THE MARAWI SIEGE: CHALLENGES TO THE STAKEHOLDERS ROLE ON CVE, TERRORISM, AND PEACE EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT
The study is about the Marawi siege and the context in which Philippine Countering Violent Extremism and Terrorism policy and programs is perceived by the crucial stakeholders in Marawi City; namely: Ulama, NGO leaders, and LGU officials. Particularly, the study enquires the following: (1) What led to Marawi siege, its preconditions and triggering factors? (2) How did the government employ countering violent extremism and terrorism warfare during Marawi siege? (3) How did Meranao leaders view Philippine countering violent extremism and terrorism on Marawi siege? (4) What are the implications in the variation between Philippine countering violent extremism and terrorism with people's perception on Marawi siege? It conducts both quantitative and qualitative methods of research identifying critical variables comprising both preconditions and triggering factors and the extent they are defined by both internal and external environments. These are framed along CVE and terrorism concepts and theories and how they reflect in Philippine experience during Marawi siege. With the impact of Marawi siege, there should be more lessons to be learned and old policy and strategy must change so that better ones could effectively address the challenges of CVE, terrorism and peace education.

Keywords: Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), Anti-Terrorism Operation, Philippine CVE and ATO Program, Peace Education

INTRODUCTION

On May 23, 2017, the unforgettable incident happened in the city of Marawi known as the War in Marawi also referred to as "Marawi siege". It was the first day of Ramadan where Muslims were supposed to enjoy and prepare to fast. However, the big tragedy and scary incident happened to the people of Marawi. It was the clash between Philippine security forces and militant groups identified with the Islamic State of Syria and Levant, Maute group, and Abu Sayyaf group.

The siege lasted for five (5) months, first time in modern history of war in the Philippines that took such a long period. It was a common story of local people that they were alarmed ten days before the attack. What became then as the Maute group warned the people to evacuate the city because they would attack like what they did previously in Butig and Piyagapo, Lanao del Sur. The Meranao people struggled a lot as many of them lost their properties, business, and homes. Aside from these, there were many lives wasted. According to statistics of the Amnesty International, 920 militants, 165 soldiers and 47 civilians were killed in the fighting, and more than 1,780 hostages were rescued.

The incident has raised many questions that until now remains unaddressed. Marawi is a very small city to begin with where only small parts of the area where under the influence of militant groups during the siege; yet, it is a question why the Armed Forces of the Philippines carpet bombed the strategic part of the city and referred to it arbitrarily as "Ground Zero". There are many things that should have been discussed in order to justify the command of the government in implementing policies on countering violent extremism and terrorism before, during and after the Marawi siege. If there was only proper handling of the situation, the Marawi siege could have been avoided.

Given the wars that previously happened in Butig and Piagapo, Lanao del Sur between the Maute group and the military, it is a question why the AFP failed to secure Marawi City. Civilians, Ulamas, local officials and traditional leaders were alarmed over rising violence in the city even before the war. As a Meranao familiar with the city, I witnessed karaoke bars in Mindanao State University (MSU)-Main Campus ransacked and destroyed, killings of non-Muslim workers, gays, drug users, and pushers. These violent activities were done by the Maute group long before the Marawi siege would happen.

Civilians have different stories why the Maute group attacked Marawi. The most convincing story of the locals is that, the incident in Butig and Piagapo was the result of Maute group's failure to demand money from incumbent Mayor of Marawi, Majul Gandamra. As the Mayor refused to give the amount, the Maute group threatened to attack the city. With such threat coming from the Maute group, the local government unit did not only fail to provide security measures to civilians and the city itself; there was no information from local government on what should be done to stop the activities of Maute group. Neither did the local government inform civilians or barangays about the demand of the Maute group and their threat to attack the city. This is why civilians were not prepared to escape from their places during the attack. They did not have even clothes and other properties when they fled. Two years since the Marawi siege, the residents of the city are still suffering from the tragedy. They cannot return to their homes as they just rely on relief goods and programs from the government. They barely survived in evacuation centers while hoping to return home in their beloved city.

