


Building the Culture of Peace in Southern Philippines: Retrospect and Prospect

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Prefatory Note

I was given the daunting task of synthesizing the proceedings of this symposium from Day 1 to Day 3, in other words, including not only the papers and open forum discussions of the first two days but also the reports of the workshop groups who completed their presentations during the last hour or so just before my turn at this rostrum. A genuine synthesis, I was made to understand, is a comprehensive summation that captures and logically inter-relates all the essential ideas, but must nonetheless be brief and concise. Considering the wealth of information, the wide-ranging insights and the diversity of seminal ideas on policy and action programs that were shared and generated in this historic gathering of peacemakers and peace advocates, such a synthesis is a tall order in any language. Hence, with much trepidation that I could not possibly do justice to the resource persons and other speakers, but drawing comfort from the thought that this is an assembly committed to peace (therefore, a lynching is very unlikely even if I botch this awesome task), I essayed a synthesis which I now submit to your tender mercies.

Following a stock-taking format, this synthesis attempts to recapitulate our symposium proceedings along these questions: 1) where were we at the start? 2) from this point, where did we want to go or what did we hope to accomplish? and 3) what did we accomplish and what needs to be and can be done hereon?

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Our Starting Point: Update on the Peace Process and the Symposium Objectives

Only three months earlier, last September 2 to be exact, the historic GRP-MNLF Peace Agreement was finally signed by Pres. Fidel V. Ramos and Chairman Nuralladji Misuari. Establishing a new covenant of peaceful co-existence and partnership in development between the erstwhile combatants, the agreement provided for a two-phased implementation of what was envisioned as, *in due time*, a comprehensive settlement of the two-decades old civil war and the full implementation of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement. The underlying rationale for this phased implementation, according to inside information, was to strike what turned out to be the only possible, i.e. acceptable, compromise between the non-negotiable position of full compliance with the Philippine constitutional processes, on the side of GRP, and, on the MNLF side, the full geographic coverage of the region of autonomy under the 1976 Tripoli Agreement without recourse (at least not immediately) to the constitutional requirement of a plebiscite.

As a preparatory stage to Phase II, the 3-year implementation of Phase I has commenced with the issuance of the executive order (E.O. 371 dated October 2, 1996) creating the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD) and its Consultative Assembly and establishing the Special Zone of Peace and Development (SZOPAD). In the areas of the SZOPAD, the SPCPD, through the Chairman, shall exercise *general supervision* over local government units and other government agencies created by law, and *supervision and control* over other agencies including task forces created by executive issuances. MNLF leadership in Southern Philippine Affairs was subsequently secured and formalized with the uncontested election of Misuari as Governor of the ARMM and his appointment as concurrent chairman of the SPCPD. As of Day 1 of our symposium the members of Misuari's cabinet were reportedly already selected while the composition of the Consultative Assembly was already being finalized. Meanwhile, the first stage of integration (selection and processing) of MNLF forces in the AFP (total of 5750) and the PNP (total of 1750) had started in November in accordance with section 20 of the peace agreement and Presidential Administrative Order 295 (dated October 7, 1996). In the case of the DND/AFP, the training program intended to facilitate this integration process has been put into place and will be conducted starting February 1, 1997 in the following military camps: a) 1st ID in Zamboanga del Sur; b) 6th ID in Carmen, North Cotabato; c) 4th ID in Bumbaran, Lanao del Sur; and d) the Marines headquarters in Jolo, Sulu. In the case of the PNP, agreements have been reached on the schedule and procedures within the existing framework and budgetary program of police recruitment beginning the next fiscal year. Hence, the formal mechanisms, the "superstructure" as it were, of the peace process were being or already set in place. But the realization dawned that, beyond the formal documents, one crucial

element was not yet in place, because none had been articulated as of yet- the overall plan of implementation, alternatively referred to as a "blueprint" or "master plan". This is the instrument through which the peace process could be directed and kept in pace, in other words, orchestrated. The absence of such a plan and the perceived drift in Misuari's newly installed administration inevitably urged the disturbing question that was raised on the floor: "Is there anyone in control here?"

