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Mediating Severe Multicultural and Religious Conflicts in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand

Bruce E. Barnes

3936 Lanipili Place, Honolulu, Hawai'i
USA 96816-3912
Email: <bbarnes@hawaii.edu>

ABSTRACT

This paper and presentation discusses mediation as a conflict resolution option for severe conflicts in 3 Southeast Asian countries: Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand. Transformation of pre-existing mediation processes will be central to this discussion, with discussants and respondents from the subject countries. Each of the conflicts discussed have involved hundreds of deaths over a period of decades—thus the “severe” rating. The focus in each country will be on the contemporary status of these conflicts: between diverse Muslim and Christian groups in Maluku, independence and political struggles in Aceh, Indonesia, conflicts between Muslims (Bangsamoros) and *lumad* (indigenous Mindanao groups) pitted against predominantly Catholic populations and the national government in Mindanao (the Southern Philippines) and conflicts between Muslim groups and the Buddhist majority represented by the national military in southern Thailand. Since each of the three countries has a different religious group in the majority of its population, and thereby in control of its government, analysis and comparisons of the possibilities, successes and obstacles to successful mediation in each of these long-term conflict areas should be of interest to the conflict resolution and peacemaking communities and indeed vital to the long-term interest of peace in the Southeast Asian region.

Our discussion begins with Indonesia. First we address long-term and violent conflicts in Maluku (in English this area is called the Moluccas) and some promising peacemaking and mediation developments there. Next, we look at recent and relatively successful applications of international mediation in Aceh, Indonesia. In the Indonesia portion of this presentation, we will discuss in more detail the following concepts: “Wayame and Team 20” interfaith community dispute resolution and prevention, “*pela*” interfaith cultural process for integrating communities in Maluku and “*Baku Bae*” facilitated peacebuilding workshops in conflict areas of Maluku.

Following that, we discuss the Bangsamoro and Lumad conflicts in the Southern Philippines, and the implications of experience there on possible future mediation processes. Concepts introduced

in this section include “BUF” – Bishops Ula Forum (a conflict prevention and resolving group of Catholic and Muslim leaders and the “Paglas Experience” addressing an agricultural project involving Catholic and Moro populations of Southern Mindandao designed to build a stronger economic base for all the cultures of Southern Mindanao, thereby promoting peace. The third country discussion addresses the current situation in Southern Thailand, with conflicts in the Thailand provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat involving the Muslim population there, and the predominantly Buddhist Thai government. The conflicts date back to the 16th century, when the provinces were a part of the Malay Sultanate. The recent violence in Pattani has led to renewed efforts to build conflict resolution institutions in Southern Thailand, particularly in universities, civil society groups and NGOs, and government military organizations. Barnes will offer final comments on the need for culturally appropriate conflict resolution methods in this region, and suggestions for ways the Asia Pacific region areas can learn from each other’s experiences and collaborate to transform our mediation practice to be more effective throughout the Asia Pacific region. The presentation will conclude with short responses from discussants from the countries affected by these conflicts, with Barnes moderating a discussion of the issues raised in this session with all conference attendees invited to offer their comments and questions to the panel.

INTRODUCTION

This paper will discuss mediation as a conflict resolution option in 3 Southeast Asian countries: Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand. The focus in each country will be on contemporary conflicts: between diverse Muslim and Christian groups in the Moluccas and struggles in Aceh, Indonesia; between Muslim and *lumad* (indigenous Mindanao groups) and predominantly Catholic populations in the Southern Philippines who dominate the government, and conflicts between Muslim and Buddhist groups in southern Thailand. Since each country has a different religious group in the majority of its population, and thereby in control of its government, it is felt that comparisons of the possibilities, successes and obstacles to successful mediation in each of these long-term conflict areas should be of interest and indeed vital to the long-term interest of peace in the Southeast Asian region.

INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF INDONESIAN EXPERIENCE

We begin this discussion with Indonesia. First we address long- term and violent conflicts in Maluku (in English this area is called the Moluccas) and some promising peacemaking developments there. Next, we look at recent and relatively successful applications of international mediation in Aceh. The Aceh experience may further highlight some principles and patterns that can lead to successes in applying mediation more widely in other countries and other areas in the region.

For peacemakers, mediators and organizations such as Asia Pacific Mediation Forum, several interesting developments are seen in the recent historic evolution of conflict management in Indonesia. With emergence of the Baku Bae and other Maluku NGO-based processes we note

the emergence of trained and dedicated cadres of facilitators in the local NGO's and other grassroots-level groups. Multicultural facilitation teams from these multicultural areas are vital to Pacific model facilitation and mediation, as described by this author (Barnes 1994:117). Since Indonesia has the largest Islamic population in the world, the involvement of religious leaders, both Muslim and Christian, was essential in all the grassroots processes we have discussed in this chapter. Using EU mediators and convening meetings outside Indonesia, grassroots activist groups like GAM could meet and negotiate with a government on a relatively level playing field. The Aceh case demonstrates that where a government at times in the past had used punitive and somewhat authoritarian methods in trying to quell dissent, the EU mediation and monitoring process seems like a promising model with aspects that may be useful or adapted for other conflict areas in the region.

INDONESIA: MALUKU: RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS: WAYAME VILLAGE IN AMBON

Disputes have taken place between Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Protestants and Catholics in many eras of Indonesian history. Under Suharto, religious tensions were tightly controlled by both national policy and military and police action. Since the collapse of his government, Indonesia has been plagued by a number of highly contentious, violent and costly religious and ethnic conflicts. Christopher Moore has written about the "Team 20" approach to deterring or preventing conflict on the island of Ambon, one of the major "hot spots" for religious/ethnic conflict in Indonesia in the last decade of the 19th century (Moore 2001).

Ambon is located within the province of Maluku in Eastern Indonesia, where Catholics and Protestants came into the population through colonization by the Portuguese and Dutch in the 16th and 17th centuries. With subsequent conversion efforts by the Europeans, a number of Ambonese became either Catholic or Protestant. From 1950 to the end of the 1990s, the Christian and Moslem Ambonese lived together in a relatively peaceful setting, where minor religious conflicts usually were managed such that they didn't escalate. At the end of the 1990's, the whole region of Ambon underwent destabilization of the relationships between the religions. In December 1998 a minor altercation between a Muslim and a Christian in Ambon City released pent-up tension between the religious groups. Major riots ensued in 1998 and 1999.