As members of Islamic faith, it is our responsibility to help find solution to this scary situation in Mindanao and the rest of the Muslim world. According to prominent scholar Fetullah Gulen, violent extremism in the Muslim world these days and age is like a cancer to all Muslim whose medicine is not easy to find; yet it is our responsibility to provide solution in order stop this sickness.

METHODS

This research is a mixed method of both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The researcher conducted survey and in-depth interview to the respondents of this study. A structured survey was employed in this study.

The researcher provided survey questionnaire to, at least, thirty (30) LGU officials, thirty (30) Ulama (religious leaders), and thirty (30) NGO leaders who answered the questions in order to measure the variables of this study. They are considered, as mentioned, crucial stakeholders in Marawi City; therefore, their views carry weight in understanding CVE and terrorism on Marawi siege. The researcher conducted several interviews among selected key informants of this study. They provided enough information about the Marawi siege, their experience and observation and how to counter violent extremism. The key informants of this study belong to one of the following sectors: local government unit (LGU); non-government organizations (NGO) such as youth leaders, professionals or head institutions and from Ulamas such as local Imams and Asatids (teachers). The researcher limited only to, at least, five (5) key informants for each sector for reason of accessibility and time. The survey questionnaire was developed based on the literature on CVE and terrorism and Moro struggle. The survey questions were divided into two parts. Part I was about the demographic profile of the respondents. Under this, basic information of the respondents was asked such as gender, tribe affiliation, educational background, type of education, and lastly, counting one has graduated either local or abroad. Part II of the survey comprised the questions reflective of the 21 variables in this study. A twenty one (21) variables with a total of 65 statements were formulated to be graded or scaled. The grading system ranges from their level of agreement and disagreement. The variables of this study contain three statements except the variables of combat operation which contains nine statements.

Additionally, a separate questionnaire was prepared for the in-depth interview. The questions formulated were structured or patterned from the survey questions. In line with this, the researcher selected five (5) respondents in each sector for in-depth interview.

This study deals generally with the relationship of variables (i, e., independent, dependent, intervening) while their correlation and detailed nuances maybe done in separate studies by other researchers. The researcher used primary and secondary data and used structured instruments in measuring the twenty-one variables of this study. The researcher formulated sixty-five (65) items or statements as an instrument to be answered by the respondents of this study. This structured questions were patterned in the research objective of the study. Additionally, the researcher also requested from key-informants some relevant data. Among these data include audio, reports, and research studies. Some of which are treated with utmost confidentiality. The data gathered by the researcher was to analyse and interpret it in very best discussion and interpretation in order to satisfy the questions raised in this study and its purpose.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The anti-terrorism program of the government and the national security forces of the Philippine consider the level or range of threats among non-state groups. It is usually couched into two major approaches;

namely: countering violent extremism (CVE); and, anti-terrorism operation (ATO). Countering violent extremism is usually operationalized on low threat level without necessarily implementing combat operation in particular setting while anti-terrorism operation has a high level of threat involving, if need be, combat operation in order to neutralize acts of terror by non-state actors.

This study uses the concept of two-tiered approach on Countering violent Extremism and Anti-Terrorism operation. The first is concerned with "soft power" strategies which focus on what can be framed as defensive approaches including intelligence, infrastructure protection, and crisis planning and border security. The second is oriented by offensive framework including military, legislative and policing approaches.

Manifestation of violent extremism did exist in Marawi even before the Marawi siege. As such, Philippine government conducted programs and policy on countering violent extremism in the City of Marawi. According to Colonel Monico Abang the AFP has put in place the Clear Support Methodology and Clear Hold-Support Methodology for Muslim Communities that is socio-culturally, sensitive, inclusive and acceptable with all stakeholders in Lanao del Sur. It includes building trust, confidence, and alliances with MILF and MNLF, Local government units, ARMM, Religious organizations, and the Organization of the Sultanate of Lanao. It forms part of The Whole of Nation approach while linked to Cabinet Oversight Committee for Internal Security (COCIS) with Muslim religious leaders, traditional leaders, and respected politicians from ARMM. It was activated purposely to integrate, synchronize, monitor and asses all government plans and programs and project in Lanao del Sur and other parts of Mindanao that caused problem on extreme Islamism. Intelligence operation Intelligence Policy on Intelligence Requirements for Countering Violent Extremism contains knowing extreme Islamists and their manifestations. Unfortunately, according to Colonel Abang, this program of the AFP and the government failed, although it was implemented. One of the reasons is the ambivalent participation of local residents as they have reservation whether or not to cooperate with the government and the AFP. Moreover, intelligence units failed to provide authentic and strategic information that caused the unexpected entry of many non-state groups into the city. The failure of Countering Violent Extremism and the "soft" strategy of AFP precipitated the wars in Butig and Piagapo leading into full blown war in the socalled Marawi siege. In other words, had the previous soft strategy on Countering Violent Extremism was successful, the hard approach programs of the government and AFP would have not translated into anti-terrorism warfare with exorbitant combat operation of the military force that eventually became the Marawi siege.

