


Development Policies for Muslim Mindanao in the Pre-Martial Law Period (1955-1971): Historical Notes on Their Origin and Implementation

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Introduction

As the second largest island in the Philippine archipelago, Mindanao, including the other smaller islands in the South, comprises 35% of the country's total land area while producing the bulk of the country's agricultural output. During the past two decades, Mindanao, together with the archipelago of Sulu (and Tawi-Tawi) and Basilan Island, was divided for a number of times into several administrative regions. The partition was always done arbitrarily and was motivated more by political expediency than by any other reason.¹

Before Martial Law, Mindanao and Sulu were divided into two regions -- Region IX which comprised the northern and eastern Mindanao and Region X which included southern and western Mindanao. In 1972, Mindanao and Sulu became three regions -- Region IX (Western Mindanao), Region X (Northern Mindanao), Region XI (Southern Mindanao). Further change was implemented three years later with the addition of a fourth region -- Region XII (Central Mindanao) -- by reshuffling the provinces in northern and southern Mindanao. This re-division of the southern part of the archipelago came in the wake of the Mindanao rebellion. The martial law regime, through the latest modification, attempted to contain and defuse the rebellion in predominately Muslim provinces. In 1977, autonomy was declared in Region IX and Region XII.²

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Mindanao: An Economic Profile of the "Land of Promise"

The aggregate area of 10.2 million hectares of the "South," as Mindanao and Sulu are sometimes alluded to, being the southern geographical region of the Philippine Archipelago, constitutes more than one-third of the country's total land area of thirty million hectares. The lands in the South are classified according to general land use pattern as forest lands, agricultural crop lands, pasture lands, marshes, swamps, fishponds, urban lands and reservations. A greater part of the regions is made up of productive forest (48.6% of the total area) while 40 % is classified as agricultural crop lands. Agricultural crops are classified as food crops and commercial or export crops.³ Some two decades ago, the average farm size in Mindanao was already four hectares operated by owner-cultivators, settlers and tenants.

But with the higher rate of in-migration (of settlers from Visayas and Luzon) into Mindanao compared to other areas of the country over the years, the average farm size by this time is definitely much smaller than the 1960 figure.⁴

As in the rest of the country, the pattern of Mindanao cropland utilization is towards an increasing commercialization of agricultural production. A few years back, the Ministry of Natural Resources (presently the Department of Environment and Natural Resources) reported that the only available "frontier lands" can be found in Mindanao - in the Surigao and Agusan provinces and in the provinces of Davao del Norte and Bukidnon. Agricultural development and commercialization therefore will be experienced more in Mindanao than in any other part of the country during this decade.⁵ (*N.B.* Hereinafter, the term "Mindanao" shall be meant to include the Sulu Archipelago and Basilan Island.)

Mindanao has extensive mineral deposits which can provide the mining industry with lucrative ventures.⁶ Cement raw material deposits in Central Mindanao are projected to last "for more than a thousand years." The world's largest nickel reserves are found in Nonoc Island off the northern east of Surigao del Norte. Zamboanga del Sur has 99.9% of Mindanao's reserves of lump iron ore deposits estimated at 11.6 million metric tons. Gold and silver are found mainly in the provinces of Surigao del Norte, Agusan del Norte, Davao del Norte and Zamboanga del Sur. Copper reserves total 227 million metric tons for the entire Mindanao and are concentrated in Davao del Norte and Agusan del Norte. Lead, zinc and manganese reserves are found mostly in Zamboanga del Sur, while Davao Oriental has 78% of Mindanao's total chromite reserves of 381,400 metric tons. Marble deposits of 128 million tons are found in Davao del Norte. Other non-metallic

THE MINDANAO FORUM

minerals found in Mindanao are clay, sulphur, manganesite, and phosphate rock.

More than half or 5.41 million hectares of the country's 10.21 million hectares of forest land covered by timber licences are in Mindanao.⁷ In December 1977 alone, out of the 376 timber licenses issued to logging companies, 188 are for Mindanao. In that same year, the island's log production constituted 72% of the total national output. Most of the business activities based on wood extraction and processing are concentrated in Mindanao. Almost all Philippine plywood is produced in Mindanao-based plants.

Mindanao seas abound with fish. Almost 50% of the country's total fish catch come from Mindanao waters.⁸ The Sulu Sea is the biggest producer, with 34% of the haul. Other major fishing areas are the Moro Gulf (between the Cotabato provinces and the island of Basilan and Zamboanga peninsula) and Basilan Strait. However, only a fraction of the total value of the fish exports of the country are credited to the South in spite of the abundance of fishery resources in this part of the Philippines.

Mindanao, therefore, is undeniably rich in natural resources. In terms of such resources and potentials for economic growth and prosperity, it leads other comparable areas in the country. The South then rightly deserves the much-used appellation "The Land of Promise." Yes, Mindanao was and still is considered the nation's land of promise. However, contemporary events show that "for some of its inhabitants, the promise has a reality; but for a great number, the promise has become a nightmare."⁹

Mindanao Population: The Moro People

Mindanao, until the arrival of the Christian settlers from Luzon and the Visayas in 1912 and thereafter, had always been the traditional homeland of thirty-two ethnolinguistic groups, eleven of which compose the Bangsa Moro or the Muslim Filipinos.¹⁰ Muslim Filipinos comprise roughly one-third of the Mindanao population of twelve million.¹¹ They are concentrated in Central Mindanao (Region XII) and Western Mindanao (Region IX) including Sulu, Basilan and Tawi-tawi—the so-called "Muslim Mindanao." The largest of the eleven ethnolinguistic groups of Moro people in Mindanao are the Maranaos followed by the Maguindanaos, Tausugs, Samals, etc., in that order. The Maranaos are concentrated in the Lanao provinces and according to the 1980 Census, they were 742,962. The smallest group is that of the Kalagans of Davao Oriental. The same census listed them to be around 7,902.

