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PARTNERING FOR PEACE IN THE PHILIPPINES: MILITARY AND RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT

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BASILAN, MINDANAO, THE PHILIPPINES, 2005: NO END TO THE CONFLICT

For Colonel Raymundo Ferrer, there was no end to the conflict in Mindanao.¹ He was first assigned in Basilan as a battalion commander from 1994 to 1997. Now he was assigned back to Basilan, this time as Brigade Commander of the 103rd Brigade of the 1st Infantry Division starting in January 2004. Nothing had really changed in the security situation when he saw Basilan again after 7 years, despite the so-called Final Peace Agreement signed in 1996. Only the names of the armed actors had changed. The cycle of violence continued, and insurgent and terrorist groups still operated and moved around freely. The civilians were afraid, but they did not trust the military. There was a peace process going on at the top level, but folks at the tactical level were not aware of what was really going on with the peace talks.

There were more battalions deployed in 2004 than in 1994, and after 2001 U.S. forces held the Balikatan or joint exercises with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in Basilan, for the first time in the history of this Joint Exercise. The joint Balikatan exercise helped in terms of engineering projects such as the construction of school buildings, bridges, improvement of road networks and other infrastructure projects. But building infrastructure didn't build relationships.

The Philippines had been down this road of “winning hearts and minds” by infrastructure before, with mixed results. From 1950–1971, most Presidents used the AFP to conduct social–economic programs as part of the counterinsurgency (COIN) program to win the support of the people away from the Huk (Hukbalahap) communist insurgency. The AFP built schools, roads, bridges, ditches, irrigation systems, and provided free dental, medical, and legal services to people in rural areas that were sympathetic to the Huks. The AFP was also used for the Socio-Economic Military Program that resettled former communist rebels with land grants and rural development. While the Huk movement collapsed, the New People's Army (NPA) communist insurgent group splintered off, continuing the fight in its unsuccessful separatist bid to create a Maoist state in the country, parallel to their northern neighbor China. And the seeds of future conflicts were sown. People were resettled onto indigenous and Muslim land in Mindanao, fueling the long-standing resentment of the central government in Manila and the AFP. Years of martial law under Ferdinand Marcos from 1972 to 1986 intensified both the military's involvement in development and infrastructure work, along with the hostility of the people of Mindanao to the AFP and their human rights abuses.

For nearly forty years, more than his entire Army career (Philippine Military Academy Class of 1977), Col. Ferrer and the AFP had been fighting several

insurgent and terrorist groups in the Southern islands of the tropical Philippine archipelago. First they fought the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), a socialist-nationalist group that wanted self-government and better conditions for the impoverished Muslims (or Moros as the Spaniards called them nearly five centuries ago) concentrated in the Mindanao region. After the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) agreed to greater autonomy, the MNLF reached a peace agreement and demobilized in 1996, but conflict continues led by a splinter group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) that took up the long-standing rebellion against the Catholic majority ruling from Manila. Muslims make up only 5 percent of the Philippine populace (compared with 90 percent Christians, over 81 percent of whom are Catholics). But in Mindanao and surrounding islands Muslims make up 30 percent or more of the population. Although the combatants are of different religions, the drivers of conflict are primarily political and economic. The Moros were marginalized politically and stripped of their land and property rights by biased property laws and policies, legacies of colonization and the U.S. occupation (1898–1946). Human rights violations by the military and security forces, during martial law under the Marcos regime and since, fueled the fire. Additionally, the indigenous peoples, referred to collectively as the Lumad, arrived in the Philippines 30,000 years ago, predating Islam's arrival in 1380 (Arab trader and Islamic missionary Makhdum Karim founded a mosque in Sulu, an island west of Mindanao), conquest by the Spaniard Catholics in 1521 (Ferdinand Magellan planted a cross on a hill in Northern Mindanao on Easter Sunday, 1521, naming the islands the Archipelago of St. Lazarus), and the American occupation in 1898. The Lumad have been ill-treated by all sides. Conflicts waged over land, natural resources—particularly the profits, opportunities and environmental challenges associated with the country's rich gold and mineral mines and timber, self-governance and resistance to central control and the increasing numbers of Christian settlers, poverty, and respect for local cultures.²

As the name suggests, the MILF is more religiously-oriented than the nationalistic MNLF, but is more moderate than and not comparable in attitudes or practices to Islamic fundamentalist organizations elsewhere in East Asia. The Moros have benefited from the support of the Organization of Islamic Conferences, and have maintained close relations with Muslims in Indonesia and Malaysia. MILF relations with the small terrorist (and largely criminal) Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and the Indone-

sia-based Jemaah Islamiyah have been sporadic and loose. While the conflict centers primarily over land and governance issues, religious and cultural issues play a part. For example, the Christian majority love lechon, the roast pig that is the Philippine signature dish and a natural part of celebratory meals. But Muslims do not eat pork, and seeing and smelling roasted pigs displayed in shop windows and street vendors is offensive to some Muslims. Should lechon sellers in Mindanao cover their windows or in some way hide their roast pig, and if they do so how will they be able to sell pork their customers cannot see? Alternatively, some Christians fear the expansion of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, anxious about Islamic shariah law.³