The existence of violent extremism can be due to certain factors existing in society. The term radicalism which is widely and interchangeably used as violent extremism has no wide discussion or consensus. According to Borum, extremism is deviation from the norm while radicalism refers to the process by which people appreciate their

belief and ideology. Islamist extremism believes that Islam is a totalitarian political ideology. They claim that political sovereignty belongs only to Allah and that Shariah or Islamic Law should be the state law among Muslims within the society. Violent extremism and terrorism as conceived by Ortiz are unlawful acts or threat of force or violence against individuals and their properties in an attempt to coerce government and society to achieve political, religious or ideological objectives. Whereas Owen and Christian view violent extremism and terrorism as efforts to achieve political goals by violent means, personal motives, conviction, negative experiences of exclusion, rejection, humiliation and frustration.

Taking off from Borum's, Ortiz's, Owen's and Christian's including Buendia's, violent extremism is usually underpinned with space-time dimension comprising preconditions serving as historically embedded factors like socio-economic conditions. Whereas triggering factors of violent extremism are immediate convergence of causes leading to full blown manifestation of violence and war. In other words, social injustice play a big role in the existence of violent extremism. Social justice as an equality, voice, respect for individuals, and respect for all group. As noted by Fiske, violation of social justice sows the seeds of uncertainty and extremism. In the setting of Moros in the south, their belief on self-determination and their rights to their own land with their own historical governance must have prodded them to struggle leading into series of clash between government security forces and Moro rebels and radicals in the south of the Philippines.

As claimed by Schiavo, and George, economic crisis, lack of access to political process and participation boost individuals or groups to engage in violent acts because of injustice they experienced. They posit that emotional and psychological need for belonging, meaning, revenge or continuation of violence brought on by conflict most likely led individual to commit violent acts.

The tragedy that was Marawi siege is a convergence of precondition and triggering factors which resulted in the displacement of residents and loss of properties and lives. Crucial in the socio-economic struggle of the Bangsamoro is the issue of land, their ownership and control of resources, a situation with deep roots in colonial and post-colonial political economy. While exhibiting the same as preconditional factors in early struggle of the Bangsamoro, it takes a new turn when a trigger like the Maute group was fired as the latter expressed allegiance to the international armed group the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.

Equally crucial is the non-passing of Bangsamoro Basic Law in Congress that practically summarizes the conflict in Mindanao as continuing unfulfilled promises of peace in the south until the last quarter of the Aquino Administration. According to Rene
Acosta in his article, "Terror group in Philippines: Removing the mask," proliferation of firearms is crucial question particularly how the Maute group was able to have different kinds of firearms. Before the siege, drug trafficking and gambling were rampant including killings like feuds or rido

and so on. According to Lt. Carlito Galvez, narco-politicians served as link with the Maute group, a reason how the Maute group was able to have firearms which President Duterte was even amazed how come this group can have such kind of weapons.

According to Heydarian R.J, the Islamic State (IS) new doctrine, a product of changing circumstances on the ground, had three elements: 1. High-profile terror attacks prime targets in the west and major capitals around the world al-Qaeda; 2. Expansion of lone wolf operations against Kafir (infidel) regimes, which mostly involved some elements of coordination with and logistical support from the IS command; 3. The establishment of Wilayats (governorates) across the developing world particularly in Muslim-majority regions of Africa and Asia. Since the 1990's Mindanao has been particularly attractive targets for transitional terror group, ranging from al-Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI).