Moore writes:

By the end of 2000 an estimated two to four thousand people had lost their lives in Ambon and Maluku. The central section of Kota Ambon (Ambon City) was destroyed, and the city was partitioned into multiple unconnected religiously based enclaves. Hundreds of homes, businesses, mosques and churches were destroyed, and all but one village on the island had been religiously cleansed. Several hundred thousand people became internally displaced persons (IDP's) in Ambon and on other islands of the Maluku group. Wayame is a small village located on the north coast of the Bay of Ambon. It includes both Muslim and Christian residents. It is currently the only community on the island that is religiously integrated. Today Wayame continues to serve as a regional commercial hub for surrounding villages. Muslim farmers and fishermen come to town to sell produce and fish to both Christian and Muslim residents. . . . Riots that occurred in other towns and villages on Ambon did not take place in Wayame. However, it was clear to local leaders and village residents that the social conflict and

dislocation occurring elsewhere could spread to the village. In response to the possibility of increased inter-faith tension in Wayame, a number of residents developed initiatives to address both the immediate emergency, and long-term social needs and concerns of Muslims, Christians and IDPs. They also took concrete measures to manage conflicts that might erupt in the village. The most significant initiative was an interreligious association of Muslim and Christian men whose goal was to manage interfaith conflicts. Over a period of approximately a year and half, team 20 created a village level conflict management system that helped anticipate, prevent, regulate, manage and resolve a number of potential or actual violent disputes (Moore 2001).

Team 20 went to the *raja* (king) of Wayame and requested permission to have decision-making powers and enforcement authority over inter-religious conflicts.

Moore continues:

The organization was given authority to: a) making binding rules for the village that would prevent and manage interreligious conflict and promote peace between members of the two faiths b) investigate inflammatory religiously-motivated statements or activities. c) make decisions regarding consequences or punishments for violating rules; and d) mete out punishments as appropriate (Moore 2001).

What followed were the setting up of a number of protocols designed to anticipate and prevent the types of conflicts that had occurred elsewhere in Ambon. The protocols listed norms and rules and punishments for violations of the norms. Team 20 was led by a Christian pastor and a Muslim *imam*, who provided overall leadership to the whole effort. Each side, Christian and Moslem had a separate decision-making body to handle conflicts and issues within their own group. Then, representatives from both groups met under the over-arching authority of Team 20 (Moore 2001).

Generally the groups use a *consensus method* of dispute resolution, which would be expected given the cultural norms in Indonesia discussed earlier. Initially the reports from the successes of Team 20 were encouraging. The group carried out multiple functions in defusing potentially violent conflicts, acting as a community-based peacekeeping force. They organize teams of youth to participate in “community walks.” The teams patrol neighborhoods from dusk till midnight and deal with conflicts which might arise. Team 20 members have served as facilitators for problem areas of concern to the whole community, although they have to limit their role to providing a forum for some of the long-term developmental issues.

PELA AND BAKU BAE IN MALUKU

Maluku, as indicated earlier, is a very multicultural area of Indonesia. Contemporary Maluku culture is a conglomeration of Malay, Melanesian and Polynesian cultures, as well as local cultures from Ternate and the Tidore monarchy (Setiadi and Soemadio 2003) cited in Barnes 2007:115. One result of this blending is a hybrid culture centered in the middle of the Moluccas, around Ambon Island. This blended culture was known as *Seram* culture. Three regions with separate cultures have evolved in Maluku: a feudal culture based on the traditional monarchy, an egalitarian culture organized into local boards, and a social hierarchy-system culture (Ansori

2006: 3). These three regions and cultures were the incubating area for the concept of “*Pela*” over a period of several centuries. Since the region mixed Christian and Muslim villages and populations for hundreds of years, a method of resolving disputes emerged that is unique to this area evolved. The disputants (conflicting parties) would attend a reconciliation ceremony, where apologies are given to each other in front of village elders and religious leaders. Thanks to this indigenous process and its evolution in this multicultural area with diverse religions, Maluku developed a reputation as a “model” region within Indonesia. Many of the scholars and researchers familiar with this region agree that “*Pela*” is the key to the peaceful development of this region (Ansori 2006; PreventConflict.org 2006). “For generations, Ambonese of both faiths practiced ‘*Pela Gandong*’— peaceful coexistence —where mosques and churches were built together “ (McCawley 2000 cited in Ansori 2006). Bartels points out that *Pela* originated as an alliance system, prior to the arrival of Portuguese and Dutch colonialists. The original function of *Pela* was a strategic way to face the invasion of Dutch colonialism, such as in the so-called Patatimura war at the beginning of the 19th century. Currently, *Pela* can be defined as “an alliance system, the major indigenous system to establish ties beyond the village level. Often the villages are on different islands and adhering to different religions. *Pela* is understood as an enduring and unavoidable tie of brotherhood or alliance between all people of the partner villages” (Bartels 1977).

Since *Pela* involves obligations between all villages in the alliances, the villagers are obliged to assist each other in times of crisis, assist other villages in building churches, mosques and schools (*Pela Gandong*) and to offer visitors food and crops if they are from other villages in the *Pela* alliance. In addition, all members of villages in a *Pela* alliance are considered to be of one blood; thus, marriage between members of the alliance is considered to be incestuous (Bartels 1977). The method of renewing the *Pela* relationships is to hold a celebration in one of the *Pela* villages for up to a week, with feasting, singing and dancing. This process is said to “heat up” the *Pela* (*bikin panas Pela*).

Mansori (2006) points out that the current younger generation may not actively support the concept of *Pela*, nor do the young necessarily keep up the practices of “heating up” the *Pela*. Perhaps due to ignorance of its importance in keeping a peaceful society, Mansori argues, or perhaps due to the present-day lack of colonial intruders, the young people need to be brought back into the practice of *Pela* as a local model of conflict resolution, similar in some ways to the Team 20 efforts in Wayame (also a part of Ambon). (“Revive *Pela*”) Panggabean 2004 at p. 433)

BAKU BAE

Another effort to organize a broad facilitated peacebuilding effort coming from the grassroots in Maluku, first developed in the 1999-2003 era was called *Baku Bae* (Malik 2003). “*Baku Bae*” means to reconcile enemies, and in the context of the Maluku conflicts it is understood to mean putting a stop to violence. It was noted that Team 20, the Obor Pattimura “Fire of Peace” process, and several other peace workshops did not produce a sustainable peace in Maluku (Malik 2003) so the conflicts and violence were continuing in the 2003 era. The traditionalists from the Leihitu and Baguala Passo areas, with Ichsan Malik as a main facilitator of the

workshops, launched the *Baku Bae* workshop series. They commenced outreach to all the sectors of Maluku society. There were 3 strategic goals of the *Baku Bae* movement: the first goal was to stop the violence. The second strategy was to empower the small agencies like health clinics, join together all the information sources and mass media, and create collaboration between the different religious communities. The third strategy of *Baku Bae* was to rebuild the rule of law and law enforcement in Maluku. An integral part of this was to investigate what caused the Maluku conflict, bring the perpetrators to court and justice, to create a legal regime to give compensation to the victims and victims of the conflict's families, and increase public education for the Maluku people to prevent these conflicts from ever happening again (Malik 2003).