From Col. Ferrer's vantage on the ground, often the various competing groups were indistinguishable. Those MNLF fighters who did not respect or agree with the 1996 peace agreement changed uniforms and joined the MILF. When the AFP runs after MILF fighters or other lawless groups, they hide or run towards MNLF camps so that if the AFP pursues them in these areas, it would be a violation of the ceasefire agreement. It's obvious to the AFP that the MNLF and MILF are one and the same, which created deep and mutual distrust between the AFP and the MNLF even after the 1996 Peace Agreement. And those who did not join the mainstream MNLF or MILF formed another group, Abu Sayyaf, that made their presence felt more in Ferrer's second time in Basilan. They were classified as a terrorist group, but they also engaged in basic, for-profit criminal activities, including kidnappings to earn the group ransom money. So from the MNLF emerged the MILF, and now the ASG threat. It seems there was no end to the conflict, or as one legislator lamented, the Philippines is the home of Zombi conflicts returning again and again from the grave to haunt us today.

Distrust flowed in all directions. When Col. Ferrer moved around talking to people, there was fear in their faces. Nobody wanted to talk to the military, or to give good information on the rebels. The local government was not trusted by the people; it was viewed as corrupt and in the hands of a few key families or clans, bolstered by their private militias, the paramilitary Civilian Armed Auxiliaries (previously called the Civilian Armed Geographical Units). The Philippine government counts 57,000 of these armed actors working with the AFP as local "force multipliers" in counterinsurgency operations. In practice, they were often a liability in their treatment of the local populace, groups that are well-armed but poorly disciplined and unaccountable.

Security problems continued to disrupt daily life. No teacher wanted to go to remote areas for fear of being kidnapped. The Catholic priests and nuns were angry because of the treatment of the poor, human rights abuses by the AFP and paramilitaries against civilians, topped off by the kidnapping of a priest, teachers and fifty students from Tumahubong in Sumisip town. The priest was killed later during a botched rescue attempt by military forces.

The military launched major operations against Abu Sayaf and the MILF whenever they had the opportunity, seized weapons and killed or captured rebels, but to little avail. These operations caused many civilian displacements, damage to homes and mosques, further deepening the suspicions and resentments of the people.

A DIFFERENT PATH: SHOULD THE MILITARY ENGAGE AND TRAIN IN PEACEBUILDING?

If Basilan was still the same from his first to his second assignment there, despite the signing of the Peace Accords, then what the AFP was doing was not working as it should be. Col. Ferrer wanted to try something different in Basilan to break the cycle of violence, and repair relations with the beleaguered community, but what should he try? Clausewitz's triangle of relationships between the government, the military, and the people was broken. But could broken relationships be rebuilt? This was a different job than building roads or seizing guns, and one that he and the AFP were not trained for.

He began with some very modest, practical improvements. He ordered his troops to smile. Relations were very tense between civilians and the AFP and paramilitaries, especially at military checkpoints. He ordered his troops not to scowl at people but to treat them with respect, to greet people politely and say "Good Morning," or "Good Afternoon." The military and paramilitaries told him "Sir, We were told to put on a fierce face." And he responded "Well, I'm ordering you to smile. And point your guns down when people pass." People began to smile back. Soldiers were very reluctant and felt very vulnerable at first. They feared making the change, but later felt more secure as they realized people were less hostile toward them.

He continued to work on little practical things that reduced the fear of citizens. Particularly problematic were the paramilitaries, who were poorly paid by the local governments and little trained (sometimes with as little training as two weeks). He

was very practical in his advice to the paramilitaries. "If you take a bath, dress properly, have clean clothes, comb your hair, smile at people, don't point your guns at them, say good afternoon to people, people will look at you differently." That brought a lot of change in terms of relations in the communities.

In his walk-arounds in Basilan, he met Liza Del Puerto of the Catholic Children's Fund. CCF had a peace program in Basilan, and Liza is married to an AFP officer. When she met Col. Ferrer, she was so excited to know he was also seeking alternative solutions to the conflict in Basilan. They linked up with the local NGOs PAZ (Peace Advocates Zamboanga), and NFI (Nagdilaab Foundation Inc) who are peace partners of Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Mindanao Peace Institute (MPI). Together they started some brief "Culture of Peace" training sessions for the paramilitaries, modeled after CRS/MPI Culture of Peace training programs. Many of these NGO staff were trained by CRS/MPI, and subsequently trained their staffs and conducted peacebuilding workshops using CRS/MPI materials. Col. Ferrer renamed the paramilitaries from "force multipliers" to "peace multipliers," noting that a non-judicious use of force often just brought an escalation of more force, whereas de-escalation and a movement toward more peaceful relationships could expand and stabilize the peace. He told his troops they had "to be responsible warriors. Aware of the human rights and the limitations of applying military force. At the same time also be peace builders. We have to repair broken communities that have been affected by fighting."