Meanwhile, in some sectors of the majority community, opposition to the Peace Agreement, particularly its provisions on the establishment of the SZOPAD and SPCD had been peaking in the last few months, punctuated by demonstrations and saber-rattling rhetoric. In several capitals (Zamboanga, Davao, General Santos, Cotabato, Iligan, Pagadian and Dipolog) the heated rhetoric was threatening to escalate towards the outbreak of a new civil war. But the backlash also came from sectors who felt that the peace agreement had betrayed the Bangsamoro cause; the spate of kidnapping and armed raids, attributed in the media to the MILF or "lost commands" of the MNLF, was fueling a mounting hysteria.

Contrapuntal, however, to such provocative outbursts and sporadic acts of violence, other elements in the larger society have been taking resolute steps to douse "the smoldering embers of hatred, mistrust and fear". About a week before our symposium, the Ulema (Muslim religious leaders) League of the Philippines and the Catholic Bishops of Mindanao broke new ground towards preserving the gains of the GRP-MNLF Peace Agreement. Their joint statement signed in Cebu City on 29 November affirmed their "common commitment to peace and mutual understanding among our religious communities in Mindanao." That the seven areas of concern identified in this statement more or less coincided with the problems or issues addressed in our symposium is remarkable; perhaps it was indicative of a unifying spirit inspiring and guiding what may be optimistically perceived as an emerging new community of peacemakers and advocates in Mindanao. But the fragility of the newly erected platform of peace was again brought to the foreground on Day 1 of our symposium --- the MILF was reported to have mobilized the previous day a massive rally in Sultan Kudarat, North Cotabato in which the secessionist agenda to establish a separate Islamic State in Southern Philippines was re-affirmed.

Thus mindful of the urgency of a concerted response to the mounting danger of the collapse of the peace process, our symposium addressed this challenge: to hasten the transition from the centuries-old tradition of war to a new culture of peace. In more vivid terms this was captioned in our ensuing dialogue as "a journey from the deadly barrenness of the deserts of ignorance, mistrust and fear to the life-sustaining oasis of peace". Three kinds of outputs were expected from the participants: 1) sets of policy and agenda recommendations; 2) a program concept to institutionalize the peace process; and c) the core of a new army of peace advocates who shall spearhead the performance of the

multifarious tasks ahead.

Our Accomplishments: An Overview

With reference to the expected outputs, so much was accomplished in this symposium and these were:

1. Information Update on the Formal Structures of the Peace Process

Firstly, as already outlined above, information was updated on the status of the formal structures of the GRP-MNLF Peace Agreement, namely the creation and organization of the SPCPD and its Consultative Assembly, establishment of the SZOPAD, and the process and mechanisms of integration of MNLF soldiers into the AFP and the PNP, and relatedly, the organization of the ARMM administration and the regional assembly following the relatively peaceful ARMM elections last November. One compelling insight that bears reiteration is the complexity of the problem of leadership, i.e., how to activate the formal apparatus of peace and development in the apparent absence of a clearly articulated vision and the agenda of urgent or priority actions. Many participants felt anxiety over the apparent drift and expressed the need for a forceful demonstration of leadership, that things are now actually underway.

2. Update and Synthesis of Social Knowledge on the Problem and Prospects

Secondly, a body of social knowledge was updated and consolidated. In the process old knowledge was revalidated and new perspectives emerged on the root causes of the problems and the prospects of peace and development in Southern Philippines. More specifically, we emerged at the end of the symposium with a broader and sharper knowledge of the evolutionary dynamics of the culture of peace and a deeper understanding and appreciation not only of the meta-institutional or macro-societal context but, more importantly, also of the micro-processes involved in the deeply personal, and necessarily spiritual, dimension. From the richness of such knowledge and the incisiveness of the insights gained, a wealth of ideas were essayed on what should now be done, how and why.

3. New Linkages Forged and an Emergent Community of Peace Advocates

Finally, since so much still remains to be done, even as so much was accomplished, it was a tacit understanding that this symposium was to be only the first of a series which henceforth should be regularly held. And although

none but a few could legitimately claim the stature of peacemaker, it was a tacit resolve among the participants to form now a core of a new community of peace advocates and that the personal and institutional linkages thus far created should be sustained, strengthened and expanded.

