GRP-MNLF negotiation in Manila. His separation was triggered by the petition of the fifty-seven leading officers of the MNLF in Cotabato region followed by a group from Lanao, addressed to the OIC secretary general and Muslim World League ousting Nur Misuri and instead recognizing Salamat as the new MNLF chairman.²³

Salamat just followed the majority will and took over the leadership. On his part, instead of recognizing Salamat, Misuari counteracted by expelling Salamat from his post. He charged Salamat with treachery, insubordination, and incompetence; he even declared Salamat as *persona non grata*.²⁴

Later, Salamat clarified his reasons for separating from the MNLF, which were:

1. The MNLF leadership was being manipulated away from the Islamic basis, methodologies, and objectives and was fast evolving toward a Marxist-Maoist orientation;
2. Instead of evolving toward harmonized and collective leadership, the central committee has evolved into a mysterious, exclusive, secretive, and monolithic body, whose policies, plans, decisions, and dispositions become an exclusive preserve of Nur Misuari, going away from all commitments previously arrived at to submit for

consultations all plans and strategies to the MNLF members themselves and also to organizations, local and external, sympathetic with the movement.

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

For its part, the OIC attempted to reconcile Misuari and Salamat but this did not work simply because the former could not accept some of the deals. However, still, the OIC continued its support and recognition to the leadership of Nur Misuari and the MNLF as the legitimate representative of the Bangsamoro struggle. On the other hand, Salamat's New MNLF leadership had freely gone on to its own way, direction, and program. In March 1984, after coming up with the consensus of opinion, the central committee of the New MNLF leadership decided to change the name of the front, officially adopted and declared "Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)" as its name. It was told that the dropping out of the word National and adopting Islamic in its stead signifies, among other things, that the front adopted Islam as its ideology and guidelines in all its activities.²⁵

Unlike the MNLF, which is more of a secular organization, Salamat molded his Moro Islamic Liberation Front into an organization that advocates for the establishment of a genuine Islamic state in Mindanao governed entirely by the dictates of the Qur'an. It defines its ideology as *la ilaha illa allah muhammad al rasul Allah*, which means that there is no god worthy to be worshipped but Allah and that worship of god must be in accordance with the teachings of prophet Muhammad.

Toward this end, the MILF applies the concepts of da'wah or Islamic call and jihad or struggle in the way of Allah. Da'wah (Islamic call) is particularly concerned with reviving the old traditions of practicing the Islamic faith. Along this line, the MILF is undertaking the so-called "back to Islam" program to teach the Muslims in Mindanao the proper observance and practice of their Mohammedan faith. In this regard, they sponsored the construction and opening of Arabic schools (madrasah) to teach Muslims about the Islam faith.²⁶

Jihad or "struggle in the way of Allah" is the other side of the MILF strategy. It calls for an organized and unified armed struggle to serve Islam by fighting perceived oppressors of the faith or, in the local context, those who are blocking the Muslim's aspirations in Mindanao to achieve Islamic independence.

The MILF gets some of its support and funding from the contributions of sympathizers working overseas, particularly in the Middle East. The largest source, however, comes from the local Muslim community, through zakat, or obligatory alms. The MILF also does extortion activities especially from contractors of big government projects in Mindanao. For their firearms, part of their arsenal are locally bought and manufactured and augmented by smuggled weapons coming from Afghan-Pakistani sources.²⁷

Previously referred to as the MILF central committee, the jihad executive council is the highest governing body of the MILF that directs the front's political and military components with Hashim Salamat as chairman. Other members of the council are Ghadzali Jaafar, vice chairman for political affairs, Ahod Ibrahim (alias Al Haj Murad), vice chairman for military affairs and Aleem Abdulasis Mimbantas, vice chairman for

internal affairs. Serving as staff to carry out specific tasks for the council are the standing committees in the field of social welfare, civil/military tribunal, organization and training, finance, foreign affairs and information, production, religious and cultural affairs, education, da'wah coordination, and transportation and communications.²⁸

Also being referred to as the MILF “shadow government” in a given area, the regional, municipal and barangay revolutionary committees run the MILF’s political affairs at each level. These committees practically exist in all Muslim dominated areas in Mindanao.²⁹

The Bangsa Moro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF) completes the organizational structure of the MILF (see Appendix D for Organizational Chart of the MILF). Vastly patterned after the structure of a conventional armed force such as the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the BIAF is under the command of the MILF chairman. Its chief of staff provides over all supervision to ten functional staffs, a General Headquarters division, a National Guard division, the Bangsamoro Women Auxiliary Islamic armed forces and four field divisions. These units operate mainly in central Mindanao with the exception of the 4th Field Division, which is based in western Mindanao. The MILF has grown from about 6,000 in 1990 to a peak of fifteen 15,000 in 1999.³⁰

When then-President Estrada declared an all out war against the MILF in 2000 the Armed Forces of the Philippines counteractions against them in that year resulted in the following:³¹

1. Reversed the increasing trend in MILF strength and firearms since 1996; and increased the number of MILF surrendering.

2. Control of the main highway connecting northern Mindanao with Southern Mindanao (Narciso Ramos highway) and secure traffic in other strategic road networks around Mindanao.

3. Forty-five MILF camps and other defense positions were captured resulting in the dispersal of MILF forces and leaders; disruption of their communication and logistics systems; curtailing their recruitment and training systems; restoration of the local government officials' authority in areas formerly covered by MILF camps; and the restoration of the people's confidence in government, particularly in conflict-affected areas.³²

At the moment, the MILF still maintains a strong presence in the provinces of Maguindanao, Cotabato, South Cotabato, Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Sultan Kudarat and Sarangani. It is also maintains a presence in the western Mindanao provinces of Basilan, Zamboanga del Norte, and Zamboanga del Sur.³¹

Abu Sayyaf Group (Bearer of the Sword, ASG)

The formation of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) could also be traced from the disgruntled members of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), which became a dormant secessionist movement in late 1970s and fuelled by the wave of foreign Islamic fundamentalists who came to the country to propagate Islam and recruit local Muslims for scholarship abroad. The recruits who have gone for religious training in the Middle East later joined the international Islamic brigade as mujahideens (Islamic warriors) to fight the Soviet invaders in the Afghan war from 1980–1988. The Afghan war served as the breeding ground of Islamic extremist movement worldwide.

From the Afghan war, Filipino mujahideens such as Abdurajak Abubakar Janjalani along with other former MNLF members formed in the late 1980s the Mujahideen Commando Freedom Fighters (MCFF). Eventually, the MCFF attracted a multitude of followers who were disenchanted with the MNLF and the Philippine government. The MCFF was later known as the Abu Sayyaf and in 1994 Janjalani renamed the group as Al Harakatul Al-Islamiya (AHAI), its international name to solicit foreign support for its cause.³³

Ustadz Janjalani was originally a member of the *dahwa jama'at tabligh*, a fundamentalist group in Marawi city founded by Professor Amilhussein Jumaani of the Western Mindanao State University and Abe Cologan of the Mindanao State University. Janjalani turned to extremism later due to the growing perception that all deeds are justified and lawful in the eyes of Allah as long as these are in the pursuit of Islam. He espoused the radical view that a true believer could practically do all forms of *jihad fi-sabillillah* (an Arabic term which means a broad and endless struggle for the cause of Allah) to “defeat the non-Muslims who subjugate the abode of Allah.” In the Islamic indoctrination, it is their belief that Muslim areas are part of Allah’s abode, therefore, non-believers of Islam have no place therein.³⁴

Ustadz Janjalani used the alias “*Abu Sayyaf*,” an Arabic term which means “bearer of the sword” to conceal his identity. He envisioned establishing a bangsamoro republic and an Islamic state free from non-Muslims.

Since it no formal name at that time, the group was identified by Janjalani’s alias: Abu Sayyaf, which is the name today. The group is also locally known as Al-haraka al-islamia, which means Islamic movement. The Al-haraka is an international organization

of Muslim fundamentalists based in Pakistan whose chairman or amir is identified as Sibani Huruz Talib, a Pakistani. It envisioned re-shaping the Islamic world through *jihad fi-sabillillah* and is composed mostly of religious radicals and emirs like Janjalani.³⁵

Unlike other fundamentalist organizations, the Abu Sayyaf interprets the Islam fundamentals to the extreme since the ASG is uncompromising in advocating the rule of the holy qur'an in society. The establishment of an Islamic state, be it Muslim or non-Muslim, in Mindanao can be achieved through a holy war or jihad a view similar to the extremist and radical Muslim groups in Afghanistan, Algeria and Egypt. For Janjalani, 'jihad-sabillilah' (jihad in the way of the god) is the greatest devotion (ibadah saluggu-lagu) to Allah.

The Abu Sayyaf's first officers were Abdul Ashmad, intelligence chief, and half-Tausug convert Edwin Angeles, who sported the Muslim name Ibrahim Yakub, as operations chief. When Angeles quit in 1995, Juvenal Bruno, a Muslim convert from Cagayan de Oro, replaced him. Abdurajack also attracted his two younger brothers to the cause. Hector and the boyish Khadaffy would train in Pakistan in the use of explosive.³⁶

Three years after its creation the ASG started to conduct terrorist and criminal activities around Mindanao for sowing terror and to financially support its cause. As such, the Philippine National Police branded it as a group not composed of ideologues but of bandits, robbers and kidnappers doing criminal activities in the guise of jihad and fighting for an independent Islamic state.³⁷

From 1991 to 1994 the Abu Sayyaf conducted several bombings on inter-island ships, Christian churches, and Christian dominated areas in Mindanao, killing and wounding no less than 500 people. Several Christian priests, missionaries, nuns, and

moneyed person were also kidnapped for ransom during this period. It was estimated that during this three-year period alone the group generated about twenty million pesos (four hundred thousand dollars) from ransom and robbery.³⁸

In 1995 it scored the first American kidnap victim, Charles Walton, a language scholar who was doing research in Basilan. Walton was released weeks later without ransom through the intercession of Ambassador Abdurazak Rajab Azzarouq, the Libyan ambassador to the Philippines. It was also in 1995 when the Abu Sayyaf was linked to a plot to assassinate Pope John Paul II who was visiting Manila. Several suspected foreign terrorists, allegedly in cahoots with the Abu Sayyaf, were rounded up in a wave of arrests in metro Manila. The foreign terrorists bolstered military suspicions that a bigger group was controlling the Abu Sayyaf. Military reports traced the links to a low-key Muslim businessman named Mustapha Jammal Khalifa, who is married to the sister of world terrorist Osama bin Laden. The military said bin Laden funded the Abu Sayyaf through a foundation set up by Khalifa.³⁹

On 4 April 1995 about 200 ASG raided Ipil, a predominantly Christian town in Zamboanga del Sur. During that raid about fifty-three people were killed, banks were looted, and buildings and houses burned down. In their escape the raiders took about thirty civilian men, women and children as hostages and killed some of them along the way. It was after these activities that the strength of the ASG started to increase and recruitment became an easy task because of the lucrativeness of its activities. Its strength, which was about 120 in 1991, eventually reached a peak of about 1280 in the year 2001.⁴⁰

The kidnapping of civilians and members of the clergy continued until 2000 when the group started targeting foreign nationals from beach resorts in Mindanao and Visayas and going as far as Sabah. On 27 May 2001 it raided the Dos Palmas beach resort in Palawan and kidnapped three Americans and eighteen Filipinos. As of March 2002 only three are left in the custody of the ASG, the two Americans Martin and Gracia Burnham from Kansas and Deborah Yap, a Filipina nurse. The rest of the kidnapped victims either escaped or were rescued because of combat operations, and some were released after paying ransom.⁴¹

Since the in Dos Palmas in May 2001, the ASG never had the opportunity to conduct any other terrorist activities and criminalities against the civilians for it was always on the run and hiding from pursuing military forces. The fight of the government against the ASG was further bolstered when United States military assistance came in January of 2002.⁴²

The joint Philippine and US military exercise/training was conducted in areas where the ASG were operating for a period of six months starting January of 2002 with the participation of 660 US personnel and 3,800 Philippine Forces. The exercise was a mutual counter-terrorism advising, assisting, and training exercise relative to Philippine efforts against the ASG, and will be conducted on the island of Basilan. 160 US Forces organized in twelve man Special Forces Teams were deployed with Philippine infantry battalions in Basilan who are currently operating against the ASG. The US Teams were remain at the battalion headquarters and, when approved, company tactical headquarters where they can observe and assess the performance of the AFP Forces against the ASGs.⁴³

Organization, Composition, and Disposition of the ASG

When it was organized the highest governing body of the Al-harakat'ul Al-islamiyya (Ahai) is the Islamic Executive Council (IEC) composed of the fifteen-man council of emirs headed by ustadz Abdurajak Abubakar Janjalani alias Abu Sayaff/mofti. Its function included the planning and execution of operations and the discussion on issues affecting Islam.

Under the IEC are two (2) special committees, namely: the Jamiatul Al-Islamia revolutionary tabligh group and the Al-misuaratt khutbah committee. The Jamiatul conducts Islamic propagation and the solicitation of fund and assistance from foreign countries. The Al-misuaratt, on the other hand, is in-charge of the organization's agitation-propaganda activities.

ASG's military organization (see Appendix E for Organizational Chart of ASG) is known as the Mujahidden Al-sharifullah that is composed mainly of former MNLF and MILF reformist group members. Three main units are undertaking its activities, the demolition team, the mobile force, and the campaign and propaganda division.

The demolition team manufactures its own mines and explosives and conducts the bombing/sabotage operations of the Ahai. The mobile force monitors, collaborates, and coordinates with the other divisions. It consists mainly of affiliates of radio clubs, traders, businessmen, shippers, and professionals. The campaign and propaganda division collects and reports vital information to the Mujahidden Al-sharifullah. It is composed of professionals, students and businessmen.

After the death of ustadz Abdurajak Janjalani, the amir (revolutionary leader) and the founder of the Al-harakatul Al-islamiya (islamic movement), in an encounter with the

police in December 1998 in Lamitan, Basilan, ASG members became disgruntled and suffered a leadership vacuum. As an effect, its organization crumbled. Under Janjalani, the ASG has a central committee with different functional committees responsible for planning and formulating programs, and controlling and directing the activities of all sub-groups in its entire operational area (Basilan, Sulu, General Santos, and Zamboanga peninsula including Palawan). At present, the formal organization disappeared and what is left is a collection of various armed groups who have their own respective leaders. Although ostensibly fighting for an Islamic State, the ASG has little to show for its activities but criminal behavior and the accumulation of money from that behavior.

The leadership problem in Basilan was resolved with the appointment in July 1999 of Abdurajak Abubakar's brother Khaddafy, as his successor. In the province of Basilan, all factions of the ASG recognized Khaddafy Janjalani as the overall amir. The Basilan based group continued to dominate the illegal activities of the ASG, and aside from the regular ASG members there are other lawless groups in Basilan who affiliated themselves with the ASG and they provide most of the forces that the group uses in its activities. Recently, there have been several indications that the group had recruited some MNLF and MILF regulars in Basilan as allies.

The Sulu-based ASG, on the other hand, failed to establish a "de facto" organization after the death of Abdurajak Janjalani. As a consequence the five Sulu based groups headed by Radullan Sahirun, Galib Andang, Mujib Susukan, Nadzmie Saabduallah, and Umbra Jumdail operate independently and no centralized guidance and leadership has ever been noted in all its previous operations. What is commonly done is

to forge a temporary tactical alliance during the conduct of criminal and terroristic actions against the civilians.