Col. Ferrer was pleased at the results from these small scale programs, but he knew the larger problems of Mindanao required larger solutions than personal grooming and smiles. Mindanao contained many areas where there was little governance or corrupt government that was not trusted. Here soldiers were being asked to backfill those functions, from providing social and development services to settling disputes between neighbors or "rido" vengeance disputes among competing Muslim clans, but with no preparation or training. Soldiers were taught to kill, not how to talk, to mediate disputes or de-escalate violence. His CRS partners at the Catholic Children's Fund and PAZ then made an outrageous suggestion: Col. Ferrer should apply for the CRS/MPI peacebuilding training they had undergone and found so useful, to start his formal peacebuilding training and advance his skills so that he could take his new approaches in Basilan to the next level. They gave him the course catalog and applica-

tion materials, and wrote letters of recommendation for him. They contacted CRS and MPI, and made their case for why he should be included in the training. Now all Col. Ferrer had to do was agree to go, and CRS had to agree to accept its first military student to a civilian peacebuilding institute that included participants from religious groups, NGOs, as well as members of the insurgent groups Col. Ferrer was tasked with fighting, capturing, or killing.

Colonel Raymundo Ferrer couldn't decide if he was considering something very creative or very stupid. He thumbed through the application and course catalogue for the 2005 Mindanao Peace Institute. Was this an innovative idea to get practical skills he could use to build relations with local communities in the fight against terrorists and insurgents? Or was it a foolish way to end or tarnish his rising military career? "The Mindanao Peace Institute provides a unique experience in that it brings together a wide range of people with vast experience, knowledge and skills in peace-related work. The intensive training in areas such as religious peacebuilding, conflict transformation, community-based peacebuilding and other themes increases people's skills, drawing on the shared knowledge of both the participants and the facilitators. At the heart of the learning and sharing, the MPI builds upon people's commitment and strengthens their capacity, as well as that of their organizations, to build a more peaceful and just world. Aside from the technical skills that are acquired, many of the participants ascribe equal meaning to the bonding, friendships and solidarity that are created among peace advocates from different countries. Indeed, the Institute has become a venue where participants strengthen their commitment to peacebuilding work."⁴

Lord knows he could use this information, courses in peacebuilding and conflict transformation, including practical skills in non-violent communication, mediation, negotiation, and conflict prevention. But he could also use some supportive social networks, somewhere he could talk about the innovations he'd been trying in Basilan Island without the skeptical reaction he often received from his military peers.

There were career concerns to think about, however. What if he went through all the risk and trouble to complete the training, and then was transferred out of Southern Mindanao? How useful would these skills be if he were put in non-conflict areas, or worse, sent to do time at Headquarters in Manila? What would happen to the careers of the younger officers he had trained in his Basilan command, if their mentor was deemed "off the reservation" by

the officers on the more inside political track? Promotion to a one-star was imminent. Why rock the boat, and advertise his non-conforming ideas? Advocating for peacebuilding tactics wasn't just some odd, personal ideosyncrasy; the approach was antithetical to military training as warfighters. Many of his peers told him they thought his efforts were not just ill-advised but dangerous. The government and military were fighting for control over the Philippine homeland against al Qaeda-linked terrorists, armed Moro insurgents, communist separatists, and armed rival clans. Constant military vigilance was needed, not hare-brained, untested ideas that might encourage troops to take their fingers off their triggers or to pause at the moment when quick, decisive use of force was needed. He was on-track to outrank his father, who retired as a Colonel at the end of his military career. If he stopped or slowed his progress by bogging himself down in this peacebuilding stuff, he wouldn't have much time to repair the damage. Mandatory retirement at age 55 was only a few years away.

Reading "Participants will be expected to engage in discussions, roleplays, exercises, simulations, case studies, and group exercises,"⁵ triggered a new round of concerns. Even if he applied, even if his superiors allowed him to participate in three weeks of civilian training, would an institute of peace "doves" allow a military "wolf" in the door? It was hard to imagine, given the decades of hostile relations between peace and human rights NGOs and the military. The Institute was run through Catholic Relief Services, but the military and the Catholic Church had poor if not hostile relations. MPI provided peacebuilding training to NGO peace groups and to members of the insurgent groups he was charged with hunting down. He wouldn't be wanted or welcome at MPI. Given the legacy of martial law in the Philippines, human rights and corruption abuses that had poisoned civil-military relations for decades, it didn't seem likely any of them would want to engage in "group exercises," or "bonding, friendship, and solidarity" with an AFP Colonel. He looked again at the application. Perhaps this was a moot point. The deadline had passed.

SHOULD RELIGIOUS AND NGOS ENGAGE WITH THE MILITARY TO TRAIN AND EXPAND THE CONSTITUENTS FOR PEACE?

CRS/MPI's most senior trainer, Maria Ida "Deng" Giguiento,⁶ grew up in Mindanao listening to Cota-

bato City's Catholic church bells ringing alongside the Adhan, the five times daily Muslim call to prayer. She had worked on social justice issues all her life, whether in urban hospital work, advocacy for indigenous and poor people, or in her current job as Project Officer for Catholic Relief Services' Peacebuilding and Reconciliation program in Mindanao. Catholic Relief Services is the humanitarian, relief and development agency of the U.S. Catholic Bishops Conference operating in over 100 countries and serving over 80 million people worldwide. CRS is a leader in peacebuilding training and projects. The horrific 1994 genocide in Rwanda, where CRS had worked for 20 years, convinced CRS that it could not do development work while ignoring conflict issues: CRS had to address peacebuilding as a core mission. Pursuing development without attention to the larger conflict context would only, as in Rwanda, create what Father Bill Headley, Director of Peacebuilding Programs for CRS, called the "well-fed dead."⁷ Despite its affiliation with the U.S. Catholic Bishops, CRS is an ecumenical workplace. The organization is forbidden to proselytize, hires indigenous personnel of all and no faith backgrounds in the countries it works, and serves all regardless of denomination. Under the leadership of the much respected Mennonite peace building practitioner and scholar John Paul Lederach, CRS and its umbrella organization Caritas Internationalis had published its peacebuilding training manual, fast-becoming a standard in the field and a valued resource for its practical approach, with information from program design to training the trainers.⁸