Our Updated Body of Knowledge: The Basic Themes

Our updated body of social knowledge pertaining to peace and development in Mindanao - facts, perspectives and insights - which emerged from the papers presented and the ensuing discussions include the following basic themes:

1. *Given the interdependence of peace and development, there is great danger of losing our new growth momentum and forfeiting our bright new opportunities towards genuine development if we keep forgetting the lessons of history.*

This was heavily stressed as already axiomatic: peace and development can emerge only as one seamless web, and one unravels when the other disintegrates. From a post-WWII status second only to Japan, the Philippines, dragged down by the ravages of internal war, was overtaken by Taiwan, Hongkong, Singapore, South Korea and lately by Thailand, Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia. The GRP-MNLF peace agreement stands in sharp contrast to the post-Cold War spate of ethnic-religious strife in many parts of the world, notably the protracted "ethnic-cleansing" war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Thus it will be a great tragedy if, failing to learn the lessons of history, we do not now this opportunity to forge a new sense of nationhood based on the bonds of common interests and the imperatives of unity in diversity in the highly competitive world of the 21st century. For the Philippines to join the ranks of the "tiger economies" of Asia, a regime of stability and peace must now be firmly established and sustained. Hence, a determined political will is now required to unleash the creative genius of our people, moving the nation forward on the path of development with a new "army" as its vanguard - a cadre of "development warriors".

But development, it was doubly stressed, must be sustainable. It is not merely growth in terms of expanding GNP and high rates of GNP growth. These labor-exploitative and natural resource-destructive "development" paradigms of the past, which resulted in environmental degradation and the widening gap between the rich and the poor, should now be eschewed. To be sustainable, development involves the full participation of the masses of the people resulting in the equitable distribution of its benefits as evidenced by the rising quality of their life. *Sustainable development is thus equity-based and equity-led.*

In this context the inter-locking relationships between peace, development and national unity was finally also underscored. The thesis that global competitiveness in the new internationalism implies the need to tone down nationalism was rejected as a dangerous fallacy. More than ever, Philippine entry into global trade within APEC or EAGA should be founded on a strong *national* political will and not merely the desires and ambitions of the affluent and powerful few. Pre-supposing popular mobilization and participation, sustainable development thus at the same time strengthens the bonds of national unity, and the sharing of development benefits strengthens the foundations of a culture of peace. But, it was heavily underscored, *first there must be peace.*

2. *The Mindanao war was not and never had been a religious war.*

This fundamental knowledge was revalidated and relearned --- the internecine war between the Christians and Muslims in Southern Philippines was not fueled by differences in religious doctrines. Peace is the dominant theme of Islam, of which the Arabic root word "salm" means "peace". The same is true for Christianity; as the Lord Jesus, the Prince of Peace, said: "My peace I give you, my peace I leave with you." Doctrinally there is in fact so much in common between Islam and Christianity since both, like Judaism, belong to the "Abrahamic tradition". It was made abundantly clear that *if only Muslims and Christians truly practice their respective faiths, there should never be any cause for war among them.* Apart from teaching the same basic doctrines, such as the brotherhood of all humanity under the Fatherhood of one God, all having the same spiritual origin and potentially the same spiritual destiny, both faiths teach tolerance and respect for others in the name of fraternal love and charity.

The only logical conclusion is that the Mindanao war was definitely not a dispute over religious teachings, but our failure to practice our respective faiths *especially the fundamental element of forgiveness* inherent in, but the most difficult element of, the virtue of fraternal love that all universal religions preach. It was and is basically an inter-ethnic conflict fueled by centuries of colonial wars and the subsequent economic, political and socio-cultural quests, inter alia, for dominance and survival, a conflict that worsened because of our inability to forgive and forget. Hence, the conflict only took on the "raiment" of religion because religious affiliation had historically become a defining attribute of ethnic identity.