But despite this organizational and leadership crisis, both Basilan and Sulu-based ASG were observed to have been using similar if not the same strategy, tactics, techniques, and procedures in the conduct of criminal/terrorist activities as well as guerrilla operations. Both groups involve themselves in kidnap for ransom, abduction and killing of innocent civilians, attacks on Christian dominated villages, bombings, arson, and bank robberies.⁴⁴

ASG Strategy and Tactics

The following are the tactics being adopted by the (ASG) Ahai Mujahideens:

1. Sabotage and bombing operations are conducted in heavily populated areas and in areas where non-Muslim religious activities are being undertaken (e.g., the August 1991 bombing of the Zamboanga city port terminal where members of the ship Doulos, an international and interdenominational movement committed to world evangelization, were holding a cultural and farewell program).

2. In kidnapping religious personalities (like Fr Cirilo Nacorda, Charles Walton, and two Spanish nuns), they see to it that there is wide media coverage before release of its victims and they will only release their captives if the MILF is involved in the negotiations. To justify kidnapping and extortion activities, it is alleged that it is in keeping with the Islamic doctrine which gives them the right to kill their enemies and deprive them of their wealth as mandated by Allah and the Islamic law.

3. In carrying out major armed activities, it seeks augmentation from the other Muslim autonomous groups like the MNLF and the MILF and their armed relatives.

4. All armed operations are well planned and well coordinated and to ensure the success, they do not discriminate whether Muslims are included in the targeted victims. They justify their conduct by alleging that all Muslims are required to shed their blood for the glory of Allah. They invite foreign nationals as observers while undertaking atrocities to popularize their group in other Islamic countries that they are court for support.

5. Conduct political, economic and social disorders to force Christians and non Muslims to vacate areas they claim as their own. ⁴⁵

ASG Operational Techniques and Procedures

1. Movement Techniques. The movement of the ASG is never limited by time, weather, and terrain. Units can move with ease in the day and even at night, capitalizing on their knowledge of the terrain and on the use of some commercial night vision devices.

The ASG usually move in file formation with the leaders, hostages and members of the families at the middle. At the head of their formation, the ASG utilizes women and children as lead elements. They are about two to three kilometers away from the forward security elements. Following the main body is the ASG's rear security, which is just about 500 meters to one kilometer away.

2. Evasion Techniques. Most of the time the ASG will avoid contact with operating troops. This is done by doing the following techniques:

Sidestepping Technique. This technique is normally used when ASG controls the area it is in, has plenty of rest, and is not doing any significant or important activity. Doing this simply avoids the general direction and axis of advance of operating troops by

stepping aside a few hundred meters away from the axis, hide, and do not make contact and let the government forces pass.

Water Lily Concept. The technique is used when ASG control the area it is in, is awaiting resupply in that area, and needs a rest. It is called a 'water lily' concept because it depicts how the water lilies in a pond of water just flows out, around and back to its original position when somebody is wading or crossing the pond. The ASG evades the axis of advance of operating troops by going out, away, and around a position in two different directions avoiding contact, then going back to the original position.

The ASG follows the Troops. The ASG will tail the last element of patrolling troops from a distance with the thought in mind that the leading element will never have a chance to cross its paths and will be avoiding the direction of attack and patrol of operating troops. Civilians will usually be used to tail the end of the operating government forces and will serve as the recon element and the main ASG body will follow from about 2-3 kilometers behind.

Use of a small diversionary force to divert the attention of the operating troops away from an unprepared main body. The small diversionary force will sacrifice being noticed by operating troops to divert the attention from a main body that is not ready to fight.

3. Engagement Techniques. When engagement cannot be avoided, the ASGs will more often than not employ their 57-millimeter recoilless rifles, massive M203 grenade launchers in the first burst of fire and execute fire and maneuver which is usually envelopment or encircling maneuvers. It will use snipers in every opportunity. Usually armed Muslims, who are residents of nearby villages, will collaborate with the ASG and

participate in the on-going firefight. Even Muslims who are only armed with bolos will participate with the intent of capturing a firearm from a fallen government troops. The government forces eventually get surprised that attacks and fires are coming from different directions when these armed sympathizers join the fight.

The ASG, as a guerrilla unit, carefully selects their targets and employs tactical advantage by dictating the location, time, and tempo of the battle. As discussed earlier it will as much as possible avoid a fight against government forces. And when engaged, the ASG will not sustain or engage in a long fight and will find a way to break out of battle.

4. Withdrawal Techniques. When the ASG is involved in an intense engagement, it is likely to withdraw in areas where it believes pursuing troops would hesitate to follow and that the delivery of artillery and close air support would be held back due to some political and other constraints. These will be in areas where there are many civilians like places of worship, hospitals, markets, and schools. If there are mangroves in the vicinity it is likely that it will withdraw to these places for refuge.

It does a withdrawal by bounds with the main body doing the first breakout. A small delaying element will cover the withdrawal of the main body and sniper fires will be extensive in the execution of the delay. Delaying elements eventually disengage and breakout by bounds.

5. Bivouac Techniques. They ASG do not stay in one place longer than three days. During these hasty encampments, it secures temporary bases with at least three security layers with three groups in each layer, with the main body staying on the center. The bivouac area will be in a heavily vegetated area, a water point will be nearby, and it

will be in the vicinity of about three to five kilometers of a nearby village whose residents are sympathetic.⁴⁶

Logistics and Local Support System

1. Local support. The ASG derives its strength from the civilian populace in the areas where it operates. Cultural factors, blood ties, religion, and tribal affinity enable the ASG to easily muster support from the local populace. The protection offered by the ASG's civilian layered supporters is one big factor why they it easily escapes pursuit operations by government troops.

Aside from its regular members, the ASG considers the MILF, particularly those in Basilan, as a force multiplier. After the capture of a main jungle base in Lantawan, Basilan in May 2000; the MILF in the province supported the ASG in terms of safe refuge, manpower, and logistics. The group of Hadji Amin, an MILF commander based in Baiwas, Sumisip, Basilan was also the one who aided Khadaffy Janjalani and his group to extricate from Basilan to Sulu.

The large monetary compensation derived from criminal activities attracts a lot of the local populace by the hordes to become members or mass base support system of the ASG. Even some of the MILF regulars in Basilan also shifted their membership to the ASG because of the financial gains they got in joining the group. This accounted for the sudden increase of strength of the ASG in 2000 when they were at the height of its moneymaking activities. Aside from kidnapping and robbery the ASG also extorts money from wealthy families particularly in Jolo, Basilan, and Zamboanga city.

2. Foreign Support and Linkages. In the Middle East, the ASG previously drew support from the extremist elements in Iran (Hezbollah), Pakistan (Jamaat-i-Islami and

Hizbul-Mujahideen), Afghanistan (Hizb-i-Islami), Egypt (Al Gamaa-al-islamiya), and in Algeria (Islamic Liberation Front). In North Africa, it receives significant financial, logistical, and tactical support from the International Harakat'ul al-Islamia based in Libya.

Islamic NGOs engaged in relief work in Mindanao are suspected to be conduits of support between international terrorist organizations and local extremist groups. The International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO) was reported to have financed the expenses incurred by ASG recruits sent for religious and military training in the Islamic University of Pakistan and at the International Islamic Brigade camp in Afghanistan.

The Philippine National Police has identified Osamah bin Ladin as a supporter of local extremists through his brother-in-law, Mohammad Jamal Khalifa who was able to infuse financial and material support to the ASG. His support however stopped and their linkage with bin Ladin severed when he was banned by the Bureau of Immigration from re-entering the Philippines in 1994.

On 23 July 1999, Radullan Sahiron's (one of the ASG commanders) close relatives identified as Nursha Sahiron met two Pakistani nationals, Abulwahab Al-Habsi and Kamsa Habib Alih and a Malaysian national identified as Ustadz Abdulbaki, in Jolo, Sulu. The meeting between the foreigners and Sahiron took place at the ASG's satellite camp at the foothill of Mt. Tungol, Patikul, Sulu. Discussed during the conference was the recruitment of women to be trained as medical aides in Sabah, Malaysia, and Jedda, Saudi Arabia. As part of the arrangements, dependents of the probable recruits were to be given paid compensation when their respective relatives left

for training abroad. Talks about training ASG recruits in Sabah and Pakistan were also discussed.⁴⁷

In the documents recovered by the Philippine police in 1995 outlining an Oplan Bojinka, it was disclosed that Osama bin Laden asked a certain Ramzi Ahmed Yousef to train some members of the Abu Sayyaf in the use of highly sophisticated explosives. In view of this, Yousef spent several weeks in Basilan traveling into the remote and hilly island to witness small arms training, then imparted his extraordinary bomb-making skills to more than twenty ASG terrorists somewhere in Isabela, Basilan. Before undertaking this mission, Yousef was reported to have arrived in the country several years before the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993.⁴⁸

¹Utoh Ilkhab Salahuddin, "Feasibility of Integrating Filipino Muslims into the Mainstream of the Philippine Society" (Master's Thesis, Central Colleges of the Philippines, 1990), 43.

²Alunan Glang, *Muslim Secession or Integration?* (Quezon City: Garcia Publishing Company, 1969), 28.

³Mariano A. Dumia, "The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference: Its Implications to National Security" (Master's Thesis, National Defense College of the Philippines, 1991), 81

⁴Samuel K. Tan, *The Filipino Muslim Armed Struggle, 1900-1972* (Manila: Filipino Foundation, Inc., 1977), 93.

⁵T. J. S. George, *Revolt in Mindanao* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1980), 68.

⁶Dumia, "MNLF," 83.

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹*Ibid.*, 84.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹George, *Revolt in Mindanao*, 201.

¹²Dumia, "MNLF," 85.

¹³George, "Revolt in Mindanao," 208.

¹⁴Sugiyanto Hadi Pramoto, *Political Implications of the Problem in Southern Philippines* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Press, 1990), 70.

¹⁵Peter G. Gowing and Robert D. McAmis, *The Muslim Filipinos* (Manila: Solidaridad, 1974), 213.

¹⁶Geoffrey Salgado, *Development Policies for Muslim Mindanao in Pre-Martial Law Period, 1955-1971* (Iligan City: Moro Peoples Response Center, 1989), 34.

¹⁷Dumia, "MNLF," 129.

¹⁸Marites Danguilan-Vitug and Glenda M. Gloria, *Under the Crescent Moon: Rebellion in Mindanao* (Quezon City: Ateneo Center for Social Policy and Public Affairs, 2000), 33

¹⁹Dumia, "MNLF," 129

²⁰"Moro Islamic Liberation Front," database on-line; available from <http://www.morohihad.com/milf.html>; internet; accessed on 29 October 2001.

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- ²¹Danguilan-Vitug and Gloria, *Under the Crescent Moon*, 134
- ²²"Moro Islamic Liberation Front."
- ²³*Ibid.*
- ²⁴*Ibid.*
- ²⁵Danguilan-Vitug and Gloria, *Under the Crescent Moon*, 122.
- ²⁶OG3 Headquarters, Philippine Army, "Operational Brief on Muslim Insurgency" (Fort Bonifacio, Makati City, 2001), 3.
- ²⁷*Ibid.*, 6.
- ²⁸OG2 Headquarters, Philippine Army, "Intelligence Brief on the MILF" (Fort Bonifacio, Makati City, 2001), 4.
- ²⁹*Ibid.*
- ³⁰*Ibid.*, 5.
- ³¹OG3 Headquarters, Philippine Army, "Operational Brief on Muslim Insurgency," 3.
- ³²*Ibid.*, 4.
- ³³OG2 Headquarters, Philippine Army, "Intelligence Brief on the Abu Sayyaf" (Fort Bonifacio, Makati City, 2001), 2.
- ³⁴Danguilan-Vitug and Gloria, *Under the Crescent Moon*, 211.
- ³⁵OG3 Headquarters, Philippine Army, "Operational Brief on Muslim Insurgency," 5.
- ³⁶OG2 Headquarters, Philippine Army, "Intelligence Brief on the Abu Sayyaf," 6.
- ³⁷*Ibid.*
- ³⁸*Ibid.*, 7.
- ³⁹*Ibid.*, 7-8.
- ⁴⁰*Ibid.*
- ⁴¹*Ibid.*, 8-10.
- ⁴²*Ibid.*, 11.
- ⁴³Martin Marfil, "U.S. to Help Rescue Burnhams, Support Fight Against Abu," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 14 January 2002.
- ⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 13-15.
- ⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 15-16.
- ⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 16-17.
- ⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 17-19.
- ⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 22.

CHAPTER 4

PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT PEACE EFFORTS

With the Moro National Liberation Front

The armed struggle of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) against the Philippine Government became an international issue in 1972 when the Third Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, adopted a resolution titled “The conditions of Muslims in the Philippines.” In its final communiqué, the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) expressed its concern over the plight of Muslims living in the Philippines. In a 1974 Kuala Lumpur conference, the OIC adopted Resolution 18 that called on the Philippine government to meet with representatives of the MNLF in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in order to arrive at a just solution to the Muslim problem. This just solution should be within the framework of national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Philippines. The resolution stressed the OICs recognition that the war in Mindanao was a problem internal to the Philippines.¹

The war with the MNLF at that time (1974) had already claimed about 120,000 lives and displaced about 300,000 more and wanting a solution to the problem and to have peace in the country, President Marcos took into consideration the proposals of the OIC. In confidential exchanges between Marcos and his senior advisers, the government acknowledged that it could not deal with the MNLF without considering its rich and powerful supporters in the Middle East. The country, being very dependent on its oil exports from Middle East countries, found it politically and economically wise not to sever its ties with these countries by not heeding to OIC recommendations on how to solve the problem.

