

INTERNAL ARMED CONFLICT IN THE PHILIPPINES AND THE QUEST FOR PEACE IN THE PERIOD OF DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

By EDMUNDO GARCIA

Armed Conflicts in the Third World

There are relatively few studies on conflict resolution in the Third World. Given the importance of internal armed conflict in countries of the Third World, this situation would suggest that a reduction of political and military tension in diverse regions of conflict would greatly contribute to the process of global peace. At the same time, this effort would help bring about the realization of a collective aspiration for peace especially in those areas where there is a clamor for popular participation and economic development. Besides, it has become increasingly clear that wars in the Third World are generally prolonged and indecisive: Wars in the Third World seldom resolve the issues for which they were begun.

It is for these reasons that a study on the resolution of internal armed conflict in a Third World country like the Philippines becomes relevant. The origins of the conflict are historical, its nature structural and its consequences complex. Yet, precisely because the Filipino people put down a dictatorship and embarked on the path towards democratization it is worth asking how they can now best build a just society which alone makes possible the attainment of lasting peace. It is equally relevant to explore how a people can resolve their differences while respecting human rights; how a nation can achieve development while respecting the rights of minorities; how a society can ensure justice for all under the rule of law guided by a vision that will empower the majority who are powerless and poor.

The fall of authoritarian rulers in the Philippines and various countries in Latin America during the mid-1980s raised expectations that long-standing internal armed conflicts could finally be resolved and lasting peace achieved. The advent of civilian rule seemed to have brought about an end to the politics of repression and the militarization of politics that had characterized a number of Third World countries during the past three decades. The political upheavals also focused attention on the profound causes of social unrest in these countries: massive poverty, social inequality

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and injustice, the violation of basic human and political rights, and the loss or diminution of national sovereignty.

Background to the Conflict

The Philippines provides an example of a country in the Third World confronted by the challenge of protracted internal armed conflict. After an authoritarian regime was replaced by a civilian government, the elusive quest for a durable peace remains. It is, therefore, the task of this paper to explore a path that can bring about a just and lasting peace. At the same time, it probes into the possibilities of a political settlement through political negotiations as a basic approach to the resolution of internal armed conflict. To do so, concrete measures are examined to help bring about the process and realize the aspirations of a people in pursuit of a just peace.

In the Philippines, the roots of the present armed conflict can be traced to the politics of exclusion and the practice of economic exploitation that date back to the colonial period. In the aftermath of independence, successive governments failed to respond to the needs of the majority who remained poor and landless while power was effectively held by the privileged few. Agrarian unrest exploded into a serious armed challenge in Central Luzon in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Government responded with counter-insurgency warfare supported by U.S. armaments and advice. The communists suffered a setback but the roots of the problem were not thoroughly addressed. Inequality, injustice, foreign domination deepened in the intervening years. Social unrest was articulated in the parliament of the streets in the early 1970s before martial law was imposed in 1972. Declared in the name of national security, martial law destroyed democracy totally and resulted in the loss of freedom and in economic deprivation for the majority.

In February 1986, the power of the people brought down the Marcos dictatorship. This provided a new opportunity to chart a course different from that of the past.

It was a political upheaval with an unfinished agenda. Truly representative democratic structures had to be built while creating a just economic order. Addressing the needs of the majority in the period of transition was crucial if democracy and development were to be pursued side by side. It also seemed the best and surest path to peace.

The first steps taken by government reflected a firm democratic direction, and opened the possibilities for ending nearly two decades of internal armed conflict.

However, during the first two years of the new government, five major coup attempts took place engineered by military factions associated with

the deposed order or the advocates of national security. Vigilantes, a majority of whom were armed, proliferated throughout the country performing counter-insurgency work in an atmosphere of political intolerance. Human rights violations continued to take place. In the meantime, urgent social reform measures like agrarian reform were neither comprehensive nor adequate enough to meet the basic demands of the majority of peasants who worked the lands without owning them. Ironically, it was after the massacre of peasants near the foot of the bridge at Mendiola when the peace talks broke down.

