

4. The consolidation and enlargement of democratic space and the meaningful reassertion of civilian supremacy over the military through:

- a. the professionalization of the military.
- b. the implementation of the constitutional provision on the dismantling of private armies, vigilantes, the CHDF and other para-military units.
- c. the repeal of all repressive laws left behind by the Marcos regime.
- d. the repeal of PD 1850 and the transfer of all cases involving military offenses against civilians from military tribunals to civilian courts.

5. A serious and thorough conversion study in preparation for the possible pullout of American bases in the Philippines by 1991. Meanwhile, Congress must enforce the constitutional provision banning nuclear weapons from Philippine soil.

6. A strong resolve to support the popular call for a continuing dialogue by government with the National

Democratic Front, the Moro National Liberation Front, the Cordillera People's Liberation Army and all other rebel groups towards a meaningful resolution of the problems that divide our society.

Congress must realize that peace is not hammered out on the negotiating table alone. Congress must legislate wisely and with compassion to create the climate that would sustain a just and lasting peace.

IV. CONCLUSION

As we usher in our first democratically elected Congress in 17 years, let us not forget that this body, as the people's representatives, must reflect our aspirations. The solutions to our problems do not lie solely with them. It is our role as a pressure group to participate in the formulation of these solutions.

Legislative enactment of our peace agenda, however, would still be empty without the political will of the entire government, the military establishment, the various warring groups, and most important, the Filipino people, to make this peace a reality.

The People's Christmas Ceasefire and the Challenge of Forging Genuine and Lasting Peace (Coalition for Peace Manifesto, 6 January 1988)

Today, January 6, marks the end of the people's Christmas Ceasefire, a three-week period during which citizens committed to peace raised their collective voice and called for a halt to the fighting in our land.

Those three weeks affirmed our belief that peace is possible in our country. However, they also made us realize that the attainment of genuine peace is a lifelong challenge that calls for an unwavering commitment.

While the government and the National Democratic Front quickly responded to the people's demand for a holiday ceasefire with their own declarations of limited truce periods, the call was opposed by forces of violence who prevented our people from enjoying a meaningful holiday season.

Majority of Filipinos, remained victims of the subtle violence inflicted by poverty and political marginalization. However, cruder forms of violence haunted and continues to haunt our people: the murders and kidnappings of political candidates by rival and warlords; and ambushes, raids and encounters perpetrated by government forces, the

New People's Army, civilian vigilantes, loyalist troops, separatist groups in Mindanao and the Cordilleras, and other armed groups roaming the country.

Our people are helpless in the face of such violence. Yet they are the most numerous victims of an inhuman war they neither want nor understand.

Against this grim backdrop of mindless violence, we take heart in the gains made by cause-oriented people's organizations in pressing for a people's peace agenda. Besides the 96 hours of truce declared by both the government and the NDF, we achieved the following:

1. A multi-sectoral human peace chain (Bigkis-Kapayapaan) was formed in Dagat-Dagatan, Navotas last December 15, the eve of the People's Ceasefire.

2. The Katiwasayan People's Peace Center was set up and multi-sectoral peace consultations were conducted by peace advocates in Naga and Legaspi.

3. Children's immunization and peace education programs were held in Quezon, Sorsogon, and Cebu.