Thus in January 1974, Marcos dispatched his team of diplomats to the Middle East to impress on MNLF supporters there the sincerity of his government in exhausting all peaceful means to bring immediate peace to the Muslim communities in Mindanao. Marcos sent his executive secretary Melchor, a skillful diplomat, to head the mission to the Middle East. After the first trip of Melchor, in 14-20 January 1975, he reported to Marcos that diplomatic ties with the Middle East countries hinged on a settlement with the MNLF and that the MNLF was not acting on its own but under the influence of its major supporters from the OIC.²

In succeeding trips to Jeddah, Melchor had several meetings with Misuari but talks failed due to Misuari's proposals that were tantamount to government recognition of the territorial integrity of a Muslim country within Philippine territory. Melchor refused to discuss Misuari's proposals and instead talked about the importance of economic development and national unity. With Melchor and Misuari not coming into terms, the talks came to a stalemate and dragged on for a year. In an OIC conference in Istanbul, Turkey, in May 1976, the OIC issued a resolution appealing to the government of the Philippines and the MNLF to resume negotiations for a solution to the problem. With this, a new round of talks was set in Tripoli for November 1976.³

The Tripoli negotiations presided by Dr Ali Treki was held at the Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 13-23 December 1976. Carmelo Z. Barbero with Ambassadors Pangandaman and Castro, Commissioner Datumanong, Karim Sidri, and Col Eduardo Ermita, headed the Philippine panel. Chairman Nur Misuari headed the MNLF panel with members Hashim Salamat, Abdul Baki, and Hasan. The representatives of the members

of the Quadripartite Commission and the Secretary general of the OIC, Dr Ahmed Karim Gaye, also participated in the discussions.⁴

At the end of the negotiations on 23 December 1976, the Tripoli Agreement with four main provisions was signed (see Appendix F for the Tripoli Agreement). The first provision called for the establishment of autonomy in the Southern Philippines within the realm of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of the Philippines. The second provision enumerated the enumerated provinces in Mindanao that would comprise the Autonomous Region. The third provision outlined and defined substantive principles for the establishment of autonomy and ceasefire in certain areas in Mindanao which was to commence right after the signing and another four paragraphs which stated the procedures to finally achieve or implement autonomy. The agreement emphasized that its implementation would be within the realm of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of the Philippines. Moreover, the implementation of the agreement was to conform to constitutional processes of the Republic.⁵

The signatories were Undersecretary Barbero and Chairman Misuari for the Philippine government and the MNLF respectively. For the Philippine government the signing of the agreement was one solid step toward the attainment of peace in Mindanao, ending a generations long uprising. On the other hand, Chairman Misuari was not very happy over the signing because he believed that the compromise formula of autonomy was a complete departure from its original stand for a separate and independent state for the Muslims in Mindanao. The pressure of the OIC on Misuari to come to terms with the Philippine government forced him to sign the treaty.⁶

After the signing of the agreement another meeting was scheduled to study in detail the points left for discussion in reaching a solution that could implement the provision of the agreement. Again in this meeting Misuari and his panel members reverted to the original position of demanding the creation of a separate Islamic government in Mindanao with a separate flag, coat of arms, and a standing army equivalent to 25 percent of the total strength of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The MNLF demands violated the Philippine constitution and the Tripoli Agreement itself and were therefore not acceptable to government. Thus, the meeting failed to define the details for the implementation of the agreement and with the refusal of the MNLF to reconsider its demands, the implementation of the Tripoli agreement failed and was doomed.⁷

President Marcos, however, still wanting to find ways to salvage the agreement, issued a presidential proclamation creating Regional Autonomy in the southern Philippines implementing the first provision of the Tripoli Agreement. He also immediately set about establishing a provisional government, offering majority membership to the MNLF and the chairmanship to Misuari. Misuari however did not respond and as a result incumbent governors of the thirteen provinces were appointed members of the provisional government. To implement the second provision, a referendum-plebiscite was scheduled for 17 April 1977. The referendum was to ask the electorate to vote on the administrative system of the autonomous areas being ruled or controlled by the MNLF with full and complete authority.⁸

Only nine of the thirteen provinces joined the referendum and in an overwhelming margin the electorate voted against the creation of a single autonomous unit as well as

giving the MNLF out-right full control of the autonomous areas but rather chose to remain in their respective regions and be administered by their elected regional and provincial officials. Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, and Zamboanga thus remained in Region 9; North Cotabato, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, and Lanao in Region 12; Palawan in Region 4; and South Cotabato and Davao del Sur in Region 11. The MNLF refused to honor the conduct and results of the referendum and continued with its demand and hostilities against the government for a separate Islamic state within Mindanao.⁹

When Corazon Aquino took over as President from Marcos after a peoples' revolt in February 1986, one of the very first moves she made was to restore democratic institutions in government and pursue a national reconciliation program. As a result negotiations between the MNLF and the government began again and the 1976 Tripoli Agreement was used as a starting point.¹⁰

Eventually in January 1987, after several meetings, the MNLF and the government reached a cease-fire. The MNLF relinquished its goal of complete independence for Muslim regions and accepted the government's offer for autonomy. By this time, Muslim opposition groups had further splintered, and only the MNLF (representing about 20,000 members) agreed to the peace terms. All the while, the government also attempted to establish relations with the MNLF breakaway group, the MILF. By early 1987 however, MILF forces launched offensives against government troops in an attempt to gain negotiating leverage and be recognized internationally.¹¹

The new Philippine constitution of 1987 ultimately honored the Tripoli Agreement, and provided for autonomous regions in Muslim areas of Mindanao. At the end of 1987, Aquino created the Regional Consultative Commission (RCC) in an attempt

to maintain dialog between the government and rebel groups in preparation for the constitutionally mandated autonomy legislation for Mindanao. Despite the creation of the RCC though, most of the dialog between the government and the MNLF continued to be one-to-one affairs.

Violence in 1988 and 1989 in Mindanao continued sporadically due to splits along ethnic and personalistic lines of the Muslim separatist movement. In August 1989, the Aquino administration approved Republic Act 6734 that created the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) as a response to the Muslim rebels clamor for autonomy. The affected regions of Mindanao and Sulu were given the right to avoid membership in the ARMM if they so voted in a plebiscite. Since most provinces had majority Christian populations, only four of thirteen provinces voted for autonomy in the November 1989 plebiscite (two in Mindanao and two in Sulu). Many Muslims were dissatisfied with the agreement, felt too much had been compromised, and boycotted the vote. With the agreement in hand and the apparent willingness of the government to honor agreements, Misuari's main rival was no longer the government bureaucracy, but rather the breakaway MILF and its leadership. The MILF has remained adamantly opposed to the government-MNLF agreements, and sporadic violence continued among rival factions, family clans, and government troops.¹²

The first election of ARMM officials was held in 17 February 1990, and the new politico-administrative body of the ARMM was formally inaugurated in November 1990. The former MNLF legal adviser, Zacarias Candao, was elected to the governorship winning over Ali Dimaporo. The functions of the departments of public works, labor and employment, local government, social services, etc, were transferred to Candao and his

autonomous regional government. The government authorized the ARMM to initiate and encourage direct foreign investments for growth and development, but the lack of Moro unity and commitment to common cause prevented the ARMM from becoming a functioning, legitimate governorship body.¹³

Candao had a three-year term and after an election Liningding Pangandaman won and replaced him as the new governor. Candao refused to concede defeat in the election and his people took away computers, office tables, and vehicles and there was no semblance of a civil and smooth turnover. Problems of bureaucracy, nepotism, and corruption, which characterized Candao's term, also tainted Pangandaman's term as governor and the dissatisfaction of the residents of ARMM over governance continued to increase. In these initial six years of the ARMM, the MNLF continued to rebel against the government and fighting never ceased.¹⁴

In the March 1996 election government strategists tried to convince Misuari to run for ARMM governor and, despite objections from MNLF hardliners, Misuari filed his candidacy and eventually won. The strategy of the government then was that it will be easier to talk peace with the MNLF now that it was practically running the ARMM for until then, the MNLF had never recognized the ARMM. The MNLF jockeyed for positions in the ARMM government and Misuari appointed officials arbitrarily with more than 50 percent of the cabinet posts available given to MNLF members.¹⁵

With Misuari at the helm of the ARMM, President Ramos pushed the peace agreement to be continued and concluded and finally on 2 September 1996 (see Appendix G for the 1996 Full Implementation of the Tripoli Agreement) the peace pact between the MNLF and the government was finally signed by President Ramos and

Misuari. This signed peace pact covered three broad areas, namely the transition to autonomy, socio-economic development in selected areas in Mindanao, and the MNLF combatants integration into the police and the military. The third area of the pact, which calls for the integration of combatants into the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police, was realized before the end of year 2000. About 5,500 former MNLF members underwent basic military training and about 200 as officer candidates training and after the completion of their respective trainings they were integrated into the mainstream of the Philippine Armed forces as privates and second lieutenants respectively.¹⁶

The term of Misuari as governor, just as his predecessors, was also characterized with severe bureaucracy, dubious financial transactions, and corruption. The ARMM under Misuari received huge infusions of money from the national government, second highest of the thirteen regions of the country. The infusions were meant to subsidize the newborn region and expedite development in the area, but after several years ARMM still had little to show for the investment. The region remained the lowest per capita rate of functional literacy in the country, lowest per capita income, and the lowest life expectancy among all regions in the country.

On 29 April 2001, just four months before the election for a new governor for ARMM, twenty-six top MNLF officials led by Farouk Hussien withdrew support for Nur Misuari stripping him of all powers and functions including his command of the Bangsa Moro Army. A council of fifteen was created from among the twenty-six top MNLF officials to replace Misuari. In reaction, Misuari convened on 2 May 2001 an MNLF general conference wherein he forced the members of the Central Committee to oust the

twenty-six petitioners. Salem Adam, Libyan ambassador to Manila disclosed that the key members of the OIC who met on 10 May recognized the fifteen man council that toppled Misuari as the highest ranking body in the MNLF hierarchy. The envoy was further quoted as saying that "if the consensus of the Muslims is that chairman Misuari is not performing very well, then it is the will of the Muslims and the will of the leaders of the MNLF."¹⁷

In a bid to hold on to power, Misuari tried on 19 November 2001 to derail the 26 November election by leading some 100 armed followers in a pocket rebellion, attacking the town of Jolo, Sulu, and an Army camp in the province. Although government forces easily quashed the attack, it resulted in fifty-two dead and eighty-six wounded, mostly civilians. Misuari fled to Sabah in Malaysia after the failed rebellion where he was arrested for illegal entry. He was later repatriated and was detained at Fort Sto. Domingo, a training camp of the Philippine National Police in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, awaiting trial for rebellion.¹⁸

Farouk Hussin won as the new governor of ARMM in the 26 November 2001 election and although the term of Misuari still had to end on September 2002, he was sworn in as de facto governor of ARMM in January 2002. Except for the timing of his takeover, Hussin complied with the following requisites of his office: he had been proclaimed by the Commission on Elections; he had been sworn into office by a duly authorized official, in his case, no less than the president; and most importantly, his assumption had been accepted by the other branches of government.¹⁹

With the passage of the New Organic Act 9054, the ARMM's geographical coverage was expanded to include Marawi City and the trouble-plagued Basilan

province. The autonomous region previously included only Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur; both in Central Mindanao; Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, both in the far south. The new governor was confident that the New Organic Act granted a very strengthened regional autonomous arrangement that empowered the new leaders to create their own plans and policies faithful to their commitment to rebuild the ARMM and Muslim Mindanao. With the new ARMM leadership, the government hoped that peace and development would eventually occur in Mindanao.²⁰

With the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)

In 1997 when the peace pact with the MNLF was about to be concluded, President Ramos started exploratory talks with the MILF by sending his executive secretary, Ruben Torres, to meet with Hashim Salamat. The initial mission of Torres was to get the MILF agree on a ceasefire and on 27 January he was able to forge a ceasefire with the MILF in the area of Buldon, Maguindanao, where the fighting was fierce.²¹

In a following February meeting between the government and MILF panels, the MILF listed nine broad peace discussion issues: ancestral domain; displaced and landless Muslims; destruction of properties and war victims; human rights issues; social and cultural discrimination; corruption of the mind and moral fiber; economic inequities and widespread poverty; exploitation of natural resources; and agrarian related issues. These long-term issues were hardly discussed on several succeeding meetings because ceasefire violations took too much of the time and attention of the peace panelists in their discussions.

The ceasefire agreement signed in 27 January 1997 (see Appendix H for Interim Cessation of Hostilities in Buldon, Maguindanao) for the area of Buldon was eventually

pushed to become a general cessation of hostilities, and was signed in 27 July 1997 (see Appendix I for the Agreement for General Cessation of Hostilities) by Fortunato Abat for the government and Jaafar for the MILF. To firm up the ceasefire, an independent fact-finding committee was formed, headed by Catholic priest Father Mercado and composed of representatives from non-government organizations and the private sector, to monitor violations and help settle disputes.²²

After the signing of the cessation of hostilities agreement any further development on the peace process, however, was shattered by armed skirmishes between the MILF and government troops in Maguindanao, Cotabato, Lanao del Norte, and Lanao del Sur following a series of MILF terrorist operations which ultimately led to the declaration of an all out war by the Estrada presidency. On 12 August 2000, the MILF unilaterally and indefinitely suspended the peace talks after the Armed Forces of the Philippines captured all of its major and satellite camps in Central Mindanao including its main camp, Camp Abubakar in Barira, Maguindanao. Realizing the futility of adopting semi-conventional tactics in confronting the Armed Forces of the Philippines in this major battle, the MILF eventually shifted to guerrilla type operations.²³

Despite a continued armed conflict between the MILF and the government forces, on November 2000 the continuous back channeling efforts of the government peace panel members paved the way for the MILF leadership to accept that the Moro problem and conflict in Mindanao could be resolved through a negotiated political solution after an alleged nationwide consultation on the stalled peace negotiations. In this regard, the MILF stated its willingness to resume peace negotiations with the government during exploratory talks on 3 January 2001.²⁴

When President Arroyo assumed office on 20 January 2001, she ordered the reconstruction and continuance of the peace talks with the MILF. With the order, government panelist doubled their efforts and was able to forge a pact with the MILF to resume peace talks on 24 March 2001 (see Appendix J for the Agreement on the Resumption of Peace Talks) and on 7 August 2001 an agreement detailing how to conduct and implement a ceasefire signed between the MILF and the government was signed (see Appendix K for the Agreement on the Conduct of and Implementation of the Ceasefire).

Months thereafter, further resumption of formal peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) was again in danger because of possible ceasefire violations, including serious accusations that the separatist group had been harboring members of the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan. The Philippine military claimed that the remaining hostages of the Abu Sayyaf were being moved in and out of MILF camps in Maluso, Sumisip, Tipo-Tipo, and Tuburan towns in Basilan and as a result the formal talks scheduled in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 9 March 2002 were again suspended until the issue of violations was clarified. The MILF in their press statements made it clear however that they are not in any way supporting the ASG and denied having organizational links or tactical alliances with them.²⁵

Despite these snags in the peace talks with the MILF, the Arroyo administration was still determined on pursuing peace talks and address the concerns raised by the MILF under Hashim Salamat. President Arroyo herself stressed that the government should speed up the peace process so that Mindanao's development could proceed. She was inclined to downgrade the level of government's peace efforts with the MILF through

backdoor channels as was done in the past to make progress faster since there was no protocol to deal with. Back channel talks held in Kuala Lumpur proved effective when both sides reached initial agreements to resume talks and eventually forge a ceasefire pact. In a radio interview she said, “The faster we can talk peace, the faster we can work for the region’s development, and all these suspicions will be removed.”²⁶

With the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)

While the MNLF have come into terms with the government and the MILF agreed to talk peace, the ASG continue to demand an independent Islamic State and disagrees with a non-violent struggle with the government. After the death of its founder and leader, Abdurajak Janjalani, it articulated its non-violent struggle against the state by conducting sensational terrorist actions and criminal activities. Because of this, the Philippine National Police branded it as a group not composed of ideologues but of bandits, robbers, and kidnappers doing criminal activities under the guise of jihad and the fight for an independent Islamic state.

The government demanded that they stop with their terrorist activities, avail itself of an amnesty program and to proceed with complaints through the Philippine judicial system. However, the group has refused to consider the offer of the government and as a result the military was ordered by the president to declare an all out war against them. The Philippine government further stated that it would no longer settle or talk peace with the ASGs for the reason that it is but a bond of criminals and terrorists who should be brought to justice by force.²⁷

¹Sugiyanto Hadi Pramoto, *Political Implications of the Problem in Southern Philippines* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Press, 1990), 84.

