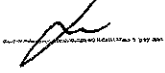


FOURTEENTH CONGRESS)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

7 AUG 22 2011

RECEIVED BY: 

P. S. RES. NO. 91

Introduced by Senator M. A. Madrigal and Senator Antonio Trillanes IV

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON PEACE, UNIFICATION AND RECONCILIATION AND THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE STATUS OF PEACE AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES (GRP) AND THE MORO ISLAMIC LIBERATION FRONT (MILF) AND THE MORO NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (MNLF) IN VIEW OF THE ESCALATING ARMED CONFLICT IN MINDANAO AND THE NEED TO DETERMINE WHAT IS THE PEACE POLICY OF THE MACAPAGAL-ARROYO ADMINISTRATION

WHEREAS, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) are the largest Muslim rebel groups fighting for a Muslim-dominated independent state in the southern Philippines that has resulted in decades of violent strife;

WHEREAS, much of Mindanao, especially the Muslim regions, has been a hotbed of unrest and resentment ever since United States occupation troops tried to pacify Muslim clans in the early part of the 20th century when the Philippines was colonized by the United States;

WHEREAS, in October 1972, the MNLF launched its separatist war in Mindanao. In December 1976, the MNLF and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) signed the Tripoli Agreement which provided for the establishment of 13 regions under Muslim autonomy in Mindanao;

WHEREAS, in September 1996, the government signed a peace accord with the MNLF known as the GRP-MNLF Peace Agreement, which led to the formal creation of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao or ARMM;

WHEREAS, in June 2001, the GRP also signed a peace agreement with the MILF, which paved the way for formal peace talks.

WHEREAS, the peace deal did not fully satisfy either rebel organization as well as other Muslim groups as neglect and corruption have left the Muslim region in Mindanao one of the poorest in the country. Accordingly, rebellion and armed conflicts led by the

MNLF and MILF have continued in Mindanao, even as new groups like the Abu Sayyaf have surfaced;

WHEREAS, on 21 March 2006, the GRP-MILF peace talks resumed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, with both sides expressing optimism that the ancestral domain, the most contentious issue of the peace talks, would be threshed out. In September 2006, the peace talks were stalled due to disagreements on ancestral domain issues;

WHEREAS, in the ongoing peace talks, the GRP panel has reportedly been offering to add 600 villages to the existing Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, but the MILF wants the inclusion of more than 1,000 villages. Other topics being discussed are the sharing of revenues and governance, which could only be discussed once agreement on the issue of territory has been reached;

WHEREAS, the sudden resignation of GRP peace panel head Silvestre Afable and his replacement by Ret. Gen. Rodolfo Garcia Jr. raises festering questions regarding the prospect of the peace process with rebel Muslim groups;

WHEREAS, on 10 July 2007, a team of the 1st Marine Brigade of the AFP was dispatched to Tipo-Tipo, Basilan to check reports on the presence of abducted Italian priest Fr. Giancarlo Bossi. They were ambushed on the way back to their headquarters in Lamitan by supposedly MILF and Abu Sayyaf forces; 14 soldiers were killed and 10 of them were beheaded;

WHEREAS, consequently, 12,000 troops have been deployed in Basilan and Sulu islands to target the Abu Sayyaf and Muslim militants suspected of committing this act;

WHEREAS, on 18 August 2007, in an attack on a suspected Abu Sayyaf camp in Paktul, Basilan, 15 more Marines and 42 alleged members of the Abu Sayyaf were reported killed;

WHEREAS, almost 900 families have been reported displaced as a result of the added deployment of military forces in Basilan even as reports claim that military operations were being hampered as many civilians were refusing to leave their homes and move to safer areas;

WHEREAS, thousands of civilians have fled their homes after fierce fighting broke out between the AFP and Abu Sayyaf forces reportedly backed by MNLF rebels. The two groups were said to be coddling two Indonesian Jemaah Islamiya militants Dulmatin and Umar Patek tagged as being behind the 2002 Bali bombings that killed 202 people, mostly tourists, including 88 Australians;

WHEREAS, the checkered background of the Abu Sayyaf, and its rapid rise and influence and fundamentalist program, together with its reported alliance with the MILF and MNLF groups also raise serious questions that must be addressed;

WHEREAS, in the light of the beheading of the ten soldiers, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo declared that "we will run after those who killed our Marines but

we will not run away from the peace talks.... and we will not allow those who committed barbaric acts to hide under the negotiating table. Only principled warriors deserve a seat on it”;

WHEREAS, after threatening to attack MILF gunmen involved in the beheading of ten soldiers, government officials said on 23 July 2007 that there is a need to preserve the peace talks with the country’s largest Muslim rebel group;

WHEREAS, on 14 August 2007, GRP announced that the resumption of peace talks with the MILF was held off allegedly due to the reluctance of Malaysia to host the talks until a breakthrough is reached on the issue of ancestral domain;

WHEREAS, the beheadings are a deplorable act and there is no excuse for it. However, the question is whether this single act alone is justification enough to start a war and violate the ceasefire agreement with the MILF and MNLF to the detriment of the ongoing peace talks and the safety and security of the civilian population as well as the lives of the soldiers;

WHEREAS, various groups and sectors are reiterating their call for an immediate pull-out of the military forces in Basilan and Sulu and a halt to the military offensives;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, to direct the Committee on Peace, Unification and Reconciliation and Committee on National Defense and Security to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the status of the peace agreements between the GRP and the MILF and MNLF in light of the current crisis and escalating armed conflict in Mindanao with the end in view of determining what is the peace policy of the administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Approved,


M. A. MADRIGAL


ANTONIO TRILLANES IV