Between July and August 2014, various Jihadist groups in Mindanao pledge Bay'ah (allegiance) to IS leadership. By 2016, they openly received full recognition by the IS leadership, which designated them as the harbingers of dawla Islamiyah Willayatul

Mashriq (Islamic State-Eastern Region) under the overall leadership of Isnilon Hapilon.

This explains the linkage between the Maute group and ISIS.

More particularly, the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC) published a report explaining the linkage of ISIS of Iraq and Syria to the East Asia Wilaya composed of three countries Malaysia, Indonesia and Philippines which the Maute group and ASG are linked. The operations of Maute group and ASG was confirmed by IPAC saying that it was funded by the ISIS Central. Dr. Mahmud Ahmad, a Malaysian who sits in the inner circle of the command structure of ISIS Central controlled recruitment as well as financing and has been the contact person for foreigners wanting to join the pro-ISIS coalition in the

Philippines. The statement coming from the ISIS Central commanding the ISIS in Indonesia to help ISIS in the Philippines reads:

> "If you find it difficult to go to Sham (greater Syria) because of cost and security concerns, why not try the Philippines? Truly, our brothers in the Philippines are awaiting your arrival, why are you slow in answering the calls?" Call them soldiers of the State (Jundul Khilafa), IS fighters, IS of east asia.

The IPAC claimed that the fund used in the attack in Marawi by the Maute group and ASG directly came from the ISIS Central as well as local sources. The process of sending the money comes from Syria, Indonesia, and Malaysia then to the Philippines through Western Union, a popular money remittance center in many countries.

With regards to local funding, the Maute couple and their contact abroad were believed to have facilitated fund transfer before and during the war. Incidentally, soldiers found 80 million in cash and checks in Marawi houses; however, it was not clear if this money belonged to the

Maute group and ASG. President Duterte accused the Maute group of raising funds through illegal drugs.

The government implemented various Countering Violent Extremism policies before and during the Marawi siege; however, most of these policies failed and resulted to what became the Marawi siege. The Philippine Primer defines terrorism, "as the premeditated use or threatened use of violence or means of destruction perpetrated against innocent civilians or non-combatants, or against civilian and government properties, usually intended to influence an audience." Moreover, the Philippine provides fourteen pillars and action against terrorism to wit: Supervision and implementation of policies and actions of the government against terrorism; Intelligence coordination; Internal focus against terrorism; Accountability of public and private corporations and personalities; Synchronizing internal efforts with global outlook; Legal measures; Promotion of Christian and Muslim solidarity; Vigilance against the movement of terrorists and their supporters; equipment; weapons and funds; Contingency plans; Comprehensive security plans for critical infrastructure; Support of overseas Filipino workers; Modernization of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police; Media support; and, Political, social and economic measures.

Policies and strategies shall go along for without strategy that connects to the objectives of policy, it will not satisfy said policy. In the Philippine context, there is gap in the conceptual flow from policy to strategy. Strategy refers to the art of projecting and directing the extensive military operations of a campaign, which might be a sequence of battles. Military strategy is the art on the employment of battles to gain the objectives of war. In other words, strategy forms the plan of war. The distinction between strategy and tactics is somewhat blurred; however, as Evered R pointed out strategy deals with deployment over wide spaces, long time and large movements and before contact with the enemy. Whereas tactics deal with actions on the battle field itself. Strategy is the comprehensive direction of power; and tactics is the immediate application of power. Despite these theoretical distinction, it is often impractical to separate strategy from tactics because each not only influences but merges into the other.

In truth, Philippine countering violent extremism with its attendant policies, strategies and tactics has been in place to counter violent extremism. As mentioned, the enactment of Republic Act No. 9372 also known as Human Security Act declares that the State protects life, liberty and property from act of terrorism. This allow the government security forces in the view of Bhattacharji to pursue warfare with non-state groups in order to protect the Filipino people. The Internal Security Plan (Oplan Bayanihan) during the administration of former President Benigno Aquino III is to counter insurgency and terrorism. This provides strategic guidance for the performance of the AFP in protecting the Filipino people. However, Duterte's over focus on the campaign against drugs early in his administration neglected the threat coming from the group like the Maute.

