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**FOURTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC
OF THE PHILIPPINES
Second Regular Session**

RECEIVED BY: 

**SENATE
S. B. 2569**

Introduced by Senator Villar

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is an archipelagic country located in Southeast Asia. It comprises 7,107 islands in the western Pacific Ocean, sharing maritime borders with Indonesia, Malaysia, Palau, the Republic of China (Taiwan), and Vietnam.

It is home to vast mountain ranges and forests, the smallest living mammal alive in the Tarsier, the Philippine Eagle, the perfectly shaped cone of Mayon Volcano in Bicol, the Chocolate Hills of Bohol, the Tubbataha Reef in Palawan, among the world's best beaches, and some of the finest delicacies the world can ever taste.

With all these, it is such a shame that the Philippines and its government is a country embroiled in deep conflict, not with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, or the Moro National Liberation Front, the Abu Sayyaf and not even the National People's Army. But it is embroiled in deep conflict with fellow Filipinos.

With this in mind, a lasting solution to the peace process is sought by this representation, and the creation of a government agency that will aim to create and foster lasting peace is recommended.

With this in mind, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


MANNY VILLAR

8 AUG 27 11:54

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AN ACT
TO ESTABLISH A DEPARTMENT OF PEACE IN THE PHILIPPINES

Be it enacted by the Senate of the Philippines and the House of Representatives
in Congress assembled:

Section 1. Policies. It is hereby declared the policy of the State:

- 1.1. The Filipino people in their Constitution have committed themselves to build "a just and humane society" and a democracy "under the rule of law and a regime of truth, justice, freedom, love, equality, and peace.";
- 1.2. The Philippines adopts the generally accepted principles of international law as part of the law of the land and adheres to the policy of peace, equality, justice, freedom, cooperation and amity with all nations; and
- 1.3. Christianity and Islam are religions of love and peace that command believers not to kill.

Section 2. Establishment of a Department of Peace. There is hereby established a DEPARTMENT OF PEACE (hereinafter referred to as the "Department"), which shall –

- 2.1 Be a Cabinet-level department in the National Government; and
- 2.2 Be dedicated to:
 - (a) promoting peace by developing peaceful, nonkilling and nonviolent conditions in all local communities and the country as a whole;

- (b) peacemaking and peaceful resolution of conflicts; and
- (c) the study of conditions that are conducive to a just and sustainable peace, both domestic and international.

Section 3. The Secretary for Peace. – There shall be at the head of the Department a Secretary for Peace (hereinafter in this Act referred to as the “Secretary”), who shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines and whose appointment shall be subject to confirmation.

Section 4. Mission of the Department. – The Department shall –

- 4.1. Hold peace, non-violence and non-killing as organizing principles, coordinating service for and toward peace at every level of Filipino society;
- 4.2. Endeavor to promote freedom, justice and democratic principles to expand human rights as conditions favorable to non-violence, non-killing and peace;
- 4.3. Strengthen civilian and non-military means of peacemaking;
- 4.4. Promote the development of human potential for peacefulness;
- 4.5. Work to create peace, prevent violence, divert from armed conflict, use field-tested programs conducive to peace, and develop new structures in nonviolent dispute resolution;
- 4.6. Take a proactive, strategic approach in the development of policies and programs that promote international conflict prevention, non-violent intervention, mediation, peaceful resolution of conflict, and structured mediation of conflict;
- 4.7. Address matters concerning peace both domestic and international in scope; and
- 4.8. Encourage the development of initiatives from local communities, religious groups, and non-governmental organizations toward peace;
- 4.9. Be the lead Department dealing with matters of peace, understanding, and cooperation for good relations among the citizens and between them and the government, and the responsibility to protect and promote human rights, and prevent and minimize conflict leading to violence and killing.

Section 5. Responsibilities and Powers.