"Moro Problem": The Cumulative Effect of Official Neglect

One of the problems, aside from an economy that was and is still tied to the purse strings of the United States which the Republic faced after its inauguration on July 4, 1946, was the so-called "Moro Problem"—a constellation of problems of several dimensions. The Moro people or Muslim Filipinos were seen as a problem by the colonial governments of Spain and the United States in the country, because they were "pirates," "uncivilized" and "stubborn"—epithets which Western colonizers used to label the natives of Asia, Africa and Latin America who refused to bow under the colonial yoke.

The Filipino national leaders during the Commonwealth period and the early years of the Republic viewed the Muslims in the South as a group of people that had to be made subject to the central government based in Manila. This was also how our Spanish and American colonizers viewed the Muslim Filipinos. It was a view that ignored or glossed over the history of the Moro people and more so the colonial policy under which they were forcibly brought into the body politic by the colonial regimes of Spain and the United States.¹²

The Spanish concept of integration or assimilation for over three centuries was to Christianize the Moro people and make them adopt to some extent the culture of the majority of the natives in the Islands who were expected to be loyal to both Church and State. The Americans followed another policy of integration. They allowed the Muslims and other indigenous peoples in Mindanao to keep their own religion or belief system and other cultural practices not contrary to the provisions of the American Constitution. American colonial structure could be achieved "by the introduction of Christian Filipino teachers, professionals, civil servants and settlers into the Muslim areas."¹³ But the Americans, like the Spaniards, failed to produce the desired integration. It was evident that what was alluded to as the "Moro Problem" during the colonial period was not solely that of peace and order. The breakdown of peace and order due to the armed conflict in the South was actually the effect of the spirited and stiff resistance of the Moro people against colonial attempts at integration and the assertion of their birthright to preserve their culture and traditional way of life.

According to a prominent Muslim scholar and historian, Cesar A. Majul, the Filipino national leaders who came into prominence in the Philippine Commonwealth and the Republic "inherited the colonial mantle as well as many of the colonial's mental habits or attitudes towards the Muslims." He further said:

THE MINDANAO FORUM

"More than this, (Filipino national leaders) assumed that their culture... was superior to that of the Muslims. Upon this assumption lay their claim to legitimately dictate to the Muslims what was good for them and what role they should play in the new indigenous political set-up. Since the political elite was drawn mainly from the majority group classified as Christian, it was expected that the Christians would consider the government as theirs or at least an institution which their leaders controlled. To them the government was a Filipino government, that is, a government that was Christian and foreign. This attitude had deep historical roots like the Moro War between Spaniards who were aided by the Christianized natives, and the Muslims. In any case, such an attitude constituted by itself a problem to a government that did not want to identify itself along religious, ethnic or linguistic lines. But the government did not do much to change or correct this attitude — possibly because it did not fully comprehend its premises and implications."¹⁴

In the early 1950s a recurrence of the breakdown of law and order in some Muslim areas began to attract and merit national attention. However, the government's initial reaction was to deal with the problem with a mailed-fist policy through what we now commonly know as "police and military operation." It was expected for any government to view any form of social disorder as a challenge to it. What the central government initially failed to perceive was that the breakdown of peace and order in Muslim Mindanao was just a symptom of a social malaise that had deep historical and psychological roots. Thus, it was in the 1950s when Filipino statesmen and cooler heads in the Philippine Congress, prodded by a few vocal Muslim congressmen, came to realize that "the so-called Moro Problem was actually a constellation of problems involving historical, political, educational, religious and other social dimensions."¹⁵

In a period of more than a quarter of a century, from 1955 with the creation of the Mindanao State University in Marawi City up to the establishment of the Ministry of Muslim Affairs in 1981, various government instrumentalities were set up to implement and/or oversee programs and projects for the development of Muslim Mindanao. A discussion and assessment of the programs and projects launched before Martial Law and the policies behind them is the subject of this paper.

The Alonto Report

In 1951, an uprising erupted in Sulu. This was the rebellion led by Kamlun, a native of Tandu Panuan.¹⁶ The rebellion was so serious that it took

the government four years to quell it and it committed 3,000 soldiers in the field for a military operation dubbed as "Operation Durian." The Kamlun rebellion was an unmistakable sign that the "Moro Problem" has refused to die during the postwar period.

At the height of the rebellion, a special committee composed of three Muslim congressmen was created by the House Committee on National Minorities of the defunct Philippines Congress.¹⁷ The Committee's Report, also known as the Alonto Report, stated that the post-independence "Moro Problem" had been a question of "inculcating into Muslim minds that they are Filipinos and this government is their own and that they are part of it."¹⁸ As its principal recommendation, the Alonto Committee called for the integration of the Muslim Filipinos into the Philippine body politic in order to effect "in a more and complete measure their social, moral and political advancement."¹⁹

The Alonto Report was so influential that it influenced the thinking of the members of the Philippine Congress from the 1950s until the Mindanao Crisis in 1971. The report was instrumental in prodding Congress to pass legislation for the creation of agencies which would take the cudgel to effect the integration of the Muslims and to develop the Mindanao region.