According to the video of one of the Maute group members, the government did not fulfil its promise to the Bangsamoro necessitating jihad in Muslim Mindanao.

The crisis did not end after the death of Maute brothers, and the Emir of ISIS in the Philippines, Isnilon Hapilon. Lives loss and destruction of the city, business and livelihood destroyed are impossible to return. According to the Armed Forces Spokesman Restituto F. Padilla Jr. the number of lives lost in Marawi after more than four months of battle is from 982 to 1,000; 158 were government troops; 777 were terrorists; and 47 were civilians. According to Franco, as of the last phase of the fight in October, Marawi remains desolate with 90 percent of civilian population displaced to nearby municipalities and towns with 700 militant, killed along with 153 members of the security forces, with fighting expected to end in "10 to 15 more days."100 According to Panzo, as of the war in September, government forces had suffered 151 casualties, civilians 47, and the Maute group fighters 695.101 According to Maboloc C.R., five months after quelling the violent siege in Marawi, the AFP reported that 802 militants, 160 government forces, and 47 civilians have been killed.102 Padilla clarified that by October, too, government troops were able to clear 69 buildings over the weekend. However, he added there are still 200 buildings in about 5-7 hectares that are up for clearing by the military. The military are concentrating in this area with more or less 200 facilities including mosques, and other important offices and places. Ideally, the State pursues coherence of policies, warfare strategy and tactics in its fight against violent extremism and terrorism. Wherever there is terrorism or before terror happens, government provides security measures and warfare strategy, if necessary, in order to maintain peace and stability in a place. In reality, the government and its armed forces are often faced with the problem in reconciling its tactics during actual conflict situation. There is therefore a need to surface such variation and contradiction as shown in Philippine CVE and terrorism and AFP warfare strategy in Marawi siege. This way, implications may be drawn to help in furthering a broader understanding on CVE and terrorism and other attendant issues. The expression of implications is by way of suggesting recommendations as well.

Government and AFP warfare policies and strategy and tactics must be coherent to achieve the goal in protecting the people while ascertaining their security and safety to eventually defeat any groups involved in violent extremism and terrorism. As revealed in the findings of this study and as confirmed by crucial sectors, the presence of Maute group in Marawi City was a public knowledge before the Marawi siege happened. The group conducted operations in the city for two years before they attacked Marawi under the nose the National government, city government and AFP as many civilians and other sectors of Marawi were fully aware of such operations. However, there was no ample security measures put in place to stop their plans.

The government and the AFP provided security measures when conflict had already taken place. As pointed out by the government and AFP,

they have two levels of warfare strategy that depend on the degree of threat posed by non-state armed groups and other enemies of the State: (1) Countering Violent Extremism; (2) Anti-Terrorism warfare strategy. On the first level, the government and AFP implemented Clear-Hold Support Methodology for Muslim communities that is socio-culturally sensitive, inclusive and acceptable with all stakeholders; it envisious to build trust, confidence and alliance with MILF and MNLF, local government, ARMM, Religious organizations, and the organization of the Sultanate. In the case of Marawi, the clear hold-support methodology was not properly implemented. Despite civilians reports on the threat of the Maute and other militants in the city, such methodology failed to respond effectively as Marawi siege was not averted.

If the AFP's Clear-Hold support methodology was properly implemented before the Marawi siege, the Maute group and its threat would have been detected before months or years earlier. Therefore, appropriate security measures could have been put in place that early. Because of years of neglect and apparent lack of seriousness on Maute's threat as shown in their oath taking of allegiance to ISIS, the AFP acted only when it was already late as it had to confront the Maute in a brutal urban warfare. As such, even a window of negotiation in the early days of the war would have to be put aside.

Moreover, the Whole of the Nation approach policy which aims to re-establish the Cabinet Committee for Internal Security with Muslims religious leaders, traditional leaders, politicians from ARMM purposely to synchronize them with national goals was also short of proper implementation as religious leaders and politicians were absent in many instances of visioning before the Marawi siege. It is ironic because the Whole of Nation approach policy actually monitors and synchronizes programs and project of the government in countering violent extremism.

