

The Moro Times

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These trinkets of budding lasses were no more than toddlers when the Final Peace Agreement was signed. They think that Jabitah was a dance craze in the 70's and Misuari is a brand name of a dairy product (see timeline at bottom of page). How many generations more in spillover are needed before everything settles down in Muslim Mindanao, they are asking.

PHOTO COURTESY MSU-MIO

GRP-MNLF final peace agreement

Where are the peace dividends for the youth and the stakeholders of ARMM?

BY ABDULRAHMAN ISMAIL

TEN years ago, the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) signed the Final Peace Agreement (FPA) which was envisioned to be the framework to end the decades-old war in Southern Philippines. Yet, up to this very day, fighting flares up in the hillsides and islands of Mindanao, shattering the hopes of both Muslims and Christians for lasting peace. Experts have cited factors why the historic accord failed to usher in economic growth and development in Muslim Mindanao.

In an assessment report by the Philippine Council for Islam and Democracy (PCID) an independent Muslim think-tank, it noted that the FPA did not lead to visible economic or social progress—a repudiation of the stated goals of the

1996 peace accord.

An estimated 228,970 families or almost 75 percent of ARMM population of 2.4 million live below the poverty line. The National Statistical Coordination Board in its June 29, 2006, report stated that 4 in

every 10 families in 11 Mindanao provinces were poor, with family incomes insufficient to pay for their food and other basic requirements. Maguin-danao remains as the second poorest province, with a poverty incidence increasing from 59.3 percent in 2000 to 60.4 percent in 2003. Poverty incidence in Basilan increased slightly from 31.5 percent to 33 percent for the same period.

Figures from the NSO show that ARMM growth rate from 2000 to 2003 shows a negative 2.3 percent—the lowest among the 16 regions in the Philippines. Total family expenditures in 2003 total 30.452 million—a dismal amount compared with that of the National

Capital Region (528.388 million), Calabarzon (318.629 million) Central Luzon (232.8 million) and even with Western Visayas (129.3 million).

The reason for ARMM economic stagnation, former ARMM governor Dr. Parouk Hussin said, is the apparent failure of the government to provide funds for the implementation of the FPA. Hussin claimed that between 1991 and 2005, only P 53 billion was released by the national government to ARMM—representing only a portion of what is needed and what has been allotted (see GAA article). Hussin noted that in 2002-2004, more than a billion in ARMM funds was not released. See PEACE D2

GAA funds to ARMM lowest among regions

BY PAT TULAWIE

FUNDS appropriated by the national government to the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) comprise three percent of the total national budget for the past 10 years—the second lowest allocation among the 15 regions in the country. The revenue share of ARMM belies the priority given to it under the GRP-MNLF Peace Agreement which was signed on September 2, 1996.

An analysis of the General Appropriations Act (GAA) shows that the ARMM received an aggregate total of P 89.48 billion—or just 3.1 percent of the P 2.554-trillion national budget from 1996 to 2005.

In 2004, per capita allocation to ARMM reached P3,396, which increased slightly to P4,562 in 2005. However, a comparison of per capita allocations by region, ARMM is lower than the Cordillera Administrative Region and the newest region, Caraga, for instance.

Per capita allocations for CAR remain first in nationwide rankings with P6,830 in 2004, which increased to P7,280 in 2005. Caraga meanwhile, improved from being third place in 2004 with P4,836 per capita allocation to second place at P6,493 in 2005.

Compared with ARMM,

with five provinces and one city, the Caraga region has only two provinces. Though both ARMM and CAR have their peace agreements with the government, the Caraga does not have a peace pact.

Of the funds given to ARMM, 71 percent went to pay salaries of devolved government employees. Only 14 percent went to fund development projects, such as road construction, livelihood assistance and operational expenses. While 15 percent was used for maintenance and other operating expenses.

Eighty-six percent of the ARMM budget went to programs, which consist of three components: regular, locally-funded and foreign-funded programs. Locally-assisted programs consist of just 10 percent while those which are considered foreign-assisted projects constitutes 4 percent.

In a letter dated July 31, 2006 addressed to ARMM Governor Datu Zaldy Ampatuan, the recommended 2007 budget for the ARMM by the Department of Budget and Management is only P8,708,114,000. Regular program allocations total P6.6 billion, while only P650 million are being allotted for locally-funded projects.

Foreign-assisted projects amount to P1.027 billion.

An automatic appropriation totalling P427.750 million will See LOWEST D2

ARMM Muftis lead halal board

MUFTIS from each of the five provinces of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) took the lead in forming the Muslim Mindanao Halal Certification Board.

Halal refers to what is permissible in Islam, such as food. The Mufti is the Islamic legal scholar or religious leader authorized with issuing a fatwa (opinion) in answer to inquiries on what is.

The five Mufti's—Ustadz Mahmud S. Polangi of Lanao del Sur, Ustadz Abdulla Hamja Utoh of Basilan, Ustadz Sharif Jul Asiri J. Abirin of Sulu, Ustadz Abdulwahid A. Inju of Tawi-Tawi, and Ustadz Kamarudin Baulo of Maguindanao composed part of the 15-person Board of Trustees of the newly created Halal Authority. Ustadz Inju was elected Board Chairperson. Other members of the Board include Shariah experts, doctors and scientists.

The members of the Board formulated the guidelines for the certification of halal food and nonfood products. This effort was supported by the Department of Trade and Industry-ARMM and the Local Governance Support Program in ARMM of the Canadian International Development Agency. See MUFTIS D2

LGUs honor departing foreign team

GENERAL SANTOS CITY: Two new batches of ceasefire monitors of the International Monitoring Team (IMT) from Malaysia and Brunei will be deployed in General Santos City after their one-year tour of duty, on August 18 and 25 as local government and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) officials feted in separate events the IMT soldiers who served in Mindanao for the past year.

The IMT reported that it has been able to “silence the guns between the military and the MILF all over Mindanao” since its deployment in four sites—Iligan City, General Santos, Cotabato and Zamboanga in 2004.

Pursuant to GRP-MILF peace agreements, the IMT was created to carry on its primary task to observe ceasefire implementation between government and the

MILF, and conduct field verification and validation for any reported encounters between government and MILF forces.

Moro groups and local government units in the provinces covered by IMT-Site 4—South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani, Davao del Sur and the cities of General Santos and Koronadal, honored the team headed by Malaysian Lt. Col. Abdulrazak Hussain for a “job well done.”

Gov. Rene Dominguez of Sarangani lauded the “zero” record of skirmishes between the government troops and the MILF forces in the region because of the IMT's presence.

“You have shown us images of soldiers who prefer to be involved in developing communities rather than fighting in the

battlefield,” Engr. Abdulgafur Kudarat, president of the Young Moro Professionals Council, told Hussain and his team of six Malaysian and Libyan officers during the farewell party for the team in General Santos.

Governors Miguel Rene A. Dominguez and Datu Pax S. Mangudatu of Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani Vice Governor Bridget Chiongbian-Huang, and representatives of Governor Daisy Avance-Fuentes of South Cotabato and Mayor Pedro Acharon, Jr. of General Santos City attended the farewell rites, as well as police and military high-ranking officers and leaders of Muslim organizations headed by Sultan Nasser Pendatun of Talik and Raja Muda Alimudin Hassan of Suguda Buayan. See HONOR D2

With light, children can study at night, villages made bright

BY HADER GLANG

MORE than 5000 remote households in 185 barangays in the conflict-affected communities in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) now have electricity through the use of solar energy and micro-hydro power systems, with plans to electrify some 6,000 more households in 189 villages by 2009.

Alliance for Mindanao Off-grid Renewable Energy

(Amore) Chief Theresa Capellan said the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) spent \$20 million, with \$4 million more from Mirant Philippines, for the renewable energy (RE) systems that Amore installed in 74 barangays in Tawi-Tawi with 2,220 household-beneficiaries; 25 in Sulu with 750; 29 in Basilan with 870; and 65 in Maguindanao with 1,670. As of July 2006, some 6,850

households, 143 community centers and 319 streets in 227 barangays in Tawi-Tawi, Basilan, Sulu, Maguindanao, Zamboanga Sibugay, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga City, Sultan Kudarat and Davao have been electrified with RE systems (224 barangays with photovoltaic systems and three with micro-hydro power).

“This project is what we wanted for the people of the world. We wanted to have light so children can study

well, so our men and women can see and can live a good life,” said visiting US Sen. Daniel Inouye of Hawaii. “This is what this project is, a project of hope. We will have more miracles like this in the years to come.”

The Philippine Department of Energy reported that more than half of all un-electrified villages in the country are in Mindanao. Of these, about 70 percent are located in the ARMM, where men and

women have grown old dreaming that their villages would one day have electricity.

National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) Secretary Zamzamin Ampatuan said the electrification project addresses the spiritual needs of Muslims and would definitely result in a better life for all Muslims in the areas.

Ampatuan signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with AMORE for the allocation See LIGHT D2

Highlights of the Bangsamoro struggle

March 1968

Government forces massacred 28 Moro army recruits with one survivor on Corregidor Island in what was dubbed the Jabitah massacre, triggering widespread indignation across the country.

1968-1971

Constabulary elements took

control of Muslim communities. Christian paramilitary groups staged an attack at a Mosque killing 65 men, women and children, which gained international attention.

Before the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) was organized, Datu Udtog Matalam, led the first salvo by leading the Mindanao Independent Movement

(MIM) declaring the whole of Lanao, Cotabato “Empire”, Davao Sur, all of Zamboanga Peninsula, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Basilan and Palawan as independent. These were the same areas identified in the 1976 Tripoli Agreement.

September 21, 1971

Marcos declared martial law. One

month later, the first organized Moro counter-offensive took place in Marawi. The MNLF declared secessionist war against the government.

November 14, 1972

The MNLF, headed by University of the Philippines Professor Nur Misuari, Salamat Hashim and others, was formally announced.