A. Mindanao State University

Republic Act No. 1387 (1955): Establishment of the Mindanao State University in Marawi City

On February 1, 1955, a bill was filed in the House of Representatives of the Third Philippine Congress providing for "the Establishment of the University of Mindanao in Dansalan City authorizing the appropriation of funds therefore."²⁰ Three of the four sponsors of the bill were the members of the Alonto Committee. The fourth author was Congressman Enrique J. Corpus of Zambales. The bill was passed on third reading on May 13, 1955 and was subsequently sent to the Senate the following day for concurrence under the sponsorship of Senator Tomas L. Cabili, a native of Lanao.²¹ On June 19, 1955, President Ramon Magsaysay signed the bill as Republic Act No. 1387. Since then, the enabling law that provided for the establishment of the first state university in the South, right in the heart of Muslim Mindanao, had been amended three times.²²

R.A. 1387 was not implemented until after six years since its enactment.²³ Many factors delayed its implementation and foremost among which was the difficulty in getting the right man to serve as the university's first president. The man who was finally tasked to perform the challenging and exasperating role of heading an educational institution which till then existed only on paper was Antonio Isidro, a prominent educator and teacher.

THE MINDANAO FORUM

Isidro assumed the position on September 1, 1961, the day he was sworn into office by President Carlos P. Garcia in Malacañang Palace.²⁴

His first challenging task was to secure a 1,000-hectare campus site out of the 6,000-hectare military reservation of Camp Keithly (now Camp Amai Pakpak) in Marawi City. President Garcia issued Presidential Proclamation No. 806 setting aside that portion of the camp as the site of the Mindanao State University (MSU) campus. Buildings for classrooms and student dormitories were immediately constructed in a record time of seventy five days, in time for the operating of classes in mid-June 1962. MSU produced its first batch of sixty-three graduates (in its bachelor's degree programs) in 1966, seven of whom were Muslims.²⁵

The charter of MSU opens with a preamble which expresses the following concepts that serve as the guiding principles of the university.²⁶

1. the university is an instrument of the government policies in the southern region of the Philippines;
2. the university must help promote the program of education to accelerate the integration of national minorities into the body politic, particularly the Muslims;
3. the university must provide extensive professional and technical training and undertake research in native Filipino culture.

Aside from the main campus in Marawi City, MSU is presently maintaining a number of external units.²⁷ This year, as in the previous years, it receives the second highest budgetary appropriation for the state colleges and universities, next only to the University of the Philippines System. After a promising beginning, the university developed some snag in its administration. But with qualified, competent and principled leadership, MSU is a veritable reservoir of enormous potential for assisting the indigenous peoples in Mindanao, especially the Muslims, in participating gainfully in the life of the nation.²⁸

B. Commission on National Integration

Republic Act No. 1888 (1957) as amended by Republic Act No. 3852 (1986): Creating the Commission on National Integration.

In 1955, two bills were filed in the lower house of the Philippine Congress both providing for the creation of the Commission on National Integration (CNI). One bill was introduced by Congressman Luis Hora of the 3rd District of Mountain Province and the other one by Congressmen Domocao Alonto, Ombra Amilbangsa and Luminog Mangelen.²⁹ The two bills were consolidated and passed on third reading on May 23, 1957. On June 22, 1957 it was

signed into law by President Garcia and became known as Republic Act No. 1888.³⁰

In its eighteen years of existence (1957-1975), the Commission on National Integration was headed by six commissioners— four of whom were Muslims and two came from non-Muslim ethnic minorities. Madki Alonto, younger brother of Congressman Domocao Alonto, was appointed as CNI's first commissioner. He held office for two years (1957-1959).³¹

The law creating the Commission on National Integration represented, for the first time in the Republic, a social policy towards the Muslims and other indigenous peoples. The most striking characteristics of the CNI charter is the extremely wide range of functions and broad powers (never fully used) entrusted to it. A total of seventeen powers, functions and duties were vested on the Commission. Based on these functions, one can infer that the CNI was tasked to attain two objectives: advancement and integration of who were then officially labeled as the "National Cultural Minorities."³²

The Manahan Report

In 1964, amendments were introduced to the original CNI charter through the efforts of the Senate Committee on Cultural Minorities. Between October 15, 1962 and January 15, 1963, the Committee, which was composed of Senator Manuel P. Manahan as chairman and Senators Rogelio de la Rosa, Lorenzo Sumulong, Francisco Rodrigo, Roseller Lim, Maria Kalaw Katigbak and Alejandro Almendras as members, visited several places in Mindanao, Sulu, Palawan, Mindoro and Northern Luzon.³³ Their objective was to survey the problems of the ethnic minorities including those of the Muslims. At that time, peace and order was observed to have deteriorated again in Mindanao and the situation precipitated the trip of the Senate Committee.

The Committee's report, also known as the Manahan Report, showed statistically the prevalent problems among the country's indigenous peoples. It graphically described these problems as perceived by themselves and by the CNI personnel. The report also indicated that the indigenous peoples had not only been neglected, their rights had been abused, too. Five broad classes of problems confronting the indigenous peoples were identified by the committee. The consensus of the responses and views indicated the following in the order of their importance; (1) land problems; (2) education; (3) livelihood; (4) health; and (5) transportation.³⁴ The Committee also underscored the fact that serious cases of landgrabbing occurred in various Mindanao provinces and that "the provinces of Davao, Cotabato, Bukidnon and the island of Basilan are the major trouble spots."³⁵ In this report, the Committee was emphatic in pointing out the significance of

THE MINDANAO FORUM

agrarian problems and their crucial role on Muslim-Christian relationship.

The recommendations of the Manahan Report were later reflected in the additional powers, functions and duties of the Commission on National Integration, most especially in extending legal assistance for land settlement and in giving emphasis to its scholarship program.