The Process of Democratization

The period of transition from dictatorship to democracy in the Philippines has been difficult and complex. A Constitution has been ratified, and civilian political leaders have been elected into office or taken over power; formal democratic structures have been put in place, but numerous problems still remain. Not only have internal armed conflict intensified or continued, but the attempts or the threats of military coup d'états have persisted. In part, this explains the military influence in the formulation of public policy.

Moreover, the exercise of effective and adequate political participation for the majority of the people remains difficult. Political tolerance and pluralism which characterize most working democracies have been honored more in their breach. Death squads masquerading as armed vigilantes continue to violate basic human rights, exacerbating social and ethnic conflicts. The peasants who constitute the majority in the rural areas have remained landless and poor, while the workers in the urban centers who are employed have been poorly paid. The underemployed and the jobless live side by side in mushrooming slum areas. In the meantime, cultural communities and indigenous peoples seek to protect their rights and improve their lives.

The transition to democracy is a delicate process. In fact, democracy itself is under siege from forces which seek to prevent change. Democracy cannot be consolidated unless there is economic development that is both self-reliant and equitable. And, development cannot take place unless there is peace and popular participation. Is this path a dead-end therefore? Or, are there opportunities which we can identify and possibilities we can explore to bring about a situation where democracy can be based on social justice, and development can take place in an atmosphere of a durable peace?

The 1986 Peace Initiatives

Peace initiatives were taken by the newly-installed government of President Corazon Aquino at the outset of the transition from dictatorship to democracy. Not only were political prisoners released and a highly-

respected human rights committee formed, but peace talks took place leading to an unprecedented cease-fire agreement that began on 10 December 1986.¹ After charges of truce violations and countercharges of continued abuses committed by security and para-military forces, the initial atmosphere of confidence broke down. The killing of peasants who marched towards the presidential palace to demand the urgent implementation of land reform provoked the suspension of the short-lived peace talks as representatives of the armed resistance lamented the inability of government to control the military.

In the aftermath of the breakdown to the sixty-day cease-fire in February 1987, the Philippine government declared an all-out war while the New People's Army of the Communist Party of the Philippines escalated their offenses and brought the war into the cities. There have been numerous deaths; violations of human rights have increased, democratic space has been threatened, social and economic reforms side-tracked and made more difficult. The aspiration for peace which was universally held at the onset of the period of transition has constantly been blocked and frustrated.²

Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law

Nevertheless, this does not mean that there are no possibilities for taking action that can eventually bring about peace. Measures to prevent the further deterioration of the situation and the escalation of the violence can be taken. If violent conflict cannot be avoided, as in some situations they cannot, then at the very least violent behaviour can be regulated so as to create an atmosphere more conducive perhaps to subsequent political negotiation when a more opportune moment presents itself with better chances of success.

Principles of Humanitarian Law

In the first place, international humanitarian law in periods of internal armed conflict can be recognized and enforced. The 1949 Geneva Conventions and the 1977 Protocol II which deals specifically with internal armed conflict provide norms for the conduct of armed combatants.

A summary of the fundamental rules of international humanitarian law applicable in armed conflicts was formulated by the International Committee of the Red Cross in 1979:

1. Persons *hors de combat* and those who do not take a direct part in hostilities are entitled to respect for their lives and moral and

¹ Dramatic peace overtures were also made to the Moro National Liberation Front in Mindanao and the Cordillera People's Liberation Army in the highlands of Northern Luzon.

² For an analysis of the sources of the situation of violence and the dilemmas of the peace process in the Philippines, confer Ed Garcia, "The Search for an Authentic Peace," *The Filipino Quest*. Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1988.

physical integrity. They shall in all circumstances be protected and treated humanely without any adverse distinctions.

2. It is forbidden to kill or injure an enemy who surrenders or who is *hors de combat*.

3. The wounded and sick shall be collected and cared for by the party to the conflict which has them in its power. Protection also covers medical personnel, establishments, transports and equipment. The emblem of the Red Cross or the Red Crescent is the sign of such protection and must be respected.