January 1975

MNLF Chairman Misuari and government representatives held their first meeting in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Autonomy was the first exploratory option, after the See HIGHLIGHTS D2

Halal industry to create more jobs for Moros

ONCE giant food companies in the Philippines adapt Muslim halal practices in food production, Muslims will have hiring opportunities that would benefit them by addressing problems of poverty and discrimination in the workplace.

Sheikh Salih D. Musa, an Islamic scholar from General Santos City, who is concurrently the secretary-general of Philippine Halal Fatwa Council and local director of the World Assembly of Muslim Youth, said he was hopeful that unemployment, a plague among Moro Muslim communities, would be reduced when the country gets its slice in supplying halal-certified products to the Middle Eastern countries.

The halal industry has a wide market, considering the world Muslim population of 1.2 bil-

lion, and halal food worldwide valued at more than \$80 billion a year.

Halal means permissible or lawful, and its opposite, haram, literally means unlawful or forbidden. Islamic doctrine mandates that Muslims are allowed to consume only halal foods. Meat from swine, dog, blood of animals, animals with canine and snakes are considered *haram*.

Once halal certified, companies will be required to hire Muslim workers in the supply and production divisions of

food companies to monitor that "farm-to-plate" no haram components would be mixed or added in the process, Musa said.

He said they have received reports indicating that ground swine liver was being added in canned tuna products to improve its taste.

While fattening the cattle for corned beef production, for instance, Muslims must ensure that feeds must be free from any haram ingredients, like dried ground innards of swine, he said.

"In the process of producing canned meat products like beef loaf, there must be no lard or ground liver from swine that shall be secretly added in the production," Musa said. "Often

the producer does not declare this ingredient in the labels."

Musa said that canned goods should undergo laboratory tests by Muslim chemists, to determine if there are haram components or ingredients present.

The newly formed halal certification body will issue a "halal seal" for products that will meet international halal standards. The halal seal will inform Muslim consumers that the product is fit for their consumption.

A team of representatives from government agencies led by the Department of Trade and Industry, businessmen from the National Capital Region and Musa, who represented the *ulama*, went to Brunei for a weeklong "Halal Familiariza-

tion Visit" and attended a two-day seminar on International Halal Products Expo 2006. Their weeklong stay exposed them to Brunei's standard in halal certification and production through visitation in food companies in the country.

Musa said he was hopeful that the country would soon set up a "well-equipped laboratory" that will meet international halal certification standards for them to start operating.

Jamil Olermo of the Muslim Business Forum said that "the halal industry, once it will penetrate the world market with Mindanao as halal hub of the country, will surely boost Philippine export and drag us into economic bliss." **Gandhi, Mindanews**

■ LIGHT From page D1

With light, children can study at night

of P40 million to be used in the construction of solar-powered drinking water pumping systems in a number of AMORE electrified villages, in support of President Arroyo's thrust to provide electricity and water to all villages in the country by 2008.

"These renewable energy systems and solar power potable water systems will contribute to alleviating poverty especially in the ARMM, the poorest region in our country," Capellan said.

The project would be sustained if the Barangay Renewable Energy and Community Development Associations (BRECDA) and Local Governments work together to expand the systems so that the government could move closer to its goal of achieving 90 percent household electrification by 2017, she said.

Muslims leaders applauded AMORE, which is composed of the USAID, MIRANT Philippines and Winrock International, for continuously providing the people in the remote barangays with one of the basic necessity such as electricity.

Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan of ARMM said, "We are appreciative that the implementation project of AMORE, along with many beneficial projects supported by USAID, are geared towards the enhancement of the living conditions of our people, especially in the conflict-affected areas."

He also called for the strengthening of the spirit of cooperativism among its stakeholders, the BRECDA, so they can continue to properly manage and maintain these lighting projects.

"I assure everyone that the implementation of this project shall always be in accordance with my policy of good governance, transparency and accountability, all of which are the pillars of my administration," the ARMM governor said.

Gov. Benjamin Loong of Sulu joined the AMORE's BRECDA in thanking the American people and Mirant Philippines who have assisted his administration in jump-starting peace and development in their communities.

"The lives of the people of Sulu have been lighted up and given hope through this most valued partnership. We celebrate a partnership that has helped 227 poor communities all over Mindanao who thought that their communities would never see light through the darkness," Loong added.

Gov. Sadikul Sahali of Tawi-Tawi cited AMORE for the renewable energy systems installed in at least 70 barangays in his province.

AMORE, which was launched four years ago, is considered a highly successful program for rural electrification because of its intensive social preparation, strong community organizing, capacity building initiatives for local associations, and creative financing schemes.

■ MUFTIS From page D1

ARMM muftis lead halal board

The drafting of the guidelines followed consultations with religious leaders and representatives of the business community in the 5 ARMM Provinces. The Technical Guidelines and Manual of Operation of the Muslim Mindanao Halal Certification Board, Inc. (MMHCBI) was finalized and adopted by the Board on August 6, 2006 in Zamboanga City.

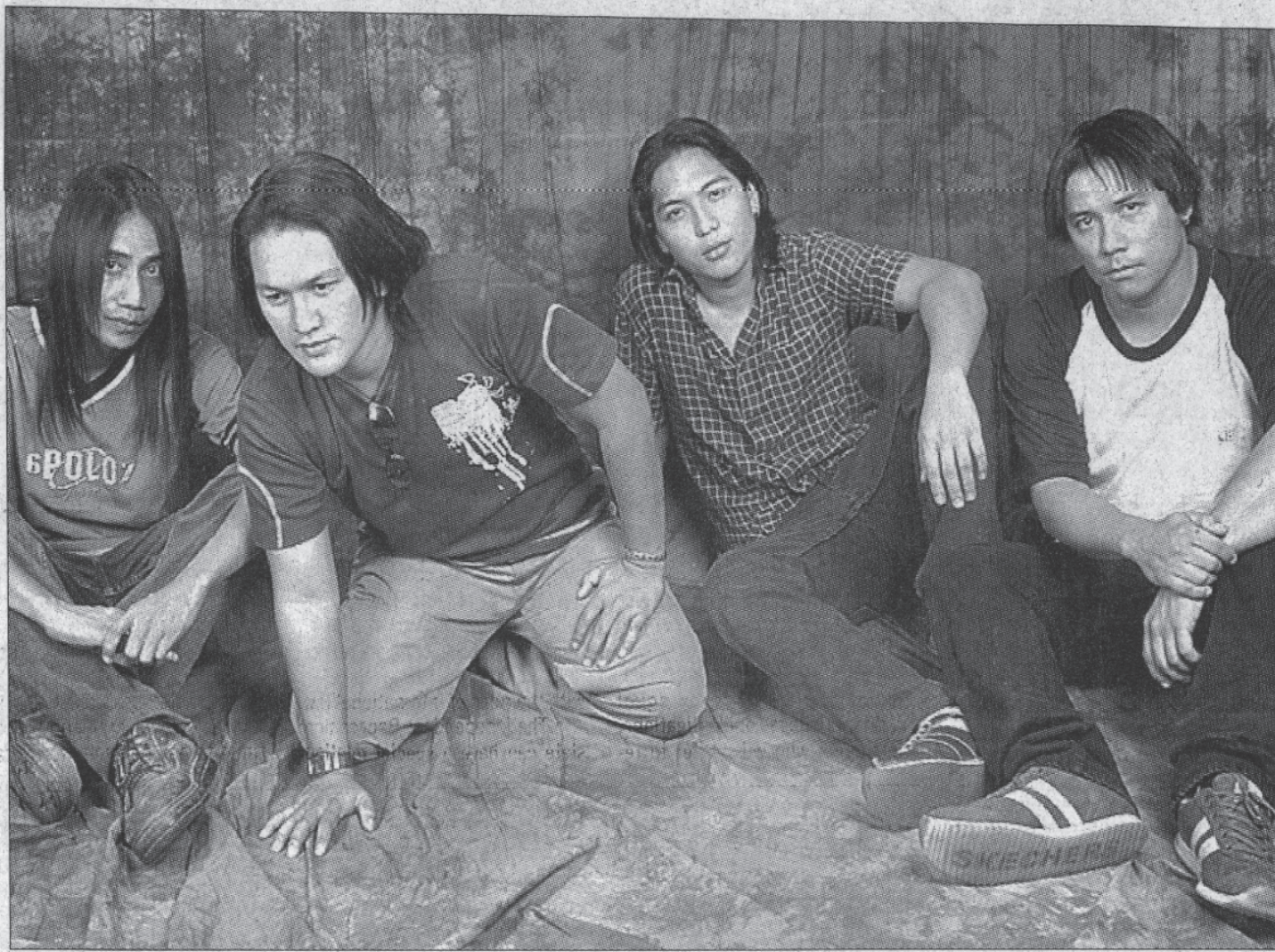
Ustadz Esmal Ebrahim, Managing Director of MMHCBI, said that the 48-page guidelines will be the primary instrument of the Certifying Board to ensure that food and non-food products made available to the Muslim ummah are permissible for Muslims to consume or use.

The guidelines call attention to the unprecedented growth in the development of food industry worldwide over the last decade which put at high risk the health and welfare of consumers: "New processes and ingredients (both natural and synthetic) have become too sophisticated (and exotic) that an ordinary Muslim consumer would be at a loss whether certain products are permissible for consumption. Food-borne diseases are projected to grow with mass food production and presence of chemicals and additives in the modern day food supply."

Ustadz Ebrahim emphasized that the guidelines, while founded on the Shariah, fully recognize the key role of science and technology. He said that as a strategic approach, "the Board shall make full use of science and technology in detecting haram and harmful ingredients and chemical components in both food and non-food products."

"With the MMHCBI, we have tapped people who know Shariah science and technology to promote hygiene and good health to the ummah in particular and for the broader health-conscious Filipino community in general," Ebrahim added.