A. IN GENERAL – The Secretary shall –

- 1. Work proactively and interactively with each branch of the National Government on all policy matters relating to conditions of peace and conflict resolution;

2. Serve in the cabinet as the spokesman on matters of peace;
3. Call on the intellectual and spiritual wealth of the Filipino people and seek participation in its administration and in its development of policy and programs from private, public, and non-governmental organizations;
4. Monitor and analyze causative principles of conflict and make policy recommendations for developing and maintaining peaceful conduct, and the prevention of crisis and violence;
5. Promote and develop program(s) involving citizen participation, e.g. a Filipino Peace Program aimed at prevention of crisis and violence, involving their participation in all the elements from peace-building, peace-making and peace-keeping;
6. Develop an intercultural competence to manage conflicts among individuals and groups.
7. Assist in the establishment and funding of community-based violence prevention programs, including violence prevention and counseling and peer mediation in schools;
8. Develop strategies and implement programs to address unhealthy manifestations of violence in Filipino culture as they relate to both humans and animals.

B. HUMAN SECURITY RESPONSIBILITIES – The Secretary shall address and offer *nonviolent conflict resolution strategies* to all relevant parties on issues of human security if such security is threatened by conflict, whether such conflict is geographic, religious, ethnic, racial, or class-based in its origin, derives from economic concerns (including trade or misdistribution of wealth), or is initiated through disputes concerning scarcity of natural resources (such as water and energy resources), food trade, environmental and gender concerns.

C. EDUCATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES – The Secretary shall –

1. Cooperate with educators to develop a peace education curriculum, which shall include studies of –
 - a. The human rights movement in the Philippines, Asia, and throughout the world, with special emphasis on how cooperative endeavor and involvement have contributed to advancements in peace and justice; and
 - b. Peace agreements and circumstances in which peaceful intervention has worked to stop conflict;
2. In cooperation with the provincial educators and departments of education –
 - a. Commission the development of such curricula and make such curricula available to local school districts to enable the

utilization of peace education objectives at all elementary and secondary schools in the Philippines; and

- b. Offer incentives in the form of grants and training to encourage the development of provincial and city peace curricula and assist schools in applying for such curricula;
3. Work with educators to equip students to become skilled in achieving peace through reflection, and facilitate instruction in the ways of peaceful conflict prevention and resolution;
4. Maintain a site on the Internet for the purposes of soliciting and receiving ideas for the development of peace from the wealth of political, social and cultural diversity;
5. Proactively engage the critical thinking capabilities of grade school, high school, and university students and teachers through the Internet and other media and issue such periodic reports concerning submissions;
6. Development of an intercultural competence to manage conflicts between individual groups;
7. Provide a diploma/degree course of instruction in peace education, after which graduates will be required to serve five (5) years in public service in programs dedicated to domestic or international non-violent conflict resolution; and
8. Provide grants for peace studies departments in colleges and universities throughout the Philippines.

D. DOMESTIC RESPONSIBILITIES – The Secretary shall ---

1. Finance local community initiatives that can draw neighborhood resources to avoid and reduce or stop killing, create peace projects that facilitate the development of conflict prevention and resolution at the local and national levels and thereby inform and inspire national policy for peace;
2. Develop community-based strategies for celebrating diversity in languages, cultures, and religions, promoting respect, and combating prejudice and discrimination;
3. Assist in the establishment and funding of community-based violence prevention programs, including non-killing, and violence prevention counseling and peer mediation in schools;
4. Develop policies that address domestic violence, including spousal abuse, child abuse and maltreatment of the elderly;
5. Develop policies to address violence against animals;
6. Analyze existing policies, employ successful, field-tested programs, and develop new approaches for dealing with the implements of

- violence, including gun-related violence and the overwhelming presence of handguns;
7. Develop new programs that relate to the societal challenges of school violence, gangs, racial or ethnic violence, violence against gays and lesbians, and police-community relations disputes;
 8. Make policy recommendations to the Secretary of Justice regarding human rights and labor law;
 9. Counsel and advocate on behalf of women victimized by violence;
 10. Provide for public education programs and counseling strategies concerning hate crimes;
 11. Promote respect for racial, religious, and ethnic diversity; and
 12. Ensure that the principles of building a culture of peace guide regional official languages and employment of equity policies.

E. INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES – The Secretary shall ---

1. Advise the Secretary of National Defense, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, and the Secretary of Interior and Local Government on all matters relating to domestic peace and to human and national security, including the protection of human rights and the prevention of, amelioration of, and de-escalation of unarmed and armed domestic and international conflict;
2. Provide for the training of all government personnel who administer post-conflict reconstruction and demobilization in war-torn communities;
3. Sponsor country and regional conflict prevention and dispute resolution initiatives, create special task forces, and draw on local, regional, and national expertise to develop plans and programs for addressing the root sources of conflict and violence in troubled areas;
4. Provide for exchanges between the Philippines and other nations of individuals who endeavor to develop domestic and international peace-based initiatives;
5. Administer the training of civilian peace-keepers who participate in multinational non-violent police forces and support civilian police who participate in peace-keeping;
6. Facilitate the development of peace summits at which parties to a conflict may gather under carefully prepared conditions to promote nonviolent communication and mutually beneficial solutions;
7. Submit to the President recommendations for reductions in weapons of violence and destruction including stopping their proliferation;
8. Advise the Philippine Permanent Representative to the United Nations on matters pertaining to violence and peace, and the United Nations Security Council; and
9. Provide ethical and value-based analyses of issues and problems to the Department of National Defense and the Department of Interior and Local Government.

Section 6. Principal Officers

1. UNDERSECRETARY FOR PEACE – There shall be in the Department an Undersecretary for Peace, who shall be appointed by the President. The Under-Secretary shall designate the order in which other officials of the Department shall act for and perform the functions of the Secretary during the absence or disability of the Secretary.
2. BUREAU DIRECTORS – There shall be in the Department such Bureau Directors as may be necessary and authorized by law.
3. AUTHORITY OF THE SECRETARY FOR PEACE – Each officer described in this section shall report directly to the Secretary or the Under-Secretary and shall, in addition to any functions vested in or required to be delegated to such officer, perform such additional functions as the Secretary/Undersecretary may prescribe.

Section 7. Bureau of Peace Education and Training --- There shall be in the Department a Bureau of Peace Education and Training (Bureau) who shall carry out those functions of the Department relating to the creation, encouragement, and impact of peace education and training at the elementary, secondary, university, and post-graduate levels, including the development of a Civilian Peace Service (CPS).

The Bureau, in cooperation with the local offices of the Department of Education, shall develop a peace curriculum and supporting materials for distribution to schools in the various local communities. The peace curriculum shall include the building of communicative peace skills, non-violent conflict resolution skills, and other objectives to increase the knowledge of peace and non-killing conditions and processes.

The Director for Peace Education and Training shall ---

1. Provide peace education grants to colleges and universities for the creation and expansion of peace studies departments; and
2. Create a Community Peace Grant program under which grants shall be provided to not-for-profit community and non-governmental organizations for the purposes of developing creative, innovative neighborhood programs for non-violent conflict resolution and local peace-building initiatives.

Section 8. Bureau for Domestic Peace

There shall be a Bureau for Domestic Peace, the Director of which, in collaboration with local government heads, shall be responsible for promoting and undertaking domestic peace activities, including the development of policies that increase awareness about intervention and counseling on domestic violence and conflict, and those functions in the Department affecting research and analysis relating to creating, initiating and modeling approaches to peaceful engagement and non-violent conflict resolution.