CNI: Achievement and Problems

An achievement of the Commission on National Integration was that it helped out 3,000 students, mostly Muslims, to attain college education.³⁶ However, its attempt to assist the ethnic minorities in their land cases, through its Legal Assistance Program, was not successful due to the ignorance of the litigants or claimants and the slow turn of the wheel of justice, so to speak; and also because of insufficient funds.³⁷ Its resettlement projects were also hampered by the chronic lack of funds.³⁸ The CNI was supposed to receive five million pesos annually to finance its programs as provided for in its charter. The amount was supposed to come from any funds in the National Treasury not otherwise appropriated. Only half of the five million pesos was assured of release.

The creation of the Office of the Presidential Assistant on National Minorities (PANAMIN) in 1967, added another problem for the Commission on National Integration. PANAMIN was established by President Ferdinand E. Marcos to advise him on non-Muslim minorities, while CNI continued to discharge its function with respect to the Muslims.³⁹ However, through both agencies had separate specific areas of concern, PANAMIN was seen as a rival of the Commission in getting attention and much-needed additional funding from the national government.

Finally, like any government agency that is not insulated from the whims of partisan politics, CNI finally became a dumping ground for the proteges of the politicians. Cesar A. Majul assessed the Commission thus:

"Setting aside some of the accomplishments of the Commission on National Integration, the fact that the secessionist movement among the Muslims began to germinate in the late 1960s shows that it failed to integrate the bulk of the Muslim population into the body politic."⁴⁰

C. Mindanao Development Authority

Republic Act No. 3034 (1961): The Creation of the Mindanao Development Authority.

Like R. A. 1888 which created the CNI, the legislation which established the Mindanao Development Authority (MDA) was also based on two bills

which were separately filed in the lower house of the defunct Philippine Congress. The first bill was introduced on February 21, 1961 by Congressman Feliciano Ocampo of the 2nd District of Nueva Ecija.⁴¹ The second bill was co-authored by eleven congressmen from the MINSUPALA region and was introduced on April 6, 1961.⁴² Both bills were consolidated and signed into law as R.A. 3034 by President Carlos P. Garcia in the same year.

Because of legal interagency implications, the Mindanao Development Authority was formally organized as a public corporation on July 3, 1963, two years since the enactment of the Authority's enabling law. Its principal functions were.⁴³

1. to draw up comprehensive and short-term plans and programs for regional development;
2. to coordinate and integrate the activities of both the public and private sectors;
3. to extend or facilitate the extension of financial, management, and technical support to industrial and commercial ventures in the region;
4. to undertake, by itself or in joint venture with the private sector, agro-industrial-commercial pioneering ventures.

MDA had a share of problems which affected its ability to translate its plans and programs into reality. Firstly, there was a frequent turnover in the management leadership of the agency. In a period of ten years (1963-1973), the Authority had five chairman-general managers and three officers-in-charge. Secondly, it was not given sufficient funding, so that in 1972, its paid-in capital was only P24 million out of the P132 million appropriated. Thirdly, MDA's Board of Directors had not been constituted on a more permanent basis. During one third of the period of its corporate existence, the Authority neither had a board nor even a working majority of the board on duty.⁴⁴

By the time of its replacement by the Southern Philippines Development Authority in 1975, MDA was able to establish seven commercial operating projects, an investment in shares of common stocks in three private ventures of the projects, and a number of special projects.⁴⁵

MDA and Capitalist Penetration of Mindanao

As if to cap what Michael O. Mastura calls as its "highly significant, if modest, breakthrough in regional pioneering development," the Mindanao Development Authority was involved in the preparation of a development plan two years prior to its abolition in 1975. The plan envisions to open the floodgates of foreign investment for Mindanao and achieve the capitalist development of the region.

THE MINDANAO FORUM

At the height of the Mindanao rebellion in 1973, the South was hastily identified as a priority area to be subjected to massive development efforts. The government's plan—"Development Plan, FY 1974-1977" conceptualized between 1973 and 1974, put forth the "Mindanao Regional Development Project (MRDP)" along with the "Manila Bay Ring Development Project" as the development priorities from the national point of view.⁴⁶ Under the MRDP scheme, several "strategic leading growth points" were identified in Mindanao — Iligan City, Davao City, General Santos City, Cotabato City, Cagayan de Oro City and Zamboanga City. From these "growth points" radiate the tentacles that will extract and draw towards the centers the otherwise untapped resources of the hinterlands and the countryside.⁴⁷

MRDP is based on a study conducted between 1973 and 1974 under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programs (UNDP) with the cooperation of the Mindanao Development Authority. In fact, the project director of the study was no less than MDA's last manager, Ernesto M. Aboitiz. UNDP was represented in the project by a certain D.H. Cohen who prepared the seventy seven-page final report being the project's industrial planner and adviser.

The project proposal based on the study called for the infusion of foreign capital for infrastructure projects to attract foreign investors. These infrastructures included a network of highways, ports, power generation and industrial estates.⁴⁸ A number of these projects required the massive transformation of the countryside most often resulting in a host of problems for communities which happen to occupy the lands identified as project sites.⁴⁹ Reports gathered from sources in areas in Mindanao where major infrastructures are currently being implemented reveal the same pattern of insensitivity to the social cost of development as observed in Luzon.

The Mindanao Regional Development Project together with a host of "economic and social reforms in Mindanao and Sulu" was precisely aimed at giving a socio-economic dimension to the military activities against the Muslim secessionist group, the Moro National Liberation Front. Whether or not the "socio-economic uplift" of the people of Mindanao, particularly the indigenous peoples, was achieved through the combined programs in agriculture and industry is still a big question mark. The fact that the frenetic infrastructure efforts in the South produced incongruous scenes of huge technological complexes in the midst of communities living a marginal existence. This resulted in their displacement and further marginalization. To the inhabitants of these communities the "promise" that is Mindanao has become a nightmare.

