

Date Printed: 04/23/2009

JTS Box Number: IFES_71
Tab Number: 24
Document Title: Important notice to:
Document Date: 1999
Document Country: Philippines
Document Language: English
IFES ID: CE01634



* 2 2 6 4 6 3 8 B - 0 A 8 A - 4 2 C B - 9 B D 3 - 1 B D F 9 4 6 B 4 9 D B *

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO:

**The People of Autonomous Region
of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM)**

**GET INVOLVED! GO OUT and
REGISTER!
ARMM GENERAL REGISTRATION**



-
- LANA O DEL SUR
 - MAGUINDANAO
 - SULU
 - TAWI-TAWI
-

- **WHY REGISTER ANEW?** The Voter's Registration Record in the ARMM was annulled by virtue of RA No. 8746. Register in order to vote on September 13, 1999
- **WHO MAY REGISTER?** Every Filipino citizen in the ARMM of at least 18 years of age or over on election day and a resident of the place where he/she proposes to vote for at least six (6) months.
- **WHERE TO REGISTER?** Before the Board of Election Inspectors (BEI) of the precinct where he/she resides.



COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS

Intramuros, Manila
EDUCATION AND INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

Hotline Numbers 527-18-94 527-08-21
527-55-74 527-55-82

EDITORIALS

Smoke and smoke screen

Nagbabaga at umuusok na balita aptly describes last week's exchanges of accusations between the two warring groups in the PNP high command. Finally, what has been merely hinted now and then by officialdom but accepted as fact by most ordinary law-abiding citizens, has been officially acknowledged—the illegal drug trade in the country enjoys the protection of law enforcers.

If the accusations of one of the parties is to be taken at face value, the trade enjoys the protection of very highly placed law enforcers including the highest placed one, the PNP director general himself!

Such was the heat and smoke generated by the accusations that no less than five agencies including the office of the ombudsman and congress have signified their intentions to investigate the matter.

An internal power struggle might have triggered the decision of the Lacson group to go public with their accusations. But this is of little consequence. What is most important is that they make formal their accusations and lay before the investigating bodies such evidence as will substantiate their charges.

Then, perhaps some of the more highly placed protectors of the illegal drug trade in the PNP will get burnt. And the message will be sent down to the lowest echelon that the clean-up drive against drug protectors in the PNP ranks is serious and all those involved will get burnt.

Then will there be hope that local communities like Cotabato City will be able to make headway in their own campaign against the illegal drug trade. For protectors of the trade, there surely are among local law enforcers just as there are among national law enforcers as the national media reports last week indicated.

But as long as illegal drug dealers and pushers enjoy the protection of some law enforcers themselves, there is little hope of making any real headway in the anti-drug campaign. Only the law enforcers themselves know the real score about the drug protectors in their own ranks. Only they have access to or can gather the evidence necessary to entrap these latter.

But Lastimoso and Lacson have reportedly smoked the peace pipe, have patched up their differences during a one-on-one meeting. The word is out from police officials across the country calling on their men "to close ranks amid the current crisis." In other words, "see no evil, hear no evil, and speak no evil" against each other. A lot of smoke is going to emerge from that peace pipe, enough smoke to screen and protect the PNP protectors of the illegal drug trade throughout the country.

And so local drug dealers and pushers can continue to enjoy the protection of the rogues in the local PNP and other local law enforcement agencies. The good guys in these agencies have been given the word—close ranks, do not wash our dirty linens in public. In fact, do not wash it at all!

ADB and the ARMM elections

Tomorrow, May 6, the ARMM election period officially starts with the imposition of the gun ban. Much of the local media reports on the coming elections have so far focused on the issue of postponement and on who is or who is not going to run in the coming elections. Apparently, the postponement issue is now moot and academic. Who will be contesting the various electoral positions will be known very soon as according to the election guidelines, the candidates will have to file their certificates of candidacy within this month.

Very much apropos to this coming ARMM electoral exercise is the decision of the ADB board of governors to shift its priority from "economic growth" to "poverty alleviation." In almost all statistics put out by government and non-government agencies listing provinces according to standard indicators of poverty, the ARMM provinces top the lists—from incidence of malnourishment to infant/mother's mortality rate.

It is hoped that just as the ADB governors have now focused their attention on poverty alleviation, the various candidates will also focus their electoral campaign on this very glaring reality of the ARMM.

The Mindanao CROSS
"The Little Paper with a Big Cause!"

is published every Wednesday and Saturday by the Mindanao Cross Publishers, Inc., Notre Dame Avenue, Cotabato City. Tel. # 421-71-61, Fax No. (064) 421-81-95 and E-mail Address: mincross@marist.edu.ph.

Fr. Alfonso E. Cariño, OMI, Editor In-Chief, Guillermo M. Hagad, Associate Editor, Regalado M. Tendero, Jr., News Editor, Gemma A. Peñafior, Advertising in-charge, Ma. Stella G. Platon, Cashier, Julito P. Torres, Circulation in-charge, Bernard Joseph A. Limjoco, Layout in-charge.