The Director for Domestic Peace Activities shall ---

1. Develop policies and build on existing programs responsive to the prevention of violence and killing, including the development of community policing strategies and peaceful settlement skills among local officials and police and other public safety officers;
2. Develop community-based strategies for promoting and celebrating diversity and promoting respect for such diversity;
3. Study the impact of violence and war, especially on the physical and mental condition of children.
4. Implement the UN Resolution 1325 to promote enhanced participation of women in peace in all aspects of peace activities ranging from peace-making, peace-building to post-conflict reconstruction;
5. Review and implement UN deliberations R2P2 – Responsibility to Protect;
6. Publish a monthly journal of the activities of the Department and encourage scholarly participation;
7. Gather information on effective community peace-building activities and disseminate such information to local governments and non-governmental organizations in the Philippines and abroad;
8. Research the effect of violence in the media and make such reports available to Congress annually; and
9. Sponsor conferences in the Philippines to create awareness of the work of the Department.

Section 9. Bureau for International Peace (BIP) – There shall be a Bureau of International Peace, the Director of which shall be responsible for the country's international peace activities.

The Director for International Peace shall ---

1. Provide for the training and deployment of all Civilian Peace Service graduates and other non-military conflict prevention and peace-making personnel;
2. Sponsor country and regional conflict prevention and dispute resolution initiatives in countries experiencing social, political, or economic strife;
3. Advocate the creation of a multi-national non-violent peace force;

4. Provide training for the administration of post-conflict reconstruction and demobilization in war-torn societies;
5. Provide for the exchanges between individuals of the Philippines and other nations who are endeavoring to develop domestic and international peace-based initiatives;
6. Carry out those functions affecting arms control programs and arms limitation agreements;
7. Advise the Secretary of Peace on all inter-agency discussions and all international negotiations regarding the reduction and elimination of weapons of mass destruction throughout the world, including the dismantling of such weapons and the safe and secure storage of materials related thereto;
8. Assist nations, international agencies and non-governmental organizations in assessing the locations of the build-up of nuclear weapons;
9. Develop non-violent strategies to deter the testing or use of offensive or defensive nuclear weapons, whether based on land, air, sea, or in outer space;
10. Serve as a depository for copies of all contracts, agreements and treaties that deal with the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons or the protection of outer space from militarization; and
11. Provide technical support and legal assistance for the implementation of such agreements.

Section 10. Bureau of Human Rights and Economic Rights (BHR). — There shall be a Bureau of Human Rights and Economic Rights, the head of which shall be the Director for Human Rights and Economic Rights who shall carry out those functions in the Department supporting the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights passed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10, 1948, and subsequent UN Declarations on Human Rights.

The Director for Human Rights and Economic Rights shall ---

1. Assist the Minister/Deputy Minister in furthering the incorporation of principles of human rights, as enunciated in the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 217A (III) of December 10, 1948, into all agreements between the United States and other nations to help reduce the causes of violence;
2. Gather information on and document human rights abuses, both domestically and internationally, and recommend to the Secretary non-violent responses to correct abuses;
3. Make such findings available to other agencies in order to facilitate non-violent conflict resolution;

4. Provide trained observers to work with non-governmental organizations for purposes of creating a climate that is conducive to the respect for human rights;
5. Conduct economic analyses of the scarcity of human and natural resources as a source of conflict and make recommendations to the Secretary for non-violent prevention of such scarcity, non-violent intervention in case of such scarcity, and the development of programs of assistance for people experiencing such scarcity, whether due to armed conflict, maldistribution of resources, or natural causes; and
6. Assist the Minister, in cooperation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Finance, in developing strategies regarding the sustainability and the management of the distribution of funds from international agencies, the conditions regarding the receipt of such funds, and the impact of those conditions on the peace and stability of the recipient nations.

Section 11. Staff & Organizational Affiliation. Officers and staff within the Department of Peace may be drawn on secondment from national, provincial, city, or municipal organizations, civil society organizations and businesses. International staff may also be engaged.

Section 12. Consultation in drafting treaties and agreements. The Department of Peace shall be consulted in the drafting of treaties and peace agreements.

Section 13. Repealing Clause. All laws, presidential decrees, letters of instruction, executive orders, rules and regulations, or any part thereof inconsistent with this Act shall be amended or modified accordingly.

Sec. 14. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.