4. Captured combatants and civilians under the authority of an adverse party are entitled to respect for their lives, dignity, personal rights and convictions. They shall be protected against all acts of violence and reprisals. They shall have the right to correspond with their families and to receive relief.

5. Everyone shall be entitled to benefit from fundamental judicial guarantees. No one shall be held responsible for an act he has not committed. No one shall be subjected to physical or mental torture, corporal punishment or cruel or degrading treatment.

6. Parties to a conflict and members of their armed forces do not have an unlimited choice of methods and means of warfare. It is prohibited to employ weapons or methods of warfare of a nature to cause unnecessary losses or excessive suffering.

7. Parties to a conflict shall at all times distinguish between the civilian population and combatants in order to spare civilian population and property. Neither the civilian population as such nor civilian persons shall be the object of attack. Attacks shall be directed solely against military objectives.³

A member of the International Court of Justice, Mohammed Bedjooui, has pointed out that the two main underlying principles of humanitarian law revolve around the distinction between combatants and non-combatants who should be spared in situations of internal armed conflict and the obligation not to cause unnecessary harm to combatants.⁴ In countries where political polarization has resulted in bitter civil strife the victims of violence have been largely the civilian population caught in the crossfire of conflict. At the very least, the observance of humanitarian law and the rules of war will lessen the level of military and political tension thus making it less

³ International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Fundamental Rules of International Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts*, cited in *Modern Wars. The Humanitarian Challenge*, pp. 33-34.

⁴ M. Bedjaoul, "Humanitarian Law at a Time of Failing National and International Consensus," *Modern Wars. The Humanitarian Challenge*, p. 11.

difficult at some point to explore negotiated forms of resolving the conflict and addressing its sources.⁵

The Philippine government ratified Protocol II on 10 December 1986 which entered into force on 11 June 1987. In the meantime, the National Democratic Front has recognized the same Protocol II which it had mentioned in its initial proposal for a negotiated political settlement addressed to the Negotiating Panel of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines dated 23 December 1986.⁶ In a subsequent letter to the independent non-governmental organization, the Coalition for Peace, it reiterated its "adherence and willingness to abide by its (Protocol II) provisions."⁷

Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions

Although it can be argued that Protocol II cannot be deemed automatically operative since some of the requirements like the control of a significant part of the territory by the armed party opposing the government are not met by the situation from a strict literal interpretation, one can still turn to Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions of 1949. Article 3 applies to internal disturbances and tensions which have been defined as "all situations of conflict inside a nation, serious enough to give rise to significant humanitarian concerns."⁸

Common Article 3 in part demands that "belligerents shall leave non-combatants outside the area of operations and refrain from deliberately attacking them." Furthermore, it is based on internationally-recognized human rights principles such as "the protection of the integrity of the person, the right to life, freedom from torture and maltreatment . . . the right to a fair trial and the application of the rule of law . . ."⁹

The linkage of human rights and humanitarian law provides another necessary step to ensure a broad and comprehensive coverage to protect both the combatants and the entire civilian population. While humanitarian law protects parties engaged in armed conflict and individuals involved in situations of confrontation, the principles of human rights covers the whole range of basic political and civil, social and economic, cultural and collective rights of peoples.

⁵ Ed Garcia, "The Search for an Authentic Peace," *The Filipino Quest*, pp. 262-270.

⁶ National Democratic Front (NDF) Negotiating Panel Letter, Annex A, "A Record of the Peace Initiative," Negotiating Panel for Peace, GRP, 1987.

⁷ "NDF Letter to the Coalition for Peace, April 1988. An interesting example of a similar initiative is the proposal from the alliance of the Frente Democratico Revolucionario and the Frente Farabundo Marti de Liberacion Nacional to the President of the Republic of El Salvador and the high command of the Armed Forces for an immediate negotiation toward a political solution to the conflict signed on 26 May 1987. Its first provision was a "proposal for a far-reaching agreement for the humanization and the reduction of the economic, social and political impact of the war."