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- ²Marites Danguilan-Vitug and Glenda Gloria, *Under the Crescent Moon: Rebellion in Mindanao* (Quezon City: Ateneo Center for Social Policy and Public Affairs, 2000), 31.
- ³*Ibid.*, 32.
- ⁴*Ibid.*, 34.
- ⁵Mariano A. Dumia, "The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference: Its Implications to National Security" (Master's Thesis, National Defense College of the Philippines, 1991), 130.
- ⁶Saidamen Pangarungan, *Muslim Filipino Struggle for Identity: Challenge and Response* (Quezon City: International Studies Institute of the Philippines, 1985), 133.
- ⁷Danguilan-Vitug and Gloria, *Under the Crescent Moon*, 33.
- ⁸Dumia, "MNLF," 151-154.
- ⁹*Ibid.*, 156.
- ¹⁰Joel David Steinberg, *The Philippines: A Singular and Plural Place* (Colorado: Westview Press), 175.
- ¹¹Harber, "Case of Moro Identity," 55.
- ¹²*Ibid.*, 57.
- ¹³*Ibid.*, 58.
- ¹⁴Danguilan-Vitug and Gloria, *Under the Crescent Moon*, 79.
- ¹⁵*Ibid.*, 80.
- ¹⁶OG3 Headquarters, Philippine Army, "Operational Brief on Muslim Insurgency," 8.
- ¹⁷*Ibid.*, 10.
- ¹⁸Carlos Conde, "Misuari Back to the Hills, Vows to Pursue Moro Independence," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 19 November 2001.
- ¹⁹Blanche Rivera, "ARMM Polls Winners to Be Proclaimed," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 2 December 2001.
- ²⁰Danguilan-Vitug and Gloria, *Under the Crescent Moon*, 144.
- ²¹*Ibid.*, 145.
- ²²*Ibid.*, 146.
- ²³OG3 Headquarters, Philippine Army, "Operational Brief on Muslim Insurgency," 9.
- ²⁴*Ibid.*
- ²⁵"GRP-MILF Peace Talks Advance with Ceasefire Operating Pact," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 7 October 2001.
- ²⁶Marichu Villanueva, "Government Eyes Suspension of Peace Talks with the MILF," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 7 March 2002.
- ²⁷OG3 Headquarters, Philippine Army, "Operational Brief on Muslim Insurgency," 12.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Findings

The results of the research indicate that the bases for the continued Muslim insurgency in Mindanao can be traced to all aspects of the historical development of the Muslim society in Mindanao, namely: the political, economic, socio-cultural, religious, and psychological aspects which evolved since Spanish colonial times. Specifically, the Spanish colonial policy of Hispanization and Christianization resulted in several bloody Muslim raids and it also started the religious animosity and intolerance between Christian and Muslim Filipinos which considered in totality, for the basic root causes of the centuries-old Muslim problem.

For the Muslims, the preservation of the Islamic and their cultural heritage against foreign or local Christian domination is their most sacred duty and are willing to die for its defense if necessary. These root causes were later aggravated by the equally counter-productive American and Philippine governments' policies of Muslim pacification, assimilation, and integration programs. These programs were considered by the Muslims as a challenge to their religion and culture and therefore offered a serious threat to their existence. They felt that the economic development and governance brought to their land benefited only the Christians and made them a second-class Filipinos in their own homeland and the migration of Christian settlers resulted in their losing their ancestral lands.

Land-grabbing, corrupt, and abusive traditional Muslim leaders and government officials; poor economic conditions; government indifference and apathy; the 1968

Jabidah Massacre of Muslim recruits;” the “Mindanao Independence Movement;” the sensationalized reports of religious persecution and genocide; and the resurgence of the Islamic faith worldwide were the immediate causes for the Muslims’ clamor for secession and armed struggle against the Philippine government.

The findings show further that the Filipino Muslim struggle for secession and later autonomy became an international issue when the Third Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in 1972 included in its agenda, a resolution, titled “Conditions of Muslims in the Philippines.” This commenced the involvement of the Organization of Islamic Conference and the international Islamic community in the Muslim problem happening in Mindanao.

On 23 December 1976, the Philippine government and the MNLF signed the Tripoli Agreement providing for the establishment of autonomy in the Southern Philippines and Palawan and an immediate ceasefire between government and MNLF forces. The OIC signed as a witness to the agreement. The “implementing talks” between the government and MNLF panels collapsed and the Marcos government unilaterally implemented the provisions of the Tripoli Agreement by establishing the autonomous regions (IX and XII) in the Southern Philippines in accordance with Constitutional processes. The MNLF and OIC refused to recognize the autonomous regions and continued its call on the Philippine government to implement the Tripoli Agreement in letter and spirit.

Factionalism among the Muslims was clearly manifested after the Tripoli Agreement was reached between Nur Misuari and the government. Hashim Salamat, who

was the vice chairman of Misuari at that time, separated from the MNLF and organized his own separatist movement called the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The primary reason why Salamat broke away from the MNLF was his belief that the MNLF was being manipulated away from the Islamic basics, objectives, and methodologies and that the accord with the government will eventually be a big threat to their Muslim culture and their fight for a separate Islamic state. This separation of Salamat showed that Muslims in Mindanao are very fragmented and they usually follow ancestral lines of allegiance. As has been indicated in history, they have never been homogenous as Muslims in Mindanao and unification seemed never to happen because of the ethnic barriers existing among their various regional groups. Abdulrajak Janjalani, an Islamic scholar, also organized his own separatist group, the Abu Sayyaf (ASG). The ASG espoused the same objectives as that of the MNLF and the MILF and that of a separate Islamic state in Mindanao with a similar objective.

With the Aquino government's policy of national unity and reconciliation, the peace talks between the government and the MNLF were revived. As a result, the Philippine government and the MNLF signed an agreement on 3 January 1987. The agreement provided the guidelines for the establishment of full autonomy to Mindanao, Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, and Palawan subject to democratic processes. The implementing talks likewise failed and the Aquino government had to implement said agreement unilaterally in accordance with democratic processes.

The 1987 Philippine Constitution provided for the creation of an autonomous region in Muslim Mindanao and on 1 August 1989, President Aquino signed Republic Act 6734 creating the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). A plebiscite

was held on 19 November 1989 to determine the composition of the ARMM. Only four provinces voted to join the autonomous region. They were Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi. The government considered the plebiscite as substantial and in complete compliance with the provisions of the Tripoli Agreement and the Jeddah Accord.

Elections for government officials of the autonomous region were held on 17 February 1990 and on 4 July 1990, former MNLF legal adviser Zacaria Candao and his running mate, former MNLF Commander Benjamin Loong, were proclaimed by the Commission on Elections as the duly elected governor and vice-governor of the autonomous region respectively. After Candao's three year term another election was held and this time Liningding Pangandaman was elected Governor. Candao did not concede defeat and saw to it that no formal turnover of governance took place. Both Candao and Pangandaman's terms as governor of the autonomous region were tainted with anomalies and corruption. The six years of the autonomous region under Muslim governors who were former rebels themselves did not give significant improvement to the region. The Muslims were discontented with their performance and their governance did not give them any economic or social benefit.

When President Ramos took over as president, he too continued to find solutions to the problem going along the lines of the Tripoli Agreement. Government peace negotiators continued to pursue and meet with the MNLF leadership to bring them back into the negotiating table. In a strategic move the government negotiators persuaded Nur Misuari to run for the governorship of the autonomous government, and with government backing he won. But just like his two predecessors, he also failed his people. He did not

bring unity and progress into the region and the Muslim people for whom he was fighting for before. His leadership only strengthened the resolve of Salamat and his MILF to fight for secession. The very person who organized the MNLF and who first fought and clamored for secession after being given the chance to bring peace and development into the Muslim dominated region also miserably failed to do so. Power, fame, and riches eroded his early commitments and ideology so much to the point that days before the 2001 reelection for another governor he staged an armed rebellion. He incited his armed followers to attack the town of Jolo and an army brigade headquarters just to prevent the holding of the election that he was sure to lose because of a very poor performance as governor of the Muslim regions.

The Muslim dominated provinces being run by former Muslim rebels was supposed to be a good start and a good deal to make Muslim Mindanao what they had wanted it to be, short of secession. They had all the opportunities and resources to improve the living conditions of their Muslim brothers and bring development into the area but this did not happen. This experience gave indications that giving the Muslims full autonomy or even secession will not really solve their plight and their dissatisfaction will continue to exist.

The peace efforts of the Philippine government starting in 1972 under the term of then President Marcos and continuing under the administration of four successors manifested that the government recognized the problem that the Muslim insurgency brought to the country. Economic development and political stability cannot significantly increase because of the very poor law and order brought about by the insurgency. The Philippine government showed sincerity in bringing peace to Mindanao and met with the

demands and concerns of the Muslim insurgents within constitutional bounds, for in all instances when the peace negotiations broke down for one reason or another government negotiators continued to pursue and bring the insurgents back to the negotiating table.

The Tripoli Agreement as the backbone of the peace negotiations was a sound and viable agreement, satisfying both the Philippine government and the insurgents' concerns. The agreement called for the establishment of autonomy in the Southern Philippines within the realm of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of the Philippines. This provision was fully implemented in 1987 when the Philippine Constitution honored the Tripoli Agreement and President Aquino approved Republic Act 6734 that created the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. Since its creation, Muslim leaders had the opportunity to officially run and manage the affairs of the Autonomous Region, but as mentioned earlier, they failed the expectations of the national government and most especially the Muslim residents in the region.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) that broke away from the MNLF in 1977 for the primary reason that they can not get into terms and agree with the Misuari led MNLF talking and negotiating peace with the government have also decided to talk peace with the government in August 2001 and bring into the negotiating table their concerns. The remnants of the Abu Sayyaf Group on the other hand are being hunted down by government troops who are currently being assisted by US Special Forces elements. The Abu Sayyaf Group that became a criminal organization is slowly disintegrating with the arrest, capture, or death of their leaders and several followers.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are made:

The protracted Muslim armed struggle against the Philippine government is a continuation of the centuries-old Moro struggle for freedom against alien dominance. They see it as way for them to preserve and enhance the Muslim cultural heritage, religion, and identity. It is likewise a demonstration of their desire to regain their pre-Spanish period political and economic dominance in the archipelago particularly in the Southern Philippines.

The causes of the Muslim problem are deeply rooted in the Philippines' colonial past while the immediate and current causes are traced to government neglect and abuses, corrupt local/traditional Muslim leaders, agrarian discontent and land disputes, and the resurgence of the Islamic religion worldwide. They tie up and attribute the government neglect, agrarian discontent, and land disputes with religious tones for the reason that the Philippine government system and bureaucracy is predominantly Christian led and therefore they believe governance and development will favor the Christians more. Land disputes are between Christians who have legally titled most of the arable lands in Mindanao and Muslims who claim it as ancestral properties therefore giving the conflict a religious undertone.

The Muslim Filipinos are very factionalized and have never been a homogenous people. The ethnic and cultural barrier that has always existed among their various regional groups prevented them from having a concerted and coordinated fight and call for a separate Islamic state. The fragmentation among them and their leaders and them not having a central representation made it difficult for the government to negotiate and comprehensively address their concerns. The ethnic differences also led to very poor

governance and performance from some of their leaders who had the opportunity to run the autonomous government.

The Filipino Muslims are currently undergoing a period of growing awareness of Islam in line with the worldwide resurgence. That while the major secessionist groups like the MNLF and the MILF eventually come to terms with the government through peace talks and negotiations so as their socio, economic, and political concerns are addressed some other Islamic fundamentalist leader will again surface and organize a group and call for a renewed secession because of Islamic extremism. This extremism is to the belief that they need complete freedom to practice their divinely prescribed faith-ideology along with its doctrines, customs, and laws. The Christian dominated Philippine government and Christian presence in their land will always be perceived by them as a challenge and barrier to the practice of their faith.

The Philippine government manifested that they are willing to talk peace with the insurgents and find ways to address their concerns. It recognized the fact that a continued peace and order problem brought about by the Muslim insurgency in Mindanao affects the overall economic, social, and political standing of the Philippines. Whatever negotiations or peace talks the government will get into will always be along the provisions of the Tripoli agreement, which is duly recognized by the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) and within constitutional bounds. Though the government is willing to go to the negotiating table for peace, it has shown that they will not also tolerate whatever terrorist act, criminalities, and destabilizing actions the extremist Muslim armed groups conduct.