Additionally, the government intelligence units usually provide intelligence information on countering violent extremism particularly in knowing extreme Islamists and their manifestations; radical support groups, communities, order of battle factors (e.g. composition, disposition, strength figures), However, such intelligence information and reports did not come and thus proper security measures were not put in place to stop the operation of the Maute.

More particularly, the Intelligence units failed in providing authentic information about the presence of the Maute group, their force, firearms, members, allied groups, and their plans to attack the city making it easy for the Maute group to penetrate Marawi before the Marawi siege. What the Islamist radicals did was simply to masquerade as participants in World Ijtima of the Tabligh that was held two or three days before the war with checkpoints and police visibility were of no use then.

As above-mentioned policy and other attendant civil military operation failed, it was inevitable that the government and AFP upgrade strategy from typical CVE approach to launching the AFP counter-terorism

warfare that started when it tried to capture the Maute brothers and Isnilon Hapilon at Brgy. Basak Malutlut on May 23, 2017.

Indeed, as the world knows, the combat operation of AFP destroys the city of Marawi aggravated with the strong resistance shown by the IS-Ranao leading to what becomes of today's Marawi and its people mostly in diapora while many remains desperate in evacuation centers. As of today, the city itself remains in sorry state of desolation. The collateral damage of the war was staggering and the cost both its destruction and rehabilitation is almost unimaginable in financial term let alone in humane and moral realm. It is reinforced with the fact that military soldiers were not well trained in urban setting of war. They had to resort to bombing, the main reason why the war lasted for a long period of time and also the cause of huge damage in the city. Because of this, their operations were delayed in securing the civilians and the city itself. Even the Maute group members helped the civilians to evacuate the city. The fact that the military soldiers have no good tactics to defeat the Maute group during the first phase of the war, the civilians, their houses and properties became the main casualties. The military barred them to go to their houses to save their families and secure their belongings. Civilians have to evacuate the city themselves without the help from the city government and the military force.

According to Domingo Almase specific and complex local and contextual variables, trigger the root of internal conflict while resulting into casualties. To avoid it accordingly, there is a need to adjust policy and strategy framework and not to fall to sweeping at times, fanatical attitude to war. In the case of Marawi siege, the military and anti-negotiation approach was applied with much urgency that basically led to war between the AFP and the non-state groups. Had negotiation been allowed huge loss and destruction of the city could have been averted. The peace building approach in this case was set aside and that combat operation became the last and final resort.

Previously according to Manalo Esaquito, the AFP had good policy and warfare strategy on countering terrorism; it was able to degrade the force of the Abu Sayyaf group in a number of encounters. However, in the case Marawi siege, though the government and the AFP was able to defeat the force of the Maute group and Abu Sayyaf it was done with such a high price considering the loss of lives, damage, and destruction of the city.

According to Rommel Banaloi, the government has declared policy of crushing terrorist groups through combined police and military efforts. However, the government often miscalculates the strategy of rebels groups with those of Islamic radicals like the Abu Sayyaf, Jemaah Islamiyah, Ansar Al-Khilfa and others. The government focuses on combat operation while not able to conduct appropriate tactics in terms of addressing the source of increasing numbers, support, and military force. Banlaoi called this as "complex adaptive system" with a superb survival instinct. It is aggravated with underlying issues of abject poverty, inefficient governance, ethnic conflict, clan feuding and religious or ideological intolerance. This is basically what happened before the recent siege with the formation of

linkages between the Maute group, the Abu Sayyaf and ISIS International. As underscored in previous chapter, one of the factors that led Marawi siege is bad governance and the failure of the city government in countering extremism and terrorism as essentially linked with precondition or root causes of conflict like other parts of Muslim Mindanao.

According to Minerva Nasser-Eddine, increased violence of violent extremism in both national and international scene is due to unaddressed root causes of violent extremism and that governments find arm struggle or militarization as the only way to stop the intolerable act of non-state groups. Responding to the root causes of conflict means that approaches to countering violent extremism need to be embedded in consideration of social, economic, political and historical context. In the case Marawi siege, the root cause is basically attached to long standing political question and development which the city government failed to deliver. With regard to economic and social causes, the rapid increase of recruitment by the Maute Group is basically facilitated due to poverty, unemployment and other long standing economic and social issues.