ACEH AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIATION

Aceh is described as a province (governed as a “special territory” internally) of Indonesia, with a history of conflict in its history dating back to the Dutch colonization of Indonesia in the 1600's. It is located on the northern tip of the Island of Sumatra. Aceh lost its independence when the Dutch invaded with the largest colonial army they had ever put into the field in 1873. Guerilla activity continued at least until 1914, and the Dutch abandoned their occupation of Aceh in 1942. Based on this tenacious and lengthy resistance to Dutch rule, the Acehnese developed a “very proud resistance to authority” which was later exhibited in a rebellion against Jakarta's domination and the Acehnese desire for independence from 1953 to the present. After the transfer of authority from the Dutch government to an independent state of Indonesia, Jakarta merged Aceh into the neighboring province of North Sumatra. This merging ignored Aceh's special status in the colonial regime as a province which was never fully incorporated into the colony. Due to ethnic differences between the Acehnese and the dominant Batak people in North Sumatra, and also due to Acehnese resentment for Jakarta's failure to accord Aceh a special autonomous status, in 1953 Aceh initiated a rebellion against Jakarta. Even though later that year the Indonesian government granted Aceh the status of “special territory,” the rebellion continued through 1962. The independence movement accelerated in 1976 with the formation of a resistance group, the Free Aceh Movement (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka—“GAM”). Since the 1970's Aceh has been economically important to the central government because of oil resources and extensive natural gas fields discovered by Exxon Mobil in Aceh.

The GAM's political influence in Aceh was quite large in relation to its military power. It is estimated there were between 15,000 and 27,000 people in the movement, but they only had a couple of thousand modern firearms (Cano 2000).

In 2000 a plebiscite was held in Banda Aceh (the provincial capital) which was attended by nearly half a million people. Aceh was allowed to implement and apply shari'ah law more broadly, and receive direct foreign investment in the ensuing period after the plebiscite. In May 2003 after a ceasefire with GAM collapsed, the Indonesian government set out to crush the rebels. Over 40,000 soldiers and armed police were deployed to Aceh to fight the 5,000- strong Acehnese. Aceh was still under martial law, and the war was going on when the Tsunami Disaster of 2004 struck Aceh on December 26, 2004.

The disaster profoundly affected Aceh and the surrounding area. Estimates vary, with an estimated 230,000 people killed by a combination of an earthquake in the seabed offshore off Aceh coast, and the resultant *tsunami*. About 500,000 were left homeless. One year after the disaster, in February 2006 large numbers of people were still living in temporary living centers or tents.

Observers noted that a clamor for peace arose out of the devastating impact of the tsunami. In August of 2005 a peace “deal” was signed between the GAM leaders and the Indonesian government in Helsinki, Finland. The chief international mediator for the peace process was Maarti Ahtisaari, a former president of Finland. As part of the peace agreement, a 240-strong EU peace monitoring mission was established, with the title of Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM). The AMM oversaw the decommissioning of weapons of the GAM, and the disbanding of its armed wing. In the agreement, GAM gave up its demand for an independent homeland. In return, the Indonesian government agreed to remove non-essential military regiments and police forces, and grant amnesty to GAM fighters and prisoners with alleged links to GAM. Importantly, in another provision of the peace agreement Jakarta granted Aceh greater autonomy and allowed the establishment of local political parties, a first for Indonesia. Indonesian politics has traditionally been closely tied to national Jakarta-based parties, which are seen as failing to reflect the aspirations of regions with strong local identities such as Papua, North Sulawesi and Bali.

In December of 2006, Aceh held an historic and peaceful election for its top provincial and district governmental posts. Irwandi Yusuf, a former leader of GAM was elected as governor of Aceh along with his running mate, Muhammad Nazar, capturing nearly 39% of the vote with the nearest rival getting only 17% of the vote. At that time, the AMM monitoring group was deactivated, signaling a confidence by the EU that the peace was achieved, and that there was a sufficient level of security for the monitors to close the AMM mission (Barnes 2007: 118).

MEDIATION ANALYSIS: ACEH CONFLICT

From an outside view, three points can be made about the mediation effort in Aceh: the first point is that if we consider this to be an international mediation as analyzed by Bercovitch then the placement of Ahtisaari from Finland as mediator is a favorable choice (Bercovitch 1996: 27). Bercovitch points out that leaders or representatives of small governments, like Finland had a relatively high success rate in mediation—54.8 per cent success—in his study of 137 international mediations in the period of 1945-1990. Leaders and representatives of large states fared worse than expected (about 35% success on average) and representatives of international organizations were only about 24% successful. The highest success level (56%) was attained by leaders and representatives of regional organizations. Given the highly diverse nature of SE Asian cultures, languages and societies, it might be more important to have mediators well-known to the parties and stakeholders in this region and fluent in the local languages, than are indicated in Berkovitch’s percentage of success rankings.

The second point is that the mediator may operate better as part of an orchestrated team, since Indonesia is a very collectivist society, predisposed to consensus. In the Indonesian national

language—Bahasa Indonesia—the word *musyawarah* is the term for deliberative decision-making and *mufakat* is the word for consensus. Thus, having the backing of the 240-strong EU peace monitoring mission (Aceh Monitoring Mission) served many purposes to assure that the parties held to their agreements and negotiated/mediated in good faith, with high visibility of the process in the communities affected in a peaceful, more traditional peacekeeping fashion. The whole operation had a collectivist, consensus-based and low-key tone, appropriate for the conflict.

