

Position Paper on the GRP Peace Talks Framework

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Position Paper of the RPMM-RPA on the Demobilization, Disarmament Reintegration/Rehabilitation Framework of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines vis-à-vis Peace Talks

REBOLUSYONARYONG PARTIDO NG MANGGAGAWA NG MINDANAO (RPM-M)

REVOLUTIONARY PEOPLES' ARMY (RPA)

The Press Statement of the Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita on September 3, 2008 has drawn reactions from various Revolutionary groups and even the civil society groups. It was obviously formulated in the midst of current hostilities in Mindanao that killed innocent civilians, destroyed properties and displaced hundreds of thousands of civilians. Of course, it has to be blamed to some base commanders of the MILF as their irrational reactions on the forestalled signing of the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain or the MOA-AD after the Supreme Court issued a *Temporary Restraining Order*. The violent events that followed seemingly justified the arrogant reaction of the Central Government over the armed-opponents of the MILF especially on its legitimate claim on its right to self determination.

The Demobilization, Disarmament and Re-integration/Rehabilitation (DDR) as the forefront context of any peace process is tantamount of saying 'surrender first before we talk' or "no peace process at all". For a period, the GRP seems to act progressively when it basically agreed with the content of the MOA-AD which has transcended the constitutional framework of the present Philippine Constitution. If it was not what it seemed, then the government was merely using the MOA-AD to premise the formulation of the "new thrust" on the peace process which is the DDR for whatever "agenda" that best serve the present dispensation.

Looking back at the content of the Statement on DDR as a new policy, one could find the militarist stand and at the same time effort to take ground in the grassroots communities through the so called "authentic dialogues". There is nothing wrong with the latter, if and only if, the GRP will consider the revolutionary groups included as among the legitimate stakeholders; and, shall not dwell on deceptions to isolate its opponents from their respective mass base.

We strongly believe that DDR is always an integral part of a peace process but it should be the last stage of the whole process. In fact, DDR should be the logical result of the whole process in which each stage is a built up for the next and higher and nearer to a comprehensive political settlement.

The RPM-M maintains the following points as paramount vis-à-vis the DDR framework of the GRP:

1. Community-based community empowerment and development processes through inclusive consultations;

2. Acknowledgement of the legitimacy and validity of the inherent right to self determination as manifested in the MOA-AD of the Bangsamoro through the MILF without prejudice to the Right of self-determination of other minority nationalities in Mindanao; and,
3. Peace process shall always transcend the framework of the present Philippine Constitution in both words and deeds since it should be mutually inclusive to the talking parties. Conflict transformation can genuinely start from this viewpoint and;
4. That DDR is an integral part of the peace process but that it should not start or restart with it as the condition for the peace talks.

RPMM Peace Committee

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