Member: Philippine Press Institute
Entered as Second Class Mail at Cotabato City Post Office under Permit No. 91-01 Dated August 15, 1991



Through prayer, a glimmer of hope



It was dubbed virtually "mission impossible", a reference to the unofficial undertaking by a group from the International Council of Churches, headed by Rev. Jesse Jackson of the U. S., to seek the release of three American servicemen. If you recall, these were the soldiers who were nabbed by the Serbian army while they were on patrol along the Macedonian border over a month ago. The Clinton administration and the NATO High Command had reasons to be skeptical. There was no sense in approaching a dictator who had shown no compassion at all for the hundreds of thousands of ethnic Kosovars who were forcibly ejected from their homes and who had no scruple whatsoever, of seeing his country reduced to rubble, rather than to bow down to the will of the international community. Besides, it was feared that the Yugoslav President would exploit the situation as a bargaining chip in exchange for conces-

sion. Earlier, it was announced by Serbian authorities that the soldiers would be facing trial for unspecified charges. Until the International Red Cross managed to verify the prisoners' state of health only recently, no one knew the fate of the soldiers. Embittered by relentless bombing from the air for over a month, the Serbs were not expected to show any sign of leniency. Despite lack of official sanction, the mission proceeded nonetheless, and succeeded in getting an audience from Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic. As expected, the Dictator turned down the request. But then, as a footage from the Serbian TV showed, moments later, Milosevic was seen holding hands with Rev. Jackson, engrossed in

prayer. Obviously, it was an ecumenical prayer since many of us knew that Milosevic and his fellow Slavs, belong to the Orthodox Church, a religious denomination akin to the Greek and Russian Orthodox Church. Surprisingly, hours later, the Serbian government announced that President Milosevic had reversed his stand and had authorized the release of the American servicemen. Sgt. Andrew Ramirez, Sgt. Christopher Stone and SPC Steven Gonzales. Against all odds, the mission which was thought to be an exercise in futility, succeeded. I really do not know whether this was a tactical ploy on the part of the Yugoslav strong man to win world public opinion. As it is, the NATO alliance has

already declared that despite the release of the soldiers, there would be no pause in the air campaign unless Milosevic agrees to the five demands as specified in the Rambollet Accord. What I know, however, is the mystical power of prayer as proven by our own experiences. It was a Jesuit priest who reminded us back in college, that "prayer changes things" and it could be said wherever we are, even in the privacy of our own rooms, if done with sincerity. Who knows whether in this moment of crisis, it was prayer which made Milosevic relent from his adamant stand? An anxious world, appalled by the carnage and human sufferings in the Balkans, could only hope that where brute force and diplomacy have failed thus far, ardent prayer could soften the heart of the Yugoslav President and make him come to his senses. He, after all, holds the key to the restoration of Peace in that troubled state.

Blaming somebody else

Anita S. Meily

When asked why he hit his wife, a husband replied: "She made me so angry because she wouldn't stop talking!" This was a classic case of a person shifting responsibility for what he felt to someone else. Nobody can force us to be angry, let alone respond badly to the action of another person. How many times do we hear a husband or a wife trying to justify his or her infidelity by blaming the spouse? "She's a nagger," or "He's so absorbed in his work that he neglects me." People forget that, no matter what anyone does to us, we are still responsible for our own actions. All of us, at one time or another, will be hurt, humiliated, wronged—some more than others. The difference will be in how each one responds to these disturbing situations. One of the easiest targets to blame for any failure in life is our parents. "I was born poor!" "I was not

given attention!" "I was maltreated!" All these may be true. But how many people, given the same circumstances, came out strong, without a trace of self-pity or resentment against their elders? I remember the story of a successful businessman, who will remain unnamed, who attributes his hard work, determination and perseverance to his impoverished childhood. "I will never be hungry again!", he vowed. One man's poison may, indeed, be another person's vitamin pill! Many times, I am wary of blaming parents for their children's failures in life. There are too many factors beyond their control that can influence their offspring. Misbehavior of growing children can, perhaps, still be laid at the parent's door as the youngsters cry for help and attention. But when they are grown up and leading their own lives, they alone should be held responsible for what

they do with their lives. We often hear the remark that a philandering husband is the product of a philandering father. Not always. I know many husbands who worked hard at their marriage because they knew the heartaches of their mother and siblings. They did not want the same experience for their family. All of us were born with a free will, with the power to make choices. We alone choose how we will respond to persons, events, and situations. If we start blaming somebody else for anything negative that happens to us, we will never mature. Our growth will be stunted because we can never move from where we are. Blaming somebody else will only promote disharmony, discord, and bitterness. When we feel like blaming somebody else, let us look at Jesus and remember His example. Hanging on the cross; it would have been so easy for Him to curse those

who put Him there. Instead, he cried out: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do!" At the Last Judgment, we will be judged individually, regardless of what anybody did to us. We cannot point our finger at anyone else for what we did or did not do. However, it is consoling to remember how God does not hold anything against anyone who is truly sorry for sins committed. After a good confession, God will no longer even remember our transgressions. Remember the good thief hanging on the Cross alongside Jesus? All he said was: "Remember me when You get to Your Kingdom." Immediately, salvation was his with the Lord's reply: "This day you will be with me in Paradise!" If the Holy Spirit lives in us, we will have love, peace, patience, and all His other gifts that will enable us to give the right response to trying situations (Philippine Panorama, November 22, 1998).