APPENDIX A

MAP OF THE PHILIPPINES



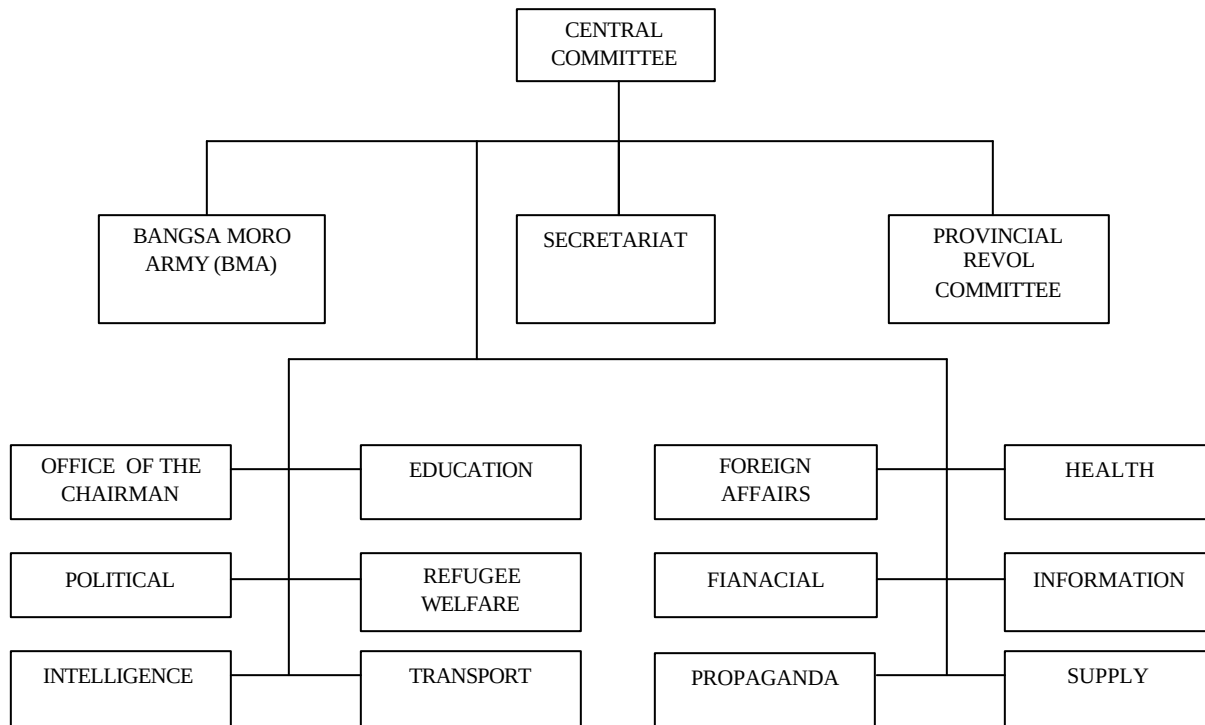
APPENDIX B

MAP OF MINDANAO



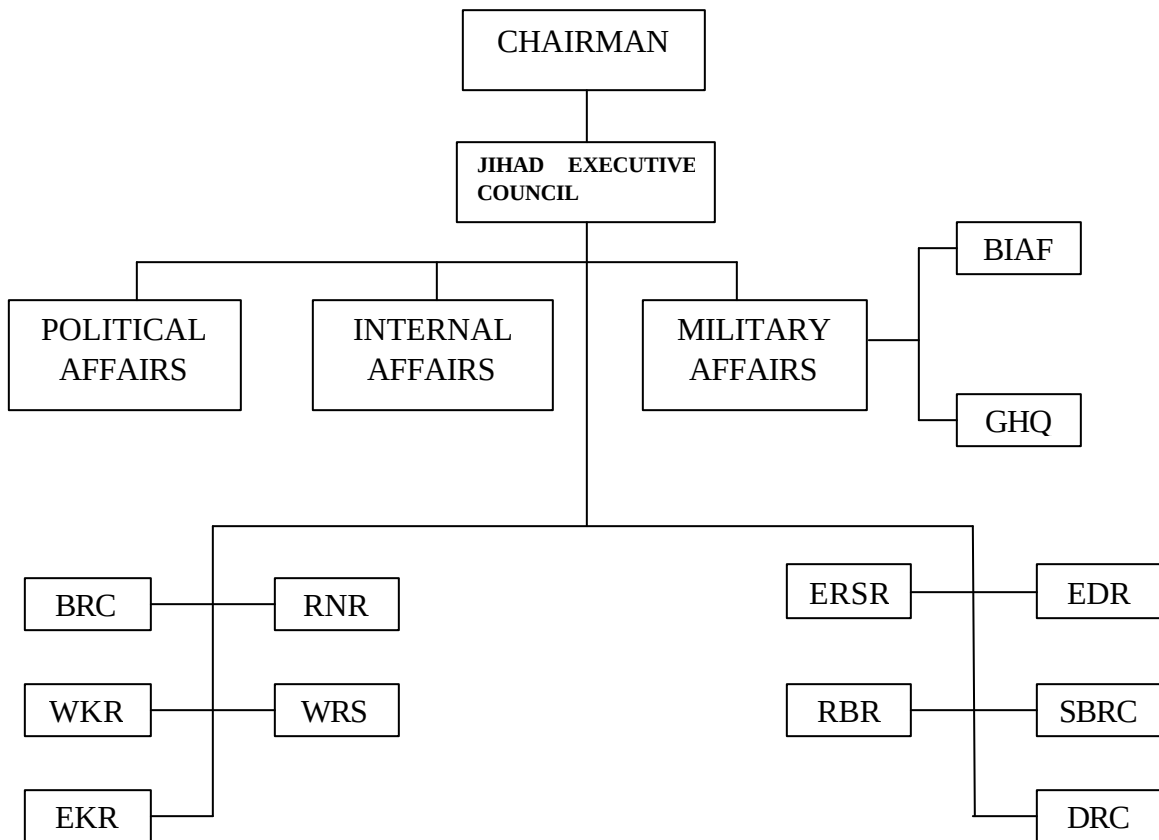
APPENDIX C

MNLF ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



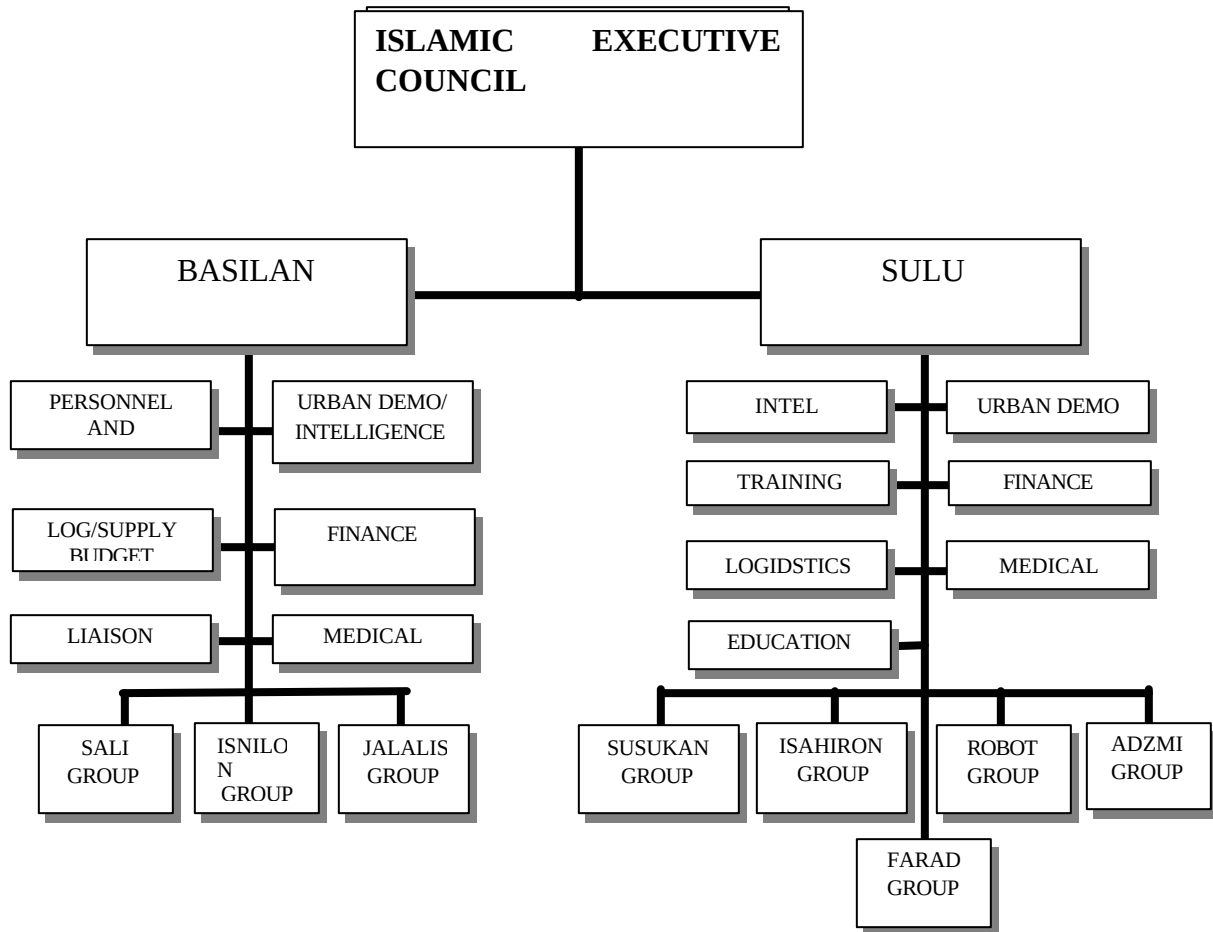
APPENDIX D

MILF ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



APPENDIX E

ASG ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



APPENDIX F

THE 1976 TRIPOLI AGREEMENT

In the Name of God, the Omnipotent, the Merciful.

Agreement Between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and Moro National Liberation Front with the Participation of the Quadripartite Ministerial Commission Members of the Islamic Conference and the Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Conference.

In accordance with the Resolution No. 4 Para. 5 adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Islamic conference in its Fourth Session held in Benghazi, Libyan Arab Republic during the month of Safar 1393 H. corresponding to March 1973, calling for the formation of Quadripartite Ministerial Commission representing the Libyan Arab Republic, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Senegal and the Republic of Somalia, to enter into discussions with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines concerning the situation of the Muslims in the South of the Philippines.

And in accordance with the Resolution No. (18) adopted by the Islamic conference held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in Jumada Alakhir 1393 H. corresponding to June 1974 A.D. which recommends the searching for a just and peaceful political solution to the problem of the Muslims in the South of the Philippines through the negotiations.

And in accordance with the Resolution No. 12/7/S adopted by the Islamic conference held in Istanbul in Jumada El-Ula 1396 H. corresponding to May 1976 A.D. empowering the Quadripartite Ministerial Commission and the Secretary General of the Islamic Conference to take the necessary steps for the resumption of negotiations. And following the task undertaken by the Quadripartite Ministerial Commission and the Secretary General of the Islamic Conference and the discussions held with H.E. President Marcos, President of the Republic of the Philippines.

And in realization of the contents of Para. 6 of the Joint Communique issued in Tripoli on the 25th Zulgeda 1396 H. corresponding to 17th November 1976 A.D. following the official visit paid by the delegation of the Government of the Philippines headed by the First Lady of the Philippines, Mrs. Imelda R. Marcos, to the Libyan Arab Republic and which calls for the resumption of negotiations between the two parties concerned in Tripoli on the 15th of December 1976 A.D.

Negotiations were held in the City of Tripoli during the period between 24th Zulhija 1396 H. to Second to Moharram 1397 H. corresponding to the period from 15th to 23rd December 1976 A.D. at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs presided over by Dr. Ali

Abdussalam Treki, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the Libyan Arab Republic, and comprising of the Delegations of:

1. Government of the Republic of the Philippines, led by Honorable Carmelo Z. Barbero, Undersecretary of National Defense for Civilian Relations.
2. Moro National Liberation Front, led by Mr. Nur Misuari Chief of the Front.

And with the participation of the representatives of the Quadripartite Ministerial Commission:

The Libyan Arab Republic - represented by Dr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia - H.E. Salah Abdalla El-Fadl, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Libyan Arab Republic.

The Republic of Senegal - Mr. Abubakar Othman Si, Representative of the Republic of Senegal and Charge d'Affairs of Senegal in Cairo.

Democratic Republic of Somalia, Libyan Arab Republic.

With the aid of H.E. Dr. Amadou Karim Gaye, Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Conference, and a delegation from the Secretariat General of the Conference composed of Mr. Qasim Zuheri, Assistant Secretary General, and Mr. Aref Ben Musa, Director of Political Department.

During these negotiations which were marked by a spirit of conciliation and understanding, it has been agreed on the following:

First: The establishment of Autonomy in the Southern Philippines within the realm of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of the Philippines.

Second: The areas of the autonomy for the Muslims in the Southern Philippines shall comprise the following:

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Basilan | 8. Sultan Kudarat |
| 2. Sulu | 9. Lanao del Norte |
| 3. Tawi-tawi | 10. Lanao del Sur |
| 4. Zamboanga del Sur | 11. Davao del Sur |
| 5. Zamboanga del Norte | 12. South Cotabato |
| 6. North Cotabato | 13. Palawan |
| 7. Maguindanao | |

Third:

1. Foreign Policy shall be of the competence of the Central Government of the Philippines.
2. The National Defense Affairs shall be the concern of the Central Authority provided that the arrangements for the joining of the forces of the Moro National Liberation Front with the Philippine Armed Forces be discussed later.
3. In the areas of the autonomy, the Muslims shall have the right to set up their own Courts which implement the Islamic Shari'ah laws. The Muslims shall be

- represented in all Courts including the Supreme Court. The representation of the Muslims in the Supreme Court shall be upon the recommendation from the authorities of the Autonomy and the Supreme Court. Decrees will be issued by the President of the Republic of their appointments taking into consideration all necessary qualifications of the candidates.
4. Authorities of the autonomy in the South of the Philippines shall have the right to set up schools, colleges and universities, provided that matters pertaining to the relationship between these educational and scientific organs and the general education system in the state shall be subject of discussion later on.
 5. The Muslims shall have their own administrative system in compliance with the objectives of the autonomy and its institutions. The relationship between this administrative system and the Central administrative system to be discussed later.
 6. The authorities of the autonomy in the South of the Philippines shall have their own economic and financial system. The relationship between this system and the Central economic and financial system of the State shall be discussed later.
 7. The authorities of the autonomy in the South of the Philippines shall enjoy the right of representation and participation in the Central Government and in all other organs of the State. The number of representatives and ways of participation shall be fixed later.
 8. Special Regional Security Forces are to be set up in the area of the Autonomy for the Muslims in the South of the Philippines. The relationship between these forces and the Central security forces shall be fixed later.
 9. A Legislative Assembly and an Executive Council shall be formed in the areas of the Autonomy for the Muslims. The setting up of the Legislative Assembly shall be constituted through a direct election, and the formation of the Executive Council shall take place through appointments by the Legislative Assembly. A decree for their formation shall be enacted by the President of the Republic respectively. The number of members of each assembly shall be determined later on.
 10. Mines and mineral resources fall within the competence of the Central Government, and a reasonable percentage deriving from the revenues of the mines and minerals be fixed for the benefit of the areas of the autonomy.
 11. A Mixed Committee shall be composed of representatives of the Central Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the representatives of the Moro National Liberation Front. The Mixed Committee shall meet in Tripoli during the period from the Fifth of February to a date not later than the Third of March 1977. The task of said Committee shall be charged to study in detail the

points left for discussion in order to reach a solution thereof in conformity with the provisions of this agreement.

12. Cease-fire shall be declared immediately after the signature of this agreement, provided that its coming into effect should not exceed the 20th January 1977. A Joint Committee shall be composed of the two parties with the help of the Organization of the Islamic Conference represented by the Quadripartite Ministerial Commission to supervise the implementation of the cease-fire.

The said Joint Committee shall also be charged with supervising the following:

- a. A complete amnesty in the areas of the autonomy and the renunciation of all legal claims and codes resulting from events which took place in the South of the Philippines.
 - b. The release of all the political prisoners who had relations with the events in the South of the Philippines.
 - c. The return of all refugees who have abandoned their areas in the South of the Philippines.
 - d. To guarantee the freedom of movements and meetings.
13. A joint meeting be held in Jeddah during the first week of the month of March 1977 to initial what has been concluded by the Committee referred to in Para. 11.
 14. The final agreement concerning the setting up of the autonomy referred to in the first and second paragraphs shall be signed in the City of Manila, Republic of the Philippines, between the Government of the Philippines and Moro National Liberation Front, and the Islamic Conference represented by the Quadripartite Ministerial Commission and the Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Conference.
 15. Immediately after the signature of the Agreement in Manila, a Provisional Government shall be established in the areas of the autonomy to be appointed by the President of the Philippines; and be charged with the task of preparing for the elections of the Legislative Assembly in the territories of the Autonomy; and administer the areas in accordance with the provisions of this agreement until a Government is formed by the elected Legislative Assembly.
 16. The Government of the Philippines shall take all necessary constitutional processes for the implementation of the entire Agreement.

Fourth: This Agreement shall come into force with effect from the date of its signature. Done in the City of Tripoli on 2nd Muharram 1397 H. corresponding to 23rd December 1976 A.D. in three original copies in Arabic, English, French languages, all equal in legal power.

For the Government of the Republic of the Philippines:

Hon. Carmelo Z. Barbero

Undersecretary of National Defense for Civilian Relations

For the Moro National Liberation Front:

Professor Nur Misuari

Chairman of the Front

Dr. Ali Abdusaalam Treki

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Libyan Arab Republic and Chairman of the
Negotiations

Dr. Amadou Karim Gaye

Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference

APPENDIX G

THE FINAL AGREEMENT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 1976 TRIPOLI AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES (GRP) AND THE MORO NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (MNLF)

In The Name of God, The Omnipotent, The Merciful

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

Whereas, the MNLF, led by Professor Nur Misuari, inspired by their quest for peace and prosperity, had in the past asserted the right of the Moro people to freely determine their political status and freely pursue their religious, social, economic and cultural development;

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

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

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

Whereas, the parties likewise, acknowledge the role of the OIC Ministerial Committee of the Six comprising the nations of Indonesia as Chair, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh,

Senegal and Somalia in the search of a just, comprehensive and durable peace in Southern Philippines;

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

Whereas, the parties affirm their solemn commitment in the aforementioned Statement of Understanding as well as the Memorandum of Agreement signed in the 1st Round of Formal Peace Talks held in Jakarta, Indonesia on October 25 — November 7, 1993; the Interim Agreement signed in the 2nd Round of Formal Peace Talks held in Jakarta on September 1-5, 1994; the Interim Agreement signed in the 3rd Round of Formal Peace Talks held in Jakarta on November 27 — December 1, 1995; the Interim Agreement signed in the 4th Round of Formal Peace Talks held in Jakarta on August 29, 1996; and in the nine (9) meetings of the Mixed Committee held in various places and dates in the Philippines and Indonesia;

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

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

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

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

Now Therefore, the Parties do Hereby Agree on the Following:

I. Implementing Structure and Mechanism of this Agreement

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

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

2. Phase II shall involve an amendment to or repeal of the Organic Act (RA 6734) of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) through Congressional action, after which the amendatory law shall be submitted to the people of the concerned areas in a plebiscite to determine the establishment of a new autonomous government and the specific area of autonomy thereof.
 - a. While peace and development programs are being implemented in the SZOPAD, a bill to amend or repeal the RA 6734 shall be initiated within Phase I (1996-1997). The bill shall include the pertinent provisions of the final Peace Agreement and the expansion of the present ARMM area of autonomy. After a law shall have been passed by Congress and approved by the President, it shall be submitted to the people for approval in a plebiscite in the affected areas, within two (2) years from the establishment of the SPCPD (1998).
 - b. The new area of autonomy shall then be determined by the provinces and cities that will vote/choose to join the said autonomy (1998). It may be provided by the Congress in a law that clusters of contiguous Muslim-dominated municipalities voting in favor of autonomy be merged and constituted into a new province(s) which shall become part of the new Autonomous Region.