No half measures in jobs squeeze



Competition for jobs as population grows drives Moro youth to resort to non-traditional means. Here, a band calling themselves *Half Blood*, so named for their being born of Muslim and Christian parents had cut their first album *First Blood* with D'Concorde Corporation. Many Moro youth garage musicians in the capital rent instruments by the hour to practice, taking time off from their peddling on the sidewalks. Their music ranges from pop to rock to reggae, experimenting with staccato rhythms, blending ancient Moro tunes with techno-pop.

PHOTO COURTESY D'CONCORDE CORPORATION

■ PEACE From page D1

GRP-MNLF final peace agreement

This failure, whether intentional or not, is aggravated by the fact that out of the total budget, 86 percent goes to personal services, leaving almost nothing for infrastructure and development programs.

Rev. Absalom Cerveza, spokesperson of the MNLF Peace Panel, was more specific in pointing the failure of the national government to remit internal revenue funds for the first five years to ARMM, the intervention of Malacañang in the ARMM elections and the passage of legislation concern-

ing mineral rights—effectively depriving ARMM of vital sources for development—as the causes of the failure.

Former ARMM Executive Secretary Randolph Parcasio, meanwhile, blamed the lack of teeth of ARMM institutions for the failure of the ARMM government to function as intended by law. He asserted that the FPA has been negated by the government with the passage of the ARMM Organic Act or RA 9054. He cited a UN Multidonor Program 2nd Assessment Mission Report which supports the view

that the ARMM Organic Act does not offer true autonomy.

However, a report released by the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process shows governments' commitment to the full implementation of the FPA. Some of the points raised include the establishment of Special Zones of Peace and Development (SZOPAD), devolution of line agencies, integration of MNLF rebels to the AFP, institutionalization of Madrasah education, and livelihood assistance projects

which transformed the lives of 11,000 former MNLF fighters. Secretary Jesus Dureza, Presidential Peace Adviser, reiterated President Arroyo's stance on the full implementation of the 1996 Peace Pact.

Recently, President Arroyo promised to release an additional P 500 million to fund ARMM projects this year. This is a welcome development, says incumbent ARMM governor Datu Zaldy Ampatuan, which shows the sincerity of the government to effect change in Muslim Mindanao.

■ HONOR From page D1

LGUs honor departing foreign team

"The memories of your stay and support extended to us here will be treasured forever," Raja Muda Hassan said. "You have provided a bridge that contributed to a peaceful collaboration between the MILF and the government."

Mangudadatu, the only Moro member of the government peace panel said, "with the IMT's presence, many have been disciplined."

The MILF, represented by Commander Aguilar from

Sarangani also commended the IMT for its noble duty and urged the LGUs to continue supporting the peace process.

In a recognition ceremony for the IMT at the city hall here, Mayor Acharon explained, "The role of the IMT in quest for peace in Mindanao is crucial. In God's time I know peace will come to us." He also commended the cooperation of Moro communities in maintaining peace and order in this city. **Gandhi, Mindanews**

■ LOWEST From page D1

GAA funds to ARMM lowest among regions

go to the item "retirement and life insurance premiums."

Of the total Foreign-Assisted funds provided for the ARMM, an estimated total of P1,139,703 billion has been given since 1996.

Funds budgeted for ARMM, according to section 16 of Phase II of the 1996 Final Peace Agreement (FPA) come from the General Appropriations Act (GAA). At the first phase of the implementation of the peace accord, activities and operations of the SPCPD and the Regional Assembly were

funded directly through the Office of the President (OP).

Though the accord vests the regional autonomous government with the power of taxation, eighty percent of collected revenues go to the national government while only 20 percent are used to fund ARMM activities.

From 1997 to 2006, ARMM activities depended largely on the fund allocation from Congress. Section 145 of the FPA mandates the national government to appropriate a "sufficient amount" for infrastructure projects based on a devel-

opmental plan approved by ARMM. The insufficiency of the allocation has been at the core of the complaints of Muslim Mindanao.

The Philippine Congress, in a report by the Congressional Planning and Budget Division in its 2003 analysis of the Office of the President budget, admitted that ARMM funds are comparatively lower than those allotted for other regions for the period 1992-2002. In fact, the report says, ARMM has the lowest budgetary allocation in 2002. This contradicts a Malacañang

report to the Organization of Islamic Conference which alleges that the Philippine government has allocated more than enough funds to support autonomy in Muslim Mindanao.

Funding support for the FPA and the ARMM, based on GAA documents, started to increase in 1998, with the Ramos administration infusing P4.940 billion into the autonomous government. However, it slowly went down to the P4.3-billion level during the Estrada administration.

Highlights of the Bangsamoro struggle

6th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) supported it as basis for negotiations. The definition of autonomy was culled from the Working Paper of the Committee of Four (Senegal, Libya, Saudi Arabia and Somalia) which provides for self-government within the framework of

December 23, 1976
MNLF Chairman Prof. Nur Misuari and GRP Defense Undersecretary Carmelo Barbero signed the Tripoli Agreement. The Agreement provides for autonomy in 13 provinces and nine cities in Southern Philippines.

tion 1628 declaring autonomy in 13 provinces. On 17 April, a plebiscite was called despite MNLF objections. Only 10 to 13 provinces voted for autonomy. Talks broke down.

May-December 1977
A group led by Sultan Hashim

Cairo, Egypt declaring a New MNLF.

1978
Negotiations between the MNLF and GRP resumed. However, Marcos chose to negotiate with Hashim instead of Misuari. The 6th ICFM declared Misuari

1979
Misuari reverted to his original position for secession, which was supported only by Iran. Surrendered MNLF founding member Abul Khayr Alonto joined government panel.

1980
Misuari and Hashim offered to

Bangsamoro political options deliberated

AS negotiations for peace continue between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, debates on what form of governance, whether federalism, autonomy, or independence are ongoing.

A forum organized by the Philippine Council for Islam and Democracy (PCID) and the National College for Public Administration and Governance titled Political and Governance Options for the Bangsamoro: Autonomy, Federalism and Independence highlighted that although the ultimate aspiration is for the Bangsamoro to be an independent state, the people have to decide which political structure is possible based on current realities and efficiency.

The discussion allowed the participants to discuss the three viable political propositions for the Bangsamoro people—autonomy, federalism and independence. The expert resource persons on each of the three options were former Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) executive secretary Atty. Randolph Parcasio, Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) panelist and lawyer Moh'd Musib Buat and Institute of Bangsamoro Studies executive director Abhoud Syed Lingga.

Parcasio emphasized that the negotiated autonomy provided in two international peace covenants—the 1976 Tripoli Agreement and its implementing arm, the 1996 GRP-MNLF Peace Agreement—was never really fully implemented for the Bangsamoro people.

"The misgivings to autonomy stem from the lack of implementation of real autonomy," Parcasio said. "Autonomy has not been fully tested, and so it remains a viable option for the Bangsamoro people."

Parcasio also said that none of the provisions of RA 9054 (an act to strengthen and expand the organic act for the autonomous region of muslim mindanao, amending for the Purpose Republic Act 6734, entitled an act providing for the Autonomous Region of Muslim

Mindanao) were implemented, and that "these must be fully and properly executed to provide access to justice to ARMM constituents."

Buat discussed federalism and other options for governance as exemplified by various political models globally. He emphasized the need to focus on unity in diversity, rather than on national integration and assimilation.

"Solving the Bangsamoro political problem with the federal option will mean development, not only for Mindanao, but also for the rest of the Philippines," Buat said.

Buat said that it is obvious that the federal alternative is national in scope and its impact goes beyond the concerns of Mindanao. He said that it will "give Mindanao what autonomy has failed to provide—genuine self-government and eventually peace and development."

Lingga, however, stressed that the ultimate aspiration of the Bangsamoro people was independence—as signified by historical struggle, and that all the options are steps toward the realization of that goal.

"An independent state will give justice to the Bangsamoro people, and will redound to the benefits of the Filipino people," Lingga said. "It is a win-win option."

Lingga said that holding a referendum for the people to finally decide on which option best suits them "will put an end to the war that causes the death of tens of thousands, displacement of millions from their homes, division of people, and the drain of economic resources of the Philippines."

The forum recommended further research on the options to adopt any political structure that must be based on informed decisions made by the people themselves.

■ The autonomy experience

THE autonomous government envisioned under the 1976 Tripoli Agreement has the following powers and features:

- 1) To set up courts to implement Shari'ah laws;
- 2) Have representation in all courts including the Supreme court;
- 3) Right to set up schools, colleges and universities;
- 4) Set up an administrative system;
- 5) Establish financial and economic system;
- 6) Right of representation and participation in the central government and in all organs of the state;
- 7) Establish regional security force

- 8) Have a legislative assembly, and an executive council appointed by the legislative assembly;
- 9) Reasonable percentage derived from the revenues of the mines and minerals.

Despite the existence of two international peace covenants, the Philippine government had continually breached various provisions in these agreements:

- The Tripoli Agreement mandated the GRP to immediately organize a provisional autonomous government in the Southern Philippines, and to further discussions concerning regional security, resources, shari'ah law, education,

and administrative system. But the discussions never took place, and former President Ferdinand Marcos instead established two autonomous regions, in classic divide and rule tactic, absent the authority and power stipulated in the Tripoli Agreement.

• In 1990 the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao was created unilaterally by Philippine government without the authority and power stipulated under the 1976 Tripoli Agreement, and the Comelec was suspected to have manipulated the plebiscite to ensure that only four provinces constitute the ARMM—Tawi-Tawi, Sulu, Maguindanao and

Lanao del Sur.

• Former President Fidel Ramos pursued peace talks with the MNLF, which led to the signing of the 1996 Peace Agreement. But history repeated itself after this agreement, as with what happened after the Tripoli Agreement.

