

## GROUP REPORTS

### The Impact of an Autonomous Government in the Mindanao Area

The group decided to identify the points that have relevance to the development of Eastern Visayas. They first pointed out those areas in regional autonomy that do not have relevance to regional development; next they identified the positive aspects and lastly they recommended some modifications/revisions in the autonomous type of government.

#### *Weak Points*

1. There is no security of tenure for a government employee. If the Lupong Tagapagpaganap unjustly decides to terminate him from office, he can be immediately kicked out.
2. The national line agencies cannot set targets for accomplishment. They will be solely dependent on the dictates of the Lupong Tagapagpaganap.
3. It emphasizes a very limited view of development, which is just concentrated on their own region. There is apparently less economic transactions with other regions/areas.

#### *Positive Points*

1. The policy that any employee can be terminated from office any time is a reminder for the government employee to conduct his service in the most efficient manner all the time.
2. Development projects are more responsive to the felt needs of the people and their delivery is facilitated.
3. It gives the Lupong Tagapagpaganap enough power to supervise and control all activities, so there is guided planning and implementation process.
4. It creates and encourages self-reliance among the people (grassroots level).
5. Their government is based on mutual trust and respect between the people and the executive group.

***Recommendations***

1. There should be a clear definition of people's participation: the areas they are to participate and be activated, and in the degree of their participation.
2. Obsolete policies of the present non-autonomous regional form of government should be replaced with new policies responsive to regional situations.
3. The autonomous government must also be financially independent.
4. The people must show only justifiable social action so they may be given attention and concern by the top management.

Chairman: Eugenio U. Silang

***Members***

1. Antonio P. Talabo
2. Benjamin B. Donaldo
3. Encarnacion A. Benedicto
4. Jose D. Trumata
5. Jose R. Mangrobang
6. Rosalina A. Castañeda
7. Agripino G. Galvez
8. Iluminado C. Nical
9. Venerio A. Yap
10. Daniel A. Navidad
11. Panfilo T. Marantan
12. Rufino Galvez
13. Mrs. Carmencita Aguilar – participant observer

Chairman: Lauro A. Castillo

Secretary: Marivic Vallecera

## **The Impact of the Autonomous Government In the Mindanao Area**

### **I. *Constraints***

We found assessment of the Impact of the Autonomous Government in the Mindanao Area extremely difficult because of the following:

1. Scarcity, if not outright lack of information regarding:
  - a. Acceptance of the autonomous government concepts and strategies by:
    - 1) The Public Sector
      - a) Elective Officials (Governors, Mayors, etc.)
      - b) Appointive Officials (Regional Administrators)
    - 2) The Private Sector
      - a) The wage-earner
      - b) The entrepreneur
      - c) The unemployed grassroots
  - b. Performance record of the system sufficient to form a conclusion as to its desirability or lack of it.
    - 1) The system is relatively new

### **II. *Bases***

We have, however, listed down some realities upon which our analyses are based:

1. The corruption and excesses of the Old Society created the secessionist movement led by Nur Misuari which:
  - a) Gained the sympathy of Arab and Islamic nations and groupings thus creating foreign relations irritants inimical to national interests;
  - b) Started a movement which could have succeeded were it not for the nationalism shown by our Moslem brothers who rallied behind the enlightened leadership of President Marcos;
  - c) Precipitated a crisis which cost our government P2 M a day in order to maintain peace in the South and which could have resulted in our loss of:

- 1) The Maria Cristina Falls and the power it generates
  - 2) Our only integrated steel mill in Iligan City
  - 3) The fertile rice-corn granaries of Cotabato
  - 4) The oil-rich Sulu-Palawan region;
  - 5) The rich and unconquered (Pilipino) culture.
2. This autonomous government is a compromise commitment of the Philippine government towards the establishment of lasting peace in Regions IX and XII.
  3. This system of autonomous government or any system for that matter can only be as good as the men and women called upon to implement it.

### III. *Analyses*

Firm in our abiding faith and belief that President Marcos has chosen men of competence and selfless dedication to the success of the autonomous government, Group 2 concludes.

The impact of the Autonomous Government in the Mindanao area may be summarized thus:

#### *On the Autonomous Regions*

1. Removal of all clouds of doubts in the minds of our Muslim brothers as to our government's sincerity of purpose in establishing a lasting peace in the South — thereby making them lay their arms and return to the folds — their faith in their government restored.
2. Effective orchestration of public and private sector efforts towards the social, economic, political and cultural development of the region.
3. Hopefully, the integration and assimilation of Christian and Moslem Filipinos into a single national identity.

#### *On the rest of Mindanao*

The faster pace of development inspired by the autonomous government would influence the setting of developmental projects that would complement and support the projects implemented in the autonomous regions that, taken as a whole, these projects may optimize operations towards the attainment of development goals.

#### *On the rest of the country*

A focusing of interest in the performance of the autonomous

government — interest which will engender a fond hope for the success of the system that the same may be replicated in the other regions of the country.

*On the outside world*

A firming up of the universal acceptance of the sincerity of our government towards the establishment of an honorable and lasting peace in the south, not only because of our international commitment, but in the interest of national solidarity as well.