According to Soliman Santos, counter-terrorism has arguably cost more innocent civilian lives and created more human rights violations than terrorism. One danger would be not to take the terrorism or violent extremism problem seriously enough at its own level when there is a need for immediate counter-measures. Sometimes, effective counter-action are held back by valid human rights concern. Still, terrorism, in the main sense of deliberately targeting civilians to spread terror or extreme fear among the civilian population, is itself violation of human rights, including the most basic right to life and freedom from fear. For Santos, as long as the counter-violent extremism and terrorism do not observe humanitarian rights and not concerning political agenda, the counter-measures will not be effective and still will create another problem in countering extremism both to the civilians and to the non-state group.

Violation of human rights during Marawi siege is a big issue given that many civilians died and lost their properties, houses, and businesses. While talk of rehabilitation of the city is on-going after two years or so since the war, it is not clear what is the state of government on countering violent extremism and terrorism. Many civilians are still not able to visit their place, as they are still living in evacuation centres waiting for the government to provide them food and shelter. Meantime, non-state armed groups are still in existence and continuing with their ideological, political and military mobilization. It must be a lesson for government to develop effective countering violent extremism measures not necessarily those that often violate human rights and security.

According to Esaquito Manalo, success in combating terrorism is predicated on the availability of timely and accurate intelligence. One approach to assuring timely information in combating terrorism involves conventional human and technical intelligence capabilities that penetrate terrorist groups and their support systems. An equally important approach is through investigative police efforts. Collecting tactical police intelligence

aids in monitoring terrorists' activities may be crucial to tracking terrorist bands. The national intelligence effort relies on collection arrangements that exist also with many friendly government. However, the case of Marawi seemed to be a surprise to intelligence community. The military just got information about the presence of Maute-ASG leaders from the local. And without any investigative report and collaboration with local sectors, the military would be put in difficult situation because of the terrain or setting of the city. Manalo added that long term intelligence programs to combat terrorism involve collection and analysis of data that address history, culture, religion, politics, psychology, and security conditions. In the case of Marawi siege, local residence was not even aware of the attack of the military against the Maute group while they were not even aware of Maute group staying in nearby houses of the city.

According to Borum, radicalism is a pathway or at least a necessary precursor for terrorism, although there are many people who are radical in their ideas and religious practices but they do not engage in terrorism. And there are many terrorists who are not deeply ideological and may not have been radicalized by their group in traditional sense. Thus, counter violent extremism programs must consider the case of such groups on what really their beliefs or ideology. In the case of Marawi siege, there are many factors that led the members of IS-Ranao join or become extreme in their ideology; but it is not necessarily that all their members are radical. They were enticed with opportunities and ideals promised to them by their leaders.

One of the factors that led to Marawi siege is because of ideology to establish Khilafa in the city of Marawi. Hussain and Erin confirm that one of belief of the extremist or Islamist groups is that political sovereignty belongs only to Allah rather than the people. Islamist extremism believes that Shariah should be state law and that it is the duty of Muslim to pledge allegiance to an Islamic state that reflects these principles. Given this too polarized vision on ideal of such non-state group like the IS-Ranao, appropriate CVE program could have been promoted in years before the Marawi siege reminding the people of the principles of Shariah must be applied fairly to both Muslims and non-Muslims living in the city of Marawi. However, for more than two-three years, there was no effective CVE programs conducted with much seriousness in the city and the rest of Lanao areas.

The Marawi siege provides lessons to many sectors including the national government about countering violent extremism and terrorism. It shows that political leaders and crucial stakeholders must get involve in discussing the programs, policies and security measures in countering violent extremism. In this way, the government and other agencies will be able to know what appropriate policies and programs to be implemented in order to avoid war, collateral damage, loss of lives and properties.

