

LT. GEN. RODOLFO C. GARCIA

“We need to veer away from the mindset of just relying on the military option”

Secretary Rodolfo C. Garcia was appointed by the President on July 9, 2007 as Chairman of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) Peace Negotiating Panel for Talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). His involvement in the peace negotiations started when he was named co-Chair of the Joint Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities, a GRP-MILF mechanism mandated to monitor and implement the ceasefire agreement. This was during his incumbency as Vice Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Soon after his retirement from the military service, he was appointed as Undersecretary of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process and later becoming a member of the Peace Panel, which he now heads. His in depth knowledge of the multi-faceted situation in the conflicted Southern Philippines stems from his experience as a soldier who served a significant time of his career in Mindanao and by his work in the ceasefire mechanism which had drastically reduced the level of conflict since 2003.

The foregoing statement accurately outlines what our fellow Paconian whom I am about to introduce has been busy lately.

After attending Paco Catholic School, he enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering program of the University of the Philippines-Diliman and thereafter joined the Philippine Military Academy. He took up his Master in Business Management at the University of Nueva Caceres in Naga City and Master in Public Administration at the Divine Word University Legaspi City. He took up several courses here and abroad relative to his job in the armed forces including the Senior Executive Course Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies in Hawaii, USA; the Brigade Commander’s Course Training Command, Crisis Management Course Command and General Staff College, Command and Staff Course in the Singapore Armed Forces.

Among the major positions he has held are GRP Panel Chairman of the GRP-MILF Talks with the rank of Cabinet; GRP Panel Member; Undersecretary at the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process; Assistant to the President Fortune Tobacco Corporation, Inc.; and Member of the Board of Governors of the Philippine National Red Cross.

He had a very colourful military career that was capped with his designation as the Vice Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines with the rank of Lt. General. He was Commander of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Northern Luzon Command; Division Commander 5ID of the Philippine Army (Major General); Division Commander 6ID of the Philippine Army (Brigadier General); Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations GHQ of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Brigadier General); Brigade Commander 603rd Brigade of the 6ID of the Philippine Army (Colonel – Brig Gen); Group Commander of the Intelligence and Security Group of the Philippine Army (Colonel); Defense Attaché to Jakarta, Indonesia (Colonel).

His other special duty assignments and special activities include:

- Head, AFP Delegation to Korean War Commemoration
- Commander, AFP Disaster Response Task Force
- Chairman, Modernization Board, Armed Forces of the Philippines
- Commander, AFP Task Force HOPE
- Chairman, GRP Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities
- Chief, Office of the Ethical Standards and Public Accountability Armed Forces of the Philippines

Gen. Garcia is one of the most decorated soldiers in the Armed Forces of the Philippines having received several special Distinction, awards and decorations during his entire military career. He was awarded the Philippine Legion of Honor (Degree of Commander), an award granted to a person in recognition for his eminently meritorious and valuable service rendered in a position of major responsibility and given by the President of the Republic of the Philippines to high-ranking military officers and civilian dignitaries including the Chief of State, Prime Minister or Head of Government and other persons holding high and respectable positions whose accomplishments can seldom be surpassed such as jurist, parliamentarian, statesman, diplomat, journalist and scientist.

He was awarded eight (8) Distinguished Service Stars (DSS), an award given by the Chief of Staff of the AFP to officers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines for eminently meritorious and valuable service rendered in a position of major responsibility.

He has one (1) Gold Cross Medal (GCM) for Gallantry in Combat, three (3) Bronze Cross Medals (BCM) for Conspicuous Courage, two (2) Military Merit Medals with Bronze Spearhead Devices (Combat), eight (8) Military Merit Medals, four (4) Military Commendation Medals plus other Awards & Decorations.

Fellow Paconians, I have the honor to present to you a true man of peace who once said -- *“We need to veer away from the mindset of just relying on the military option”* -- **General Rodolfo C. Garcia.**

*Prepared and read by: Reynaldo A. Mones 1971
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