*On Group 2*

A consensus: The cost of establishing and operating the autonomous government we are willing to make in the promotion of national solidarity and lasting and honorable peace in Southern Philippines. For after all, spending only P300 M for CY 1980 now means actually an expenditure of P821,918 per day on peoples' development compared with the P2,000,000 per day on bullets and coffins. This further means that the P1,178,092 savings per day could be used by the national government in helping other depressed regions through bigger funds for development projects.

**GROUP III**

**Topic: The Economics of Development in Autonomous Regions**

**Leader: Director Miguela Pineda-Roldan  
Aca Region VI and VIII**

*Members:*

- |                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Mr. Eugenio A. Carilla     | — MEC                                   |
| 2. Miss Preciosa P. Blanco    | — LSBDA                                 |
| 3. Mr. Saturnino B. Deocariza | — MA (BPI)                              |
| 4. Mr. Carlos R. Umali        | — BAT                                   |
| 5. Miss Corazon S. Manaog     | — LSBDA                                 |
| 6. Miss Julia A. Torreja      | — BFD                                   |
| 7. Mr. Florentino M. Nalda    | — MEC                                   |
| 8. Mrs. Azucena C. Tabao      | — CSC                                   |
| 9. Mr. Meliton A. Gaylon      | — MEC, Matarinao<br>School of Fisheries |

10. Miss Jesusa M. Abarca — NIA  
11. Mr. Sofronio J. Hacbang — BLT

The group members discussed and showed their views and opinions re: the present mechanics and operations of the autonomous governments Regions IX and XII. The areas of discussion focused on the following:

1. The impact of regional autonomy to the target situation or group.
2. The impact on situation or groups other than the target.
3. Impact on the future as well as immediate conditions.
4. Its direct costs, in terms of resources devoted to the autonomous region..
5. Its indirect costs including loss of opportunities.

As gleaned from the speakers of our distinguished visitors from the south, the group members were of the opinion that the scheme of an autonomous government is accepted by the general public in Regions IX and XII and that its implementation restored peace and order in the areas affected as proven by the return of the rebels from the mountains and back into the folds of the law. Admittedly, the scheme has greatly minimized bureaucratic red tape in the matter of delivery of services to the people of the areas affected.

However, we believe that, as yet, there is no proof result or effect on the economy. This much gleaned from the fact that our speakers had failed to point out or mention any economic results in their speeches.

On the spill-over effects of the introduction of regional autonomy, the non-autonomous region may feel a sense of deprivation of privileges and material benefits now, presently enjoyed or to be enjoyed by the autonomous regions. On the other hand, there is pervading feeling of relief that our Muslim brothers agitating for secession are now concerned with national unity.

Non-autonomous regions, might, as a result, develop a desire to be autonomous. However, we believe this will result in repercussions on the structure and procedure of government. For example, the creation of the SP and the LTP provides a coercion and binding force over the provincial administrators in the autonomous regions as against the lack of such a binding or unifying force over provincial governors, city mayors and municipal mayors in non-autonomous regions which could account for the faster or

slower pace of development of programs in a specific modification of these civil service laws as well as auditing regulation might be necessary to suit the needs of an autonomous government.

On the direct costs that this exercise would entail, we agree that definitely an annual budget of P300M necessary to support the autonomous government of Region XII as against P2M spent daily on bullets and coffins, is something to be happy about.

As to the fear in a loss of opportunities for non-autonomous regions as a result of providing greater resources for the privileges and benefits of the autonomous regions, is dispelled by our trust and confidence that the national government under the able leadership of President Marcos will be able to find the necessary solutions and the means whereby the accomplished national developmental goals may not be sacrificed for the sake of limited regional development.

This report is discussed on rather general terms due regrettably to scarcity of details that could be attained from the source of information and speeches delivered.

## GROUP IV

### Topic: The Economics of Development in Autonomous Regions

#### *Major Issues*

1. Danger to national integration
2. Too much financial authority
3. Diminution of power of local government (Provincial, cities and municipal)

#### *Comments on Issue No. 1*

1. The system is good for the people within the autonomous regions.
2. Results in compartmentalization of the nation.
3. The outcome of the experiment would be a basis for the adoption or discarding of the autonomous system of government in the future.
4. Improves the peace and order situation in these regions.
5. Because of too much financial support, it appears to be very costly because it is of experimental nature.

*Comments on Issue No. 2*

1. Gives enough flexibility for governance.
2. There is danger of misappropriation of funds.
3. This will be a basis for future application in other regions.
4. Speedy implementation of programs and projects.
5. It is costly because of its being experimental in nature.

*Comments on Issue No. 3*

1. It lessens to some extent the "Palakasan System" (such as getting funds, appointments.)
2. It reduces the authority and power of the MLGCD.
3. There is no effect in other regions.
4. Minimizes internal jealousies among local officials.
5. Reduces cost of travels as well as the internal intrigues.