CRS/MPI had been very successful, training nearly a thousand trainers from 35 countries who then went on to train the staffs of their own peacebuilding NGOs. CRS's approach⁹ distills the teachings of John Paul Lederach, emphasizing relationships and conflict transformation.¹⁰ Human beings live in relationships to one another. Conflicts break and change relationships. But relationships can be healed. Peacebuilding skills can be taught, which transform and rebuild the various societal relationships that are the foundation of sustainable peace. Looking over the 2005 applicants, though, CRS peacebuilding staff wondered if there was something missing in their relationships. CRS peacebuilding training stressed participation by the multiple stakeholders in a conflict. Yet CRS had trained religious leaders from various faiths and countries, NGO leaders, communists, participants in the Moro liberation groups, and civilian members of the Philippine government, particularly staff of the Office of the Presidential Advisor of the Peace Process. Their

alumni list was diverse in its representation of religion, culture, race and ethnicity, gender, education and financial levels, sectors, and countries, with one glaring omission. They had not trained or entered into partnerships with one of the key participants and stakeholders in the Mindanao conflict: the military. CRS headquarters staff raised the question, but gently, knowing that many of their local CRS partners had traumatic experiences with the military in their countries and conflicts. Are we placing enough effort on reaching people who are not like us? Do we think that people outside of NGOs and civil society cannot build peace?¹¹

Deng recognized the criticism in her head, but not her heart. She was very comfortable jumping cultural fences. She worked in relief and development and peacebuilding as a Christian in hot spots and in Muslim-majority countries such as Indonesia and East Timor, she felt completely at ease in both Muslim and Christian settings, with Moro liberationists, Catholic nuns and priests, communists, environmentalists, advocates for indigenous rights, or government officials. As the daughter of a politician and an advocate for the poor, she felt comfortable in legislatures or in barrios with the urban poor. She did not, however, feel remotely comfortable with the military, and for good reason. Not only had she worked against the human rights violations of the military, but she had experienced them herself. As a Justice and Peace worker for the Archdiocese of Cotabato in the 1980's, she was part of a fact-finding mission at a mountain village reportedly bombed by the military. Leaving the village, the group was in a hurry as they still had a long section of open field to cross before dark, when they were detained by soldiers. The soldiers asked question after question that the group had already answered, despite the pleas of the group to be released. At dusk when crossing that field, drunken soldiers blocked their way. Deng noticed they had removed their name patches so they couldn't be identified by name or rank. Deng could still see the threads where the identifying patches on their uniforms were ripped off, and knew then that they really meant harm. A priest in their group exchanged heated words with an inebriated soldier. When Deng placed herself in between them for the priest's protection, the soldiers placed the cold barrels of their automatic rifles around Deng's waist. She kept talking calmly, and negotiated the group's way out, but Deng was never comfortable around the military. She was prepared to acquiesce to the arguments of her CRS colleagues about building bridges to the military sector, as long as the gesture was small and didn't

include her.

When Col. Ferrer's application came in, late, accompanied by phonecalls from CRS/MPI partners and alumni on his behalf, CRS headquarters staff noted they ought to admit a few other members of the military as well, so Col. Ferrer would not be isolated and alone. Deng argued to keep it to a minimum, as they really didn't know what to do with these people. How could they maintain a safe space for sharing and learning with the other MPI participants, many of whom had been traumatized by the military in the Philippines or other countries? How could they know these members of the military were not using MPI as an excuse to spy, and gather intelligence on the other participants and CRS/ MPI itself? The recommending groups—Catholic Children's Fund and other partners—were contacted, and told there would be some strict ground rules: no guns, no uniforms, no bodyguards, no ranks, just the participants' first and last names would be used, and no intelligence gathering. The CRS partners agreed. Col. Ferrer and two freshly minted female graduates of the Philippine Military Academy, Lucy and Lucky, were admitted.

ENGAGING: HOW TO REBUILD CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONSHIPS OF TRUST DURING WAR?

MPI classes began in the third week of May. Deng looked over her class list for the introductory "Fundamentals of Peacebuilding" with her Mennonite colleague Jon Rudy. When she saw the name "Col. Raymundo Ferrer" on *her* class list, her jaw dropped. She went to her colleagues and begged them to move him out of her class into one of their classes instead. "No, No," I told them, "Take this away!" But her colleagues gently assured her that she was the most senior person, and really the best one to take on the challenge. Col. Ferrer seemed to respect the ground rules as set up. His bodyguards brought him to MPI in a civilian car, then parked the car under the trees and waited outside the complex all day while Col. Ferrer took his peacebuilding classes. The bodyguards never set foot in the building, and at the end of the day they would drive him back to the barracks. The military participants showed up in civilian clothes, but on the first day of class Deng started to introduce Col. Ferrer as just "Ray," when he said he would introduce himself, and then told the class his name, rank, and that he would have to leave them for a day in the middle of the class to go up to Manila and get his first star as General, but that he

would then return to take the rest of the class.