⁸ Asbjorn Eide, "Respect of Humanitarian Norms in International Disturbances and Tensions," *Modern War. The Humanitarian Challenge*, p. 104.

⁹ Asbjorn Eide, *Ibid.*, p. 107.

Human Rights and Peace Education

To protect human rights and enforce humanitarian law, it is necessary to embark on a campaign of human rights and peace education. Furthermore, it is essential that the task is entrusted not only to government but that it be taken up by independent non-governmental organizations, institutions and social movements. Credible national agencies that can sustain the effort, monitor the situation, enforce basic standards, and bring together a constituency committed to peace and human rights are therefore indispensable. It is commonly held that the most effective sanctions against those parties which violate human rights and humanitarian norms are public pressure and public opinion at home and abroad.

Moreover, the objective of government and those who seek to replace leaders who presently rule is to win the political allegiance and the adherence of the people. This is only possible in the long run if they pursue generally-accepted humanitarian principles and adhere to the rule of law, and thus gain the respect if not the support of their constituents.

People's Peace Councils

It is for this reason that independent people's peace councils capable of monitoring the observance of human rights and humanitarian standards while willing to work for their enforcement are essential. In the case of the Philippines, credible religious leaders, academicians, professionals, and those engaged in non-governmental organizations and popular movements have been tapped to provide the people initially necessary for the task. In Bicol, the Visayas and parts of Mindanao, Church leaders and concerned citizens have come together in the task of peace-making. People's organizations have put up the Coalition for Peace to build a broader constituency for peace nationwide.

In parts of Central America, for example, the participation of the people in the peace process has taken a regional dimension. Emerging from the desire of Central Americans for peace in their countries and in the region as a whole, popular movements have come together to forge what has been called "Esquipulas de los Pueblos" (Esquipulas of the People) to put pressure on their respective governments to follow through on their 1987 Peace Accord. Four major sectors have taken the lead in advancing the peace process: the Church, the academe, the trade unions and people's organizations.¹⁰ Among their major objectives is to put pressure on the Central American Presidents to meet once more and do so periodically as they had previously agreed. Another aim is to stress the importance of the international Verification and Monitoring Commission

¹⁰ CRIES, "Whither Central America?," *Envio*, March 1988, p. 88. Also, Cesar Jerez, SJ and Xabier Gorostiaga, SJ, "Conference on Central America," held at Uppsala Kyrkans Hus, 27 May 1988.

without which it is difficult to "verify and monitor the fulfillment of the commitments contained" in the accord.¹¹

To create the necessary climate wherein people respect the rule of law and the principle of political tolerance a program of human rights and peace education is essential. An education campaign undertaken by independent social movements through the mass media and in the schools and in public fora can contribute significantly to the effort. If a constituency for a just and lasting peace is to be built up then a sustained effort is necessary to raise the level of public awareness regarding the obstacles and possibilities of peace. In this manner, the priority of national policies that lead to the creation of a just society where peace is both principled and durable becomes understood and acceptable.

Seen in the context of various efforts both in the Philippines and in countries like Guatemala, El Salvador and Colombia, where ceasefire agreements broke down and peace talks between the respective governments and the armed movements collapsed, it is instructive to reflect on the role of a sustained demand made by the people and their organizations to ensure that a lasting peace prevails.

If governments or their armed forces and the armed insurgents are unwilling or incapable of sitting down to talk and negotiate or to call for even a temporary truce that can be regularly renewed, it could be the signal for those sectors whose collective voice can embody the aspirations of the majority to come forth and be heard. Public pressure that will advance the process of peace is indispensable to resolve stalemates and create breakthroughs.