D. Conclusion

Assesment and Conclusion

In the summary and conclusion of his book, *Filipino Muslim Armed Struggle, 1900-1972*, Samuel K. Tan made a very significant observation that the "problem of conflict and violence in Mindanao areas had not changed except in the magnitude of the armed conflict, the nature of its aims and the seriousness of its implicatons." Corollary to this is the writer's observation that the central government launched more programs and projects for the development of the South particularly in Muslim Mindanao during the Martial Law period than it did prior to this period. Such quantitative difference was due to the "magnitude of the armed conflict" in the period following 1972. It was during this time that the Republic faced the most serious threat to its territorial integrity from a rebel group fighting for the secession of Mindanao, Sulu, Basilan and Palawan and to become a separate state to be known as the "Bangsa Moro Republik." The intervention of certain Islamic countries in the conflict provided it an international dimension not found in previous armed struggle in the South.

However, the government approach had always been based on the colonial assumption that there was only one Muslim society and one "Muslim or Moro Problem." Therefore, one Muslim leader or group was presumed to be the spokesman of the entire Muslim people. This unitary approach was unsuccessfully adopted by the Spanish and American colonial policy-makers.

Another assumption which is very evident in the policy statements of the national leadership is the preception of the "Muslim or Moro Problem" as nothing but the problem of integrating the Muslim Filipinos into the body politic and that they must not only be beneficiary but active participant in the productive process of the nation's economic life. Speaking before the ASEAN Foreign Ministers in 1973, Carlos P. Romulo, the late Foreign Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Marcos government, did not mince words in articulating the position of the Philippine government vis-a-vis the "Moro Problem." Romulo stated that "in line with the President's assessment of the situation, he is pushing through a program of national integration which heretofore was a meaningless rhetoric in the political vocabulary of the Old Society in my country and to solve the problem through economic and social reforms in Mindanao and Sulu."⁵⁰

It is based on the aforementioned assumptions — colonial and unitary approach and integration as solution to the "Moro Problem" — that an assesment of the following programs and projects intended for Muslim Mindanao in particular is attempted.

THE MINDANAO FORUM

1. *Mindanao State University.* We may never know the reason why the principal author of the enabling act creating MSU chose Marawi City as the site of this first state university in Mindanao. One may be tempted to surmise that Congressman Domocao Alonto, being from Lanao, gave preference to the capital of his province as the site of the main campus of MSU. But what the university is now, is proof that it should not have been there in the first place. MSU is virtually controlled by one ethnolinguistic group which is dominant in the area, by holding the university's key positions. The university was not founded exclusively for the Maranaos. All told, nowhere in MSU's charter is a provision to this effect. Therefore, qualified administrators from other Muslim groups should also be given equal chance to manage the university and not just be limited to positions in the external units. Who would later on prevent other Muslim groups from demanding for "their own state university" in their area?

2. *Commission on National Integration.* The CNI is the one single proof that the postwar Philippine government, which is supposedly a sovereign republic, has still colonial tendencies by looking at the "Moro Problem" through the colonial binoculars of Spain and the United States. The government's simplistic solution to the problem, a solution that did not proceed from a serious re-examination of the unitary approach of our former colonizers,⁵¹ called for the establishment of an agency which was not meant to succeed in the first place. CNI was virtually made to swallow more than it could chew by its charter. The first two of the seventeen functions and duties assigned to the Commission necessitated huge appropriations as they were capital-intensive projects. CNI's annual budget of five million pesos (only half of the amount was assured of release) was not even enough for its other programs and projects.

For lack of funds, even CNI's task of establishing "public schools in the regions inhabited by the National Cultural Minorities" (Section 4, (e), R.A. 1888 as amended by R.A. 3852) could not be effectively implemented. The statement of the first president of MSU bears witness to this:

"The situation seems paradoxical when it is considered that all along the government has pledged interest in the education of the Muslims to enable them to find national identification with their Christian brothers from the North; and yet, when the Muslims eventually accepted the public schools, the government failed to provide the funds to maintain the schools effectively. The government must manifest greater interest in the welfare of Muslims if they are to develop a feeling of oneness with the rest of the people in the country."⁵²

GEOFFREY G. SALGADO

Again like MSU, the Commission later on was not spared from political maneuverings and patronage. Four of its six commissioners came from the three dominant Muslim groups. There were reports that in granting scholarships, one's membership in an ethnolinguistic group was given priority over the grantee's intellectual capacity. In 1962, CNI was placed in bad light due to an expose by one of its highest ranking officials of alleged, irregularities in the disbursement of scholarship funds.⁵³ The expose prompted the General Auditing Office (GAO) to examine the records of the Commission. The report of the GAO examiners pointed out that certain CNI officials treated scholarship grants like political pork barrel items, while some of them connived with certain private schools which make a killing by receiving from the Commission tuition fee payments for non-existent scholars.⁵⁴

Even the establishment of the Office of Presidential Assistant on National Minorities (PANAMIN) in 1967, did not save the day for CNI. PANAMIN was actually one side of the same coin, with the CNI as the other side. From the beginning, the PANAMIN had certain inherent infirmities as shown in its organizational and administrative set-up. The absence of sufficient control on the magnitude and utilization of its resources resulted in such anomalies as bloated payroll and rechanneling of funds for purposes other than those mandated for the PANAMIN.⁵⁵

Let me end this paper with a statement from the late Peter G. Gowing, a statement which really hit the nail on its head, so to speak:

"The whole integration program of the Government seems to revolve around the philosophy that if the Moros are provided with more roads, schools, health facilities, civic centers, and industrial plants, and if they are instructed in more modern methods of farming or are given more scholarships for higher education in Manila or are offered more jobs in government, then in time they will be "integrated," that is, they will resemble the Christian Filipinos. Moros do in fact want many of these things (hence, the cooperation of some with CNI), but they fear this philosophy of assimilation, reflecting a basic contempt for the religious, cultural, and historical factors upon which they anchor their psychological and social identity."⁵⁶

NOTES

¹Eduardo C. Tadem, *Mindanao Report: A Preliminary Study on the Economic Origin of Social Unrest* (Davao City: Afrem Resource Center, 1980), p.2.