Source:

Parcasio, Randolph. *Autonomy Option: More Than A Quarter of a Century of Breach*. A paper presented at the PCID Forum titled "Political and Governance Options for the Bangsamoro: Autonomy, Federalism and Independence. (28 July 2006)

■ What is Federalism?

THE best way to define a federal form of government is to compare it with that of a unitary system. Although a unitary form of government mandates a constitutional monopoly of powers on central (national) government, federalism constitutionally provides that sovereignty be divided between at least two territorial levels (i.e. national and state levels). This arrangement is made so that units at each level have the final authority and can act independently of the others in some area.

The establishment of a Bangsamoro state will be a step forward, along the advocacy for a federal constitution. The Bangsamoro

Nation may opt to federate with the Philippine state or enter into free state association. It may also enter into a treaty with the Philippine state to form a federal union like that of the State of Texas which federated with the American Union via treaty.

Source:

Buat, Moh'd Musib. *Federalism as a Bangsamoro Option*. Elazar, Daniel. *Federal Systems of the World: A Handbook of Federal, Confederal and Autonomy Arrangements*. (1998)

Exclusive powers of the national and state governments

National government

1. Print money
2. Regulate interstate (between states) and international trade
3. Make treaties and conduct foreign policy
4. Declare war
5. Provide an army and navy
6. Establish post offices
7. Make laws necessary and proper to carry out the these powers

State governments

1. Issue licenses
2. Regulate intrastate (within the state) businesses
3. Conduct elections
4. Establish local governments
5. Ratify amendments to the Constitution
6. Take measures for public health and safety
7. May exert powers the Constitution does not delegate to the national government or prohibit the states from using

■ The independent state

AN independent Bangsamoro State is to be founded on the principles of freedom democracy, equality of all men and women, respect to religious beliefs and adherence to universal human rights.

• A provisional government will see to the drafting and adoption of a constitution that defines the system of government, which will be determined by the Bangsamoro people themselves.

• Residents of the independent territory will enjoy equal rights, privileges and obligations. Residents who will prefer to re-

main Filipino citizens may choose to remain as permanent resident aliens or move to Philippine territory with the right to bring with them all their properties. Immovable properties can be sold to private individuals or opt for government compensation.

• International conventions and agreements to which the Philippines is a signatory that directly apply to the Bangsamoro territories will be honored, in accordance with the rules of international law.

• The independent Bangsamoro state can have a special relation-

ship with the Philippines on matters of development of shared resource, exploitation of resources to benefit from economy of scale, flow of goods and services, movements of their citizens, regional security, and other concerns.

• At the time of independence, laws passed by the Congress of the Philippines that apply to the territory of the Bangsamoro state will remain in force until amended or repealed by the Bangsamoro legislative body. The Bangsamoro government will continue to pay pensions to retirees

according to the same terms and conditions; while issued permits, franchises and authorizations will remain in force until their expiry.

• The Bangsamoro government may include agreements with the Philippines on matters relating to the apportionment of properties and debts of the Philippines.

Source:

Lingga, Abhoud Syed. *Understanding Bangsamoro Independence as a Mode of Self-Determination*. Mindanao Journal XXVII (2004).



■ The Philippine Council for Islam and Democracy (PCID) does a continuous dialogue on political options with the people of Muslim Mindanao through consultations, conference and workshops. Here, the late Abraham Iribani, a member of the PCID Executive Committee is being interviewed on a local radio station in Jolo in one of the series of roundtable on *Muslim Perspectives on Federalism*. Iribani's book *Give Peace A Chance*, an intimate look into the peace accords, is slated to be published late this year by PCID.

Moro rebs lauded for arrest of rape suspect

MALAPATAN, Sarangani: Gov. Miguel Rene A. Dominguez of Sarangani lauded the cooperation of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) with local authorities leading to the arrest on July 13 of a fugitive suspected in the rape of a 9-year-old girl from the municipality of Glan in this province.

"We are grateful for the effort of our brothers from the MILF, led by Commander Bujar," Dominguez said as he presented the rebel leader in front of local government officials, the media, military personnel,

the International Monitoring Team (IMT) and his constituents attending the anniversary of Barangay Lun Masla here.

Bujar and his men arrested Tony Peralta, reportedly responsible for the series of rape cases in Sarangani, while seeking refuge in an MILF stronghold in the hinterlands of Barangay Sapu Masla.

The MILF turned over Peralta to Sr. Supt. Efrén Valeriano, provincial police director, and to members of the IMT headed by Malaysian Lt. Col. Abdulrazak bin Husain.

Peralta, is known for sea piracy, was also tagged as responsible for homicide and series of rape cases in barangays Burias and Pangyan in Glan town.

Informants reportedly tipped off the MILF that resulted in the arrest of the fugitive.

Sapu Masla is a recognized Peace and Development Community. The barangay has been receiving projects from USAID-Growth with Equity in Mindanao that constructed a footbridge and fish-trading center and a multi-purpose training center.

Gandhi, Mindanews

Preach peace - foreign scholars urge youth

DAVAO CITY: Two Arab preachers from Saudi Arabia urged the young Moro participants of the Second Youth Educational Enrichment of the World Assembly of Muslim Youth to devote themselves in "dawah" (preaching) to help establish peace in Mindanao.

At least 60 Moro in-school and out-of-school youth leaders from across Mindanao attended the peace camp on July 28 to 30 at the Seagull resort in Davao City.

Sheikh Musfir Al Jufan and Sheikh Bandar Al Falih, preachers from Saudi Arabia, said preaching "peace" to communities is not the task merely for "Dua" (preachers) alone but also for the Muslim youth who are capable, having strong bodies and sound minds, to keep acquiring more knowledge and to share this with others.

"Move now and don't wait for our Ulama (Muslim scholars) to approach us," Sheikh Falih said. "You should know that it was the youth who helped Prophet Mohammad in preaching during his era."

The camp's theme, "The Critical Role of the Youth in Dawah and Promoting Peace," was organized to encourage the Moro

youth to learn more about Islam and spearhead in spreading the message of peace.

World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), an international organization serving the interests of the Muslim youth all over the world and recognized by the United Nations, has been engaged in building mosques and madaris (Islamic schools), sponsoring youth camps, Islamic seminars and technical training, scholarship for orphans, advocating peace and development with other stakeholders, and other activities that answer the needs of Muslims.

Sheikh Salih Musa, country director for WAMY-Philippines, said WAMY was created by the efforts of the Muslim students in America and Saudi Arabia, and supported by Muslim philanthropists. "WAMY has many branches all over the world," Sheikh Musa said.

He urged the Moro youth to be united despite the ethnolinguistic diversity. He also urged them "not to confine ourselves in learning about our religion, but also learn about science and technology."

Sheikh Musa is optimistic that an "Islamic and Technological

University" will soon rise in Mindanao through the help of Arab Muslim brothers.

Salem Demuna, a Ka'agan youth leader, proposed the establishment of an Islamic university particularly in Davao city, "which shall produce more Muslim professionals."

"There are many Muslim youth who yearn to finish college, but they're financially constrained," Demuna explained.

Dr. Abdulmoin Lamtong, lawyer Sammy Buat and Prof. Abhoud Syed Lingga, all from academe, tackled topics about Islamic development, the role of Muslim youth in society and Dawah.

"To attain development, man should develop himself first, enriching his knowledge both on spiritual and scientific," Lamtong explained. "Islam is open for changes and development, despite being fixed in its principle and ideology, as long as these does not contradict with Islamic doctrines and principles."

Prof. Lingga of the Institute of Bangsamoro Studies encouraged the youth to be creative and innovative to carry effective dawah. "An effective Dua is the one who is skillful and, of course, has a credible personality," he stressed.

Gandhi, Mindanews

Highlights of the Bangsamoro struggle

Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers in Pakistan requested GRP to implement the 1976 Tripoli Agreement.

1981
Misuari failed to convince Arab states summit in Saudi Arabia to support secession. Marcos meanwhile, visited Saudi Arabia and OIC Habib Chatti. The 13th

ICFM called on GRP to immediately expedite the implementation of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement. CPP-NPA formed the Moro Revolutionary Organization.

1984
The 15th ICFM reaffirmed its commitment to recognize the territorial integrity of the Philippines and called for MNLF to close

ranks. Hashim meanwhile officially declared the establishment of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

February 26, 1986
Marcos ousted by a people-led revolt. Newly-installed President Aquino tasked the Constitutional Commission to include provisions for autonomy in Muslim Mindanao and the Cordilleras.

March-September, 1986
MILF sent feelers to Pres. Aquino for peace talks. Through the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and Muslim World League mediation, both MILF and MNLF agreed in principle to negotiate jointly in an expanded panel. In September, Aquino visited an MNLF camp which Misuari seizes to gain an initiative

and recognition for the MNLF from the government as its negotiating panel.

August 1, 1989
Philippine Congress passed Republic Act 6734, which creates the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and signed by Aquino into law on 1

See HIGHLIGHTS D4

The role of third parties in Mindanao peace process

FOR the past three decades, a neutral third party has always been involved in the peace talks between government and the Bangsamoro liberation fronts. In the negotiations with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) had been actively involved. Malaysia is the facilitator in the on going talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Third parties have been helpful in bringing warring parties to the negotiating table and keeping them at the table even if talks at times reach stalemate and border on resumption of hostilities. The OIC's interest in facilitating a peaceful settlement between the government and the MNLF, according to Prof. Julkipli Wadi of UP institute of Islamic Studies, followed its mandate as a pan-Islamic organization to promote Islamic solidarity and peaceful settlement of disputes. The OIC believed a peace agreement would serve "the best interest of the Muslims in South Philippines."

Almost 10 years after the signing of the agreement, hostilities have resurfaced between the government and MNLF forces. Many of the points of conflict were a result of the nonimplementation or violation of terms of the agreement. Thus, the OIC experience teaches the lesson that third parties should concern themselves not just with reaching agreements, but also with the faithful compliance of the terms of the agreement.