II. The Transitional Period (Phase I)

Phase I shall be implemented as follows:

3. There shall be established a Special Zone of Peace and Development in the Southern Philippines (SZOPAD) covering the provinces of Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte, North Cotabato, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Davao del Sur, South Cotabato, Sarangani and Palawan and the cities of Cotabato, Dapitan, Dipolog, General Santos, Iligan, Marawi, Pagadian, Zamboanga and Puerto Princesa. Within the next three (3) years, these areas shall be the focus of intensive peace and development efforts. Public and private investments shall be channeled to these

areas to spur economic activities and uplift the conditions of the people therein.

4. There shall be established a Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD), composed of one (1) Chairman, one (1) Vice Chairman and three (3) Deputies, one each representing the Muslims, the Christians, and the Cultural Communities. They shall be appointed by the President.
5. The SPCPD shall be assisted by the Darul Iftah (advisory Council) which shall be created by the Chairman of the SPCPD.
6. The local government units in the area including the ARMM, shall continue to exist and exercise their functions in accordance with existing laws.
7. Appropriate agencies of the government that are engaged in peace and development activities in the area, such as but not limited to the Southern Philippines Development Authority (SPDA), shall be placed under the control and/or supervision of the Council as its implementing agencies to ensure that peace and development projects and programs are effectively accomplished.

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

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

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

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

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

- b. The Governor and the Vice Governor of the ARMM, the 14 Governors of the provinces and the 9 City Mayors in the SZOPAD;
 - c. 44 members from the MNLF; and
 - d. 11 members from various sectors recommended by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and people's organizations (POs).
- 11. The Consultative Assembly shall exercise the following functions and powers:
 - a. To serve as a forum for consultation and ventilation of issues and concerns;
 - b. To conduct public hearings as may be necessary and to provide appropriate advice to the SPCPD; and
 - c. To formulate and recommend policies to the President through the Chairman of the SPCPD and make rules and regulations to the extent necessary for the effective and efficient administration of the affairs of the area.
- 12. The OIC shall be requested to continue to extend its assistance and good offices in monitoring the full implementation of this agreement during the transitional period until the regular autonomous government is firmly established and for this purpose, help generate broad international support for the Zone of Peace and Development.
- 13. A Joint Monitoring Committee composed of members coming from the GRP and the MNLF, with the help of the OIC, shall continue to meet to review and identify agreements that can be immediately implemented, and monitor the implementation of this Agreement during Phase I.
- 14. The provisions of the 1994 and 1995 Interim Agreements and subsequent agreements entered into by the GRP and the MNLF that would not require legislative action shall be implemented during Phase I.
- 15. The funds for the operations of the Council and the Assembly shall be initially sourced from the funds of the Office of the President. Funding for development programs and projects shall come from the appropriations of Congress as may be

drawn from the General Appropriations Act. A supplementary budget for the year 1996 will be recommended to Congress for the purpose.

16. The term of the SPCPD and the Consultative Assembly shall be for a period of three years and may be extended by the President upon recommendation of the Council itself.
17. The term of office of the SPCPD and the Assembly shall coincide with the three-year term of office of the officials of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) elected in 1996.
18. The powers and functions of the Council shall be as follows:
 - a. To take charge in promoting, monitoring and coordinating the improvement of peace and order in the area;
 - b. To focus on peace and development efforts more particularly in the depressed areas and cause the implementation of peace and development projects;
 - c. To provide support to local government units as necessary;
 - d. To exercise such other powers and functions necessary for the effective implementation of its mandate as may be delegated by the President;
 - e. To assist in the preparation for the holding of elections, referenda or plebiscite and people's initiative in the area as may be duly deputized by the Commission on Elections (COMELEC);
 - f. To cause the creation of such offices or instrumentalities as shall be necessary for the effective and efficient administration of the affairs of the areas. There shall be approval from the Office of the President for budgetary purposes.
19. The joining of the MNLF elements with the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Provision of Security Protection for Certain Officials of the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development:
 - a. During the transitional phase (Phase I), there shall be a program or process to allow the joining of MNLF elements into the PNP and to be part of the PNP in accordance with guidelines and procedures under existing laws. The Philippine Government shall allocate one

thousand five hundred (1,500) PNP vacancies for this purpose to be filled up by MNLF elements during the transition period, and another two hundred fifty (250) items for special or auxiliary services.

- b. The processing of MNLF elements will start upon the establishment of the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD). The police training programs to be undergone by the joining MNLF elements shall be as prescribed by existing laws and regulations, and shall be conducted by the PNP.
- c. The concerned officials of the Council (e.g. the Chairman and his Deputies) shall be provided security and protective assistance by the national government, as the security situation warrants and as part of confidence-building measures. An AFP/PNP security detail shall be immediately and particularly assigned to the Council. This special AFP/PNP security detail shall be composed of former MNLF regulars who shall have been granted AFP or PNP appointments and duly integrated into the AFP or PNP. This security detail shall be of appropriate size in accordance with the needs of the situation, without prejudice to augmentation by regular AFP or PNP units as the need arises and in coordination with the AFP and PNP commanders concerned. This security detail which shall not be utilized for law enforcement, but solely for the security and protection of SPCPD officials concerned, shall conduct themselves in accordance with existing policies and regulations in order to prevent undue alarm to the population during movements of concerned officials.
- d. To have good coordination between the AFP and PNP on the one hand and the SPCPD on the other, a liaison system will be set up composed of the AFP, PNP and SPCPD senior officials.

20. The joining of the MNLF forces with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP):

- a. Five thousand seven hundred fifty (5,750) MNLF members shall be integrated into the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), 250 of whom shall be absorbed into the auxiliary services. The government shall exert utmost efforts to establish the necessary conditions that would ensure the eventual integration of the maximum number of the remaining MNLF forces into the Special Regional Security Force (SRSF) and other agencies and instrumentalities of the government. There shall be a special socioeconomic, cultural and educational program to cater to

MNLF forces not absorbed into the AFP, PNP and the SRSF to prepare them and their families for productive endeavors, provide for educational, technical skills and livelihood training and give them priority for hiring in development projects.

- b. In the beginning, the MNLF forces will join as units distinct from AFP units. They will be initially organized into separate units within a transition period, until such time that mutual confidence is developed as the members of these separate units will be gradually integrated into regular AFP units deployed in the area of the autonomy. Subject to existing laws, policies, rules and regulations, the appropriate authorities shall waive the requirements and qualifications for entry of MNLF forces into the AFP.
- c. One from among the MNLF will assume the functions and responsibilities of a Deputy Commander of the Southern Command, AFP, for separate units that will be organized out of the MNLF forces joining the AFP. The Deputy Commander will assist the Commander of the Southern Command, AFP in the command, administration and control of such separate units throughout the aforementioned transition period. The Deputy Commander will be given an appointment commensurate to his position and shall be addressed as such.
- d. The government recognizes the skills, capabilities and achievements of the MNLF and its capacity to develop its members for the highest echelons of military and civilian leadership. The ranks and grades of MNLF forces joining AFP shall be subject to the decision of the President in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief of the AFP along the principles of universality, non-discrimination, equity and preferential treatment for the poor and underprivileged.
- e. The government shall take affirmative measures to continually improve the capabilities of those MNLF forces joining the AFP to enhance their opportunities for professional advancement in the military service. It shall undertake initiatives to provide professional training and military schooling in foreign countries to former MNLF members absorbed into the AFP in consonance with the education and training programmes with the AFP.

- f. All other matters regarding the joining of MNLF forces into the AFP not expressly covered by this Agreement shall be prescribed by the President in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief of the AFP.

III. The New Regional Autonomous Government (Phase II)

The following provisions shall be implemented after a law amending or repealing the Organic Act of ARMM shall have been enacted by Congress and approved by the people in the concerned areas in a plebiscite therefore. Accordingly, these provisions shall be recommended by the GRP to Congress for incorporation in the amendatory or repealing law.

A. Executive Council, Legislative Assembly, Administrative System and Representation in the National Government

Executive Council

21. Executive power shall be vested in the Head of the regular Autonomous Government duly elected at large by direct vote of the people of the Autonomous Region. There shall also be a Vice Head of the Regional Autonomous Government also elected in the same manner. The Head of the Regional Autonomous Government may appoint three (3) Deputies. The Head, the Vice-Head and the three (3) Deputies shall comprise the Executive Council of the area of Autonomy.
22. The President shall exercise general supervision over the Regional Autonomous Government and all local government units in the area of Autonomy through the Head of the Regional Autonomous Government to ensure that laws are faithfully executed.

The Head of the Autonomous Government shall exercise general supervision over all local government units in the area of autonomy to ensure that national and regional laws are faithfully executed, and see to it that they act within their assigned powers and functions.

Legislative Assembly

23. Legislative power shall be vested in the Regional Legislative Assembly.
24. The Legislative Assembly shall be composed of members elected by popular vote, with three (3) members elected from each of the Congressional Districts.
25. There shall be sectoral representatives in the Legislative Assembly whose number shall not exceed fifteen percent (15%) of the total number of elected Members of the Legislative Assembly coming from the labor, disabled, industrial, indigenous

cultural communities, youth, women, non-government organizations, agricultural, and such other sectors as may be provided by Regional Law to be appointed by the Head of the Autonomous Government from among the nominees of the different sectoral groups; provided, however, that the youth representative shall not be less than 18 years of age nor more than 21 years of age at the time of his appointment.

26. The people's initiative, by way of a plebiscite or referendum, is recognized.
27. The Regional Legislative Assembly shall exercise legislative power for application in the area of autonomy except on the following matters, to wit
 - a. Foreign Affairs;
 - b. National Defense and Security;
 - c. Postal Service;
 - d. Coinage, and Fiscal and Monetary Policies;
 - e. Administration of Justice except on matters pertaining to Shari'ah;
 - f. Quarantine;
 - g. Customs and Tariff;
 - h. Citizenship;
 - i. Naturalization, Immigration and Deportation;
 - j. General Auditing, Civil Service and Elections;
 - k. Foreign Trade;
 - l. Maritime, Land and Air Transportation and Communications that affect areas outside the autonomous region; and
 - m. Patents, Trademarks, Tradenames and Copyrights.
28. The Legislative Assembly may create, divide, merge, abolish or substantially alter boundaries of local government units in the area of autonomy in accordance with the criteria laid down by law subject to approval by a majority of the votes cast in a plebiscite called for the purpose in the political units affected. It may also change the names of such local government units, public places and institutions.
29. Any member of the Legislative Assembly who accepts an appointment and qualifies for any position in the Government, including government-owned-

and/or-controlled corporations or institutions and their subsidiaries, shall automatically forfeit his seat in the Legislative Assembly.

30. No member of the Legislative Assembly may personally appear as counsel before courts of justice or quasi-judicial and other administrative bodies. Neither shall he directly or indirectly, be interested financially in any contract with, or in any franchise or privilege granted by, the Government or any subdivision, agency or instrumentality thereof, including any government-owned-and/or-controlled corporation or its subsidiary, during his term of office. He shall not intervene in any matter before any office of the government for his pecuniary benefit or where he may be called upon to act on account of his office.
31. In case of vacancy in the Legislative Assembly occurring at least one year before the expiration of the term of office, a special election shall be called to fill the vacancy in the manner prescribed by law; provided that the member elected shall serve for the unexpired term.
32. The Legislative Assembly shall elect from among its members a Speaker and such other officers as the rules may provide. The Speaker shall appoint the personnel of the administrative organization of the Legislative Assembly.
33. The powers, functions, responsibilities and structure of the different Departments, agencies, bureaus, offices and instrumentalities of the regional government including regional government-owned-and-controlled corporations in the areas of the autonomy shall be prescribed and defined by the Regional Legislative Assembly.
34. No person shall be elected member of the Legislative Assembly unless he/she is
 - a. A natural-born citizen of the Philippines;
 - b. At least 21 years of age on the day of elections;
 - c. Able to read and write;
 - d. A registered voter of the district in which he/she shall be elected on the day he/she files his/ her certificate of candidacy; and
 - e. A resident thereof for a period of no less than five years immediately preceding the day of election.

35. Every member of the Legislative Assembly shall take an oath or affirmation of allegiance to the Republic of the Philippines before taking his/her seat.
36. The Legislative Assembly shall adopt its own rules of procedure by a majority vote of all its Members including the selection of members of its standing committees and the suspension or expulsion of its Members.
37. A majority of all the Members of the Assembly shall constitute a quorum to do business, but a smaller number may adjourn from day-to-day and may compel the attendance of absent members in such manner, and under such penalties as the Assembly may provide.
38. The Legislative Assembly or any of its committees may conduct inquiries or public consultations in aid of legislation in accordance with its rules. The rights of persons appearing in or affected by such inquiries shall be respected.
39. The Legislative Assembly shall keep a Journal of its proceedings and a record of its caucuses and meetings. The records and books of account of the Assembly shall be preserved and be open to public scrutiny. The Commission on Audit shall publish an annual report of the itemized list of expenditures incurred by the Members of the Assembly within sixty (60) days from the end of every regular session. The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly shall, within ten working days from approval thereof, submit to the President and to both Houses of Congress a certified true copy of all laws and resolutions approved by the Legislative Assembly.
40. No member shall be questioned or be held liable in any other place for any speech or debate in the Assembly or in any committee thereof.
41. The Chief Executive of the Autonomous Government shall approve the budget of the Autonomous Region. If, by the end of any fiscal year, the Legislative Assembly shall have failed to pass the regional appropriations bill for the ensuing fiscal year, the regional Appropriations Act for the preceding fiscal year shall be deemed automatically re-enacted and shall remain in force and effect until the regional appropriations bill is passed by the Legislative Assembly.
42. No provision or enactment shall be embraced in the regional appropriations bill unless it relates specifically to some particular appropriation therein. Any such provision or enactment shall be limited in its operation to the appropriation to

which it relates.