3. *The media industry itself is bad news.*

This pernicious practice of defining ethnicity in terms of religious affiliation has become so deeply ingrained in our mentality, and our propensity for

“loose labelling” is so indiscriminate that we now even hear of this oxymoron --- “half-Muslim, half-Christian” referring to the offspring of a mixed marriage, as if religious faith is also genetically transmitted to the next generation following Mendel’s laws of heredity.

Unfortunately the bad news is the media industry itself. Media news reporters and feature writers have perpetuated this practice of loose labelling through the indiscriminate use of “Islamic” or “Muslim” to denote ethnicity as in “Muslim pirates”, “Islamic fundamentalist”, “Muslim terrorist”, although we never hear of a “Christian pedophile” or “Christian kidnapper”. But this is no longer big news because this issue has long been raised in conference after conference on the “Mindanao Problem”. The big news is that rare still is the media publication or broadcast program that has shifted away from this practice after all this time.

And this is because the problem is a complex syndrome, other manifestations of which include all types of journalistic crime such as non-investigative reporting, sensationalism, and even outright fabrication of the news! Hence, instead of performing its ideal function as “the nerves of government”, or the communications link between government and the people, the media industry in more ways than one has contributed to the confusion and hysteria attendant to the GRP-MNLF peace negotiations and the agreement itself.

All this is a reflection of the ownership structure and editorial policy of the Manila-based national media. In other words, the mass media industry is itself a part, and contributes to the perpetuation, of the “semi-colonial status” of Mindanao. But rather than passing the proposed bill penalizing the media for journalistic crimes, the recommended approach is to “Mindanao-ise” the industry by increasing and strengthening the corps of Mindanao media practitioners and facilitating their ascent into the higher echelons of the industry - in short, media reform from within.

4. *The war in Mindanao was basically a struggle for the fundamental human rights of justice and equality.*

The knowledge that the war was not over religious doctrine was buried in between the centuries-old and the new layers of bigotry and mutual fear and hatred engendered by the new cycle of attacks and counter-attacks in the last two decades. With the contemporary host of bigots contributing no little to the revival of Spanish-vintage prejudices, the new feud retrogressed to a re-enactment of the all-out Muslim-Christian war of extermination during the Spanish colonial period.

But not only was this knowledge revalidated in the symposium, our dialogue also articulated a more comprehensive understanding of the root cause

of the Mindanao conflict. The underlying character of the majority-minority conflict was the Bangsamoro struggle for justice and equality. The central contention is that the basic injustice is the loss of the territory or "ancestral domain" of the original inhabitants of Mindanao and this is an irreparable loss. The Lumad views his domain as the totality of his ethnic selfhood: nature is his communal home, as his genetic patrimony of plant and animal life, it is his industrial sector, food store and pharmacy; it is also his university and his cathedral. The Maranao Moro acquires social being and status (*bangsa*) only by ownership and possession of land within the Maranao territory. Take away his land and he is stripped of his "Maranao-ness".

Hence, the State-sponsored massive migrations from the northern and central regions and the government-sanctioned penetration and exploitation of Mindanao's resources by foreign capitalists and their Filipino partners were *dagger thrusts into the core of being* of the Moro and the Lumad. The conflict thus took on the character of total war involving the socio-cultural and religious aspects of ethnicity because land, both as a physical resource and ethnic habitat or "domain", is the warp and woof of the intricate social fabric of ethnicity, or the sense of socio-cultural being. The Bangsamoro war was impelled by the perception that his territorial diminution had already reached a point where he is in grave danger of ethno-cultural extinction. The MNLF charge of government-sponsored "genocide" was, therefore, not mainly defined in terms of the decimation of the Bangsamoro population due to deaths in the war, but as much, if not more, in terms of the perceived imminent socio-cultural obliteration of his ethnic community.