Formal negotiations between the GRP and the MILF started in January 1997 after the conclusion of the peace talks between the GRP and the MNLF. Malaysia's involvement in the peace talks started in the year 2000, after government's all-out war against the Moro liberation movement. President Arroyo sought the assistance of Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad and Indonesian President Abdulrahman Wahid to convince the MILF to resume the stalled negotiations.

"Malaysia's facilitation, aside from being host, usually involved the following functions: go-between conveying positions of the par-

The Jihadist

ties; providing a conducive atmosphere and facilities; presence in the talks as 'referee' and to witness commitments and understandings; help bridge differences by shuttling between the parties; administration of the talks; and record and keep minutes, to detail what had actually been agreed upon," cites Atty. Soliman Santos.

Malaysia also leads the International Monitoring Team (IMT), tasked to monitor the ceasefire between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the MILF forces, providing the biggest contingent of peacekeepers. The smaller contingents come from Brunei and Libya.

Upon the invitation of the Philippine government and the MILF, the United States government has become involved in the peace process through the United States Institute for Peace (USIP). The late MILF Chairman Salamat Hashim wrote President Bush on January 20, 2003, looking forward to a US initiative that would bring in a new formula to resolve the problem. President Bush's statement that the United States would provide diplomatic and financial support to the renewed peace process ushered in expectations that the US government would be officially involved, rather than the Track II initiatives provided by the USIP.

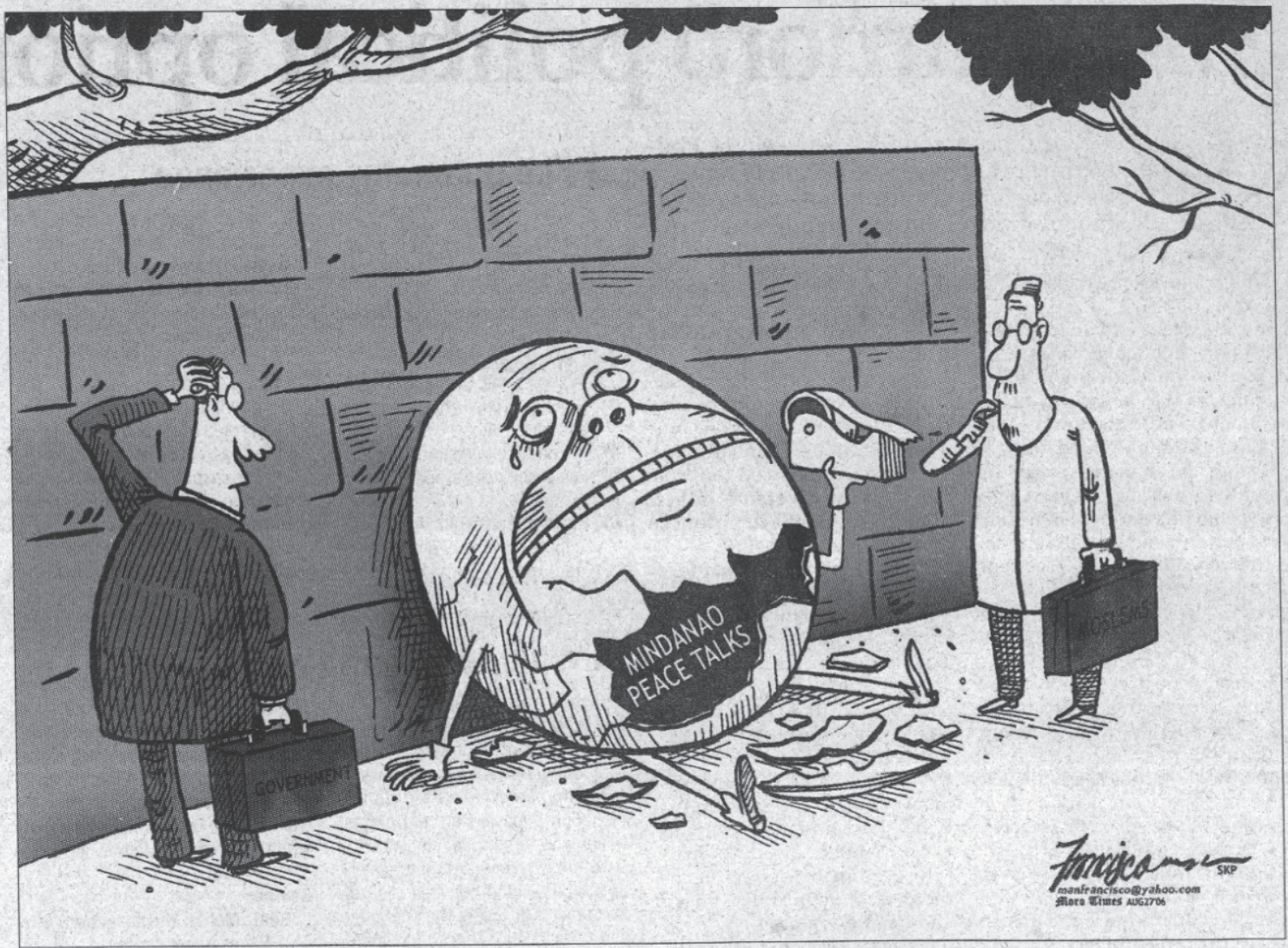
In the meantime, Malaysia has continued its role of facilitating the government-MILF peace talks. As then-Foreign Affairs Secretary Delia Albert noted, "Malaysia remains crucial to the search for peace in Southern Philippines," and should continue its engagement up to the post-conflict phase. It is imperative that Malaysia should remind the GRP and MILF on the importance of a road map and benchmarks of implementation, as well as the need for monitoring mechanism."

The US should keep up its policy not to supplant Malaysia as facilitator of the peace talks. Better still, the United States Government must raise its involvement in the peace process to the level of the State Department. This will make Malaysia more comfortable in partnering with the US, given that peace initiatives will be on a state-state level.

Many European countries have rich experience in assisting states rebuild their societies after a tumultuous civil war. Their involvement in the peace process, either unilaterally or through the European Union, will certainly add to chances of success in peace building efforts, particularly in the post-conflict reconstruction phase. Meanwhile, Japan, which has been invited to join the IMT's civilian component, should give favorable consideration to the request because it can contribute so much to the success of the peace process.

Executive Director Abhoud Syed M. Lingga of the Institute of Bangsamoro Studies

Based on a paper presented during the International Conference on Peace Building in Asia Pacific: The Role of Third Parties, on July 1-3, 2006, organized by the Institute for Dispute Resolution, Khon Kaen University, and Southeast Asia Conflict Studies Network.



Islam 101 [Part 2]

(Second of three parts)

Assalamu Alaykum Hamid Barra

THE second level in the structure of Islam pertains to the performance of certain required worship or religious obligations that a Muslim of age must do. These are: 1) the euphonious utterance of the *shahaadah* or testimony of faith: *ASH'HADU AN LAA ILAAHA ILLALLAAH WA ASH'HADU ANNA MUHAMMADAR-RASUULULLAAH* (I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah); 2) performance of *salaat* or the five daily prayers; 3) payment of *zakat* or the required charity or poor-due; 4) *sawm* or fasting during the month of Ramadhan; and 5) performance of the *hajj*, or pilgrimage to Makkah, once in a lifetime for those who have the strength and means to do so.

The first pillar of Islam lays down the principles of *tawhid* and *risalah*, which are expressed in the testimony of faith—*LAA ILAAHA ILLALLAAH, MUHAMMADUR-RASUULULLAAH*.

When such *shahaadah* is recited formalizing membership in the Islamic community, a person enters a contract with his community for him to defend his membership in the community and for the community to defend the believer from harm.

The bedrock of Islam is the concept of *tawhid*. This is the faith and belief in the oneness of Allah, in His Godhead, in His creative power, in His Lordship over all creations and in His uniqueness in His Names and Attributes.

The concept of *tawhid* is expressed in the phrase: *LAA ILAAHA ILLALLAAH*, which forms the first part of the attestation of faith of a Muslim. It literally means THERE IS NO DEITY WORTHY OF WORSHIP EXCEPT ALLAH. The phrase is composed of two parts: *LAA ILAAHA* (THERE IS NO DEITY WORTHY OF WORSHIP) and *ILLALLAAH* (EXCEPT ALLAH). The first part states that a Muslim must negate all deities that man worships, be they idols, men, gods, nature, or even one's inner desire and love for the world. After negating all of these imaginary sources of power and strength, a Muslim affirms that it is only Allah Who is the sole source of Godhead and Lordship, Who is Creator, Designer and Fashioner of all creations, and their Sustainer, Cherisher and Guardian-Lord. *Tawhid* is also a process of negating any

source of power and authority and establishing in one's heart and soul the ultimate faith and belief that it is Allah alone Who is the source of Sovereign Authority, upon Whose power a Muslim rests his fate, and in Whose worship, submission and obedience a Muslim surrenders and dedicates his prayers, sacrifices, life and death.

Thus, *tawhid* sets the methodology upon which a person undergoes a process of change in his life from a state of disbelief, of assigning partners to God, of believing in other sources of power, to a state of faithfulness, of accepting no other deity but Allah, of dedicating his prayers and sacrifices, his life and death to Allah Alone.

Through the process of *tawhid*, a Muslim finds total liberation and freedom from any source of slavery or obedience to any other being. When a Muslim enters into the total sovereignty of Allah by the process of *tawhid*, he becomes a totally free individual, free from servitude to any other being. He only worships, serves and obeys Allah and only submits to His will.

M U H A M M A D U R - RASUULULLAAH means MUHAMMAD IS THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH. This statement makes a Muslim a member of the Community of the Holy Prophet

who believes in his message, upholds his leadership, obeys his teachings, attunes his lifestyle with the way of the Holy Prophet, and takes him as a model and exemplar.