A third point can be made about the nature of mediation: in the ACEH case, nobody could have predicted that this tsunami—or any tsunami for that matter—would have arrived with such ferocity in 2004. However, one of the great qualities of mediation is that it is very flexible process, able to react relatively quickly to any sudden changes in circumstances, or changes in the relationship between the parties. We might guess that as the discussions proceeded, and as the mediator became aware of all the implications of the drastically changed situation, opportunities could have been presented that almost required higher levels of cooperation among all levels of society in the region. Working closely with international relief agencies and dealing with the catastrophe could have reinforced the basic interdependence between all the Indonesians, reminding one and all that cooperation, collaboration and negotiation are often necessary to survive such natural disasters, and that sometimes crises can have an unforeseen silver lining. The tsunami may well have been the “tipping point” in this particular conflict, but the mediation team was well-placed to utilize its impact to facilitate a positive redirection in the conflict.

MEDIATION & CONCILIATION: HISTORIC BACKGROUND IN THE PHILIPPINES

As we move from Indonesia to the Philippines, there is a need to quickly review the development of systematically developed national mediation systems in E and SE Asia. In conducting research for my recent book (Barnes 2007) I pointed out that China and the Philippines are two examples of nationwide village or province-level mediation programs among the 8 E. Asian and SE Asian countries that were the subject of my book (China, Japan, Korea, Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand). It should be noted here that the two Muslim countries in my study, Malaysia and Indonesia do not seem to have organized nationwide mediation systems, reaching to the village levels, at least as far as this author’s research has gone.

The Philippines was a leader in organizing the Asian countries to study in a comparative way all the mediation systems existing in various Asian countries. They attempted to use this information as well as they tried to reconstruct their traditional village mediation systems to alleviate the crowded courts and litigious situations prevalent in urban areas of the Philippines, with a statutory system introduced in 1978 (Pe and Tadiar 1988). This movement to restore traditional village mediation practices was called *Katarungang Pambarangay* (hereafter KP). This demonstrates clearly the Philippines’ desire to move from modern Western legal systems back to traditional consensual mediation processes (Pe and Tadiar 1982, 1985, 1988). With the support of Ford Foundation and others, conferences were convened and several books were the result of the extensive efforts to collect comparative information on mediation in the Asia-Pacific, and to resurrect the *Katarungang Pambarangay* programs nationwide.

Tadiar traces the origins of the conciliation resurgence movement to the late Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Philippines, Fred Ruiz Castro. Castro read accounts of the pre-colonial days in the Philippines, where conciliation was the preferred and traditional mode of processing disputes, and that formal suit was only possible after the failure of conciliation (Tadiar 1988). An awareness of the huge delays in the courts through excessive numbers of court filings, and attendant deterioration of the quality of justice were obviously driving forces in the initiation of the changes. Through Castro's initiative a Presidential Decree launched the creation of the *Barangay Justice Law*, which was drafted and went into effect in 1978.

This law was the instrument established to put into effect a system of amicably settling disputes at the *barangay* level. (*Barangays* were formerly called barrios, roughly synonymous with villages). Each *Lupong Tagpayapa* (conciliation body) consists of between 10 and 20 persons from that *barangay* with an elected head (the *Barangay* captain). The Captain appoints the members of the *Lupon* (synonymous with "*Lupong*"). The law created such a conciliatory committee in each of 42,000 *barangays* throughout the Philippines. Central to this system is the concept of compulsory conciliation. This means that no dispute that falls within the fairly broad authority of the *lupon* can be filed in a court or other government adjudication process until first the dispute has been submitted for conciliation to the *barangay* captain. If successfully resolved at that level, the settlement agreement has the force of a final judgment in court. If the *barangay* captain is not able to settle the dispute within a prescribed period, then the dispute goes to a 3-member conciliation committee chosen from the members of the *lupon*. This 3-person group is called "*Pangkat ng Tagapagkasund.*" If earnest efforts of both the captain and the *Pangkat* are unsuccessful, then the parties may seek adjudication.

STATISTICAL TRENDS IN KP

One general conclusion that can be drawn from the statistics presented by the *Barangay Justice* program taken at face value is sustained growth over their first ten years. The total annual number of conciliations grew steadily over the program history, and an 89% rate of settlement at the *barangay* level supports international statistics showing mediated and conciliated agreements in the 80% range in other countries. Detailed statistics for the years studied are available through the sources cited here (Pe 1985).

IMPACTS OF KP ON MUSLIM COMMUNITIES IN THE PHILIPPINES

Given the focus of this chapter, we will examine more carefully the background and history of the Moros, the Muslim population in the southern Philippines, from the southern parts of Mindanao. The Moro conflicts served as a case study in my 2007 book, *Culture Conflict and Mediation in the Asian Pacific* (Barnes 2007). The founders of the KP program encountered difficulties when they attempted to incorporate indigenous and religious minorities into the KP program. In much of its history, the Philippines has had to deal with a Muslim minority on the southern islands (the "*Moros*" notably the island of Mindanao, and with highland tribes in the Cordillera region of the North. Both groups are demanding "meaningful autonomy to preserve their distinct cultural identity." The *Moros* were so named by the Spanish colonial power

because of their perceived resemblance to the Moors of North Africa, even though they were an amalgam of distinct Southeast Asian Muslim ethnic groups, each under the leadership of a sultan or *datu*.

Lumad is a *Bisayan* word, (i.e. in the language of the Visayan people from the central island group in the Philippines) and is a term for indigenous tribes of Mindanao. The non-Muslim indigenous tribes number 18, such as the B'laan, Manobo, Tagakaolo, Bagobo, Matigsalug, Mansaka, Mandaya, Manguwangan, T'boli, Tiruray, and Subanon, among others.

In Mindanao, the population is composed of a medley of tribes, ethnicities and culturally diverse groups. There are still about 1.5 million staunch Muslims (*Moros*) on the southern tip of Mindanao. During the 1970's, Mindanao was at the center of a rebellion led by the *Moro* National Front (MNLF), the largest Muslim organization in the country. The *Moros* have historically resisted the idea of a centralized government, and their insurgency has paralleled that of the New People's Army (NPA) in Northern Luzon. More than 150,000 people have been killed in the secessionist rebellions in the past 30 years.