At the same time, if violations of the truce or the peace accords are to be minimized then an effective mechanism or monitoring and verification must be established. Besides officially-established bodies or even mutually-acceptable national and international representatives, organized sectors of the population can come together to designate responsible and credible members of the community to form part of the people's council for peace that can create the conditions for confidence-building and the eventual construction of a durable peace. This kind of initiative can also assist the parties in conflict to transcend their respective identities and share a broader perspective that can provide a wider framework for resolving a common situation which confronts both sides.¹² Ultimately, in any conflict, it is the fate of the people and their common future that is at stake.

¹¹ Esquipulas II Accord: Plan to Establish a Firm and Lasting Peace in Central America, no. 10 a., 7 April 1987.

¹² James A. Schallneberg, *The Science of Conflict*, p. 258: "To recognize the relativity of conflicts leads us to recognize the larger truth that both conflict and its resolution are woven into the complex fabric of human society. Conflict is part on the on-going social process wherever humans interact — and so is the resolution of conflict."

It might be worthwhile pointing out that international people's organizations and international public opinion have also played a significant part in facilitating the peace process in some situations. The International Committee of the Red Cross, Amnesty International and International Alert among others have sharpened public awareness and mobilized the International community on the consequences of social and ethnic conflicts that have erupted into violence and have put pressure on the combatants on either side to initiate negotiations and seek more rational means of resolving long-standing disputes.¹³

Democratization and Popular Participation: Measures to Institutionalize the Resolution of Conflict in Society

Internal armed resistance generally takes place when the avenues for peaceful change are either blocked or inadequate. It is invariably pursued by political forces who believe, either because of historical, ideological or practical reasons, that their objectives will best be served by force of arms. Thus, the resort to arms is perceived as the only meaningful or effective form of struggle to bring about the transformation of society or the realization of an alternative order. Marginalized or excluded from any meaningful participation in politics, they take up arms convinced that involvement in the conventional forms of political action are either ignored, repressed or, at best, consigned to irrelevance.

In the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, structural violence in most instances is the main obstacle to peace. Violence is inflicted on the majority of the people who are voiceless and poor. When people articulate their grievances and protest against the established order, they often confront violence employed by the State. When people respond with counter-violence to defend their lives and their dignity, internal armed conflict then becomes the prevalent form of resolving profound political and economic differences in society. This leads to the spiral of violence which characterizes numerous situations in Third World countries. What often prolongs a number of these conflicts is the intervention of interested foreign powers who support particular forces in order to assure their domination in the country or to maintain their so-called "sphere of influence."

Unless the people find avenues to articulate their aspirations, mobilize to realize them, and work out their own path to social transformation, it will be difficult to achieve a just and lasting peace. Unless people can recover their voice and participate in formulating decisions which affect their lives, then whatever decisions are taken will generally be flawed. Popular participation and democratization are essential if conflicts in society are to be resolved without resort to arms. Measures that will provide space

¹³ Confer the Annual Report of Amnesty International and the Conflict Resolution Reports of International Alert which have dealt with the internal armed conflict in Uganda, Sri Lanka and Suriname.

for a broad range of political ideas and options are basic to institutionalize the resolution of conflict in society under the rule of law and following the logic of the majority.

Democratic Pluralism and Popular Participation

Authentic democratization and the pursuit of peace, therefore, must ensure that mechanisms for popular participation and respect for diversity in ideas must become part of the political process.

In the first place, genuine democratic space must be created that would respect political differences and diversity in ideas. There can be no democracy where there is no political tolerance and no pluralism in politics. The model of a limited or restricted democracy is self-defeating. It only encourages the evolution of political dissent into armed challenge, and the deterioration of democratic values.

At the same time, authentic pluralism not only means respect for the diversity of ideas and ideologies, but also the political participation of all sectors and classes within society. It means that people must have the opportunity not only to effectively participate in formal democratic exercise but also in the construction of representative institutions in their places of work and in their communities. This means an understanding of democratic participation where power is exercised by the citizens at all levels, including within trade unions and political parties.

A unique feature of the 1987 Philippine Constitution is the recognition of the rights and role of people's organizations in the construction of a just society. Members of people's organizations were frequently labelled "subversives" during the period of the dictatorship where dissent and protest were considered suspect, a phenomenon equally experienced in various Latin American countries under military rule.