When a Muslim accepts the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him), he is thus required two basic things: 1) *saliimul-aqidah* (purity of faith), which means that a Muslim gives assurance that he has full and sincere faith and belief in the message of the Holy Prophet, and 2) *sahiikul-ibadah* (righteous way of performing worship), which means that a Muslim binds himself to perform his duties as a Muslim in accordance with the *sunnah*, or lifestyle of the Holy Prophet.

A Muslim further believes in the universality of the message of the Holy Prophet. He believes that the Prophet was not only sent to a particular nation, tribe or group but is a Messenger to the whole of humanity. Moreover, a Muslim affirms that the Holy Prophet is a guide, a warner and a mercy to all creations.

Hamid Barra is a fellow at the Philippine Council for Islam and Democracy, an author of books on Sharia, and is currently Dean of the King Faisal Center for Islam, Arabic and Asian Studies, Mindanao State University—Marawi City.

GLOBAL PINOY UMMAH

Shades of Sarah Balabagan: More Muslim female OFWs than male OFWs

THE National Statistics Office (NSO) said that female Muslims comprise 56 percent of all Muslim overseas Filipino workers (OFW), most of them below 20 years old.

In 2000, there were 42,857 Muslim OFWs working in different parts of the world or about 2 percent of Muslim Mindanao's 2.41 million population. The total number of female Muslims are estimated at 23,926 while Muslim males comprise just 18,931. Half of the OFWs working abroad are

aged below 25 years old, with 8,610 female Muslims.

Muslim male OFWs had a median age of 27 years while their female counterparts had 24 years old. Majority of Muslim OFWs work as domestic helpers, construction workers and some in the leisure and entertainment industry.

Filipino OFWs cited for honesty, friendliness and dependability

SAUDI employers prefer Filipino OFWs, especially Muslims, because of three extraordinary traits—honesty, friendliness and dependability. In a recent state-visit by Presi-

dent Arroyo in Saudi Arabia just recently, Saudi deputy foreign minister for foreign information, Dr. Abdul Aziz bin Salama told, the Chief Executive that Saudi employers prefer Filipinos because of their honesty and integrity in work. [www.filipinoweekly.com]

Filipino single mothers targeted for sex trafficking

PHILIPPINE Consulate-General Antonio Curameng said that young, unskilled Filipino single mothers are highly vulnerable to sex trafficking because of their desperate desire to provide a better future for

their children. Curameng revealed that nearly all of the 30 sex-trafficking cases handled by the consulate in Dubai involved such women who were lured with promises of jobs in the hospitality industry, usually as guest relations officers at bars and nightclubs. Their lack of knowledge of local laws allowed traffickers to easily trick them into prostitution.

Although remittances have contributed to the decline in poverty incidence and improved the economy through higher gross domestic product, consumer spending and employment opportunities, they also have created an imbalance in the regions.

I PERSONALLY welcome the first issue of the Moro Times. The country will be "richer" and "bigger" both culturally and politically with a national "platform" for the Bangsamoro people. The people behind Moro Times have given the nation a concrete instrument in mainstreaming the often marginalized minority in the country. Kudos and God Bless...

LETTER

FR. ELISEO "JUN" MERCADO, OMI
 Director of the Oblates' Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation office, Rome

CONGRATULATIONS on the publication of Moro Times! This is indeed very timely and I look forward to reading every issue!

I read your piece with interest and was reminded of the early MNLF documents and interviews with them. When talking of jihad then, the MNLF simply referred to it as holy war.

I am curious, though, of the use of the term "Moro"—Moro Times—would this include the converts from

Christianity of which there is a growing number? Obviously, the converts do not share the historical legacy of southern Muslims and the use of the term.

Congratulations again on your work! Best regards.

VIVIENNE S.M. ANGELES, PHD
 Assistant Professor
 Department of Religion
 La Salle University
 Philadelphia

Highlights of the Bangsamoro struggle

August 1989. On November 10, a plebiscite was called, boycotted by MILF and MNLF. Only four provinces—Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi—chose autonomy.

July-October 1992

The 20th ICFM in Istanbul called for the resumption of the peace talks between the MNLF and

GRP. In July 1992, President Fidel V. Ramos appointed a National Unification Commission (NUC) to formulate an amnesty program for MNLF rebels. On October 1992, the first round of peace talks were held.

1993

Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas hosted the second round of

GRP-MNLF exploratory talks which led to the signing of Executive Order 125 defining the approach and administrative structure for government peace efforts.

1994-1995

Ramos issued Proclamation 347 granting amnesty to Moro rebels and creating a govern-

ment-MNLF Joint Ceasefire Committee. In September, the second round of formal talks began. An Interim Agreement was signed, containing 81 points of consensus in defense, education, economic and financial systems, mines and minerals, Shariah courts, functions of a Legislative Assembly and Executive

Council and representation in the national government and administrative system.

1996

A meeting of the GRP-MNLF Mixed Committee resulted in the establishment of the Southern Philippines Zone of Peace and Development (SZOPAD).

See HIGHLIGHTS D5

Thoughts from the Donor Community

Benefiting All in a Peace Agreement

Ten years after the signing of the "Final Peace Agreement" between the Philippine government and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), and five years after the administration of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo agreed on a cessation of hostilities with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), uncertainty remains about the peace status of Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago. Disputes are continuous about the implementation of the 1996 Final Peace Agreement, and MNLF Chair Nur Misuari is still detained. At the same time, talks between the government and the MILF have gone through numerous informal sessions as representatives on both sides try to reach consensus on extraordinarily difficult issues so as to be able to present the Peace Panels with a final draft agreement.

There are a number of reasons to wonder if an agreement will be arrived at any

time soon. First, there is the concern that any current and future agreements with the MILF will significantly impact previous agreements with the MNLF. Second, issues like "ancestral domain" or the "Bangsamoro Juridical Entity" are very hard to resolve even with the best political will in the world. And finally, perceptions of political uncertainties may cause parties on both sides to defer decisions until after the currently scheduled elections in May 2007 to gauge the political strength of the current administration in Manila.

Maintaining some forward momentum—without really reaching a final destination—is not all bad. Despite occasional outbreaks, violence has dramatically decreased. There are many mechanisms on the ground—the International Monitoring Teams, the Local Monitoring Teams, the nongovernmental Bantay Ceasefire—helping to protect the cessation of hostilities. And relative peace means that

development projects have some chance of moving forward, funding for which could come from the recently-announced increased amounts of the regional government of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao or increased flows of assistance from overseas donors supporting peace and development.

Still, real breakthroughs are necessary for lasting peace. One particular sort of initiative requiring more effort is to reach out to stakeholders in Mindanao other than those directly involved in the peace process. Cities outside of ARMM, but possibly falling within the "ancestral domain of the Bangsamoro," have expressed apprehension and, occasionally, outright rejection of coverage within the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity (BJE). Of course, the coverage of "ancestral domain" and the nature of the BJE have yet to be finalized, but as early as now it is important to include such interests and concerns in the design of

a peace agreement.

For instance, it is perfectly rational for a city government to object to any removal of barangays from its jurisdiction since the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) from the national government depends on territorial coverage and population size. Taking away barangays would reduce the IRA for that city. In response, the peace deal could include a provision (implemented for the first five years) allowing cities and municipalities that had barangays transferred to the BJE to continue receiving the same level of funding from the national government as they would have received under calculations for the Internal Revenue Allotment (including the "lost" barangays). In this manner, the residents of the city would also be "winners" from a peace deal since the same level of funding would cover less territory and fewer people. Certainly this is a win-win solution.

We cannot say now whether this suggested provision is

workable or makes sense in the context of an overall peace agreement, but the suggestion is offered as an example of the kinds of "out of the box" thinking that would allow all residents of Mindanao to feel that they are winners in any peace agreement. Another example might be the greater involvement of businesses (Chambers of Commerce, both ARMM and outside of ARMM, the Muslim Business Form, etc) since the private sector of all communities has a strong interest in peaceful pursuit of commerce.

The more people in Mindanao who feel they have "won" in a peace agreement, the more likely the agreement will be fully implemented. Hopefully, 10 years after the next agreement we won't have the same level of controversy as we do now, 10 years after the 1996 Final Peace Agreement.

Steven Rood, Ph.D.
Country Representative
The Asia Foundation

A neighbour's support for Mindanao

Conflict has too long afflicted the people of Mindanao, who continue to suffer from decades of violent conflict and the deep scars left by that violence. The people of Mindanao want peace and deserve peace. As a close neighbour and friend, Australia is actively working towards that goal through our growing development assistance program for Mindanao.

The international community has an important role to play in assisting the peace process, as noted by President Arroyo in her recent State of the Nation Address. And Australia is making a significant contribution to

international assistance efforts. Beyond providing development assistance to the MILF and MNLF peace processes, the Australian Government is also working broadly throughout the community.

Australia is a strong supporter of the Mindanao peace process and hopes to see a genuine and workable peace agreement come out of the ongoing talks between the Philippine Government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Australia is a contributor to the World Bank trust fund that is currently assisting the Bangsamoro Development Agency build its capacity. Australia has likewise been a strong supporter of

the Moro National Liberation Front peace process and has contributed to every stage of the GoP-UNDP program for the MNLF peace process. Australia has since been the largest donor to the UNDP program.

The formal peace processes are essential but it is important to recognize that for peace to succeed in Mindanao it will require the contribution of all the various peoples and sectors of Mindanao. In that regard, I salute the efforts made by the Philippine Council for Islam and Democracy and the Manila Times in starting this important new venture. The work of media and civil society in championing

peace is critical in ensuring the momentum for progress is maintained. The establishment of the Moro Times should boost those efforts considerably.

We have made a particular focus of our activities on the youth of Mindanao. Largely through the Basic Education Assistance for Mindanao program—a partnership between Australian and Philippine Governments—we are working to improve the education system in southern Mindanao, including the ARMM. A community's future is its youth and the success of the youth depends on a good education. Hand in hand with the Philippine Government, we are helping

the youth to help themselves and therefore their communities through improving the education system.