THE MINDANAO FORUM

²Ministry of Muslim Affairs, *Implimentation of the Tripoli Agreement* (Manila: Plans and Policy Service, Ministry of Muslim Affairs, 1983), p.10
See Appendix A for the provinces and cities in the autonomous regions.

³Examples of food crops are rice, corn, root crops, vegetables and some fruits like lanzones, durian and non-export bananas, while commercial and export crops are coconut, sugar, rubber, cooffee, pineapple, abaca and export bananas. See Tadem, *Mindanao Report*,

⁴Eugenio A. Demigillo, "Mindanao: Development and Marginalization," *The Philippines in the Third World Papers*, Series No. 20 (Quezon City: Third World Studies Center, UP Diliman, 1979), p.3.

⁵Tadem, *Mindanao Report*, p.5.

⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

⁷*Ibid.*, pp.63-64.

⁸*Ibid.*, p.93.

⁹Quotation is from a paper presented by Mario R. Mapanao at the 5th UGAT National Conference, MSU-IIT, Iligan City, April 15-18, 1982.

¹⁰The non-Muslim ethnolingusitic groups of Mindanao are the Manobo, Subanon, Bukidnon, Bilaan, Bagobo, Tiruray, Tagakaolo, Mandaya/Mansaka, T'boli, Ata, Isamal, Dibabawon, Mamanwa, Tasaday, Didayaon, Higaunon, Manggwangan, Matidsaug, Tala-anding, Tigwa and Ubo. The two other ethnolinguistic groups that were Islamized were the Molbog and Palawanis of Palawan.

¹¹Ministry of Muslim Affairs, *An Overview on Muslim Development in the Philippines* (Manila: Plans and Policy Service, Ministry of Muslim Affairs, 1983), p.4

The 1981 *Philippine Yearbook* estimated that there were about 4.5 million Muslims. As for the Muslims themselves, the Moro Research Group cites 3 million, while the Institute of Islamic Studies at U.P. Diliman cites 5 million. *Ibon Facts and Figures*, No. 76 (October 15, 1981) reported 2,504,232. See Appendix B for a list of the thirteen ethnolinguistic groups of the Moro people.

¹²Cesar A. Majul, "Towards A Social Policy for the Muslims in the

Philippines," in Michael O. Mastura (ed.), *Islam and Development: A Collection of Essays by Cesar Adib Majul* (Manila: Office of the Commissioner for Islamic Affairs, 1980), p. 107.

¹³*Ibid.*, p.106.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p.107.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 108.

¹⁶Samuel K. Tan, *The Filipino Muslim Armed Struggles: 1900-1972* (Makati: Filipinas Foundation, Inc., 1977), pp. 114-117. This writer adopts Tan's spelling of Kamlun's name which most sources spell as "Kamlon."

¹⁷The Special Committee was composed of Congressman Domocao Alonto of Lanao as Chairman, and Ombra Amilbangsa of Sulu and Luminog Mangelen of Cotabato as members.

¹⁸This quotation from Congressman Alonto is taken from Datu Michael O. Mastura, "Development Programs for Mindanao Sulu," in M. Mastura, *Muslim Filipino Experience: A Collection of Essays* (Manila: Ministry of Muslim Affairs, 1984), p. 245.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰Philippine Congress. "An Act Providing for the Establishment of the University of Mindanao in Dansalan City and Authorizing the Appropriation of Funds Therefore," H. Bill 2839, 3rd Philippine Congress, February 1, 1955. Dansalan City is now Marawi City and the university's name was changed to Mindanao State University after subsequent amendments to the original law.

²¹Certain Filipino senators then had misconceptions about the proposed state university. In an interpellation by Senator Cipriano P. Primicial from Pangasinan after Senator Cabili's brief sponsorship speech, the Lanao senator was asked if the University of Mindanao is "the much-advertised Moro University for the Mohammedans where the Koran will be taught." Senator Cabili countered by saying that the "bill does not permit the teaching of the Koran alone but the religions being taught under the existing rules and regulations of the Department of Education." Senator Primicias however introduced a valid amendment deleting the phrase "preferably public spirited citizens from among non-Christian Filipinos hereafter called the

THE MINDANAO FORUM

National Minorities" as qualification for the seven presidential appointed members of MSU's Board of Regents. Senate, Congressional Records (Third Philippine Congress, Second Session, May 18, 1955), pp. 1487 - 1489. Quotations in this note are taken from p. 1489.

²²Antonio Isidro, *Muslim-Christian Integration at the Mindanao State University* (Marawi: MSU Research Center, 1968), p. 136. The original law was amended by R.A. 1893, R.A. 3791 and R.A. 3868.

²³This writer surmises that this could be the reason why many scholars thought that the founding of the Commission on National Integration in 1957 was the first tangible result of recommendations of the Special Committee of the House Committee on National Minorities headed by Domocao Alonto.

²⁴This date is celebrated in MSU annually as its foundation day.