5. *Justice and equality for the Moro and the Lumad would entail recognition and accommodation of indigenous knowledge and systems of land resource management and indigenous systems of conflict resolution.*

One key factor that facilitated the territorial diminution of Moro and Lumad domains was the super-imposition of the State's Western-oriented politico-legal system. Although the codification of Muslim personal laws and the establishment of the system of *Sharia* courts in Muslim Mindanao are milestones in this direction, there is a need to arrive at an acceptable compromise in which indigenous knowledge and jurisprudence on such matters as the proper use of land resources and indigenous systems of conflict resolution can be similarly accommodated. The apparent conflict between the State definition of "ancestral domain" and the Moro-Lumad concept of ethnic territory is one crucial theme that will have to be addressed and finally resolved.

Although it was the consensus in the symposium that the past can no longer be undone, i.e., existing patterns of private landholding and ownership cannot drastically be restructured anymore, the dissipation of conflict in Mindanao

at the outset will involve: a) a moratorium on resettlement projects unless the Moro and Lumad are the principal beneficiaries; b) tapping indigenous systems of conflict resolution, especially as these apply to disputes concerning both alienable and disposable land and lands of the public domain. The great advantage of indigenous systems is that these seek the *restoration of human relations*, i.e., reconciliation, unlike the Western-oriented legal system that is based on the concept of "torts" underlying the *jurisprudence of crime and punishment*. It was, however, stressed that any system of reconciliation presupposes the co-existence of the various communities comprising the nation.

One important category of land rights settlement that could benefit from this approach is concerned with right-of-way compensation for lands traversed or otherwise affected by public works and infrastructure such as the NAPOCOR power lines and hydro-electric projects. It was suggested that NAPOCOR should review its policy on community development fund allocation and disbursement, and explore the possibility of treating such funds as the common capital asset of the cultural communities and/or local government units (LGUs) concerned. In other words, instead of disbursing the fund to specific individual landholders or groups, treat these monies as the community's equity contribution to NAPOCOR's common shares which shall proportionately participate in the corporate income on a continuing basis, instead of a "one-shot" quit claim compensation. Innovative approaches such as this could be incorporated in the corporate plan of the re-organized or privatized Mindanao NAPOCOR.

6. *Education is the central agenda towards building the culture of peace and development.*

The major theme that emerged in the conference is the centrality of education in dismantling the tradition of violence and cultivating the culture of peace. Since peace is a total way of life, the ultimate task of education is the discovery (or re-discovery) and institutionalization of *new patterns of living* that shall replace the old. But such a behavioral change presupposes fundamental changes in socio-psychological knowledge, attitudes and values --- in place of ignorance and fear, understanding and trust; instead of prejudice and hostility, respect and fraternal love; instead of discrimination and oppression, egalitarianism and mutual assistance. This process of societal transformation boils down, in the final analysis, as a deeply personal and necessarily a profoundly spiritual experience, because it takes place deep inside one's individual personality. There is, therefore, much truth to that song which goes: "Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me."

The evolution and ascendancy of a peace and development society is simultaneously macro-societal and micro-personal. The program of education that is, therefore, needed is one that touches all the people and the totality of

each person, it must be holistic, comprehensive and continuing.

The good news is that the Notre Dame University has already spear-headed such a holistic program of peace education in Cotabato City from the graduate studies level down to the basics in the elementary level. The NDU experience has also been enriched with the extension of the program to the larger community in various modes of non-formal education. The NDU model can be said to have passed its acid test in its encounter with the military during the critical recurrent years of *Coup d'etat* attempts immediately following the 1986 people power revolution.

Another welcome update comes from the DECS ARMM which reported that the long-term educational development plan has already been formulated and its main thrust is to reorient the system of public education so that it can address the 5 H's (head, heart, hand, health and human soul) and the 4 R's (reading, wRiting, aRithmetic and Religion), thus providing a program of education that is relevant and responsive to the needs, aspirations, culture and history of the people of the autonomous region. Its revitalized program of education includes:

- a system of *integration* into the regional system of public education, *curricular enrichment* with the incorporation of peace and values education, and *accreditation* of the *madaris* (plural of *madrasah*) in order to raise the quality of education in these Islamic community schools and strengthen their role in professional and technical education and in citizenship training;
- strengthening Arabic language education through the increased recruitment and deployment of Arabic instructors, which shall soon reach a strength of 936 out of the targetted total of 1,500 for the 4 ARMM provinces;
- rewriting and publication of the initial 72,000 copies of all 72 titles (1,000 per title) of PRODED elementary textbooks (ARMM version enriched with Mindanao/Islamic elements);
- re-organization and re-orientation (Islamization) of scouting education in both boy (BSP) and girl (GSP) components; and
- launching of a youth movement among those aged 10 years and above to foster the culture of peace and cooperation in the school and the larger community.