No one pretends that peace will come easily. It will take time, especially for the old wounds of war to heal. Australia is a close neighbour of the Philippines with a long-term commitment to peace—a commitment which is unwavering. Our commitment to being a partner in peace today means looking forward to the time when Mindanao is renowned the world over for its harmony and prosperity.

Tony Hely
Ambassador
Embassy of Australia

The European Union and Netherlands on peace and development in Mindanao

In spite of Mindanao being the Philippines' second largest island grouping and being richly endowed with natural resources, a significant number of Mindanao's provinces still fall below the Philippines' national poverty threshold. I share the aim of the government of the Philippines to bring about economic growth, prosperity and a peaceful environment for all those who live in Mindanao with the support of the international community.

For this to take place, first of all, peace should be attained and preserved. The involved parties should work jointly towards the conclusion and implementation of a comprehensive peace agreement. The international community should and indeed does sup-

port the ongoing peace process in various ways in order to strengthen the development of Mindanao. As such, peace in Mindanao is not only a task for the Moros. It is the responsibility of every Filipino and a matter of interest to the international community. Such cooperation will eventually bear fruit: the first signs of changing times are promising. Recently, ARMM's trade and investments have risen. With the prospects of peace, ARMM's economic growth is expected to double.

The Netherlands government supports the peace initiatives undertaken by the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). It is of the view that Mindanao's future hinges on a viable peace agreement which includes all stakeholders. Discussion of the issues put forward by the various stakeholders will eventually lead to an effec-

tive solution, embodying the common aspirations of the people of southern Philippines. Foremost to this is the full implementation of the 1996 Peace Agreement that affirms the legitimacy of the Bangsamoro cause, while maintaining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Philippine republic.

In addition, addressing human rights and governance issues during the process will in my opinion be vital to the achievement of lasting peace. Agreements drawn up with such issues in mind should promote stability, rehabilitation and development in all regions of Mindanao through power-sharing, equitable distribution of wealth and principles of accountability.

Mindanao also has a number of memories for me personally. Having witnessed the situation in Mindanao during several visits and having stayed over-

night in Sulu last time I was there, I have tried to get a better understanding of the people's conditions and the dynamics of their communities. By providing venues of discussion for Muslim scholars and by supporting workshops in the areas of human rights and peace, the Netherlands embassy has made an effort to contribute—albeit modestly—to the improvement of the situation. The embassy supported, through the Philippine Council for Islam and Democracy (PCID), a workshop that gathered over 100 Muslim political leaders who came up with a list of best practices in the promotion of human rights and peace in the context of Islam and Philippine democracy. It likewise assisted the same organization in a forum on peace and democracy attended by a total of 35 religious leaders and scholars from all over Mindanao who

discussed their role in peace and development for Muslim Mindanao. Both events illustrate our aim to bring together, in an open and constructive atmosphere, diverse groups and stakeholders for the cause of peace.

On a more substantial scale, the European Union has provided funding in the areas of agrarian reform and health, specifically towards Agrarian Reform Communities and the Health Sector Policy Support project in Mindanao.

The people of Mindanao have shown that they are resilient in coping with daily circumstances which have not been easy. I am hopeful that their quest for genuine peace and development will in the end be successful.

Robert Vornis
Ambassador
Embassy of the
Royal Netherlands

MUSLIMS ACROSS THE NATION

■ The 1st Mindanao State University International Alumni Homecoming will be hosted by the main campus, Marawi City with the theme, "Remembering the Glory of Bumbaran" on August 7-September 2, 2006 in time for MSU's 45th Foundation Day on September 1. Alumni from Europe, the Middle East, United States and Asia are expected to come home for this first reunion.

■ The Provincial Councilor's League of Tawi-Tawi recently underwent a seminar on the importance of managing the fisheries industry, organized by Tetratex, a non-governmental organization service provider. The LGU is preparing for its founding anniversary on September 27.

■ Anak-Mindanao Rep. Mujiv Hataman joined international peace delegations that visited war-affected Lebanon last August 12 as part of the local network Stop the War Coalition mission. The members of the Philippine mission include Walden Bello, professor at the University of the Philippines-Diliman; and Herbert Docena, with Focus on the Global South members and coalition members.

■ World Food Program local coordinator and Executive Director of the Ranau Youth for Peace and Development Bacon Cayongcat-Macaraya reports that 14 municipalities in Lanao del Norte and 25 in Lanao del Sur are beneficiaries of the program. 25 kilograms of rice

were delivered to each of 2813 pupils in the towns of Kapatagan, Piagapo and Butig. The program's components include child nutrition, food for work, food for training, day care centers.

■ The Ranau Claims Against Power Plants (RCAPP) staged a rally on August 9 in Plaza Cabili, Marawi to protest power rates' increase, daily brownouts and environmental degradation of Lake Lanao, the energy source of Agus hydroelectric power plants of the National Power Corporation (NPC). The more than 5,000 people who attended the rally demanded against NPC to stop environmental genocide imposed against the Maranaos.

■ Executive Director Yasmin Busran-Lao of the Al-Mujadillah Development Foundation spoke on the country report on Muslim and indigenous women's rights at the United Nations 36th Session on the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) on August 14. She highlighted poverty in ARMM leading to the diaspora to urban cities, which saw some unemployed Muslim women being jailed for engaging in illegal activities.

■ IQRA, an integrated Islamic and English school for Muslim children and based in Quiapo, Manila, was invited as the sole NGO, to dialogue with the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) in Manila.

■ A seminar-workshop on "Drafting the Bangsamoro State Constitution" was held at Buad Agricultural School, boundary of Marawi City and Marantao, Lanao del Sur on August 12-13. The organizer, Bangsamoro Development Agency (BDA) said this activity is in accordance with the GRP-MILF 10-point consensus.

■ Robin "Abdul Azis" Padilla was the guest speaker at the *Alternative Class Learning Experience* organized by the Muslim Students' Association of the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman titled "Kapatid na Muslim, Kumusta Ka Na?" The talk was held at the Lecture Hall of the UP Law Center last August 17, 2006.

Moro educators for a new generation

■ MACAPADO From page D6

Law in 1980. But with the downfall of his father's business in General Santos, Muslim couldn't find the means to support himself to live in Manila.

"I got a scholarship at the UP National College of Public Administration and Governance. So I finished an MPA instead, and went back to Marawi."

Muslim planned to teach in Marawi for only a year, after giving in to his parents' request for him to go back home, because he still wanted to a law degree. After barely three months of teaching public administration for master's and undergraduate degrees, he was recruited to become the Special Assistant for the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

"That was when my training in university governance began," Muslim said. "And it helped that I am a workaholic, and sort of a perfectionist." A highly respected MSU Chancellor, his colleagues point out that Muslim's integrity is a major factor to consider as well.

Muslim was made Chancellor of MSU General Santos in 1995, and was overwhelmingly re-elected by the Board of Regents in 2001. With efficient budget managing skills, he has largely improved infrastructure, income generation, and academic standards in the university.

"When I transferred to General Santos, the situation was depressing," Muslim explained. "I then started prioritizing basic academic needs of the school."

He purchased books and computers, and enabled access and communication by making roads and putting up phone lines. Muslim continued to teach while he was Chancellor at MSU.

"Of all the policy instruments in Mindanao, MSU is the most significant," Muslim said.

"This should be invested on by the government. We have to address the despicable situation of education in the ARMM. MSU can do a great job for building competent and committed leaders, for providing quality education in the Muslim areas."

■ CARMEN From page D6

"A teacher's influence is strong, especially on these impressionable young minds. And when these young ones develop communities, at the same time, develop themselves into outstanding citizens, that is something that you will be proud of."

She said that while the Muslim communities all over the world are experiencing various crises, many of the Muslims are trying to look for new directions, and trying to understand the important values of Islam that have been misunderstood.

"The academe deals with ideas and concepts, but is grounded on reality," Abubakar said. "The more education deals with reality, the more it will benefit society."

Abubakar said that the educational situation in Muslim communities is "very poor," as shown in the low levels of literacy and education indicators in the ARMM. According to her, this implies that the number of people who make enlightened and informed decisions is also very low.

"The capability to go to school is also very poor. If the child's family lives in the hinterlands, the child has to walk to school, and has to bring food with him. And this takes material support."

Stressing education as the fuel for development, Abubakar said that education has to be made more accessible to the people especially in the rural areas, and this must be addressed by the government. She said "quality education is impossible to attain, if there is an absence of infrastructural support."

"An educated person who is really dedicated can always open opportunities, not only for himself or herself, but also for others," Abubakar said. "It is important that we become dependent on ourselves, and not dependent on others."

Highlights of the Bangsamoro struggle

2 September 1996

The Final Peace Agreement (FPA) between the GRP and the MNLF was signed. Misuari wins the election as first ARMM Governor. Ramos issued Executive Order 371, a slight departure from the FPA on some significant points. GRP started negotiations with MILF.

1997

MILF and the GRP issued joint statement for peace. However, heavy fighting between MILF and AFP forces in Buldon which killed hundreds, marred the negotiations. In March, an Interim Ceasefire Monitoring Committee was formed but in June, AFP launches biggest offensive against MILF.

1999

Congress filed three bills amending the Organic Act on the ARMM, expanding it in accordance with the FPA. MILF-GRP formal peace talks began at the Dawah Center, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao. On December 17, GRP-MILF panels agreed on the rules and procedures for the conduct of formal peace talks.

July 9, 2000

Government forces overran MILF camps. On July 12, MILF Chairman Salamat Hashim declared jihad against the Philippine government. On August 21, MILF disbanded its peace panels after GRP issues warrants of arrest against its leaders. On September 22-24, the MILF 16th General Assembly reaffirmed

Salamat Hashim's declaration of jihad against GRP.