²⁵Report of the First National Congress on Muslim Education (Marawi City: Mindanao State University, 1980), p.55.

²⁶Isidro, *Muslim-Christian Integration*, pp. 136-137.

²⁷These external units are located in Iligan City; Bongao, Tawi-Tawi; Jolo, Sulu; General Santos City; Dinaig, Maguindanao; Naauan, Misamis Oriental and Malabang, Lanao del Sur. MSU also has several community and technical high schools in Agusan del Norte, Misamis Occidental, Zamboanga del Sur, Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte. Of the several external units, only MSU-Iligan Institute of Technology and MSU-Tawi-Tawi College of Technology and Oceanography have fiscal autonomy and separate budgets. In the 1985 Budgetary Appropriations for Autonomous Regions IX and XII, the amount of P125,739,000 was programmed for MSU.

²⁸This is a paraphrase taken from Peter G. Gowing, *Muslim Filipino Heritage and Horizon* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1979), p. 185.

²⁹In the consolidated bill (House Bill No. 3711), the original name of the Commission was "Commission on Non-Christians," an allusion to the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes which was established by the American colonial government in 1917 in lieu of the Department of Mindanao and Sulu abolished in the same year. An amendment introduced to the bill by Congressman Arturo M. Tolentino of Manila changed the name of the Commission to "Commission on National Integration." In the same interpellation during the second reading of H. Bill 3711, Congressman

Ferdinand E. Marcos withdrew an earlier opposition to the bill after learning from Congressman Tolentino that the legislation under consideration pertained "to the advancement of non-Christians." House of Representatives, Congressional Records (Third Philippine Congress, Second Regular Session, May 23, 1957), pp. 3369-3370.

³⁰Philippine Congress, "An Act to Effectuate in a More Rapid and Complete Manner the Economic, Social and Moral Advancement of Non-Christian Filipinos or National Cultural Minorities and to Render Real, Complete and Permanent the Integration of All Said National Cultural Minorities into the Body Politic, Creating the Commission on National Integration Charged with Said Functions." R.A. 1988, Third Congress, June 22, 1957.

³¹Alonto was succeeded by the following commissioners: Lugum Uka (1959-1961), Gabriel Dunuan (1962-1965), Abraham Rasul, who had the shortest stint as CNI Commissioner (January-December 1965) and Mamintal A. Tamano (1965-1969). See Leothiny S. Clavel, *They Are Also Filipinos: Ten Years with the Cultural Minorities* (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1969), p. 16. The last commissioner was Mama Sinsuat who held office from 1969 until the abolition of CNI in 1975 and its replacement with another government agency, the Southern Philippines Development Authority. Commissioners Alonto, Rasul, Tamano and Sinsuat are Muslims.

³²Commission on National Integration, *Getting to Know the Commission on National Integration* (Quezon City: CNI, n.d.).

³³Senate Committee on National Minorities, *Report on the Problems of Philippine Cultural Minorities* (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1963). All the members of the committee signed the letter of transmittal of their report to Senate President Ferdinand E. Marcos, dated May 21, 1963. Several bills that were intended for better and more effective policies regarding the ethnic minorities were included in the appendix of the report. One of these bills was Senate Bill No. 459 introduced by Senators Manahan, de la Rosa, Katigbak, Sumulong and Lim which added four powers, functions and duties to the original CNI charter. The bill was signed into law (R.A. 3852) by President Diosdado Macapagal in 1964.

³⁴*Ibid.*, P.15.

³⁵Filipinas Foundation, Inc., *An Anatomy of Muslim Affairs* (Makati, Rizal: Filipinas Foundation, Inc., 1971), p. 144.

THE MINDANAO FORUM

³⁶Majul, "Towards A Social Policy", p. 108.

³⁷It was reported that in Davao, the CNI had to request the poor minorites, who came all the way from the hills to seek legal aid on their land problems, to buy their own stationery (envelope and bond paper) so that their cases could be brought to the attention of the proper authorities. Rad D. Silva, *Two Hills of the Same Land: Truth Behind the Mindanao Problem* (Mindanao-Sulu Critical Studies and Research Group, 1979), p. 69.

³⁸In spite of its limited budget, CNI had given attention and aid to twenty-one settlements, some of which antedated the Commission itself as they were established by the American colonial government and the Philippine Commonwealth. The ten settlements which were either activated or established by the Commission removed most of its financial aid. Clavel, *They Are Also Filipinos*, pp. 46-50. Appendix I (p. 79) of Clavel's book is a table showing the settlements/projects funded by the CNI between 1959-1967.

³⁹By virtue of P.D. No. 719, PANAMIN became a full-fledged government agency directly under the Office of the President. As some kind of a private support arm for the Office of PANAMIN, a foundation, also known as PANAMIN Foundation, was established as a non-stock and non-profit corporation. Ponciano L. Bennagen, "The Continuing Struggle for Survival and Self-Determination among Philippine Ethnic Minorities," (Paper read at the Philippine Social Science Council Forum on Social Science and Government, Mimeographed, p. 6. Bennagen is the president of UGAT, Inc. (Anthropological Association of the Philippines, Inc.)

⁴⁰Majul, "Towards A Social Policy," p. 110.

⁴¹Philippine Congress, "An Act Creating the Mindanao Development Authority for the Agricultural and Industrial Development of Mindanao and the Betterment of the Inhabitants Therein and Appropriating Funds Therefore," H.No. 56426, Fourth Congress, February 21, 1961.

