Murdoch University's ***Asia Research Centr****e and* ***Politics and International Studies Program*** *Present*

CONFLICT, SECURITY AND POLITICAL REGIMES IN ASIA
A Public Seminar Series

Ethnic Conflict, Islamist Insurgency and the Peace Process in Mindanao, Southern Philippines

A Public Seminar presented by Dr Nathan Quimpo

According to media reports, the Philippine government and the armed Islamist separatist movement – the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) – may sign a peace agreement later this year. Will such an agreement finally bring about peace in the southern Philippine island of Mindanao after almost forty years of war? Signing a peace agreement with Moro rebels is not really difficult for the Philippine government. It signed peace agreements with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) three times (1976, 1987 and 1996). Implementing its part of the pact is something else. The weak and corrupt Philippine state – a "patrimonial oligarchic state" with ethnocratic tendencies at that – simply does not have the capacity, will or imagination to bring about peace, development and security in Mindanao. Only the active involvement of third parties – Philippine peace groups and international actors (governmental and nongovernmental) – can ensure that the peace process does move forward. Thus far, the peace engagement of international forces, such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and some individual Muslim countries, has been ineffectual. The U.S. and Australia are becoming more involved, but they would have to tread gingerly and be sensitive to both Philippine and regional sensitivities. The failure of the GRP-MILF peace talks or of another peace pact on regional autonomy for Muslims could very well serve to strengthen the hand of extremist groups and make Mindanao even more of an island for incubating terrorists.

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12:30 pm

Senate Room
Murdoch University

All Welcome

Dr Quimpo is currently a lecturer in international relations at the Department of Political Science of the University of Amsterdam (UvA). He finished his M.A. in International Relations at UvA and Ph.D. in Political Science and International Relations at the Australian National University in Canberra. He has also taught at the Departments of Political Science and Sociology of the University of the Philippines. Before shifting to an academic career, he was a long-time political activist in the Philippines and was very deeply involved in the movement against the Marcos dictatorship. During the Marcos period, he lived and worked in Mindanao for over seven years, establishing research links early on with Moro rebel groups.