Tensions were high in the classroom, and this introduction set some participants off. Why is he telling us this? Many went to Deng to voice their frustrations and concerns that Col. Ferrer was a spy. A Sultan from Mindanao was visibly upset, and challenged Deng, "What is this guy doing here? How can I possibly speak freely with him around?" Deng calmly explained the ground rules of the military's participation, including that whatever was shared in the class stayed in the class and was not to be used for intelligence gathering purposes. But while she reassured her students, she herself was sitting on the edge of her chair. She really didn't know what to do with him in her class, or how to break the tension.

Col. Ferrer's own deportment went a long way toward easing people's anxieties. He listened a lot. He was respectful, and did not interrupt or push himself on the group. And he spoke with such obvious passion about how he was trying to change things in Basilan that the group quickly dubbed him "Mr. Basilan." He was excited to finally understand what had happened when he ordered his troops to smile in terms of John Paul Lederach and CRS' framework of conflict transformation. In one session Deng was not calling on him in a class discussion in order to be inclusive of others when the Sultan said good-naturedly, "Maam, you really must call on him. Mr. Basilan is bursting to share."

SCALING UP: HOW TO EXPAND MILITARY PEACEBUILDING TRAINING TO CHANGE THE CULTURE AND THE CONFLICT?

Newly promoted General Ferrer found the course material on peacebuilding fundamentals, conflict transformation, non-violent communications, religion and culture as possible sources of peace and conflict, conflict analysis, etc. so helpful that he became known as a "Champion of Peacebuilding" in the military. He wanted to spread CRS/MPI peacebuilding training throughout the AFP from the military academy to senior officers, but particularly to troops serving in Mindanao. He immediately began discussions with Deng and the CRS/ MPI staff of how they could continue sending military officers for the annual three week CRS/MPI peacebuilding training sessions, while also setting up training sessions just for his soldiers in Mindanao on these techniques. They brainstormed ways to scale up the training, and arranged peacebuilding classes for

troops in Mindanao via two CRS/ MPI partner NGOs, staffed by CRS/ MPI alumni and using the CRS/ MPI training modules (and financed by German foundations). Initially CRS/ MPI admitted only a small number of military officers for the longer, full CRS/ MPI May training, so that they would be able to accommodate the follow up accompaniment with military graduates, who did not have the social or organizational support after receiving the training that their civilian colleagues had when they returned to their sponsoring NGOs. General Ferrer and General Dolorfino together went to the Asian Institute's Managing Bridging Leadership Program, which also stressed non-violent, peacebuilding approaches. General Dolorfino became head of Western Mindanao, while Gen. Ferrer headed Eastern Mindanao Command. They worked well together to promote peacebuilding training in the military, but they were not popular within the overall military structure, so CRS/ MPI staff was concerned to ensure that they were able to keep in touch and support these peace advocates after they returned to their military positions. The internal peacebuilding training for the military focused on teaching peacebuilding skills and approaches. While the CRS/ MPI training advanced skills and training, it also helped the participants build networks with each other, to help develop a constituency for peace in a variety of societal sectors.

The following year three Colonels were ordered by General Ferrer to attend, and initially they were skeptical. Deng's class immediately became very intense as several of the NGO participants were literally trembling with fear at being in the same room as military officers. Gen. Ferrer immediately texted Deng during the training, "My men say they are facing a hostile crowd." Deng replied, "Ask them how they are handling it." Gen. Ferrer texted "My men say they are feeling extremely uncomfortable because the NGOs are crying." Deng replied, "Ask them why the NGOs are crying. They need to listen to the NGOs' stories of what it is like to live in military impacted areas. It's OK. You trusted me as a teacher. You should trust me also now with your men." Despite, or perhaps because of the class' very emotional beginning, the group bonded very well. The Colonels, including Col. Pete Soria, were very senior and very professional, good listeners and very open to the learning that was unfolding in the room. Years later the alumni of that class is very tight, and they still text each other and attend each

other's weddings and family functions. Col. Soria also became a vocal advocate for expanding peacebuilding training among his troops, and he leads and facilitates "Culture of Peace" training sessions for the military with NGO facilitators. He ordered copies of John Paul Lederach's "The Little Book of Conflict Transformation" for his troops, and led evening discussion sessions of the book with them ("like a Bible study," one quipped). He had thought they would cover the short, 64 page book in a week, but discussion was so extensive and lively that it took twice as long to complete it. Now Brig. General Soria said "I have seen how my learnings from MPI worked effectively in trying to settle disputes among feuding Muslim clans. At first getting families who are practically at war against each other was quite difficult, particularly when blood has already been spilt. Under such circumstances the animosity has already become deep-seated and therefore there is a need to break down those walls or barriers of misunderstanding that made the conflict a protracted one of 'rido' or vengeance. It must be considered always that elders and other respected key leaders in the community have important roles to play. In all aspects, respectful dialogue plays a crucial role in clarifying issues attendant to the conflict, leading the conflicted parties in dialogue using non-violent communication skills to arrive at a non-violent solution to the conflict. The CRS/ MPI training sets the concrete guidelines and practical roadmaps to engage the communities, parties in conflict, and the influential persons in arriving at a peaceful solution to 'rido.'"