⁴²Philippine Congress, "An Act Creating the Mindanao Development Authority, Prescribing Its Powers, Functions and Duties Providing Funds Therefore, and for Other Purpose," H. No. 5930, Fourth Congress, April 6, 1961. The eleven co-authors of the bill were: Congressmen Gaudencio Abordo, Palawan; Ombra Amilbangsa, Sulu; Laurentino Badelles, Lanao; William Chiongbian, Misamis Occidental; Fausto Dugenio, Misamis Oriental; Canuto Enerio, Zamboanga del Sur; Reynaldo Honrado, Surigao; Salipada K. Pendatun, Cotabto; Guillermo R. Sanchez, Agusan; Gabino Sepulveda,

Davao; and Alberto Ubay, Zamboanga del Norte.

⁴³Mastura, "Development Programs for Mindanao and Sulu," p.246.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 246-248.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, p. 247; Mastura provides a list of these projects based on MDA's "Annual Report for FY 1969-1970," (Davao City: December 1, 1970).

⁴⁶Demigillo, "Mindanao: Development and Marginalization," p.1.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p.12.

⁴⁸Mindanao Regional Development Study, "Final Report: Industrial Development of Mindanao," (Davao City: MRDS, 1974), Mimeographed, p. 10; pp. 15-17.

⁴⁹An example of these massive projects is the Lake Lanao-Agus River Complex of the National Power Corporation. The Complex, as planned, will consist of seven hydroelectric plants which will tap the hydroelectric potential of the Lake Lanao-Agus River basin that straddles the two Lanao provinces, the traditional homeland of the Maranaos. As of this writing, five (5) plants have already been completed and are now in commercial operation. This is so far the largest concentration of hydroelectric plants in the country. Like other gargantuan projects of NAPOCOR, the Lake Lanao Agus River Complex is financed with foreign loans and utilizes foreign technology and expertise. The Complex is strategically valuable to NAPOCOR since its existing five (5) plants supply the bulk of the power requirements of the Mindanao Power Grid.

⁵⁰Carlos P. Romulo, "Muslim 'Problem': A Purely Domestic Affair," *Philippine Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (September 1973), p. 12.

⁵¹See Samuel K. Tan, "Unity and Disunity in the Muslim Struggle," in Samuel K. Tan, *Selected Essays on the Filipino Muslims* (Marawi City: MSU Research Center, 1982), pp. 61-80, for a thorough discussion of this colonial policy.

⁵²Antonio Isidro, *The Moro Problem: An Approach Through Education* (Marawi City: MSU Research Center, 1979), p.60.

⁵³Clavel, *They Are Also Filipinos*, p. 27.

THE MINDANAO FORUM

⁵⁴See J.L. Mercado, "2 (Million Second-Class Citizens, " *Philippines Free Press* (June 15, 1963), pp. 93-94 and Johnny F. Villasanta, " They Looted Government Bounty," *Graphic* (May 23, 1962), p. 10.

⁵⁵Gloria E. Lauzon, "The Government and Cultural Communities," *Philippine Budget Management*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (December 1984). pp. 88-90. On June 30, 1984, President Marcos through Executive Order No. 967. established the office of Muslim Affairs and Cultural Communities (OMACC) which effected the merger of PANAMIN and the Ministry of Muslim Affairs. This writer sees the merging of the two agencies as nothing but a " reincarnation" of the defunct pre-1967 CNI.

⁵⁶Gowing, *Muslim Filipinos Heritage and Horizon*, p.210.

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Appendix A-1

Provinces and Cities in the Autonomous Regions

Region 9

Provinces	Cities
1. Basilan	1. Dipolog
2. Sulu	2. Dapitan
3. Tawi-Tawi	3. Pagadian
4. Zamboanga del Norte	4. Zamboanga
5. Zamboanga del Sur	

Region 12

1. Lanao del Norte	1. Cotabato
2. Lanao del Sur	2. Iligan
3. Maguindanao	3. Marawi
4. North Cotabato	
5. Sultan Kudarat	

Source: Ministry of Muslim Affairs, *Implementation of the Tripoli Agreement* (Muslims: Plans and Policy Service, Ministry of Muslim Affairs, 1983), p. 10

Appendix A-2

**Regional Divisions in Mindanao and the
Provinces in each Division**

Region:

- 9 **Western Mindanao** - Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Zamboanga del Norte and Zambonga del Sur. This is one of the two autonomous regions in Mindanao.
- 10 **Northern Mindanao** - Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Bukidnon, Misamis Occidental, Misamis Oriental and Surigao del Norte.
- 11 **Southern Mindanao** - Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur, Davao Oriental, South Cotabato and Surigao del Sur.
- 12 **Central Mindanao** - Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, North Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat. This is also one of the two autonomous regions in Mindanao.

Source: Eduardo C. Tadem, *Mindanao Report: A Preliminary Study on the Economic Origin of Social Unrest* (Davao City: Afrim Resource Center, 1980), p.2

*Appendix B***Ethnolinguistic Groups of the Moro People**

Group	1980 Population	Provinces
1. Maranaos	742,962	Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Maguindanao, Zamboanga del Norte
2. Maguindanaos	644,548	Maguindanao, North Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Lanao del Sur
3. Tausugs	502,918	Zamboanga, Sulu
4. Samals	244,160	Tawi-Tawi
5. Yakans	196,000	Basilan
6. Sangils	77,000	South Cotabao, Davao del Sur
7. Badjaos	28,536	Sulu
8. Kalibugans	15,147	Zamboanga
9. Jama Mapuns	14,347	Cagayan de Sulu
10. Melebuganons	17,900	Palawan
11. Palawanis		
12. Iranuns	12,524	Lanao del Sur
13. Kalagans	7,902	Davao Oriental
Total	2,504,232	

Source: "Mindanao Muslim," Ibon Facts and Figures, No. 76 (October 15, 1981), p. 6.