43. The procedure in approving appropriations for the Legislative Assembly shall strictly follow the procedure for approving appropriations for other departments and agencies of the Regional Government.
44. A special appropriations bill shall specify the purpose for which it is intended, and shall be supported by funds actually available as certified by the Regional Treasurer, or to be raised by a corresponding revenue proposal therein.
45. Discretionary funds appropriated for particular offices shall be disturbed only for public purposes to be supported by appropriate vouchers and subject to such guidelines as may be prescribed by regional law.
46. All money collected on any regional tax levied for a special purpose shall be treated as a special fund and paid out for such special purpose only. If the purpose for which a special fund was created has been fulfilled or abandoned, the balance, if any, shall accrue to the general funds of the regional government.
47. Trust funds shall only be paid out of the regional treasury upon fulfillment of the specific purpose for which said funds were created or received.
48. Except as provided by its rules, the Legislative Assembly shall meet in open session. Regular session shall commence on the 4th Monday of April and shall continue to be in session for such number of days as may be determined by the Assembly until thirty (30) days before the opening of its next regular session.
49. The Legislative Assembly shall meet in special sessions at the request of one-third (1/3) of all its Members or by call of the Chief Executive. Such special sessions must be convened with specific agenda.
50. No bill shall become a law unless it has passed three (3) readings on separate days and printed copies thereof in its final form have been distributed to its Members three (3) days before its passage, except when the Chief Executive certifies to the necessity of its immediate enactment to meet a public calamity or emergency.
51. Every bill passed by the Legislative Assembly shall, before it becomes a law, be presented to the Chief Executive. If he approves the same, he shall sign it, otherwise, he shall veto it and return it with his objections to the Legislative

- Assembly, which shall enter the objections at large in its journal and proceed to consider it. If, after such reconsideration, two-thirds (2/3) of all the Members of the Legislative Assembly shall agree to pass the bill, it shall become a law. In all such cases, the veto shall be determined by yeas and nays, and the names of the members voting for or against shall be entered in the journal. The Chief Executive shall communicate his veto of any bill to the Legislative Assembly within thirty (30) days after the receipt thereof; otherwise, it shall become a law as if he had signed it.
52. The Legislative Assembly may request the presence of the Chief Executive, Vice-Chief Executive, Cabinet members or their deputies, as the rules shall provide, for questioning on matters falling within the scope of their assigned powers and functions.
53. Subject to the rules of the Legislative Assembly, the legislative power to inquire on matters relating to the exercise of administrative functions by an agency of government within the Autonomous Region shall be in the form of written questions.
54. The Chief Executive shall submit to the Legislative Assembly not later than two (2) months before the beginning of every regular session, as the basis of the regional appropriations bill, a budget of expenditures and sources of financing, including receipts from existing and proposed revenue measures.
55. The fiscal year of the Autonomous Region shall cover the period January 1 to December 31 of the same year.
56. The Legislative Assembly may not increase the appropriations recommended by the Chief Executive for the operation of the Autonomous Government as specified in the budget. The form, content and manner of preparation of the budget shall be prescribed by regional law; provided, however, that pending the enactment of such regional law, the budgeting process shall be governed by existing national laws and rules and regulations prescribed by the Department of Budget and Management.
57. The Chief Executive shall have the power to veto any particular item or items in an appropriation or revenue bill, but the veto shall not affect the item or items to which he does not object. The veto may be reconsidered by the Assembly by a vote of two thirds (2/3) of all its Members.

58. The financial accounts of the expenditures and revenues of the Autonomous Region shall be audited by the Commission on Audit.
59. No money shall be paid out of the Regional Treasury except in pursuance of an appropriation made by regional law.
60. No regional law shall be passed authorizing any transfer of appropriations; however, the Chief Executive, the Speaker of the Assembly, and the Presiding Justice of the highest Shariah Court may, by law, be authorized to augment any item in the Regional General Appropriation Law for their respective offices from savings in other items of their respective appropriations.

Administrative System

62. The Regional Autonomous Government shall have the power to enact its own Regional Administrative Code and Regional Local Government Code consistent with national laws and the Constitution provided that it shall not in any way diminish the powers and functions already enjoyed by Local Government Units.

Right of Representation and Participation in the National Government and in all Organs of the State

General Principles:

63. Representation in the National Government by the inhabitants of the Autonomous Region may be effected through appointment or elections and must be subject to standards and guidelines prescribed for the position. When representation is done by appointment, the inhabitants of the Autonomous Region will be appointed by the President of the Philippines to herein specified positions which are policy determining, highly technical, primarily confidential and supervisory upon recommendation by the Head of the Autonomous Government.
64. Right of representation shall not be construed in such a way that applicants from the Autonomous Region, especially Muslims, and Cultural Communities, for lower positions in the above organs of the government cannot be appointed anymore thereto.

Manner of Representation and Participation

Executive

65. It shall be policy of the National Government that there shall be at least one (1) member of the Cabinet (with the rank of Department Secretary) who is an inhabitant of the Autonomous Region to be recommended by the Head of the

Autonomous Government.

66. It shall likewise be a policy that there shall be at least one (1) official in each of the departments and the constitutional bodies of the national government who shall be appointed in executive, primarily confidential, highly technical policy-determining positions, from among the inhabitants of the Autonomous Region upon recommendation by the Head of the Autonomous Government. The Head of the Autonomous Government shall participate as ex-officio member of the National Security Council on all matters concerning the Autonomous Region and such other matters as may be determined by the President.

67. Government-Owned and Controlled Corporations (GOCCs) or institutions and their subsidiaries in the area of autonomy: where Government-Owned and Controlled Corporations (GOCCs) are operating mainly or with a subsidiary in the area of autonomy, as a policy, the Regional Autonomous Government shall be given some representations in the Board of Directors or in the policy-making body of said GOCCs or their subsidiaries consistent with their respective charters.

Legislative

68. It shall be the policy of the National Government that the Regional Autonomous Government shall have one (1) representative in Congress as a Sectoral Representative. This is aside from the representatives/congressmen elected from the congressional districts located in the autonomous region.

Judicial

69. It shall be a policy of the National Government that at least one (1) justice in the Supreme Court and at least two (2) in the Court of Appeals shall come from the Autonomous Region. For this purpose, the Head of the Autonomous Government may submit the names of his recommendees to the Judicial and Bar Council for consideration. This is without prejudice to the appointment of qualified inhabitants of the Autonomous Region to other positions in the judiciary in accordance with their merits and qualifications.

70. The GRP shall endeavour to cause the appointment, as a member of the Judicial and Bar Council, a qualified person to be recommended by the Head of the Regional Autonomous Government.

71. The GRP shall request the Supreme Court to create the Office of the Deputy Court Administrator for the Area of Autonomy, and to appoint thereto a qualified person recommended by the Head of the Regional Autonomous Government.

Civil Service Eligibilities

72. The civil service eligibility requirements for appointment to government position shall be applicable in the Autonomous Government. As necessary, the Civil Service Commission shall hold special civil service examinations in the region to further increase the number of eligibles therein. For a period not longer than five (5) years from the establishment of the Regional Autonomous Government, the GRP will endeavour to provide for appropriate civil service eligibility to applicants in the Autonomous Region, provided, the minimum educational qualifications for the position are met.

B. The Establishment of the Special Regional Security Force for the Autonomous Region (Phase II of the Implementation of the Tripoli Agreement)

General Principles

73. When the new regular Autonomous Regional Government shall have been established, there shall be created or constituted a PNP Regional Command for the new Autonomous Region, which shall be the Special Regional Security Forces (SRSF) as referred to in Paragraph 8, Article III of the Tripoli Agreement.

74. The Regional Legislative Assembly may enact laws governing the PNP Regional Command for the Autonomous Region/SRSF consistent with the constitutional provision that there shall be one police force in the country which is national in scope and civilian in character.

75. The PNP Regional Command for the Autonomous Region/SRSF shall be composed of the existing PNP units in the area of autonomy, the MNLF elements and other residents of the area who may later on be recruited into the force.

76. The powers and functions of the PNP Regional Command for the Autonomous Region/SRSF, which shall be exercised within the territories covered by the Regional Autonomous Government (RAG), shall be the following:

- a. Enforce all laws and ordinances relative to the protection of lives and properties;
- b. Maintain peace and order and take all necessary steps to ensure public safety;
- c. Investigate and prevent crimes, effect the arrest of criminal offenders, bring offenders to justice and assist in their prosecution;

- d. Exercise the general powers to make arrest, search and seizure in accordance with the Constitution and pertinent laws;
- e. Detain and arrest a person for a period not beyond what is prescribed by law, informing the person so detained of all his rights under the Constitution and observing the inherent human rights of the citizens; and
- f. Perform such other duties and exercise all other functions as may be provided by law.

77. The PNP Regional Command for the Autonomous Region/SRSF shall be charged with the maintenance and preservation of peace, law and order, and protection of life, liberty and property in the region in consonance with the Constitution.

Organization of the PNP Regional Command for the Autonomous Region/SRSF

78. It shall be civilian in nature or character.

79. It shall be regional in scope of operations.

80. It shall be headed by a Regional Director who shall be assisted by two (2) Deputies, one (1) for Administration and one (1) for Operations.

81. It shall have regional, provincial, and city or municipal offices.

82. At the provincial level, there shall be a provincial office, headed by a Provincial Director.

83. At the city or municipal level, there shall be an office/station which shall be headed by a Chief of Police.

Powers of the Head of the Regional Autonomous Government over the PNP Regional Command for the Autonomous Region/SRSF

84. Act as the Deputy of the National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) in the region and shall be the ex-officio Chairman of the Regional Police Commission

(REPOLCOM).

- 85. Exercise operational control and general supervision and disciplinary powers.
- 86. Employ/deploy the elements of the Regional Command through the Regional Director.
- 87. Assign/reassign officers and other personnel through the Regional Director.
- 88. Recommend to the President the appointment of the Regional Director and his two (2) Deputies.
- 89. Oversee the preparation and implementation of the integrated regional public safety plan.
- 90. Impose, after due notice and summary hearings of citizen's complaints, administrative penalties on personnel of the Regional Command except Presidential Appointees.

Creation of the Regional Police Commission

- 91. Here shall be created a Regional Police Commission (REPOLCOM) by the Retinal Legislative Assembly consistent with the Constitution.
- 92. Here shall be created a Regional Police Commission (REPOLCOM) by the Regional Legislative Assembly consistent with the Constitution.
- 93. The REPOLCOM shall be under the supervision of the NAPOLCOM.
- 94. The Chairman of REPOLCOM shall be an ex-officio Commissioner of the NAPOLCOM.

C. Education

The Integrated System of Education

- 95. The Regional Autonomous Government shall have an educational component comprising of existing schools, colleges and universities in the present area of autonomy and such other schools and institutions in the future expanded area of autonomy, with the possible inclusion of state universities and colleges (SUCs) to be decided later on. The relationship of the Regional Autonomous Government educational body with the national educational system shall be that of a system and sub-system with emphasis on the autonomy of the sub-system. In the event that SUCs should be included as part of the educational component of the Regional Autonomous

Government, the autonomous government recognizes the fiscal autonomy and academic freedom of the SUCs as mandated by their respective charters.

96. The Regional Autonomous Government educational system shall, among others, perpetuate Filipino and Islamic ideals and aspirations, Islamic values and orientations of the Bangsamoro people. It shall develop the total spiritual, intellectual, social, cultural, scientific and physical aspects of the Bangsamoro people to make them God-fearing, productive, patriotic citizens, conscious of their Filipino and Islamic values and Islamic cultural heritage under the aegis of a just and equitable society.

The Structure of Education System

97. The elementary level shall follow the basic national structure and shall primarily be concerned with providing basic education; the secondary level will correspond to four (4) years of high school, and the tertiary level shall be one year to three (3) years for non-degree courses and four (4) to eight (8) years for degree courses, as the case may be in accordance with existing laws.

Curriculum

98. The Regional Autonomous Government educational system will adopt the basic core courses for all Filipino children as well as the minimum required learnings and orientations provided by the national government, including the subject areas and their daily time allotment. Teaching materials and curriculum contents shall promote solidarity, unity in diversity, Filipino and Islamic values.

99. The addition of more required learnings and instructional materials shall be the prerogative and responsibility of the Autonomous Government.

100. The minimum requirements and standards prescribed by Department of Education Culture and Sports (DECS), Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) will be followed by the Autonomous Region.

101. The same textbooks of the National Government will be used by schools in the Autonomous Region. The formulation, shaping and revision of textbooks are the responsibilities of the Regional Autonomous Government and the National Government and within agreed norms, academic freedom and relevant legal limits, the formulation and revisions shall emphasize Islamic values or orientation, in addition to Filipino values which include Christian values and values of indigenous people, modern sciences and technology as well as the latest educational thrusts. Having adopted the core curriculum of the national government in consideration of achieving the highest quality of education, students and graduates of the education system of the Autonomous Region shall be fully accredited when they transfer to non autonomous regions.

102. The integration of Islamic Values in the curriculum should be done gradually after researches and studies are conducted.

103. The teachings of Islamic Values, as well as Filipino values, shall be incorporated in Good Manners and Right Conduct in appropriate grade levels including the tertiary level subject to agreed norms, academic freedom, and legal limitations.

104. Muslim culture, mores, customs and traditions which are mainly based on Islam, as well as the cultures, mores, customs, and traditions of Christians and indigenous people, shall be preserved through the regular public and special schools in the Autonomous Region, considering that schools are perpetuating vehicles of the values of the people.

Administration of Educational System

105. The management and control, and supervision of the entire educational system in the area of autonomy shall be the primary concern of the Regional Autonomous Government, consistent with the declared policies of national educational bodies. The national education bodies shall monitor compliance by the regional educational system with national educational policies, standards and regulations in collaboration with the educational authorities of the autonomous region. The head of the educational system of the Regional Autonomous Government shall have the right to participate in policy and decision making activities of the national educational bodies.

106. The Regional Autonomous Government shall be represented in the Board of SUCs in the region as co-chairman or at least, co-vice-chairman, as may be provided by law. Appointment to SUC Boards shall be made by the President of the Philippines.

107. The Regional Autonomous Government will be responsible for specific administrative, management functions and powers, educational supervision and school administration, and regulation over private schools.

108. The organizational structure of the educational system in the autonomous region shall follow the basic structure of the national educational system. The Regional Legislative Assembly may add special structures, if necessary. It shall follow whatever organizations of the curricular years as found in the national set-up.

109. Locally funded programs will be the responsibility of the Regional Autonomous Government.

110. The selection, recruitment, appointment and promotion of teachers and employees shall be the responsibility of the Regional Autonomous Government in accordance with general qualification standard prescribed by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) provided that the Regional Autonomous Government can initiate regionally-defined standards which are not below national standards.

111. The selection, recruitment, appointment and promotion of elementary, secondary and tertiary education employees shall be the responsibility of the Regional Autonomous Government in accordance with general standards of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) and other recognized bodies.

112. Primary disciplinary authority over officials and employees of the Regional Autonomous Government will be the area of concern of the Regional Autonomous Government in accordance with Civil Service Commission (CSC) rules and regulations. Administrative sanctions deemed appropriate and reasonable as determined by the Civil Service Commission will be the area of concern of the Regional Autonomous Government.

Religious Instruction

113. Religious instruction in public schools should be optional, with the written consent of the parent/guardian, taught by the authorities of the religion to which the student belongs, and should not involve additional costs to the government in accordance with national policies.

Medium of Instruction

114. Filipino and English shall be the medium of instruction in the areas of the Autonomy; provided that Arabic shall be an auxiliary medium of instruction.

115. Regional languages may be used as auxiliary official languages in the region as well as auxiliary medium of instruction and communication.

116. Arabic shall be recognized as a medium of instruction in Madaris (schools) and other Islamic institutions.

117. Arabic shall be taught as a subject in all appropriate grade levels as presently required in the existing laws for Muslims, and optional, for non-Muslims.

Madrassa Education

118. Existing Madaris, including Madaris Ulya shall be under the Regional Autonomous Government educational system as presently organized in the area of autonomy.