These *Moro* and *Lumad* groups have posed problems to the uniform national operation of the *Katarungang Pambarangay* conciliation system. Militantly, these groups have show continued preference for their own customary ways of resolving disputes. The *Datu* (traditional leaders) of the Muslim community, for example and the heads of other ethno-cultural groups refuse to recognize the authority of the *Barangay* captains. These groups have preferred to use their own customary dispute settlement methods, and apparently these methods could not and cannot be easily be integrated with either the existing national legal system or the newer *Katarungang Pambarangay* conciliation system (Tadiar 1988: 312)

LESSONS FROM *BARANGAY* JUSTICE

The *Katarungang Pambarangay* is a reasonably successful program that is noteworthy at several levels. In spite of political turmoil during recent decades, the *Katarungang Pambarangay* program continues to function. The country was strongly influenced by the remains of a Spanish legal code system and by American common law and litigation orientation. KP may be only nationwide program set up in the modern era with the ambitious goal of structuring a return to a traditional grassroots conciliatory dispute system. Few contemporary developing countries' governments are able to effectively challenge the value systems implicit in the mass media, with regard to conflict resolution and legalistic values emanating from popular cultural epicenters in the West. A lesson that may be learned from the *Barangay* Justice programs would be that programs that directly meet the needs of rural citizens and are culturally appropriate can succeed, even without the expenditures of enormous amounts of government funds. Interference from various political interests should be minimized such that the administration of KP is seen as a neutral body as much as possible. Other similar programs of village conciliation in South Asia (reportedly in Sri Lanka among others) have suffered from political intrusion affecting the neutrality of the conciliators to the point of causing the demise of some of the programs.

CASE STUDY: MINDANAO AND THE MORO CONFLICTS

The ongoing conflict in Mindanao in the southern Philippines is chosen for a case study of a regional/national conflict that presents many of the characteristics of a conflict centered on the fault lines between civilizations. The analysis will attempt to incorporate effective principles of culturally appropriate conflict resolution, mediation, and the application of the themes we have developed in our treatment of the other countries in our research. This conflict dates back more than 3 centuries. The major conflicts have involved the Muslim groups that trace their claims to Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago as their homelands back to the thirteenth century. The conflicts between the Moros and two successive colonizing nations, Spain and the United States, followed by conflicts with the Philippines government have marked the history of the *Bangsamoro* (*Moro* homeland) movement.

The Spanish colonized the Philippines in 1565 and established firm footholds in the Christian north of the country. The Moros of the southern Philippines fiercely defended their homeland. For three centuries, the *Moros* successfully resisted the incursions of the Spanish colonizers. By 1914, the United States had colonized the Philippines, and in that process they subjugated the *Moros* by use of overwhelming force. The Americans also solidified their ties by allocating considerable administrative powers to the governments at the municipal and district levels. At the same time, the Americans encouraged the migration of large populations of Christian residents of the Visayans and Luzon to Mindanao to create enclaves in overwhelmingly *Moro* areas, on land the *Moros* claimed as their own.

As the large Christian resettlement communities sprouted quickly in Mindanao from the 1930's forward, the *Moros* were forced to become a minority on their own lands. The proportion of *Moro* inhabitants to the total population fell from 98 percent to 40 percent by 1976.

The Philippine commonwealth was established in 1935, and the assumption at that time by the Philippines' leaders was that the *Moros* would be assimilated into the larger Philippine society. At this point in history, the *Moros* were the "unconquered people of the South . . . the masters of Mindanao and Sulu, where they constituted 98 per cent of the population" (Bacani 2005).

MUSLIMS IN MINDANAO TODAY

Muslims today account for 5 percent, or around 4 million of the Philippines' total population of 82 million. They constitute about 20 percent of the Mindanao-Sulu region's population of more than 16 million. The growth of the settler Christian population resulted in the percent of Moros in the total population continuing to fall from the original 98 percent of the *Bangsamoro* lands to only 20 percent today. *Moros* today own less than 17 per cent of the property on the islands, mostly in the poorer countryside areas. Current estimates are that 80% of the *Moros* are landless (Bacani 2005).

MORO RESISTANCE AND SELF-DETERMINATION

In the late 60's and 70's the political movement composed mostly of *Moro* students emerged on the scene, waging campaigns for the recognition of *Moro* self-determination. The *Moro* National Liberation Front (MNLF) headed by Nur Misuari, a professor at the University of the Philippines emerged on the scene. In the 1970's military and civilian casualties reached 120,000. More than 100,000 people fled to nearby Malaysia, and almost one million inhabitants of the southern Philippines were internally displaced. In 1977 the vice-chair of MNLF, Salamat Hashim tried to seize the movement's leadership. Salamat, a charismatic religious leader who had studied in Cairo, established the *Moro* Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The MILF had more of a religious agenda, while Misuari led the MNLF in a nationalist and secular political direction. Over two decades leading up to 1996 the MILF built itself into a formidable force with 12,000 armed fighters in 13 camps and 33 satellite enclaves.

BISHOPS-MULAMA FORUM (BUF)

A grassroots effort to address the conflicts between Catholics, other Christians, and Muslim groups in the southern Philippines was launched in 1986. The BUF brings together religious leaders of Muslim and Christian communities from all over Mindanao. It includes members of the Catholic Bishops' conference of the Philippines (CBCP), members of the (Muslim) *Ulama* League of the Philippines (ULP) and bishops of the Nat. Council of Churches of the Philippines (NCCP). The BUF meets quarterly in different cities of Mindanao, even continuing meetings throughout the killing of several religious leaders and the hostage-taking of several more leaders. However, all the leaders recognize the seriousness of the problems in Mindanao and created a 10-point Program for Peace in Mindanao in the year 2000. Below in abbreviated form are the 10 points of the BUF "Year 2000" program:

1. Immediate cease-fire in Central Mindanao, emergency assistance for all evacuees and displace communities.
2. Make a distinction between *Abbu Sayyaf* (ASG) and the Moro Liberation Front (MILF).
3. This is not a religious war between Christian and Muslim communities
4. The government and the MILF are urged to return to negotiating table.
5. A neutral but concerned third party, acceptable to both sides of the conflict, should be invited to facilitate the negotiations.
6. Continue to seek a political solution that addresses the legitimate demands of cultural communities and brings about a just and honorable peace for all.
7. Fast-track projects for the socio-economic development of the poorer regions of Mindanao.
8. The religious leaders resolve to intensify efforts at peace-building among local Christian and Muslim communities.
9. The media are invited to clarify their ambivalent role in reporting more accurately the facts and sentiments of Mindanao people in the Mindanao conflict.

10. Work for Peace—we are the stakeholders and have better knowledge of what is going on in this land we call the “Land of Promise” (Mindanao).

