

Neither war nor GMA's cha-cha

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Amid the bigger problem of hunger and hopelessness swallowing up the country today, a full-blown war against the Bangsamoro rebels is not a desirable path for the government to pursue in building peace in Mindanao.

We in the Partido ng Manggagawa believe that an all-out war is not only a waste of dear lives and scant resources for both Muslims and Christians. It is also a futile government instrument to correct a historical wrong. The labor party is also against the use of armed violence against civilians caught in the war.

For us, continuing peace negotiations based on genuine recognition of the Bangsamoro's right to self-determination remains the better option and which can be made more viable and thoroughgoing if accompanied by a resolute war against poverty and injustice in the region and in the whole country.

We also believe that the Moro's struggle for self-determination cannot be solved under the framework of the present Philippine Constitution. The Bangsamoro people have been waging this national war since time immemorial and we see no end to their pursuit of that historical claim until finally accorded that rightful recognition by the Philippine State. This is the biggest thing chauvinists opposed to this kind of settlement have to fully understand to avoid treating this conflict a purely religious war.

Accordingly, for final peace to be achieved in Mindanao, there is definitely a need to amend the present Constitution to uphold the spirit of the concluded peace settlement. There is nothing wrong, criminal, outrageous and immoral in pursuing such path. However, a selfless, principled kind of charter change may not be possible under the government of Mrs. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

It appears that the biggest obstacle that now confronts the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, in its pursuit of a peace settlement with the GRP, is dealing with the Arroyo government, which cannot commit peace without playing a sinister plan to smuggle a self-perpetuating agenda for charter change. The announcement by Macalañang that it is 'all-systems go' now for cha-cha right after the MOA-AD controversy flared up confirmed the existence of this hideous agenda.

Moreover, the outrage and inflammatory statements issued by no less than the allies of Mrs. Arroyo against the proposed Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD) revealed the awful fact that Mrs. Arroyo does not represent a solid government consensus on this matter. This government therefore cannot speak and commit peace to MILF. Hence, if Mrs. Arroyo cannot even maintain peace in her own government, how can she promote peace with others? In that sense, she could be the worst promoter of peace.

On the other hand, the overt role played by the United States in brokering this peace process had become even more suspicious and alarming. Everybody knows how the US plays war while talking peace at the same time in pursuit of its own geopolitical interests. They did talk peace while playing the worst kind of interventionist war in Iraq, Kosovo, Somalia, Afghanistan, and possibly next, Iran.

It is public knowledge that the US troops had already maintained a permanent presence in Mindanao in the guise of joint military exercises. But everybody knows that their presence there is certainly beyond peace missions. Thus, same with Gloria, the US could neither be a reliable ally for the Bangsamoro people, or a faithful proponent of peace.

P.S.

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