In 2008, with the help of a foundation grant, the military sent 20 (out of 120) participants to the CRS/ MPI peacebuilding training. But there was concern that this was perhaps too great a presence of the military, that it could create a power shift in the classroom which would impede one of the key learning objectives, helping participants to understand power in a non-military sense. Deng is particularly concerned about the need to follow up with the students after the peacebuilding training sessions, because of the isolation of the military peacebuilding alumni within the larger military structure. There continues to be opposition among AFP senior military leaders to the basic peacebuilding concepts. Soldiers who go through the peacebuilding training are more likely to question traditional scorched earth, "search and destroy" methods.

NOTES

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3. Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute, Catholic Relief Services Mindanao Regional Program Office Peace and Reconciliation Program, Security Sector Monograph, November 17, 2008, Davao City, Mindanao, Philippines.
4. Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute Program Brochure 2005, May 16-June 3, 2005, Davao City, Mindanao, Philippines.
5. Ibid.
6. Maria Ida "Deng" Giguiento of Catholic Relief Services, Interviews with the Author March 2010.
7. William Headley, chapter in *The Ethics and Theology of Catholic Peacebuilding*, Scott Appleby, William Schreiter, and Gerard Powers (eds.), Orbis, 2010.
8. CRS and Caritas Internationalis, Peacebuilding A Caritas Training Manual, 2002 and 2006, http://www.caritas.org/activities/peace_reconciliation/Peacebuilding_Slide_show.html?cnt=335
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10. John Paul Lederach, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*. Good Books, 2003.
11. John Ruddy Consultant to MPI and CRS, Interviews with the Author March 2010.

Case 550, Part B, Instructor Copy

OUTREACH TO MILITARY CHAPLAINS: SHOULD CHAPLAINS BE PEACEBUILDERS?

The Bishops-Ulama Conference (BUC) brought together Catholic bishops from Mindanao, Mindanao members of the Muslim Ulama League of the Philippines, and Mindanao Protestant Bishops/Pastors of the National Council of Churches of the Philippines, in order to build relationships between the communities, and to explore their commonalities. It is one of the longest running, most institutionalized Christian-Muslim dialogues in the world, with quarterly meetings, staff, and a host of programs and activities.¹² The BUC has “mainstreamed” inter-religious dialogue, serves as an exemplar to show that high-level religious leaders can talk, and inspires others to follow suit. The BUC achievements have been recognized by the Philippine government, the National Security Advisor is a regular attendee at BUC meetings, and government agencies participate in the BUC’s Mindanao Week of Peace programs. Interreligious dialogue is mandated by an Executive Order from the President.

“Recognizing the religious dimension of the conflict in Mindanao, the Mindanao Bishops and Ulamas (Muslim leaders) came together to seek the ‘soul of comprehensive development by pursuing peace in the common search for a unifying ground of their religious aspirations and experiences through dialogue.’”¹³ The Bishops and Ulama focus on the spiritual bases for peace from their respective religious traditions, grounded in the belief in one God, a common origin, and a common destiny for all. The Bishops and Ulama focus on the “missing component in many failed peace efforts—an affirmation of the convergent spiritual and cultural bases for peace. Bishops and Ulama have been holding dialogues on a quarterly basis, on areas of common concern to promote a culture of peace since 1996. Members of the BUC also initiate and support regional dialogue fora in key cities and areas to address local issues of peace and order and inter-cultural solidarity. These include religious leaders of the Indigenous Peoples (Lumad). They also join forces with peace centers, schools and NGO’s in conducting community-based culture of peace workshops and introducing peace education in the school curriculum. All of these activities are geared toward the promotion of mutual understanding, peace and reconciliation among Muslims, Christians and Lumads in Mindanao.”¹⁴

The BUC moved over time beyond high level religious leader engagement meetings, to cooperation on a variety of grassroots and mid-level projects also. One of those projects is the Mindanao Week of Peace. Every year the Mindanao Week of Peace showcases peace efforts, leaders, artwork, dance, speakers, and projects on a particular theme. The 2007 Bishops-Ulama Mindanao Week of Peace theme was “The Soldier as Peacebuilder,” focusing on the military-CRS-NGO engagement, and General Ferrer and his men’s experiences in peacebuilding. Bishop Leopoldo Tumalak of the BUC, head of the Military Ordinariate of the Philippines, asked Gen. Ferrer if he could organize a workshop or retreat for military chaplains on peacebuilding, so Bishop Tumalak, Gen. Ferrer, and Maria “Deng” Giguinto of CRS put together a Culture of Peace workshop attended by 25 chaplains. Bishop Tumalak was so excited, he asked the group to deliver a peacebuilding presentation to the military chaplains at headquarters.

