

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE GRP AND MILF PEACE PANELS
ESTOSAN GARDEN HOTEL, COTABATO CITY
27 APRIL 2000

The GRP and MILF Peace Panels held a Special Meeting today at the Estosan Hotel, Cotabato City to review and assess the status of their ongoing peace negotiations. Following is a summary of the agreements reached between Lt. Gen. Edgardo E. Batanga AFP (Ret.), Chairman, GRP Peace Panel, and Vice Chairman Glazali Jaafar, Acting Chairman, MILF Peace Panel:

1. On the Proposed Political Package for Discussion in the Negotiations
 - a. It was agreed that the GRP shall prepare a paper on the proposed political package, which shall be presented to the MILF as soon as possible, possibly within 72 hours from date of this meeting.
 - b. Upon receipt of the GRP proposal, the MILF shall have enough time for consultation, and to prepare their comments/positions to the GRP's proposed political package within reasonable time.
2. On Efforts Towards Normalization of the Situation in Mindanao, with Specific Reference to Central Mindanao
 - a. Both Panel Chairmen agreed on the need to work towards normalization of the situation in Mindanao, specifically Central Mindanao, for the sake of the people and the peace process.
 - b. It was also agreed that there is a need to pursue the ongoing peace process between the GRP and MILF in order to achieve stability and development in Mindanao.
 - c. Towards normalizing the situation along the Narciso Ramos Highway, both Chairmen agreed to task the CCCH to study the following proposal and submit its recommendations to the GRP-MILF Technical Committees for review prior to discussion/approval/disapproval at the Panel level:
 1. for the PNP to take over in ensuring security and law and order at the highway
 2. for GRP and MILF units to remain in their current positions
 3. for the joint CCCH to submit its paper on the matter on or before 15 May 2000.
 - d. Towards defusing current tensions in the vicinity of Camp Abubakar, the CCCH shall also be tasked to delineate the limits/perimeter of the camp, in line with the letter and spirit of the Agreement on the General Cessation of Hostilities. A report

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Glazali Jaafar
Edgardo E. Batanga

on this matter shall likewise be submitted to the Technical Committees on or before 15 May 2000.

- e. Towards likewise normalizing the situation and defusing tensions in Lanao del Norte, the CCH is also tasked to prepare its recommendations on the matter, for submission to the Technical Committees also on or before 15 May 2000.

It is understood that police and military actions and administrative activities shall continue to be undertaken by the GRP throughout Mindanao, with continuing coordination between the GRP and MILF forces to avoid confrontational situations on the ground.

3. On Schedules for Meetings of the GRP and MILF Peace Panels, Technical Committees and Technical Working Groups (TWGs)

- a. The Fourth Round of Formal Talks between the GRP and MILF previously scheduled for 2 May 2000 shall be re-scheduled to 16-17 May 2000 in Cotabato City.

Preparatory to the Fourth Round of Formal Talks, the GRP and MILF Technical Committees will meet on 13 May 2000 also in Cotabato City.

The GRP and MILF TWGs shall meet on 4 May 2000 in Cotabato City to clarify pointers on the substantive agenda items, and will continue to hold meetings as necessary between 5-15 May 2000.

On the Issuance of Press Releases

It was agreed that in the interest of moving the peace process forward, and to avoid the possible agitation of ground forces, both GRP and MILF should make efforts to be positive in issuing public statements and press releases.

FOR THE GRP:


ALMA R. EVANGELISTA
Chairperson, GRP Technical Committee

Noted:


FOR THE GRP:


LT. GEN. EDGARDO E. BATENGA AFP (Ret.)
Chairman, GRP Peace Panel

FOR THE MILF:


SHEIKH MONER M. BAJUNAID
Chairman, MILF Technical Committee

FOR THE MILF:


VICE CHAIRMAN GHAZALI JAAFAR
Acting Chairman, MILF Peace Panel