One immediate educational concern is the retraining of the MNLF soldiers programmed for integration with the AFP and the PNP together with the retraining of the AFP and PNP corps as a whole to facilitate the process of integration. Although the AFP training program is already in place, the AFP welcomes the involvement of the academe towards enriching and streamlining its course content and methodology.

One other educational concern, however, on which there was inadequate

update is the special non-formal education program to cater to the MNLF forces that cannot be absorbed into the AFP, PNP and the Special Regional Security Force. Such a special program is needed "to prepare them and their families for productive endeavors, provide for educational and technical skills and livelihood trainings, and give them priority for hiring in development projects".

Looking Ahead: The Workshop Outputs and Some Suggestions

The wealth of information and insights generated in the symposium have clearly identified many lines of action. Some are urgent and require immediate response, others are long-range visions entailing broader approaches and continuing effort. Basically, what is called for is an agenda that is solidly grounded on valid knowledge. Hence, the continuing cycle of theory-practice-reflection-theory refinement is involved.

1. Addressing the challenge of the mass media

The most urgent concern appears to be the re-orientation of the mass media. A follow-up conference-workshop is needed to focus on the vital role of mass communications in developing and maintaining an atmosphere of calmness and sobriety in dealing with the volatile situations of conflict in order to facilitate the social adjustments now required to expand the fragile new arena of co-existence and eventually establish the durable conditions for peace. This conference-workshop among media practitioners themselves should produce concrete plans of action towards realizing the ideal of the mass media as the communications link between government and the governed and among the different communities which comprise our people.

2. Extending academe and NGO assistance to the AFP/PNP training programs

One early stage of the peace process that is fraught with much danger of exploding into violent confrontations is the integration of MNLF forces into the AFP and PNP. No matter how carefully designed (a matter still to be validated), the AFP and PNP retraining programs will not guarantee that the daily potential for tensions between the integrees and the regular elements will be adequately managed. It is suggested that the academe and the NGO community be involved and the AFP and PNP shall tap their knowledge and experience in setting up and activating effective systems for the redress of grievances and management of inter-ethnic tensions, perhaps putting to work indigenous systems for the peaceful resolution of disputes. It would be very tragic if the peace process

shall falter on these very first steps; we cannot afford another "Jabidah massacre"

3. *Training and technical/financial assistance to facilitate return of MNLJ soldiers and their families into the mainstream of national life*

Just as crucial but more comprehensive in scope is the task of rebuilding the economic and social life of MNLJ forces that cannot be absorbed into the AFP, PNP or the Regional Security Force. Theirs will be the more difficult challenge of carving out a new life in the civilian world. Apart from mobilizing existing training institutions, this concern will require a total community effort.

4. *A people-based experiential peace research and learning exchange*

The workshop participants proved one important thing: there is such a wealth of experience pertaining to peace and development in the day-to-day life of people in Southern Philippines. The 5 workshop groups reported a wide range of conflict situations. More or less the same kinds occur everywhere, although there are some variations in the overall configuration and the frequency of incidence of the various categories of conflict. Various modes of conflict resolution have been tried with varying results as to success or failure, but there was the general feeling that indigenous mechanisms have much potential and even proved to be quite efficacious in many instances.

All this is very relevant to the lament of one resource person: "the history of Mindanao so far is only the history of war; we have yet to write its history of peace and development". The workshop group reports showed that we actually already have much case study material with which to begin this writing task.