February 7, 2001

Philippine Congress approved House Bill 7883 and Senate Bill 2129 as Republic Act 9054, supplanting RA 6734 or the ARMM Organic Act. On February 20, President Gloria See HIGHLIGHTS D6

BY NASSER SHARIEF
Photos by Reynaldo Roslin

THE endless fascination with South Sea pearls is on record since ancient times. Wang Dayuan, a Chinese chronicler of the 14th century, wrote that pearls from Sulu are far better than those coming from other marine beds. One of the longest running raids and counter-raids between the Moro warriors and the Spaniards was sparked by pearls. In 1625, the Spaniards seized a trading fleet bound for Manila owned by Datu Achech, trade envoy of the Sultan of Sulu. The fleet carried three pearls of extraordinary size belonging to Raja Bongsu.

Since the 1300s, divers of Sulu have harvested big hauls of pearls, as well as mother-of-pearl. European traders would go to Jolo to buy pearls which used to be so abundant that children played marbles with them. Over the centuries, the Badjao, the sea gypsies, did most of the diving. Badjao divers free dive to depths well beyond the limits that normal scuba divers consider safe, even today.

Today, a new breed of Moro traders continues the pearl trade. The Moro pearl shops in Greenhills Shopping in San Juan has become a paradise for pearl shoppers, locals and foreigners alike. It pays to visit the pearl *tiangge* once in a while if only to forget momentarily the damning traffic of the metropolis. Enscenced among rows and rows of stalls, you can stand on one cross-section of the aisles, close your eyes, and you could almost get a cathedral feeling, hearing the talking clicks of the beads.

What is so nice about Greenhills is the unrestrained displays of the *tiangge*. They don't have the stiff formality of a Rustan or the bowtie strangle of an exclusive boutique. Any shopper with just a few hundred pesos is just as welcome as a doña from the Forbes or the Queen of Spain (who is said to have come to Greenhills to buy pearls incognito). The Greenhills pearl market has been written about in posh fashion magazines like *Vogue* as the place to buy pearls.

"Our aim is to make everybody feel welcomed and be at ease," remarked Naseef Malawani, President of the Greenhills Muslim Traders Association. "We want to inspire the young to work hard and be successful. I've seen too many body tattoos on teenagers lately and they are not encouraging. A Filipina ought to preserve that wisp of purity and freshness. And what could better accentuate such trait than pearls."

The light and the dark

South Sea pearls are of two basic groups: the light and the black variety. The lights are primarily cultured in the Philippines, Indonesia and the north-



People's Pearls and Greenhills



ern waters of Australia. Their rarity and exceptional sizes, from 8 to 20mm, make them sought after. Their color range from white and silvery blue to pale gold—the golden or light-yellowish varieties abound in the Philippine. Pearls from the dark group are most frequently found over a wide area stretching from the Cook Islands, eastward through Tahiti to the Gambier Islands in French Polynesia.

One of the more successful South Sea pearl shops in the Greenhills exhibit is the Amerah Jewelry. The team of husband and wife Actar and Amerah Marmar has expanded their jewelry inventories over the years that now they have put up a jewelry boutique in the posh Gateway in Araneta, Cubao.

Amerah said, "In this line of business, you can't get too excited, you have to be frugal. You could have a sale of only five hun-

dred pesos in a day or a hundred thousand, even a million. It all depends. When you have a big deal, you don't celebrate right away. In the days and months following, you may have zero sales for all you know, and how would you cope with the rentals and all the sundries?"

Among the Greenhills traders, it was Pandao Ali who pioneered the pearl trade by sourcing Akoya pearls from Japan in 1986. The Akoya is mainly oval and round shaped, measuring 2 to 10mm. Their color ranges from pinkish white to creamy shades and silvery blue. After a stint in Saudi Arabia as a civil engineer, Ali traveled all the way to Kobe to find the source of the Akoya. When he came back he introduced it as the Mikimoto and started the pearl market which has made Greenhills world-renowned.

"It's a minor repackaging," he

said, "and *Alhamdulillah*, it worked. Today, many Maranao entrepreneurs who used to buy their Akoya from me are now far bigger traders than me. I can't be but be proud of them."

Most do-it-yourself pearl jewelry making uses freshwater pearls. Freshwater pearls are also referred to as "rice" pearls locally because of the close resemblance.

The price of pearls can start from 50 to 500,000 pesos—a range wide enough to choose from. "We generally have a cheaper price than say Hongkong, that's why you see a lot of foreigners milling around—Koreans, Australian, Americans, Middle Eastern and Asians," said Norsam of the Norsam Jewelry.

With the hundreds of stalls in the exhibit, when you find a stall whose price and inventory you particularly like, it pays to remember the name and not the stall number. "We always raffle

the stalls for all the lessees," said Naseef Malawani. "One month an exhibitor will find himself in a key area near the threshold of the entrance. Another month he finds himself in an odd corner. This is for fairness's sake. We don't espouse seniority here, so there's always room for new players in the business."

Love for pearls is blind

Generally, the basis for gauging the quality of a pearl are: luster, color, size, shape, surface and iridescence. Jewelers sort pearls according to grade, grouping together gems of similar quality. Unlike gemstones like diamonds, there is no single international standard quality for pearls that can be used. Every house follows its own system of grading pearls. Size, expressed in terms of its diameter, measured in millimeters, has a significant impact on price. A millimeter's difference could

double the price.

Feeding on each other

Most of the shops are family operated. Women spend countless hours bending and cutting beading wires, setting stones, stringing and gluing pearls even while they gossip about last night's episode of *Sa Piling Mo* or *Love Story in Harvard*. The myriad of designs offered generally do not come straight from the drawing board. It evolved mostly from the interactions between the customers and shop owners. A customer will casually suggest something which the shop owner will take note of. Another inspired client drops by armed with an idea of her own. The shop owner will try a combination of the suggestions, and come up with his own. It's a continuous process—a sort of People's Design, and everyone—from princess to ragamuffin—is invited to input her ideas. And they are waiting for you.

Moro educators for a new generation

BY MAYA ABDULLAH



■ Dr. Macapado Muslim

Dr. Macapado Muslim

The Almost President of MSU

THE General Santos campus of the Mindanao State University (MSU) system experienced tremendous growth in the hands of Dr. Macapado Muslim, a Maranao who was last year's number one contender for MSU President.

Of international caliber, Muslim finished his Bachelor's degree in Public Administration at MSU, his Master's degree in Public Administration at the University of the Philippines, and his MA and Ph.D. in Political Science at the University of Hawaii as an East West Center Scholar.

"I had poor beginnings, my parents did not even finish grade one. I was admitted into MSU as a College Bound Program participant," Muslim said. "This program is designed to prepare Muslim and other minority students in MSU and Marawi City for university work, assuming that a good number of us are inadequately prepared."

After his second year in college, Muslim earned a full academic scholarship by promotion. He maintained this scholarship until he graduated with his bachelor's degree.

"This boosted my morale. Back then, I was a typical minority student who became nervous at the mere thought of knowing the answers to the teacher's questions. When I became a scholar, I became active in class. I think I was even the first Muslim student in MSU to become a university champion in extemporaneous speaking."

Muslim wanted to go to law school after his graduation from college, and was, in fact, admitted to the UP College of

See MACAPADO D5



■ Dr. Carmen Abubakar

Ma'am Carmen,

The Muslim Feminist

"TEACHING is like planting seeds. Teachers nurture the seeds, so that each will grow into a beautiful tree."

They are dedicated, passionate and at times, revolutionary. Muslim educators, like Dr. Carmen Abubakar, know that at the core of the Bangsamoro problem is the hunger of young Moros for knowledge.

You might see her on TV and major academic fora tackling thorny issues such as women's rights or the Bangsamoro struggle. Abubakar, a Tausug, is a professor and the Dean of the Institute of Islamic Studies at the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman who believes that teaching is a profession that fulfills her because it allows her to nurture young minds.

Born in Jolo, Sulu, Abubakar finished her Bachelor's Degree in Education at the Notre Dame of Jolo College. She started teaching at her alma mater, before going to UP Diliman to finish an MA in Education. She then taught English at the high school department of UP Baguio before heading back to Diliman to earn a Ph.D. in Philippine Studies.

"I've been in the academe for much of my life," Abubakar said, affectionately called Ma'am Carmen by her students. "It's a fulfilling profession where I felt I could do much in terms of contributing in service of the people."

Abubakar said that being in the teaching profession does not allow one to get rich, but to her, "there is nothing more energizing and fulfilling than seeing people being taught new ideas and apply these ideas."

See CARMEN D5

Highlights of the Bangsamoro struggle

Arroyo declared the suspension of offensive military action (SOMO).

March 13, 2001

President Arroyo named Misuari as Special Envoy to the OIC. On March 24, GRP and MILF signed a General Framework of Agreement of Intent in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

March 30, 2001
Philippine Congress approved RA 9054.

April 2001

The 15-Man Executive Council was formed in defiance to the leadership of Nur Misuari and chose MNLF Vice Chairman Hatimil Hassan as Chairman of the Executive Council. Misuari,

however, remained ARMM governor.

June 19-22, 2001

GRP and MILF panel chair Al Haj Murad Ebrahim signed an Agreement on Peace.

August 7, 2001

MILF and MNLF signed an Agreement on the General

Framework for Unity and a Joint Communique and Implementing Guidelines on the Security Aspect of the GRP-MILF Tripoli Agreement of Peace in 2001.

November 19, 2001

Former MNLF Chair Misuari was accused of rebellion and on November 24, Misuari was arrested in Malaysia.

November 26, 2001

MNLF Executive Council member Parouk Hussin was elected ARMM Governor. On December 20, the GRP and MNLF signed a Joint Communique to recognize the progress in the implementation of the 1996 Peace Agreement and the need to sustain its progress.