

GROUP 3

WORKSHOP OUTPUT AMI GENERAL ASSEMBLY & CONFERENCE 2011

DAY 3

GUIDE QUESTIONS

- Does your Armed Forces have programs that promote interfaith dialogue and mutual respect?
- What problems does your armed forces encounter in promoting interfaith dialogue and how are these addressed?
- In what ways are your militaries engaged in promoting respect and tolerance among all faiths in your larger societies?

ARMED FORCES PROGRAMS THAT PROMOTE INTERFAITH DIALOGUE & MUTUAL RESPECT

- Philippines
 - 4 years ago MOP interfaith dialogue with evangelical chaplains, catholic chaplains & Imams to understand the Islamic Religion
 - Attended by the Secretary of National Defense, Chief of Staff AFP and the Major Service Commanders
 - There are similar activities at the local levels

ARMED FORCES PROGRAMS THAT PROMOTE INTERFAITH DIALOGUE & MUTUAL RESPECT

- US

- Even as early as post-WW1 there are programs that promote closer cooperation between Catholics & protestants
- In many US bases & ships they make space for religious activities non-denominational (all religions)
- Some problems after 9/11 and the Fort Hood Shootings (2009)
- Chaplain services to soldiers take into account ethnic, gender & cultural sensitivities

ARMED FORCES PROGRAMS THAT PROMOTE INTERFAITH DIALOGUE & MUTUAL RESPECT

- Europe
 - Decisions on religious programs are made by policy-makers
 - Very good cooperation between Catholics & Protestants
 - In countries with Muslim soldiers, they allowed to have their own barracks that can serve their needs (i.e. food)

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY THE ARMED FORCES IN PROMOTING INTERFAITH AND HOW ARE THESE ADDRESSED

- Philippines
 - Not much problem, the Bishop-Ulama Conference promotes interfaith dialogue
 - There are limitations in the issues discussed due to sensitivities on other religious beliefs
 - More in the stage of making friends rather than on substantive issues

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY THE ARMED FORCES IN PROMOTING INTERFAITH AND HOW ARE THESE ADDRESSED

- US

- various dialogues in cities & other places but the post-9/11 mood provides challenges to Inter-Faith dialogue
- Key issue is “How do you draw the line between being vigilant and being prejudiced?”
- Interfaith Dialogue is not so much an issue in the military but it is in the larger world
- In the past acts of terrorism (pre-9/11) due to religious fanaticism were glossed over because of sensitivities of the act being associated with Islam

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY THE ARMED FORCES IN PROMOTING INTERFAITH AND HOW ARE THESE ADDRESSED

- Europe

- Trend of being spiritual but not being a part of organized religion (this is also an emerging worldwide trend)
- Problem of balancing tolerance for another religion on the one hand and affirming one's own faith (i.e. Protestant soldiers attending Catholic masses should adhere to its rituals)

In what ways are your militaries engaged in promoting respect and tolerance among all faiths in your larger societies?

- **Philippines**

- Philippine Constitution enshrines respect for all religion
- Imams-Pastors-Priest Conference at the local level and AFP/PNP actively participate especially the commanders

- **US**

- Military often leads the way in inter-faith dialogue and civil society follow
- One “advantage” in the military is when it is ordered by the commander

In what ways are your militaries engaged in promoting respect and tolerance among all faiths in your larger societies?

- **Europe**

- In Germany armed forces help in building closer relationships on Catholics & Protestants
- Austria similar and even include activities in overseas deployment
- Imams are now allowed to establish mosques. Muslims 2nd largest religious group in some countries
- Direction is that there are increasing numbers of Muslims in Europe so there is a need to understand Islam more.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!