Under an authentic democracy, people's organizations must now not only be protected but also heard. In the Article on Social Justice in the 1987 Constitution, the State is mandated to create mechanisms of consultation so that people's organizations can contribute to the formulation of policy. In this manner, effective vehicles of popular participation can emerge in society.

Decentralization and the creation of autonomous regions for the country's main cultural communities, namely, the Muslim Filipinos in Mindanao and the tribal Filipinos in the Cordillera pose another serious challenge to the process of democratization and the possibilities of peace.

Democratization of Media and Electoral Participation

Another area where the aspirations of the people can be expressed is the mass media. People can speak through the radio, television and the

newspapers. However, those who generally control the mass media are the same social forces in society who wield both the economic and political power. Media reform is necessary to dismantle media monopoly. Democratization requires that the popular sectors and political parties of diverse persuasions have equal access to the mass media.

In the area of formal democratic structures, it is clear from previous electoral exercises that the return to parliamentary or legislative democracy does not automatically mean the creation of a democratic society. This process requires that in the end people effectively participate and decide. But, as the Philippine case demonstrates, if genuine representatives of the people will be elected then an overhaul of the electoral system is necessary. An effort must be made to ensure representativity in geographical and sectoral terms. Moreover, enforceable regulations are needed to make the electoral exercise a truly democratic experience and access to public office both fair and open. Otherwise, the old politics of patronage and personalities are merely reinforced.

In the long run, a strong participatory democracy is the most effective guarantee for a durable peace. It will enable people with different voices and with diverse views to discuss and debate, to resolve their conflicts through democratic deliberation and consensus, without resort to arms.

*Towards the Creation of a Just and Humane Society:
Foundations for a Lasting Peace*

In most countries of the Third World, democratization can neither be conceived nor achieved in the long term without some form of demilitarization. Historically, the armed forces have participated in the repression of insurgent forces or the voices of dissent. This has led to the spiral of violence and counter-violence. The importance of the armed forces is justified in the name of national security, and they grow in terms of influence, size, and share in the national budget. When democratic governments inherit a traditionally-powerful military apparatus after the demise of authoritarian rule the tendency is for the military to retain their power although they may leave the political center stage. It is rare for the guardians of the old order to preside in the transition towards the new. A major stumbling-block in the return to democracy is the intransigence of the military which can exercise undue influence over the civilian government. In effect, the military shares power, influences policy and undermines the democratic principle of civilian supremacy over the military.

Demilitarization and Democracy

The recent coup attempts in the Philippines and in Latin America and Africa manifest this tension experienced during the period of transition. Not only is there a resistance by the military to face charges of human

rights violations committed during the previous dictatorial regimes, but human rights violations in fact continue in different forms generally associated with the counter-insurgency campaign conducted by the military. Organized or tolerated by the military, the para-military forces or armed vigilantes operating in the fashion of death squads engage in a permanent warfare that resembles a "proxy war" involving sections of the civilian population. In turn, the guerrillas escalate their operations intensifying the level of violence which affect combatants and civilians alike. Thus, the prospects for peace further diminish and recede.

If democracy is to be consolidated then a clear military policy must be conceived and enunciated to ensure civilian supremacy over the military.¹⁴ If peace is to be pursued then the priority must be placed on social and economic measures to respond to the basic sources of discontent felt by the disaffected sectors of society. The threat of a coup or the virtual veto exercised by the military on national policy cannot derail the directions of a government that aspires to be democratic and hopes to build "a just and humane society."¹⁵

The Process of Democratization and Civilian-based Defense

Furthermore, it is worth exploring alternative defense options which, at the same time, can contribute to the process of democratization. In the first place, democratic governments can consider the concept of a citizens' militia composed of a small standing army primarily tasked with the external defense of the country and a trained contingent of citizens who can be mobilized within a few days in periods of emergency to defend their country.

