



The Doctor Is In

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Come Dream With Me

NEW YORK, N.Y., Sept. 4 (PinoyGlobal) - The rebellion in Mindanao is a social problem and can only be solved if the government does its homework. Surrendering the northern portion of that island to the Muslims as Pres. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo suggests, is dismembering the Philippines. It would actually shrink the country and for what when the Muslims are not even satisfied as seen by the war they have been waging against the government these past months. That solution is unwise, impractical and would further divide the nation because if it is done the sequestered part of Mindanao will be a separate country with every right to defy the Philippine government for real and or imaginary reason/s.

If the MILF is violent today, once Mindanao is divided it will be total war they will be waging as an independent country and they will be able to ask Middle East countries to help them fight the Philippines. But aside from that veil of seeking to mollify the rebellious Muslims, GMA's game plan is seen differently by the suspicious MILF. Meanwhile Christian Filipinos look at it as a ploy to amend the Constitution and subtly insert another mandate for GMA or that it will install her as head of state for unlimited number of years by removing the term limit and the prohibition for her to seek reelection.

Clearly Madam Arroyo does not intend to step down after 2010 when her term expires. This mentality will definitely spark civil strife because Juan de la Cruz will not take it sitting down. She has to go or else. Amending the Constitution to pave the way for the separation of certain parts of Mindanao is not a valid option to solve the problem of Muslim uprising.

On the other hand, former president Joseph Erap Estrada's idea of solving the Mindanao issue, is not only silly but also stupid. It will enrage the entire Muslim world against us. The best solution is diplomacy and asserting the will of the government not that of the MILF. But certainly, amending the Constitution is out of the question.

Like I said the problem in Mindanao is a social crisis, in which the government has to study its homework. By this I mean the government should provide the basic needs of the people but at the same time obliging them to do their duty as citizens and not get away discarding the rules. The administration should not use power and money but wise ideas on how to appease the Muslims. This can be achieved by making them feel being taken care of if the government provides them food, schools, hospitals, medicine and similar vital items they need every day. You cannot solve problems

from the top down. It should start from below evolving all the way up like a pyramid that has a wide base rising narrowly to the top.

Every citizen should be given the best opportunity to live decently and with dignity. This is starting the government from the grassroots. It should not be a knee-jerk process but a day to day, stone by stone, person to person, barangay to barangay, town to town process until a strong pyramid of a righteous government is built.

The solution should not be crisis oriented. It will not work if just because a group of Muslims bomb a market place the military should also kill all the Muslims in that area. The government should be more humane than that and follow ways to solve the violence without being more violent, which will only widen the gap between the Christians and Muslims. What we are facing in Mindanao is a social crisis that can be contained.

The government should implement a health program for the people in the South. Increase the budget for the Health Department to enable it to hire doctors for those areas in Mindanao. It used to be a centralized system in which the Health department paid the salaries of doctors. Now it seems the mayors will handle this duty. Of course, the mayor will be so happy because he will control the doctors, he can do things like putting up his own pharmacy in connivance with the doctor to monopolize government purchases of medicines. Giving the mayors the job of handling the salaries of doctors is like assigning the fox to watch the chicken coop. The doctor will have no choice but to prescribe poor quality and overpriced medicine on orders of the mayor. This is why we have this problem of shortage of doctors in the rural areas of Mindanao.

The terrible part is that aside from the low salaries of doctors, the town or provincial clinics and hospitals have no facilities and supplies the poor doctors have to work with their bare hands. Barangay workers in health centers don't even

have barangay health kit. The only available medicine is Tylenol. Whether you have diarrhea, heart attack, pneumonia, asthma, tuberculosis you are only given Tylenol. Tylenol, Tylenol, Tylenol until you die of Tylenol overdose not from your ailment.

On education: schools are in the worst state. During rainy season they are flooded and most often inundated. There is no security in the town and barrio schools. Teachers are also unhappy with their salaries, which to begin with are below par. Most often they are overworked. One teacher for instance, has 3 classrooms to teach in the same hour, she jumps from one group of students to another. This has resulted in many going out of school youths in Mindanao. Often times the teachers are not paid or if they are it's very much delayed because GSIS funds would be missing. Once it was autonomous and the contributions of five thousand teachers were never recorded or so it seems, that is why there is a case against the GSIS that denies having received the money. The officials are just finger pointing at each other. There is also talk that the GSIS contributed 1 billion pesos to GMA to feed the dogs in the military that's why the teachers sued GSIS Pres. Winston Garcia for corruption; all this while the poor teachers have been the victims. And yet they have to work hard and under conditions that are less than good.

Transportation is another serious problem of the government. Mindanao cannot move its farm products because of lack of transportation and highways or roads. The farmers cannot deliver their goods to the town.

A means of transportation is the "sky lab" habak habal – it is a motorbike that can carry 4-6 passengers and the only practical vehicle that can traverse the rough roads in the rural area. It can travel 100 kilometers. The driver carries the passengers in the back. One driver had to rush a sick woman

to the hospital, which was 100km away. On the way she died. To bring her back he had to tie her behind his back to balance the dead. That is why people say that if you are sick you do not go to the hospital because the road will kill you.

The people need good roads to transport their goods and farm products from town to town. This is important if the government wants to see provinces and towns becoming self-sufficient.

Due to corruption in the region you can only survive if you engage in illegal logging, illegal gambling, illegal prostitution, illegal buses and selling illegal goods. If you like

to do illegal things, Mindanao will be your paradise. Illegal aliens are not welcomed. Corrupt officials might allow some to enter the country as long they give “padulas” (M O N E Y).

Lastly, elections must be clean and honest. To make this possible the Comelec must implement the rules without exception.

These reforms can still be achieved if the citizens fight for their rights and demand that the government does the right thing. If you believe in this, then *COME DREAM WITH ME!*