It appears that the BUF is a potentially valuable key in the movement towards resolution of the long-standing conflicts in Mindanao. It apparently needs more support from the government and also from neutral outside agencies to carry out its goals.

MINDANAO DEVELOPMENTS SINCE 2000

Through 2001 the various national leaders of the Philippines had alternately fought with the MNLF and the MILF, then tried to negotiate numerous agreements with them, signing joint communiqués and resolutions, numbering over 39 in the 1996-2000 period. In July 2003 Salamat died of natural causes. In 2004 the Macapagal-Arroyo government resumed peace talks with the MILF under Al Haj Murad Ebrahim, the leader replacing Salamat. Talks in Kuala Lumpur in 2005 are focused on the issue of ancestral domain, one of the most difficult issues holding back progress throughout the long peace process to date.

Positive steps taken so far include the involvement of the OIC (Organization of the Islamic Conference) which is providing monitors from its member countries (Malaysia, Brunei and Libya) helping to implement the provisions of the cease-fire agreement. The U.S. Institute for Peace is playing a supportive role in facilitation (Bacani 2005).

MINDANAO CONFLICTS: ANALYSIS BY THEMES

Here we will apply the thematic approach, assessing the cultural factors highlighted in this book in relationship to the to the Mindanao-*Moro* conflicts and the peace processes to date in Mindanao.

COLLECTIVIST, COMMUNITARIAN AND GRASSROOTS INITIATIVES

As noted in the previous section, initiatives such as those proposed by the Bishops-*Ulama* Forum series (BUF) in Mindanao need to be expanded and given financial and administrative support.

Together with the “Team 20” case study of Wayame, Indonesia, (discussed in chapter 10) these two Southeast Asian programs are initiatives worthy of note by the international community. They are grassroots approaches to some of the oldest conflicts vexing humanity, conflicts between Islamic societies and Christian/Catholic societies. Since the implementation of any agreements needs to occur at the grassroots community level, the creation of new institutions that include Moro leaders, whether religious, educational or other community functionaries such as those represented in the BUF group are a good start. The stakeholders are predominantly collectivist cultures, so consultation should be at the community levels with extended families and clan groupings involved as much as possible.

If fundamental changes are negotiated regarding land tenure, education of youth and the possibility of the consideration of creating a place for some *Shari`ah* law principles within the Bangsamoro, then it is important that all the stakeholders at the grassroots level are involved in the discussions and negotiation. Since the region is fairly rich in natural resources, and agriculture will continue to be a central issue in discussion, the process should be designed in such a way as to approach the negotiation of land and domain issues with the *Lumad* and *Moro* cultural approaches in mind.

THE PAGLAS EXPERIENCE

Datu Toto Paglas, a Moro chieftain has launched a promising initiative in Bumbaran, in Mindanao. Using the latest agricultural technology, some introduced by Israeli experts, the Paglas plantation has produced and exported millions of dollars of bananas to Japan and the Middle East. Muslims and Christians work side by side on the plantation, even during past battles between the government and guerillas in 2000 and 2003. This promising grassroots effort to address the basic economic and developmental issues facing Mindanao, reinforces the “Bishops-Ulama Year 2000 Program” discussed previously (Tuminez 2005).

OTHER GRASSROOTS INITIATIVES

A well-known Christian political leader in Northern Mindanao (in Misamis Oriental province) has made lands available to needy Moro families, and thus attempted to reverse some of the negative effects of the southward historic waves of Visayan and other northern settlers into Mindanao, displacing Moros as well as Lumads, which began during the American colonial period.

CULTURAL ASPECTS OF THE *BANGSAMORO* MOVEMENT

It is likely that the *Moros* as a group would be similar to Malaysian and Indonesian Muslims in many of Hofstede’s cultural dimensions, even though they were not listed as a separate group in the development of Hofstede’s dimensions. This would imply that the *Moros* would rank quite high in power-distance, which could influence the type of approach to the implementation and negotiation of peace accords with the *Moros*. (Malaysia was the highest power-distance ranking of any country in the 53 surveyed, and Indonesia was eighth out of 50) This would mean efforts to build leadership skills and relationships with the leadership groups would be a good thing to consider. The format of the BUF thus seems to be an effective way to approach community issues, gathering religious leaders of both sides.

We could expect that a high power-distance culture like the *Moros* would want to deal at the highest level with the government leaders of the Philippines. Having representatives of the UN Secretary-General’s office or other highly placed officials from the UN at the negotiations, whether in Malaysia, the Middle East or elsewhere would be a reassuring factor for the *Moros* since there have been breakdowns in the implementation of past agreements.

The dimension “LTO” (long term orientation) is not projected here as a strong factor for the cultural orientation of the *Moros* as it would be for the more Confucian cultures of E SE Asia that we have discussed here. However, the *Moros* have certainly been forced to take the long-term view in their defense of their homeland —400 years of conflict and counting. Therefore, all of the NGO’s, international agencies, foreign governments and peacemakers that wish to address the conflicts in southern Mindanao would be well-advised to take an extremely long-term view of the process as well. The role of development agencies such as UNDP and educational agencies in building and strengthening agencies to address these problems in a *Moro*-friendly way will be crucial. Addressing in a constructive way the land deprivation issues from the *Moro* ancestral domain is certainly a critical issue for consideration.

The themes of face and facework, harmony, and indirect style of addressing conflicts will be merely mentioned here in passing. They are definitely important to consider in conducting all aspects of the negotiations, dealing with the *Moro* leaders as well as other stakeholders. A general consideration of these themes in the Southeast Asian cultural setting would seem useful in addressing these conflicts. If the third-party mediators, conciliators, observers, trainers and educators were themselves from SE Asian countries, they would likely have the necessary sensitivity to these cultural issues.

Spirituality and *religion* are obviously central to the very nature of the conflict, and must be considered carefully in all aspects of addressing this conflict. The very core of the conflict is related to the fundamental differences between Catholic majority religion and Muslim religions, since the underlying legal systems attached to the two religions are considerably different in important ways. The Torrens system of establishing land ownership and the Christian resettlement movement were key moving forces in dispossessing the *Moros* from most of the land that they considered their homeland. The Qur’an, on the other hand, is the basis for the legal, religious and ethical standards in the lives of the *Moros*. Since the *Moros* were unable to register land claims under the legal authority of the Qur’an, given the vast differences in the two cultures’ legal systems, it is apparent that there is a considerable problem in resolving the “ancestral domain” issues. This issue revolving around “ownership” of land formerly occupied by indigenous populations is a fundamental conflict around many parts of the Pacific basin (Barnes 2002); it seems that underlying conflicts between “indigenous” peoples and colonizing settlers as well as the contemporary type of conflict in Mindanao cannot be settled in a two-day conference somewhere. Instead, it can be argued that the initiatives can be strengthened at the grassroots level.