119. Madaris teachers shall receive compensation out of the funds of the Regional Autonomous Government provided they are employed in the public schools.

Non-formal Education and Specialized Education

120. The Regional Autonomous Government educational system shall develop the full potentials of its human resources, respond positively to changing needs and conditions and needs of the environment, and institutionalize non-formal education.

121. The educational system shall respond positively and effectively to the changing needs and conditions of the times as well as regional and national needs of the environment through the proper use of the latest educational technology, development, planning, monitoring, evaluation, and appropriate and timely educational intervention as well as linkages with national and international institutions.

122. The Regional Autonomous Government educational system shall institutionalize non-formal education in scope and methodology, to include literacy, numeracy and intensive skills training of the youth and adult, to allow them to participate actively and productively in the mainstream of regional and national life.

Scholarship Grants and Assistance

123. Universities and colleges in the areas of autonomy may seek and receive overseas donations for educational purposes.

124. The Regional Autonomous Government educational system will handle, by administrative arrangement with the national DECS, CHED, and TESDA scholarship programs, both local and foreign, including those provided by the autonomous region pursuant to the provision of existing laws.

125. Disadvantaged but deserving students will be given financial assistance by the Regional Autonomous Government out of funds given by the national government for the purpose and from other sources of funds.

Funds for Education

126. Funds for education constituting the share of the Regional Autonomous Government as contained in the General Appropriations Act should be given directly to the Autonomous Government.

D. The Economic and Financial System, Mines and Minerals

127. The Regional Autonomous Government in the area of autonomy shall establish its own Regional Economic and Development Planning Board chaired by the Head of Government in the area of autonomy. The Board shall prepare the economic development plans and programs of the Autonomous Government.

128. The pivotal role of banks and other financial institutions for development in the area of autonomy is recognized.

129. The Regional Autonomous Government in the area of autonomy has the power to promote tourism as a positive instrument for development provided that the diverse cultural heritage, moral and spiritual values of the people in the area of autonomy shall be strengthened and respected.

130. The Regional Autonomous Government in the area of autonomy shall have the power to grant incentives including tax holidays within the power and resources in the area of autonomy.

131. The Regional Autonomous Government in the area of autonomy advocates equal opportunities for all the inhabitants of the area of autonomy regardless of ethnic origin, culture, sex, creed and religion.

132. In enacting tax measures, the Regional Legislative Assembly shall observe the principle of uniformity and equity in taxation and shall not impose confiscatory taxes or fees of any kind.

133. The Regional Autonomous Government in the area of autonomy shall have the power to enact a Regional Tax Code and a regional Local Tax Code applicable to all local government units within the area of autonomy.

134. All corporations, partnerships or business entities directly engaged in business in the area of autonomy shall pay their corresponding taxes, fees, and charges in the province, city or municipality in the area of autonomy where the establishment is doing business.

135. All corporations, partnerships or business entities whose head offices are located outside the area of autonomy, but doing business within its territorial jurisdiction, either by using, exploiting, and utilizing the land, aquatic and all natural resources therein, shall pay their income taxes corresponding to their income realized from their business operation in the area of autonomy through the province, city or municipality where their branch offices are located. In case the business establishment has no branch in the area of autonomy, such business establishment shall pay through the city or municipality where its operation is located.

136. The Regional Autonomous Government in the area of autonomy as a corporate body, may contract domestic loans.

137. The Regional Autonomous Government recognizes the pivotal role played by banks and other financial institutions in the economic development of the area of autonomy. Toward this end, the Autonomous Government shall:

- a. Encourage the establishment of banks and bank branches in the area of autonomy;
- b. Encourage the entry and establishment of off-shore banking units of foreign banks in the area of autonomy.

138. The Regional Autonomous Government may accept foreign financial and economic grant for the development and welfare of the people in the region.

139. The Regional Autonomous Government may issue its own treasury bills, bonds, promissory notes, and other debt papers in consultation and coordination with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

140. The Regional Autonomous Government may contract foreign loans within the purview of national laws and pertinent monetary and fiscal policies.

141. In the pursuit of the region's economic growth, development and welfare, the autonomous government shall have the right to formulate economic and financial

policies and implement economic and financial programs, taking into account national laws and policies.

142. The Regional Autonomous Government in the area of autonomy shall encourage, promote and support the establishment of economic zones, industrial centers, and ports in strategic area and growth centers to attract local and foreign investments and business enterprise.

143. The Regional Autonomous Government in the area of autonomy shall undertake encourage, promote and support the establishment of economic zones and industrial centers. And, in order to attract local and foreign investments within the area of the zone and outside but within the area of autonomy, the government in the area of autonomy may grant incentives to investors as may be defined in an Autonomous Investment Act to be formulated by the Regional Legislative Assembly within one year from its organization.

144. The residents in the area of the autonomy shall have preferential rights over the exploration, development and utilization of natural resources in the area of autonomy respecting existing rights on the exploitation, exploration, development and utilization of natural resources.

145. The Regional Autonomous Government in the area of autonomy shall enjoy fiscal autonomy in budgeting its own revenue resources and block subsidies granted to it by the National Government and foreign donors. Budgeting includes planning, programming and disbursing of funds.

146. The National Government shall appropriate for the area of autonomy a sufficient amount and for a period (both to be determined later) for infrastructure projects which shall be based on a development plan duly approved by the Regional Autonomous Government taking into account national policies.

147. In the regulation of the exploration, utilization, development, protection of the natural resources inclusive of mines and minerals, except strategic minerals which will be defined later, the government in the area of autonomy shall enact rules and regulations and shall impose regulatory fees, taking into account national policies.

148. An Islamic Banking Unit shall be established in the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas which shall be staffed by qualified Islamic banking experts nominated by the Governor of the Regional Autonomous Government. The Governor of the Regional Autonomous Government shall nominate at least three (3) qualified persons from the area of autonomy, from which nomination the appointing authority shall appoint the Head of the Unit. The same procedure shall be observed as regards the rest of the positions in the Unit.

149. The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas shall have a Regional Office with full banking service in the capital of the government of the Autonomous Region to respond to the growing needs of the banking community in the area of autonomy which shall be established within one (1) year from the establishment of the Autonomous

Government. The Governor of the Autonomous Government shall submit a list of qualified recommendees to the appointing authority from which the staff of the regional office may be chosen; provided that those staff who are now occupying and already appointed to positions in the regional office are considered as recommended by the Governor of the Regional Autonomous Government.

150. The Regional Autonomous Government shall establish a body in the area of autonomy with the same powers as the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) consistent with the Special Economic Zone Act of 1995.

151. All current year collections of internal revenue taxes within the area of autonomy shall, for a period of five (5) years, be allotted for the Regional Autonomous Government (RAG) in the Annual General Appropriations Act; provided that:

- a. The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) shall continue to collect such taxes and the BIR Collection Districts/Offices concerned shall retain such collections and remit the same to the RAG through an approved depository bank within thirty (30) days from the end of each quarter of the current year;
- b. Out of said internal revenue tax collections, fifty percent (50%) of the tax collected under Section 100 (Value-added tax on sale of goods), 102 (Value added tax on sale of services), 112 (Tax on persons exempt from value-added tax), 113 (Hotel, motels and others), and 114 (Caterers) of the National Internal Revenue Code (NIRC), as amended, in excess of the increase in collections for the immediately preceding year shall be shared by the RAG and the local government units (LGUs) within the area of autonomy as follows:
 - (1) Twenty percent (20%) shall accrue to the city or municipality where such taxes are collected; and
 - (2) Eighty percent (80%) shall accrue to the RAG.

In all cases, the RAG shall remit to the LGUs their respective shares within sixty (60) days from the end of each quarter of the current year.

Provided, however, that the provinces, cities, municipalities and barangays within the area of autonomy shall continue to receive their respective shares in the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA), as provided for in Section 284 of the Local Government Code of 1991.

Provided, finally, that the five-year (5) periods herein abovementioned may be extended upon mutual agreement of the National and Regional Autonomous Governments.

E. Shari' ah and Judiciary

152. The Regional Legislative Assembly of the area of autonomy shall establish Shari'ah Courts in accordance with the existing laws.

F. Totality Clause

153. This Peace Agreement, which is the full implementation of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement, embodies and constitutes the totality of all the agreements, covenant and understandings between the GRP and the MNLF respecting all the subject matters embodied herein. This Agreement supersedes and modifies all agreements, consensus, covenants, documents and communications not referred to or embodied in this Agreement or whose terms and conditions are otherwise inconsistent herewith. Any conflict in the interpretation of this Agreement shall be resolved in the light of the Philippine Constitution and existing laws.

G. Effectivity Clause

154. This Agreement shall take effect immediately upon the signing hereof by the parties, unless otherwise provided herein.

Done in the City of Manila on the 2nd day of September 1996.

For the GRP:

H.E. Ambassador Manuel T. Yan

Chairman of the GRP Panel

For the MNLF:

H.E. Professor Nur Misuari

Chairman of the MNLF Panel

With the participation of the OIC Ministerial Committee of the Six and the Secretary-General of the OIC

H.E. Mr. Ali Alatas

Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia/Chairman of the OIC Ministerial Committee of the Six

H.E. Dr. Hamid Al-Gabid

Secretary-General of the OIC

APPENDIX H

INTERIM CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES IN BULDON

Whereas, the attainment and preservation of peace and order is a universal concern and aspiration of all individuals;

Whereas, it is incumbent on the Government of the Republic of the Philippines to maintain and ensure the enforcement of all its laws, rules and regulations;

Whereas, recent events in the Municipality of Buldon, Maguindanao have disturbed the peace and order in the area;

Whereas the return to normalcy in the Municipality of Buldon is a general concern of the GRP, MILF and all sectors as it will insure the delivery of vital resources and services and complement efforts towards the attainment of peace in the area;

Now, therefore, the Technical Committee on Cessation of Hostilities of the GRP and the MILF hereby covenant and agree;

Witnesseth:

1. The Provincial Governor of Maguindanao will provide assistance to insure the return to office of the Municipal Mayor of Buldon, Maguindanao.
2. The GRP and the MILF forces will maintain "as is, where is" positions within the area of conflict in Buldon, Maguindanao, prior to further discussions on the matter on February 9, 1997.
3. The PNP elements in the Municipality of Buldon, Maguindanao, assisted by local CAGU elements, shall continue its mandated role to enforce all laws and maintain peace and order within the area.
4. The MILF will remove and shall not establish checkpoints, detachments, roadblocks, and other similar points along the road networks from Parang to Buldon, Maguindanao.
5. The AFP and MILF will refrain from making provocative actions against each other such as sniping, strafing, mortar shelling and deployment of additional troops.
6. All AFP forces deployed in Buldon, Maguindanao from January 1, 1997 up to the present will be withdrawn from the area at the option of the AFP based on its evaluation of the peace and order situation.
7. The Provincial Government of Maguindanao, within its mandate, will assist the concerned government agencies in the relief and rehabilitation of evacuees, and the re-opening of schools in the affected areas.

Entered this 27th day of January 1997 at Dawah Center, Crossing Simuay, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao.

APPENDIX I

AGREEMENT FOR THE GENERAL CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES

In the Name of Allah
The Beneficent, The Merciful

Whereas, peace talks are now being undertaken between representatives of the Government of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF); Whereas, while an informal ceasefire has been observed between the GRP and the MILF, with the end in view of finding a just and lasting solution to the centuries old problem of the Bangcamoro and native inhabitants of Mindanao, it becomes necessary that peace and order be assured;

Whereas, in view of the foregoing, it becomes imperative for the GRP and the MILF to enter into an agreement for general cessation of hostilities and to agree to continue the formal peace talks,

Now, therefore, the GRP and the MILF, through their undersigned authorised representatives, agree, as they hereby agreed on the following:

1. To commit the armed forces of the GRP and the MILF to a General Cessation of hostilities.
2. To direct their respective Sub-Committee on Cessation of Hostilities to meet on 30 July 1997, and on such dates thereafter, but not to exceed two (2) months, to draw and finalise guidelines and ground rules for the implementation of this Agreement; and
3. To resume and proceed with the formal peace talks in a venue to be mutually agreed upon between the GRP and the MILF Panels.

This Agreement shall take effect on the 21st day of July 1997.
So agreed.

Done in the City of Cagayan de Oro, Philippines, this 18th day of July 1997.

For the GRP:
Amb. Fortunato U. Abat
Chairman, GRP Panel

For the MILF
Ghazali Jaafar
Vice-Chair of Political Affairs
Central Committee, MILF

APPENDIX J

AGREEMENT ON THE RESUMPTION OF PEACE TALKS BETWEEN THE MILF AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

AGREEMENT ON THE GENERAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE RESUMPTION OF PEACE TALKS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES AND THE MORO ISLAMIC LIBERATION FRONT

The Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), herein after referred to as the Parties:

Recognizing the need to resume their stalled peace talks in order to end the armed hostilities between them and achieve a negotiated political settlement of the conflict in Mindanao and of the Bangsamoro problem, thereby promoting peace and stability in this part of the world;

Aware of the need to create an atmosphere conducive to the resumption of the peace negotiation through the normalization of the situation of the communities affected by armed conflict in Mindanao;

Noting the Agreement on General Cessation of Hostilities entered into by the Parties on July 18, 1997 and the General Framework of Agreement of Intent between the Parties dated August 27, 1998;

Determined to pursue a solution to the Bangsamoro problem with honor, justice and dignity for all concern;

Acknowledging the ascendancy of moral and spiritual development as the primary foundation of socio-economic and political development of all the people in Mindanao;

Holding a common belief that the resumption of the peace negotiation should go hand in hand with relief, rehabilitation and development efforts in the areas affected by the armed conflict;



Hereby agree as follows:

Article I

The Parties agree to resume the stalled peace negotiations immediately after the signing of this Agreement, and continue the same from where it had stopped before April 27, 2000 until they shall have reached a negotiated political settlement of the Bangsamoro problem.

Article II

The MILF shall organize its own Peace Panel forthwith to meet with its GRP counterpart, and this shall be announced to the public at the soonest time possible.

Article III

In conjunction with its formation of its Peace Panel, the MILF shall reciprocate the GRP's Suspension of Offensive Military Operations (SOMO) with the declaration of its own SOMO.

Article IV

The Parties commit to honor, respect and implement all past agreements and other supplementary agreements signed by them. *Details of implementation shall be discussed by the Panels.*

Article V

The Parties shall agree to hold the first formal meeting of their panels ~~in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia within three months from the signing of this agreement.~~ *at a mutually agreed venue within three months from the signing of this agreement.*

Article VI

To pave the way for the immediate normalization of the situation in Mindanao, the Parties agree to undertake relief and rehabilitation measures for evacuees, and joint development projects in the conflict affected areas.

Article VII

The Parties commit themselves to negotiate with sincerity and mutual trust, justice and freedom, and respect for the identity, culture and aspirations of all peoples of Mindanao.

Article VIII

The Parties express their gratitude for the gracious hospitality of the Government of Malaysia in hosting and facilitating the dialogue that has resulted in this Agreement.

Done in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia this 24th Day of March 2001.

For the GRP:



EDUARDO R. ERMITA

PRESIDENTIAL ADVISER ON THE

PEACE PROCESS

HEAD OF PHILIPPINE DELEGATION

For the MILF:



AL-HADJI MURAD EBRAHIM

VICE CHAIRMAN FOR MILITARY AFFAIRS

MORO ISLAMIC LIBERATION FRONT

HEAD OF MILF DELEGATION

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