Secondly, democratic governments especially in developing countries facing economic dilemmas can look into the feasibility of putting the primacy on civilian defense in their over-all national defense strategy. Essentially, this will require a rethinking of traditional military policy. Based on a broad perspective, the security of a country is pursued by a variety of means other than just the military. Importance is given to diplomacy and foreign policy, a self-reliant strategy of economic development

¹⁴ Ed Garcia, "The Transformation of Society," *The Filipino Quest*, p. 114. A number of measures for a coherent and comprehensive military policy are suggested, among which are the following: "reorganize the armed forces which is mandated primarily for defense against external aggression; prosecute all those charged with full responsibility in the systematic violation of human rights and with complicity in political and economic crimes; revise the education and training program of the military; the police must be put under civilian control...; create a combat-capable and combat-ready citizens' militia based on responsible and qualified members who could be called upon for active duty on short notice to supplement a small but highly-effective standing army; limit and eventually terminate contracts dealing with military assistance, aid or advice which tend to put the armed forces under foreign influence or subject to foreign control thus compromising the nation's sovereignty, non-alignment and independence."

¹⁵ Preamble, 1987 Philippine Constitution.

and non-provocative defense policies that will "reduce the likelihood of military attack or other forms of external pressure."¹⁶

Not only is civilian-based defense historically-recognized as an effective form of struggle by a people using civilian means of struggle, but it also underscores the democratic and participatory character of popular civilian resistance.¹⁷ Its essential strength lies in the unity and the mobilization of the people and the contradictions that it provokes on the side of the invader. It tries to exact a high political price and aims at the political attrition of the attacking force. At the same time, among the other objectives achieved by the use of civilian defense is increased self-reliance in national defense and foreign policy, the conversion of defense-related funds to productive economic uses, and the reduction of possible losses in life and property in case of aggression.¹⁸ Furthermore, it invariably results in a more secure future for the people in a country which places its trust not on the military means of defense which for developing nations are always limited and inadequate but on the real source of power: its own people.

Structural Transformation: Development Based on Justice Leads to a Durable Peace

Any long-term effort that will work towards a just and lasting resolution of internal armed conflicts must address the major issue of structural transformation to redress the situation of social and economic injustice.¹⁹

Among the urgent measures that can be taken are the following: the implementation of an authentic and comprehensive agrarian reform, the creation of employment and the protection of the workers' living standards, the protection of the rights of workers to participate in decisions which affect their lives, the overhaul of fiscal policy to favor the majority in society, and the delivery of basic social services to the majority: housing, education, medical care, and social security.

At the same time, the pursuit of a strategy of self-reliant economic development is essential so as to address among others the problem of the

¹⁶ Anders Boserup and Andrew Mack, *War Without Weapons, Non-Violence in National Defense*, p. 139. Furthermore, in a study entitled, "Military Disengagement from Politics?: Incentives and Obstacles in Political Change," Claude Welch concluded that economic improvement appeared vital in the process of military disengagement from politics. This is a reiteration of the assertion that popular support for a civilian government committed to social justice and economic development is, in the last analysis, the most effective guarantee against military intervention and the best antidote to the deception of military adventures. A government assured of its people's support retains the best shield to protect democratic rule from pretenders or usurpers who would succumb to the seduction of martial rule.

¹⁷ Anders Boserup and Andrew Mack, *Ibid.*, p. 163.

¹⁸ Gene Sharp, *Making Europe Unconquerable. The Potential of Civilian-based Deterrence and Defense*, p. 63.

¹⁹ Ed Garcia, "Structural Violence as Obstacle to Peace," *The Filipino Quest*, pp. 179-189.

foreign debt, the question of national industrialization, the diversification of the economy and economic relations, and the primacy of the basic needs of the people and the domestic market.

Ultimately, a just and lasting peace is possible only if there is development that is both national and popular, namely, that it reaches all sectors of society. At the same time, development is best achieved in an atmosphere of peace. The task is difficult and complex, often daunting. In the Philippines, a turning point has been reached. But for those who have put their hands to the plow, there is no turning back.