Utilizing the Christian and Muslim religious leaders to join in forming alliances that can conduct outreach to their own constituents to support the peace process is a critical function of the BUF alliance group. The importance of this function at the grass roots level cannot be overestimated. The BUF group needs consistent and enlarged support from all levels.

The involvement of the OIC as a third party, via the mediation role of Malaysia and the involvement of Malaysia, Brunei and Libya in implementing cease-fire provisions appears to be a positive development. It seems obvious that the *Moros* cannot consider organizations connected to US or Philippines governments as neutral in this conflict at present, since there is

such a long history of broken or incomplete agreements, so the involvement of Southeast Asian Muslim groups as a part of the third-party neutral seems to be critical. I would consider this type of a mediation team as a version of Pacific Model mediation. Within the team are mediators who are from the Muslim tradition themselves, and can be trusted by the *Moros* since they have lived their lives in a country that is governed by Muslim principles. Libya and other relatively moderate Islamic countries have served as mediators in previous international conflicts. Given this reality, we should further analyze Muslim conflict resolution traditions to better understand these cultural preferences and inform our conflict resolution process design efforts .

ISLAMIC CONFLICT RESOLUTION PATTERNS

A noted scholar of Islamic society points out that when an initial comparison is done between Western and Middle Eastern conflict resolution approaches, it is apparent that Western strategies cannot be implemented or applied without adjusting and redefining such processes according to local experience. Abu-Nimer (1996) points out several underlying assumptions in Middle East conflict resolution processes:

- 1) Conflict is negative, dangerous and should be avoided. Conflict brings destruction and disorder. (This assumption is shared by many Asian societies but not by most or all Western societies).
- 2) Group affiliation (family, clan, religion, sect or other collective identity) is the most central and important identity that is in need of protection and should be sustained throughout the conflict management process (Similar perhaps to SE Asia, not as important in Western conflict resolution).
- 3) Spontaneous and emotional acts in the interaction of parties are an integral part of Arab society, and so these attributes are therefore embedded in Arab mediation and negotiation strategies as well. This assumption contrasts sharply with Western logical, ordered, civil and professional conceptions of negotiation and mediation.
- 4) Social norms and values are more important than legal values. The example given is that where Western mediation is commonly completed by fashioning written agreements, the Arab version of the agreement process emphasizes instead the reliance on social and cultural values and norms for implementation.
- 5) Codes of honor, shame and dignity tend to be the main elements of conflict resolution processes in Arab cultures.
- 6) Unity is often the ultimate goal for groups, implying similarity in actions, ideas and principles.
- 7) Mediation and conflict resolution emphasize hierarchical, authoritarian procedure and structure. Thus, the “leaders” of the process will tend to be older people, males and high-power officials. As in many traditional societies, the training background or other credentials of the third-party conflict resolvers may not be as important as is often seen in Western processes.
- 8) The conflict resolution processes are more relationship-oriented than they are task-oriented. Parties are very concerned about their image and perceptions of their multiple relationships involved in the conflict resolution process.

- 9) Arbitration and mediation are the most-used elements of Middle Eastern conflict resolution approaches (Abu-Nimer 1996).

As we approach the task of designing a culturally appropriate process for addressing the Mindanao *Moro* conflicts, we observe that several elements of Middle East /Arab conflict resolution approaches are very similar to conflict resolution approaches we have described in the chapters of this book. Assumptions numbered 1,2,4,6,7,8 and 9 (above) by Abu-Nimer are also found fairly widely in Southeast Asian cultures and countries as they traditionally would approach conflicts. If we are able to build on these similarities, our task becomes a bit easier in crafting a dispute resolution process for the *Moros* and the Philippines government. If we blend and hybridize the best approaches and strategies from the cultures of Southeast Asia, Middle-East Arabs, and Western contemporary practices, always assuring that the resultant combinations of elements meet the cultural appropriateness standards, then we should be moving several steps forward in creating a lasting peace in the region.

MIDDLE EASTERN THIRD-PARTY ROLES

In reviewing the writings of various knowledgeable experts such as Bacani (2005) it is apparent that a mediation/facilitation process, if designed properly, could provide a useful element to address the Mindanao *Moro* conflicts.

Abu-Nimer has provided a useful listing of distinctive features of Middle East third-party roles, which we may add to our list of important considerations:

1. Age is an important factor which contributes to the credibility of the intervenor (the older the intervenor the more respect given).
2. Political and military power enhance credibility; therefore parliamentary members, government officials, mayors, governors and military officers can function as a third party.
3. Religious affiliation (e.g. belonging to a powerful religious majority group) affects the status of the intervenor.
4. Mediators must know very well the history of the dispute, the history of mediation and intervention in the region, and the customs and norms of all religious communities.
5. It is possible that members of the third party group will have either a direct or an indirect political interest in resolving the dispute.
6. The third-parties often base their intervention on traditional belief system and values. Some of the social values and norms which are used by the intervenors are:
 - a. shame and honor;
 - b. unity of the village, family, and region;
 - c. considering the future of the next generation;
 - d. association with religious values such as tolerance and respect of elders;
 - e. attention to the history of relationships in the village, community or region;
 - f. the Arab/Muslim tradition of forgiveness and dignity to which they all subscribe (Abu-Nimer 1996).

I would recommend that the OIC continue to be involved in providing third-party facilitators and mediators in the implementation stages. Mindful of Abu-Nimer's commentary, the OIC may be consulted to find third-party mediators or facilitators since they are able to provide persons of perceived "political and military power" that also are very knowledgeable of the history, customs and norms of the region. If carefully vetted and selected, Malaysian or Indonesian individuals could possibly be suitable for roles in the third party group. The ASEAN group of nations would be a logical source of consultation and possible contribution of members of the third-party group, since they are very familiar with the regional history and the history of inter-ethnic and religious conflict in the region. They also collaborate with each other closely in humanitarian relief efforts such as the recent tsunami affecting Thailand and Indonesia, so there are many useful working relationships between the ASEAN countries at the agency working level. Of course, other neutral nations or agencies could also augment the mediation and facilitation teams, if the persons provided meet all or most of the criteria listed by Abu-Nimer.