Our immediate problem is methodological: there tends to be too much diversity in our perception of the social reality, much like the blind men and the elephant. There was a strong tendency to perceive the problem in terms of one's own disciplinal specialization, such that a problem that was viewed as political by one participant was perceived by another as economic. We need to evolve a simple methodology for "mini-case studies" of peace with which we can systematize the gathering and organization of the pertinent data and to arrive at a deeper, i.e., experientially-grounded, understanding of our social reality with the fullest participation of the people themselves in the frontlines.

Perhaps one initial step is to devise a workable typology of peace and development "situations" which will allow us to apprehend the same reality even if different observers approach it from his or her own field of specialization. The social reality is holistic and the diversity of perceptions can and should contribute to a total or a more rounded view. A possible approach is one that is suggested by the very nature of our social task in building the culture of peace --- *evolving new*

patterns of living. The patterns of social interaction that can evolve into new patterns of living take place in concrete inter-active situations or specific "arenas" of social life --- home, neighborhood, school, church, market or business establishment, recreational place, mode of travel, place of work, and the voluntary organization. It is in the matrices of these *arenas of social interaction* where concretely the ties that shall bind people in modes of peaceful co-existence and cooperation shall have to evolve so that eventually the culture of peace is institutionalized. These are the junctions where the macro-societal and micro-personal processes of transformation take place, one impinging upon and inter-acting with the other. A typology of real-life events or encounters in conflict resolution following these categories or "arenas" of social interaction could be a useful starting point for holistic observations of the reality as well as for the integrative interpretation of the data.

5. *Popularization of the social knowledge of peace in Mindanao*

Following the lead of the NDU, peace education cannot be confined to the classroom and academic campuses. There is a need to tap distance learning systems to reach out to out-of-school youth and to those who have completed or otherwise terminated their formal schooling and are now in the world of work and building homes and raising families, which are the basic institutions for building and re-building the nation. Distance learning systems that maximize the usefulness of radio, movies and other mass communications media are arguably the only realistic and affordable means for a *comprehensive* program of *continuing* education.

6. *Peace as a people's movement*

At some point, acquisition of knowledge has to converge regularly with knowledge application in real life situations. In the end the culture of peace emerges as individual persons live out its knowledge and ideals. Building and sustaining the momentum entails a popular movement, perhaps something akin to the Red Chinese cultural revolution but, in our context, with a new "Peace and Development Corps" at the frontlines. The community's voluntary organizations, especially non-government and people's organizations should be able to play the lead roles here. In this context the 7-point itemization of urgent concerns in the November 29, 1996 joint statement of the Ulema and Catholic bishops could serve as the foci of community-based concerted actions.

7. *Institutional linkaging to support the peace movement*

Education being at the core of the culture of peace, institutions of learning

will need to carry the main burden of systematically gathering and disseminating the required knowledge and enlightened perspectives. To serve effectively the whole of Southern Philippines, the academic community shall need to work more closely together in their respective areas of strength in accomplishing the basic task of peace education. The contacts made during the symposium could be the springboard to formalize the collaborative network. Institutions within the network can, as an initial step in knowledge sharing, conduct echo-conferences in their respective areas following every national symposium.

In support of the peace movement, the systematic compilation of indigenous knowledge distilled from the people's own experiences need to be translated and produced in popular form. Again the academe, in concert with NGO-PO practitioners in the field, will have to play the lead role here. For instance, the symposium had generated many "peace stories" and pithy sayings with very high pedagogical value and effect, e.g., a) the Sufi devotee who wanted initially to change the whole world and finally resigning to changing himself as the more realistic first step; b) the story bearing on the irony that science and technology had enabled Man to travel vast distances across space but has not enabled him to travel the 12 inches between the heart and the mind; and c) the rabbi who defined the light of dawn as that time of the newly breaking day when a person sees another person and recognizes him or her as brother or sister, because if not, then even at high noon, it is still the blackest of night in one's mind and heart.

Peace stories and sayings such as these could comprise the meat of the "White Book" of the "Peace and Development Corps". But if the episodes come from our own people's experience, these stories should have even greater inspiration on our peace advocates and in the communities in which they work. Again, it has to be reiterated, we need now to begin the writing and wide dissemination of our history of peace and it must truly be our people's own story.