The Chaplains from headquarters were very suspicious at first, wondering why groups like CRS and MPI were training people in peacebuilding. Deng responded that CRS was participating in a government program. President Arroyo had issued an executive order continuing her predecessors’ “Six Paths to Peace” program on the “Primacy of the Peace Process,” urging all sectors of society to “enforce the law, preserve the atmosphere of peace and stability, and advance the GRP-MILF peace talks.”¹⁵ The headquarters chaplains were very surprised to learn of the government peace program and that it called on all sectors to become involved in the peace process. They subsequently became more engaged, once assured that they were not doing anything illegal. They suggested a chaplains retreat on conflict transformation. Deng worked with them to design it, and then offered two one week retreats for 147 chaplains.

At first many chaplains were resistant to the idea of taking on peacebuilding functions. One told Deng, “I am a soldier first before I’m a chaplain. My job is to provide religious support for soldiers, not to build peace or engage communities.” Many others seemed to agree with this remark. Deng replied that making peace was a requirement of their faith, a core component of their ministry. What is the real meaning of “blessed are the peacemakers” in the gospel and the Koran? Deng led a long and lively discussion on peacemakers, stressing that our faiths call us to make peace with our enemies, not simply

our colleagues or spouses. Deng then defined “enemies” as people whose stories you haven’t heard because you’ve refused to hear them. Deng gave time for the chaplains to present their views in favor of a traditional, pastoral chaplain role. Participants were uncomfortable, but Deng thought this was fine, there are times when we have to stay uncomfortable. Many came up afterwards and said “Thank you for getting me in touch with my ministry!” The retreat sessions were very popular, and chaplains texted other chaplains recommending that they attend.

ACRONYMS

AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
ASG	Abu Sayyaf Group
BUC	Bishops Ulama Conference
COIN	Counterinsurgency strategy
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
GRP	Government of the Republic of the Philippines
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MNLF	Moro Nationalist Liberation Front
MPI	Mindanao Peace Institute
NGO	Non-governmental organization

TIMELINE

30,000 years ago indigenous people arrive.

1380

Islamic missionary and Arab trader Makhdum Karim founded a mosque in Sulu.

1521

Ferdinand Magellan placed a cross in Northern Mindanao on Easter Sunday in the Archipelago of St. Lazarus

1898

U.S. occupies the Philippines at the end of the Spanish American war, fights a 4 year insurgency.

1941

Japanese troops invade and defeat General Douglas MacArthur.

1946

Philippine independence. Communist insurgency. Formation private armies by Muslim and Christian elites.



1972–1981

Martial law imposed under President Marcos.

1970s

MNLF Moro National Liberation Front enters full scale conflict with the GRP.

1986

Corazon Aquino wins election, democracy returns.

1996

Final Peace Agreement signed GRP-MNLF. MILF splinter group gains ground.

2002

U.S. forces equip and train and conduct joint exercises with the AFP aimed at Abu Sayyaf terrorists.

2008

Supreme Court blocks peace deal between the MILF-GRP; violence and internally displaced persons ensue.

November 23–December 11, 2009

Martial law imposed in Maguindinaw after massacre. Gen. Ferrer made administrator.

NOTES

12. Brenda Fitzpatrick, "The Mindanao Bishops-Ulama Conference," in Mark M. Rogers, Tom Barnat and Julie Ideh, eds. *Pursuing Just Peace: An Overview and Case Studies for Faith-Based Peacebuilders* (Baltimore: Catholic Relief Services, 2008).

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, "Primacy of the Peace Process," March 13, 2007.

Partnering for Peace in the Philippines: Military and Religious Engagement

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR PART A

Descriptive Questions:

- Who are the actors in conflict in the Philippines?
- Why are they fighting? Why have they been fighting for 40 years?
- Is this a religious conflict?
- What problems did (then) Col. Ferrer face in Basilan?
- What did he do to try to change course in Basilan?
- What were the obstacles/ risks to Gen. Ferrer's partnering with CRS?
- What were the obstacles to CRS partnership with the military?
- Why did they decide to partner despite the obstacles?

Analytic Questions

- Was partnering a good idea? What are the pros and cons of engagement?
- What have been some of the effects of training Gen. Ferrer? Why is Gen. Ferrer an advocate of more training in peacebuilding? Were the technical skills the only thing built by the training? What is the difference between conflict transformation approach of CRS and a conflict resolution approach?

Prescriptive/Judgement Questions:

- Is it possible to rebuild, repair, heal relationships while a war is still going on?
- What does engaging religious actors get you that you might not be able to get from engaging other constituents?
- What would you have done?
- What parallels are there between the Philippine case and questions facing the U.S. military?
- What are the differences between the cases?
- Are the engagements strategic, tactical, operational?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR PART B

Descriptive questions:

- What is the BUC?
- Why were some chaplains skeptical of both CRS and peacebuilding/community engagement functions?
- How did CRS staff try to overcome these obstacles?

Analytic Questions:

- What parallels are there between the Philippine case and questions facing the U.S. military chap-

lains? What are the differences between the cases?

Prescriptive Questions

What would you have done?