Countries like the US, Japan, and some EEU countries may serve the best role in funding the implementation and development efforts that arise from the negotiation and mediation processes. The United Nations and/or international and regional groups should be overseeing the implementation process since it will likely be a long-term effort by all concerned. Since countries like the U.S. and Spain have a colonial history in Mindanao, and since the U.S. has engaged in anti-terrorism military training for the Philippines government in Mindanao, these two countries should probably not be a major presence on the mediation/facilitation teams. Nationals of these two countries may not be perceived as neutral or appropriate from the *Moro* point of view for the peacemaking role, unless the individual being considered happens to have long-term relationships with the communities in southern Mindanao and otherwise meets most of the criteria above.

It appears that Arabs in the Middle East share a common value of desiring unity as a goal for groups, including those in conflict. This value appears to coincide closely with the Indonesian value of *musyawarah*. Therefore we should be able to design a consensus-based mediation/facilitation process, perhaps using some similarities to *musyawarah* or even including some Western consensual mediation processes.

A Pacific model of mediation and facilitation could be crafted to be used in this situation, with a team of third-party mediators and facilitators containing all the necessary requirements for all participating cultures, for mediation and peacemaking in a setting that involves Muslim and Christian stakeholders who have been living in proximity to each other for many decades. The process would be brought together in a grass-roots participation mode such as was utilized in the Bishops-*Ulama* effort in the Philippines, or the Wayame-Ambon effort in Indonesia.

THAILAND AND MULTICULTURAL / RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS: THAILAND'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH DIVERSE ETHNIC SUBCULTURES

China is the principal neighboring country that has had the most cultural impact on Thailand over the years. The ethnic Chinese have merged into Thailand's population so that now every

social class in the country has Chinese included. Although one in ten Thais is of Chinese descent, the Chinese control the business community as owners of the banks and prominent factories. Engholm (1991) points out: “The Chinese have learned not to ruffle the Thai feathers, however and the relationship between Thais and Chinese in Thailand is a smoother one than in Moslem Asia.” This ability to negotiate and collaborate with its neighbors (who have quite different religions and cultures) to the mutual economic and social benefit of both sides seems to be a useful trait of Thai leaders throughout history.

Historically Thailand has not exhibited a homogenous ethnic culture. The modern-day Thai origins consist of a mix of Chinese, Lao, Malay, Khmer, Mon, Shan, Lao Phuan, So, Song Dam, Thai Yai and Phi Thai peoples (Phongpaichit and Baker 1996). Since Thai leaders felt a need to build a Thai population and a more cohesive national identity, at the turn of this century proclaimed all native ethnic groups “Thai.” This included bestowing Thai citizenship on the mostly Chinese immigrants, and ordering compulsory education in the Thai language and the essentials of Thai culture (Phonpaichit and Baker 1996).

With a flexible monarchy at the core, the Thai social system has been able to evolve “naturally and organically from the absolutist tradition inherited from the world outside elements complementary to Thai tradition and culture” (Kulick and Wilson 1996).

CONFLICTS IN SOUTHERN THAILAND

Three provinces in Southern Thailand have experienced unprecedented violence recently—Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat. Since the 16th century the Kingdom of Siam has exercised sovereignty over the former Malay sultanate of Pattani, which was divided into 3 Thai provinces of Narathiwat, Yala and Pattani in 1933. During the 20th century the region underwent a process of assimilation into Thai society. The ethnically Malay population began to adopt Thai names, and Buddhist missionary work and settlement activity increased in these provinces. In spite of these efforts, over 80% of the population in the 3 provinces still consider themselves Muslim and close to three million people still speak Malay as their first language.

There have been sporadic separatist movements in the area over the last century, but most were suppressed by successive Thai military regimes. In the 1990s renewed agitation led mostly by Malay intellectuals heavily influenced by revolutionary and Islamic ideals from the Middle East led to the formation of a militant group called the Pattani United Liberation Front (PULO). Thai leaders have vacillated between attributing the rise of violence in the region to groups like PULO and attributing it to a local front in the War on Terrorism. In January 2004 martial law was instituted in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat. In April of 2004 over 100 militants conducted attacks against 10 police outposts in Pattani, Yala and Songkhla provinces. 32 insurgents retreated to the Krue Sae Mosque, the holiest mosque in Pattani. The army commander on the scene ordered an all-out assault on the mosque, where all the insurgents were killed in spite of his orders from the Defense Minister to seek a peaceful resolution no matter how long it took. In October of 2004 the most publicized and controversial incidents involved the arrest of several men from Bak Tai in Narathiwat province by police for supplying weapons to the insurgents. The army was called in to reinforce the police and deal with a demonstration supporting the release of the arrestees.

Tear gas, water cannons and a melee resulted in the deaths of seven men. Hundreds of young people, mostly males were arrested, ordered to take their shirts off, and with hands tied behind their backs were crammed into army trucks and driven to a nearby camp in Pattani. Five hours later, upon reaching their destination 78 men in the trucks had suffocated. These types of over-reaction by a frustrated Thai army coupled with a coup that overthrew the previous Prime Minister Thaksin have left the Thai government equally frustrated by their inability to stop the violence in the south. General Soonthi Boonyaratglin, the leading general and head of the Council for National Security that overthrew Thaksin is a Muslim himself. Despite recent calls for more peaceful methods in dealing with the “insurgencies,” the conflicts persist.

AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON SOUTHERN THAILAND

Possible strategies for conflict resolution now need to be assessed from an international perspective. In both the Southern Philippines’ conflicts and in Southern Thailand, the Malaysian government is a key player. As in the Aceh situation, the alternative of a semi-autonomous state, territory, or province for the 3-province area may be a basis for negotiation or mediation led by an international or Pacific-Model, Buddhist-Muslim mediation or facilitation team.

CONCLUSION

It appears that the many groups involved in these conflicts across the three countries discussed here may benefit from the grassroots efforts of their neighbors to address equally deadly, long-term conflicts. Malaysia is certainly a stakeholder and a possible point of third-party intervention, since it has been influenced strongly by the Southern Thailand and Southern Philippines conflicts. The experiments in widespread facilitation efforts represented by the *Baku Bae* movement deserve careful study in other countries in the region as a possible method of peacemaking.

We encourage the attendees at this conference to join in this important dialogue, to improve the role of mediation and facilitation in these types of conflicts in our region, and share our experiences.