Submitted by:

MARGARITA D. SALUTAN  
Rapporteur

Chairman: Mr. Manuel I. Bernal

Members:

Francisca L. Jimenez  
William C. Ella  
Serapio G. Francisco  
Jovencio A. Montes  
Leonora U. Herino  
Solomon L. Jolbitado  
Jose A. Masecampo  
Sonia A. Colasito  
Magdaleno A. Canillas  
Leah Y. Apurillo  
Teresita P. Dolina

**Group I**

**Chairman: Lauro A. Castillo**

**Topic: Organizational implications of Regional Autonomy**

The conclusion drawn after the deliberations on the topic assigned.

There are certain structural deficiencies of the organizational process of the autonomous government as reflected in the organizational chart distributed e.g.

- a) That the provinces/cities/municipalities and barangays are directly under the local government branches.
- b) That the head is also the chairman of the LTP and also a member of the SP
- c) That there are three planning bodies, hence confusion

In enumerating the deficiencies the group has come up with a consensus that the weaknesses could possibly constitute as strength in the two autonomous regions.

On the first for example, minor decisions need not be elevated to the head but acted upon on the lower level, hence immediate solution to the problems.

On the second, it would enable the chairman to implement the program of work he would want to execute.

On the third, there's no overlapping nor confusion since the duties and responsibilities have been defined.

On the second question, the autonomous organizational set up implications on regional line agencies begets confusion hence a weakness. This is so because the regional directors has a set of standards and the autonomous government has another.

d) On the local governments, they have direct linkages with the president of the central government (as the MLGCD has)

e) On future reorganization it could very well be an input in process of reorganization

f) On regional development, a rapid/expedited economic development.

The group agreed that the more acceptable features of said autonomy could not be applied here in Region 8 because of lack of authority.

As apparent in the previous speeches, there is a need for data for us to intelligently discuss the fourth question on the participation of the people of the said system hence, we would not want to make any comment or suggestion.

## GROUP II

### Topic:

**The Organizational Implication of Regional Autonomy: Focus on the Structure of the Autonomous Governments.**

### Premise:

The concept of autonomous government should be tailored according to the peculiar circumstances obtaining in the region.

The group decided to go over immediately to the organizational chart of the autonomous regions. A guideline question was framed: what would be the implications of establishing a regional autonomous government on the RDC?

### Issues in:

- a) overlapping of functions between the RDC and LTP.
- b) what role the RDC should take if it is to continue to exist
- c) possible abolition of the RDC.

Finally it was agreed in the discussion for the RDC to continue existing as an advisory body to serve both the LTP and the SP.

The group maintains that because of the nature and composition of the RDC, it can effectively serve as an advisory body.

## GROUP III

Chairman : Neri Gantuangco

Secretary : Ina T. Gaviola

Topic : **Regional Autonomous Government and the Philippine Foreign Policy**

1. To what extent can the autonomous government control all external administrative affairs/matters such as:
  - a. Foreign affairs
  - b. Customs, etc.

By virtue of Presidential Decree 1618, regional autonomous governments have been given control over internal administrative affairs. However, the national government has retained the exclusive right and prerogative to certain functions among which are foreign relations, foreign trade, national defense and security etc.

It would appear from the provisions of Sec. 4 of PD 1618 that the autonomous governments cannot, and has no right to, encroach on these functions which are within the jurisdiction and competence of the national government.

In our group discussions on the reason why such functions have been specifically withheld from the autonomous government, we arrive at the consensus that these functions if granted to the autonomous governments would in effect diminish the power and authority of the central government and may result in a conflict of rights and interest between the autonomous and the central government.

But it appears that inspite of the provisions of PD 1618 resource speaker Hon. Chairman Tugung had clearly stated that there are some cases when some situations need immediate action, the autonomous governments have encroached in the specific functions specifically withheld from them. Chairman Tugung had justified their actions on the reason of necessity.

It is anticipated and expected that by reason of the bold action taken by the officers of the autonomous government, certain functions which are now withheld from them may be later on granted to them.

#### Group IV

**Chairman: Regional Director Miguela Pineda-Roldan**

**Topic: Regional Autonomous Government and the Philippine Foreign Policy.**

Philippine foreign policy issues:

1. Friendship of the Philippines with Arabs
2. Special relation with U.S.
3. Strengthening relation with ASEAN countries

Comments on Issue No. 1

1. Utilize autonomous regions to negotiate on the final settlement of the secessionist movement in Mindanao and assured on continued supply of oil to the Philippines.
2. Expanded trade relations with other Arab countries and (will result in additional market for Philippine goods and labor force)

3. It will bridge the gap between Christians and Muslims and will erase doubts from Arab countries that Muslims are not well treated in the Philippines.

**On Issue No. 2 – Special relations with U.S.**

1. Estimate of regional governments disproves the accusation that we have violated human rights (since the Muslims were the maltreated groups).

**On Issue No. 3**

1. Autonomous regions could be utilized to improve economic as well as security, social and cultural interests. Insofar as coordinations between the regional governments, and Malaysia and Indonesia to effect a just solution to the security problem. On the economic aspect Malaysia and Indonesia have ample supplies of oil which could become secondary supplies of oil to the Philippines.