INSTRUCTOR'S NOTE¹

The enclosed questions are a menu of various discussion options, not a recipe. Pick and choose among them, and deviate to fit your own course objectives.

To use case and participatory teaching techniques successfully, attend to classroom culture and dynamics. Establish an environment where participation is the norm, and where students feel comfortable participating. This means changing the existing expectations that the professor will be center stage, doing most of the talking and analysis. Instead, bluntly, professors must learn to “shut up,” and students must learn to “put up.” To facilitate student participation, consider the physical layout of the classroom. If possible, arrange seating into a semicircle or U, or some layout (preferably allowing the students to face each other) that will facilitate students' direct exchange with each other. If the students can see only you and are directed only to the front, chances are they will listen and direct their comments to you and not to each other. Student name plates on his or her desk, as used at professional conferences, allow participants to learn each other's names, and encourage students to take responsibility for their own contributions to the class (since they cannot remain anonymous).

You can “warm up” the class by beginning the discussion with softball, easier, descriptive, scene setting questions, and when they are more at ease and more folks are participating, move to the more high voltage or more difficult questions. “Softball questions” engage students in the material at a low stress level, and can be moved through rather quickly to get a number of people participating and get the facts of the case out on the table. You might ask basic factual questions here, a battery of short, closed, descriptive questions easily drawn from the case (for example, “Who were the actors? What were their interests? What were their options?”). Later in the class, you can push them to evaluate

these early answers or offer their own solutions (What were the pros and cons of these options? Which actors and interests mattered most? What would you have done?)

Or if you are short on time and want to immediately peak their interest in cases, or if the class is a participatory group and doesn't need much “warm up,” you might dive right to the most controversial points of the case, by asking “What is the General's problem?” or “Can religious actors help build peace?” Emphasize that they don't need to be an expert to answer the question. All they need to participate in the discussion is the information which was contained in the case. If the group is more reluctant, save high threshold questions (which require students to go out on a limb more, offering more personal judgments or prescriptions for action), for later in the discussion, after you have people participating.

One means to “prime the pump” and direct student attention to particular points is to distribute 4–5 questions prior to the students doing a particular case. These questions help the students prepare for class discussion, focus attention on key points, and can give shy students a written “prompt” to have in front of them to break down their discomfort in speaking.

Early in the course or in the session you might pair students up or use more group exercises, in which students discuss a particular topic among themselves before reporting back to the class as a whole. This can encourage participation (since there is safety in numbers), engage students first at a lower threshold (it can be easier to talk to two students rather than the whole class), vet poor answers, and boost confidence. Splitting the class into two sides for a debate can serve the same purpose, although since there are more opportunities for a student to hide in a larger group, the professor must take care in a debate format to ensure that voices besides the most gregarious are heard. In two party debates, especially on negotiations or bargaining cases, “the switch” can be a useful technique to really get students to look at all sides of an issue. After asking students to argue one point of view, at some point midway through the debate, unexpectedly ask the students to switch sides and argue the other position. Role playing can also be useful earlier in the semester or class, since a student is not being asked to expose his or her *own* views, but to represent the views of a participant in the case. Role playing can also be a good device to draw out more quiet students, or to acquaint more opinionated students with an opposite viewpoint.

1. Dr. Maryann Cusimano Love, “Strategies of Engagement,” in *The ABCs of Case Teaching*, Ed. Vicki Golich, Georgetown University, Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, 2000, ecase.georgetown.edu/abcs.pdf.

This is the bread crumb method. Get students to bite on the first few questions and in the first few sessions with a positive result, and as they become more comfortable with each other, the method, and the material, you can push them farther into the forest. As the session and the course wear on, “raise the bar” for participation. You must increase the level of difficulty of the questions somewhat quickly, or students will get bored (and perhaps lazy in their preparation and participation), and class discussion may settle in a rut. As the session and course move on, ask fewer softball, descriptive, open-the-box questions, and instead ask harder questions (more evaluative, prescriptive, analytic, judgmental and interpretive questions), and pose more challenging followup questions (“can you explain that?” “do the rest of you agree?” “how does that square with...?”), spending less time and emphasis repeating or validating students’ points. As the students get more proficient in participation, get to the “red meat” of the case more quickly, allow the students to chew on it with less direction from you, and get out of the way.

Besides the “actors–interests–options” questioning technique, you might use “the puzzler” questioning technique. Have the students generate the

reasons against something occurring (why Vietnam was not designated a CPC in 2003), and subsequently ask them why this eventually occurred. The class creates a puzzle or paradox, then solves it. Another technique is the “big bang” method of questioning, where you begin the case discussion (with little or no set up questions) by directly posing a big, controversial, high voltage question (“Should governments work with religious organizations?”), allowing the student discussion to get more heated and directed to each other, with the professor stepping to the sidelines. For the big-bang method to be effective, students have to be “primed” enough to take over the discussion, and the question has to be controversial enough to get them to bite and to generate some real heat (and light). Also important is using questions which touch on emotional issues, both early in the course (as a hook and as a signal of things to come), and later when they may be more ready to take the heat.

Classes and students are always different, so there is no magic method or strict timeline for advancing through the learning curve. Listen to your students, pay attention to how well they seem to be meeting content and participation goals, and adjust your lesson plans accordingly.