

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Q. Pimentel, Jr. (PDP-Laban) today allayed apprehensions that the adoption of a federal system of government may cause the breakup or "balkanization" of the Republic of the Philippines.

Senator Pimentel said federalization of the country would instead enhance national cohesion and unity because the proposed 11 component states will enjoy full autonomy in administering their affairs and pursuing their economic development through the wise use of resources available in their respective territories and provided by the central government.

"The possible balkanization of the Philippines is the usual argument that is raised against the federalism proposal. But as far as we know, there is no country which has federalized voluntarily that has broken up. On the contrary, they have made a quantum leap in terms of economic development," he said.

In the case of Yugoslavia, Mr. Pimentel said this former communist Eastern European country disintegrated after the death Marshal Josip Tito, because there was "no glue to hold it together."

He said the states or regions that comprised Yugoslavia were forced to join the federal republic through the iron rule of Dictator Tito.

Mr. Pimentel said the over centralization of government powers under a unitary system such as the Philippines in fact makes the country vulnerable to fragmentation.

If there is equitable sharing of funds and other resources among the various states, we can speed up the development of the entire country. He said this is graphically illustrated by the decades-old Muslim secessionist conflict in the South which was caused by the government's neglect of the poor Muslim provinces.

Senator Pimentel said that the establishment of a federal system, as embodied under Joint Resolution 10 which he has introduced, will not only overhaul the political structure of government but will also bring about a dramatic change in the system of apportioning the wealth of the nation between the central government and the local government units.

Written by Senator Pimentel's Press Office

Saturday, 03 May 2008 02:02 - Last Updated Saturday, 03 May 2008 02:17

---

“Since the central government will be left with less power, it will need fewer funds. And therefore, its share of the national wealth or resource shall be reduced correspondingly. As proposed in Resolution 10, the sharing of revenues will be 80 percent for the federal states and 20 percent for the Central (federal) government.

Mr. Pimentel explained that the definition of revenues will be broadened to include all taxes and fees being collected by the government, such as the road-users' tax, taxes on petroleum products and port fees.

He said the resolution calls for the creation of a multibillion peso equalization fund that will be used to assist less financially capable federal states and enable them to catch up with economically advanced states.

“We believe that if there is equitable sharing of funds and other resources among the various states, we can speed up the development of the entire country. And with the fruits of economic progress being enjoyed by the people, insurgency will be reduced to irrelevance,” the senator from Mindanao said.

Senator Pimentel said that while 16 senators are now supporting the resolution, even with reservation, to convene Congress into a Constituent Assembly to amend the Constitution to establish a federal system, more senators have informed him of their willingness to sign Resolution 10.

He said he welcomes the manifestation of support to the federalism proposal by prominent leaders of the House of Representatives such as Speaker Prospero Nograles of Davao City, former Speaker Jose de Venecia, Jr. of Pangasinan, Reps. Antonio Cuenco and Raul del Mar of Cebu City and Monico Puentebella of Negros Occidental.

Mr. Pimentel said Speaker Nograles has informed him of his plan for the committee on constitutional amendments and revision of laws of both chambers of Congress to informally convene and discuss the federalism proposal. # # #

[Joomla SEO powered by JoomSEF](#)