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The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) has consistently supported the Moro people's right to self-determination. This ranges from the right to regional autonomy in a non-oppressive state to the right to secede from the oppressive state that exists in the Philippines. Even an individual who finds himself or herself oppressed by a state has the right to separate from it.

In a manner of speaking, the Filipino people and revolutionary forces within the framework of the NDFP and the growing revolutionary organs of political power have seceded or separated themselves from the oppressive semi-colonial and semi-feudal state system that is ruled by the comprador big bourgeoisie and landlord class and are striving to build the new people's democratic state system that is based on the alliance of the toiling masses of workers and peasants and the middle social strata.

Prof. Jose Maria Sison is the Chief Political Consultant of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines. When I read the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that was supposed to be signed by representatives of the MILF and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) in Malaysia on August 5, 2008, I thought immediately that the contents which appeared to recognize and concretize the Bangsamoro's right to self-determination and ancestral domain were too good and too generous to be true. The MOA was so contrary to the greedy and brutal character of the GRP, whose presumptions and actuations I have long known in the course of revolutionary struggle and the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations.

It was almost predictable that the signing of the MOA would be aborted. The public release of the draft only a few days before the date of signing was clearly meant to stir up a controversy big enough to cause the abortion. Had the Arroyo regime really meant to push through the MOA, it should have worked it out with the MILF and other interested parties at the latest within the first half of the year or even late last year. But the MOA was never meant to be, either to be signed or to be realized, as GRP officials would reveal.

Top subalterns of the fake-and-mendacious President such as Ermita, Esperon and Dureza declared that the MOA was just a piece of paper, subject to existing GRP laws, further legislation and constitutional amendment. Fr. Joaquin Bernas, S.J., whom they had consulted all along, also confirmed that the MOA was nothing more than a piece of paper, despite the regime's rather expensive much ado about it.

The United States has been out to side up to and ingratiate itself with the MILF and the Bangsamoro in order to further strengthen its position in exploiting the human-and-natural resources of the Bangsamoro and deploying American military forces in Mindanao. The patriotic and progressive forces and the people are reasonably concerned that the MOA had been devised by the untrustworthy and sneaky Arroyo as a way for pushing a charter change to allow her to stay in power beyond 2010, without really having to give substantial concessions to the MILF. But they must look further into the obnoxious joint objectives of the US government (together with the Japanese and Australian governments) and the Arroyo regime in seeming to be for the MOA and making the MILF believe that the GRP was serious about signing this.

Under the direction of the US State Department, the US Institute of Peace has been busy in carrying out the Philippine Facilitation Project since 2003 in order to help produce something like the MOA. It is obvious that the US has been out to side up to and ingratiate itself with the MILF and the Bangsamoro in order to further strengthen its position in exploiting the human-and-natural resources of the Bangsamoro and deploying US military forces in Mindanao.

At this point, the question is: With the signing aborted, is the MOA still useful to the major parties directly involved in drafting or facilitating it? The MILF can continue to use the MOA as a standard or minimum basis for negotiating with the GRP. The GRP or the Arroyo regime can also use the same thing for putting off serious formal negotiations with the MILF and for hyping the need for charter change. Unilaterally or in cahoots with the GRP, the US can use the high expectations raised by the MOA among the MILF and Bangsamoros to justify the US military presence and advance US hegemony in Mindanao.

Certainly, such expectations can never be realized through the kindness of the US and the GRP and without the persevering struggle of the Moro people. The GRP and its imperialist masters are merely using the MOA as a device of pretended generosity to MILF in order to seize the propaganda initiative, to prolong GRP-MILF informal talks and ceasefire and to deploy larger US and Philippine military forces against the MILF and the Bangsamoro.

The pretense at generosity is full of malice. It is calculated to outwit and outflank the MILF and the Bangsamoro and to facilitate frontal military attacks against them. They are being left no choice but to wage revolutionary struggle in order to advance their cause of national self-determination. There is a heightened need for the unity, cooperation of the MILF and the NDFP in their distinct and common concerns and causes against the same adversaries. # # #