

Islamic state, has reportedly told Misuari that "they'll support and even join", once a "real and genuine autonomy" will be achieved.²¹ The MILF and the international Islamic community's monitoring of the peace agreement bring an added impetus for Misuari to do well. However, at the present, he feels that the MNLF is "on the verge of losing its credibility"²² something which he attributes to the "Philippine procrastination, prevarication and filibuster tactics" in implementing the peace agreement."²³

One can argue that the dissatisfaction over Misuari's performance and of the regional government in general is a consequence of Philippine bureaucratic procedures. In turn, the delays in the implementation of projects are perceived as a product of the Government's insincerity. What is clear at this point is that the Government is sincere in its efforts to gain a lasting peace in Mindanao, given the occasional vague pronouncements and policy statements of President Joseph Estrada. Even with skirmishes between government troops and MILF rebels, Estrada affirmed that "Peace is my dream for Mindanao. If we have peace, development will be accelerated not only in Mindanao but also in the whole country."²⁴

Given the convoluted nature of political and bureaucratic processes in the Philippines, the delayed amendment of the Organic Act for ARMM is understandable. As the Government explains, these were due to the separation of the legislative and executive branches of government, as well as to the delayed inputs [and warring factions] of legislators from Mindanao, mindful of the interests of their respective constituencies.

Amidst such divergent views on the political and economic gains of the Final Agreement, the Government and MNLF leadership agree on the achievement of one tangible success – the integration of the MNLF members to the forces of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP).²⁵

In the agreement's transitional phase, 5,500 and 1,500 MNLF members shall be integrated into AFP and the PNP respectively. Another 250 MNLF members shall be integrated in the special or auxiliary services of the PNP, as well as another 250 items for auxiliary services in the AFP.

²¹ Speech of Nur Misuari, p. 4.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 34.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ "Erap Affirms Gov't Policy for Mindanao", *Manila Bulletin*, 18 November 1999, p. 18.

²⁵ Miriam Coronel Ferrer in her initial findings also points to the direction that the integration of the MNLF forces into the PNP and AFP was done without demobilization and disarmament. Presentation of the research findings on *GRP-MNLF Peace Agreement, Phase 1: Pans and Gains*, Faculty Center, University of the Philippines, 10-11 November 1999.