The city and national government must address the causes or reasons why militant groups could easily threaten the government and the rest of the Muslim community. The failure of government to negotiate with radical non-state actors like the Maute group must raise question whether

negotiation is really a closed option during war situation even if, after strategic and tactical calculation, the cost is greater than risk or outcome as shown in the destruction of Marawi and the immense burden of her rehabilitation

Additionally, political leaders must always consult and collaborate with traditional leaders of the city. Until today, people give them importance and respect. The Marawi siege could have been avoided if traditional leaders were allowed to handle the situation as they have been proven effective in diffusing threat of violent extremist groups in the areas of Lanao.

Given the loss of lives and gravity of destruction caused by Marawi siege reinforced with the failure of Philippine CVE and AFP counter-terrorism warfare strategy, there is a need to make a comprehensive review of current countering violent extremism and terrorism program of the government and how they can be made to adapt to new types of militant ideology emerging in Muslim communities. Policy and strategic warfare review has to be conducted comprising cross-institutional lines of government as the fight against extremism and terrorism cannot simply be left to the military.

Most crucial, too, Muslim communities, their leaders and progressive sectors must be involved in forging comprehensive and effective CVE and terrorism policy and programs. Informed nuancing of extremism and radicalism and the like should be provided so that Muslims would not all be marked as the same with those actually engaged in violent extremism and terrorism. Sweeping generalization void of context and history would often cause more problem than solutions.

Finally, for the pain of war to fully heal, the Islamic City of Marawi should be made to stand again proud of its heritage and tradition. This is the best antidote to radicalism in the area and would send a clear signal that the government and the people of Marawi are ready to move on once again to rebuild their lives and their beloved city.

CONCLUSION

This study is about Marawi siege and the perception on countering violent extremism and terrorism by crucial sectors of Meranao, namely: LGU officials, NGO leaders and Ulama or religious leaders. The Marawi siege was the most historical incident that happened in the city of Marawi, its people and its leaders. They lost their families and relatives with many Meranao people displaced and in diaspora. Moreover, Filipino soldiers lost their lives defending the lives of the people of Marawi. The government and the AFP did their best way to defeat the non-state Maute armed group and its affiliates and allies and eventually liberated Marawi on October 22, 2017.

This study aims to answer the numbers of questions amongst the people of Marawi. Why the Marawi siege happened in the first place? Why and how such tragic incident could occur in the city of Marawi? The concept of government countering violence and conflict is analyzed including AFP's adopted policies, strategies, and tactics before, during and after the Marawi siege. It underscores crucial stakeholders' perception on those policies,

warfare strategy, and tactics in countering violent extremism and terrorism in Marawi.

The study raised four questions: 1. what led to Marawi siege, its precondition and triggering factors? 2. How does government employ countering violent extremism and terrorism warfare during the Marawi siege? 3. How did Meranao leaders view Philippine violent extremism on Marawi siege? 4. What are the implications in the variation between Philippine countering violent extremism and terrorism with people's perception on Marawi siege? The researcher identified twenty-one variables of this study. The researcher used mixed method of both qualitative (in-depth interview) and quantitative (survey) among non-government organization (NGO) leaders, Local government unit (LGU) officials and Ulama or religious leaders as respondents.

As shown in the study, Marawi siege happened due to many factors comprising both precondition and triggering ones. These are defined by history of the Bangsamoro struggle with their self-determination that transformed into Islamic radical strand represented by ISIS-affiliated Maute Group. In truth, the conflict has loomed for years in the Province of Lanao del Sur and the City of Marawi but due to neglect and inattention, it eventually resulted into a big chaos called the Marawi siege. The government and the AFP, in fairness, provided security measures, warfare strategy and tactics. However, they are bereft of proper implementation.

The war in Marawi lasted for 153 days with Philippine soldiers liberating the city at a heavy price. The Maute Group and Abu Sayyaf Group were eventually dislodged while leaving lessons to the government, AFP, leaders, civilians and many others about the danger of unchecked radical ideology that gets entangled with narco-politics, proliferation of firearms, and so on. Intelligent discussion, debate, and arguments must be done about the Marawi siege so that similar situation could possibly be anticipated and averted. This modest study is done with such view in mind.

People must stand with what is right and that wrong system and policies must be abandoned. Concerned sectors must accept their mistakes and learn lessons to avoid such tragedy like the Marawi siege.

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