

Does the philippines have a chance?

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Book of Peter Wallace as reviewed by Nash Gibril Introduction To have a glance on the a report prepared by Mr. Peter Wallace in its book entitled “ Does the Philippines have a Chance? ” you can see the naked truth about Philippines negative side. The identified realities then hamper development of the country. These realities were very complex that intertwined with each reality. Once the one problem exists it bred other problem or simply called the domino effect. The interrelated detrimental realities maybe made Mr. Wallace to raise the question, “ does the Philippines have a chance? The challenge now for each and everyone of us from mere tao up to the national leaders is draw a positive recommendation from the said report that could possibly be the or at least part of the solution to the embedded problems of the society and expectedly could at least lessen the problems if impossible to eliminate. In this book review, I will first present the world view of the author in per subject matter then I will try to find myself whether I am amenable to the idea or not and then offer an alternative position if not satisfied, otherwise, I will confirm the practicality or truthfulness of the author’s concept.

Sad Political Environment- bred poor governance and corruption Is Mr. Wallace is right when he stated “ politics is the heart of the problem? Indeed, he is right in saying so. The politicians now are the most powerful individuals along with the businessmen in the country. The political leadership controls almost everything, once Mr. Politician held in the throne, first he/she easily acquires wealth through kick-backs, red tapes and any other illegal manner, and then control follows. They [politician] controls the legislation and/or implementation of the laws – they will atify what is justifiable and directly or

indirectly on their advantage to their vested interest, otherwise they will be out of the circulation. Another attitude of the political leadership is the so called dynasties - once he/she occupied the post, the tendency is he/she don't want to vacate or leave the office as far as the constitution allows; and much worst, there were instances of strategic maneuvering, for example, the father is the mayor, the son or daughter is the vice mayor, and a son/wife/daughter is the ABC President, what a strategy.

In that structure of ascendancy, the tendency is there's no check and balance, as the ideal structure is designed for. In other words, the government is very susceptible to graft and corruption practices. And another form of dynastic attitude of the politician is as much as possible; the family can hold strategic position in the political system, let say, there is one governor, a congressman, one mayor, and so on and so forth.

And once there corruption, the immediate effect is basic services like education, health and sanitation, livelihood assistance, and others, that are expected from the government were not delivered in timely manner, thus, the poor remained to be poor, and those in the position and power are reaching the sky for their personal satisfaction achievements. Moreover, the political leadership is driven by their own personal agendas and not for the common good of the general public. For instance, the villain of the contemporary administration could be the hero tomorrow and the hero for today could be the villain tomorrow.

There's no such thing as solidarity of agenda and aspiration for the betterment of the country in terms of socio-economic upliftment. The poor governance also effect low collection of revenues. The businessmen and all

other tax payers would always find ways to evade from paying the appropriate tax of their properties. In some cases, these tax evaders are collaborating with revenue officials in order for them to lessen the amount due from them. Lastly, the competence of some of the political personalities are also low level as to some extent, the rich, regardless whether they are competent or not they can be enthroned to office as they have the money to finance electoral expenses whether legal or illegal like in the form of vote buying. The result of this reality is the formula of Mr. Wallace that a weak leadership is equal to political instability. Uncontrolled population growth The next issue is the question of uncontrollable population growth. The question now is population growth detrimental to the society? Or the huge population could be utilized by the government in attaining its desired goal of development? If to rely on the assumption of Mr.

Wallace, definitely, population growth hampers economic development of the country in a sense that the population shares the national wealth of the country. To elaborate further, when fewer people shares the national wealth of the country, the government can spend more high value-added products that can help drive the economy. On the query if it is possible that the huge population can be the resources of the government in accomplishing its goal, I don't think so. It could be possible if the government have the funds in equipping its citizens with necessary skills and expertise like of the case of China.

As context, Philippine is very limited on agricultural skills that are sometimes antiquated knowledge are pass from the parents to the siblings, that's why we cannot expect enhanced agricultural production output from it. The issue

on population control is further hindered by the position of the church [Catholic] that does not allow the passage of the Reproductive Health Bill. The church opposes the law as accordingly, to engage in artificial contraceptive is against the tenet of the Catholicism. However, as presented by the author, many western countries that predominantly Catholic are practicing the desired method of birth control.

Why do the church leaders oppose the alternative solution to the problem? On the other hand, the Philippine president is in off-hand in the issue, why? Is it because once he/she insist or at least influence the passage of law, he/she would be condemned by the majority Catholic believers? Lastly, being the highest position in the government must not look back his career and must take a risk to ensure the confirmation of something that would benefit majority of the country citizens. In addition, as suggested by Mr.

Wallace, the government shall provide option for family planning along with intensive information dissemination and advocacy through educating of the parents. Education The enrollment rate in the country is used to be at the forefront in Asia in terms of secondary education (77%) and tertiary level (31%) ratios. And accordingly, the figure is continued to improve, however, the other Asian countries improve much faster, the tendency now is there will be times that Philippines will be overtaken. But is the great number of enrollment is sufficient enough for the education sector of the country?

What about the quality? Why is it that huge number of college graduate can land a job? Is it because of lack of job opportunity or less knowledge acquired or both? What about the curriculum? To start with, let's check the quality of the education. Philippine universities now seldom got international

recognition in terms of efficiency of curriculums – only few were internationally recognized as prominent institution, among to the recently published universities are University of the Philippines, De Salla University, Ateneo University, and University of Southeastern Philippines in Davao City.

If the government could implement the free education for primary, elementary up to secondary, the better, however, I can't support the idea of privatizing the tertiary education, it only add to the problem of the parents in sending their siblings to universities. Once the tertiary education is privatize, the government no longer can impose regulation in terms of tuition fees and all other fees for very common ground, the school is business that is aimed at profit. Rather, I'm in full support to the idea of curriculum enhancement along with method of teaching improvement.

But the most important is the accountability of the education sector officials in their expenditures. There must be no corruption in the education/academe as this institution is the molders of future leaders and officials. Infrastructure The inability of the government to provide necessary infrastructures like paved roads, bridges, dikes, irrigation canals, solar driers, warehouse and others, add the hardship blocks of its citizens. The productions of agricultural products are somehow affected by the roads, bridges, driers and warehouses.

The infrastrucres are stock capital of the government that attracts more produce of agricultural products, and it also invites investors to come in and have business in our localities, when there is infrastructures, there will be more businesses thus income comes. However, this infrastructure constructions/provisions are attached to various issues, like prolonged

bidding procedures, palakasan system/kumpare system of winning the bidding, breaching of contracts, contractors/sub-contractors incapacities, kick-backs to some government officials, and poor quality outputs.

Now with these circumstances, what could be the common tao expect from its government. These sad realities must be changed by the government officials as well as the contractors, to have a sense of responsibility and credibility for the benefits of common public must be considered. On the other hand, self-centeredness shall be minimized if not erased in the blood of the Filipinos, otherwise, decade hardship will commence in the coming future. Antiquated agriculture

In terms of agriculture sector, no doubt that we have the wide arable and fertile lands ideal for many types of agriculture products like rice, corn, banana, coconut, coffee, cacao, pineapples, and a lot more. But the problem in this sector are also wide as the lands of the country, for example, the appropriate farming technologies, capital of small farmers, inequitable distribution land ownership, the pro-hybrid and anti-GMO, and lack of necessary infrastructures to support the produce of the farmers.

These interlinked realities can only be addressed if the government and farmers will work hand in hand for the resolution of the issues attached to the sector, otherwise we will be of great dependence in terms of food consumption from other neighboring countries. Lastly, in my opinion, the government shall gradually shift to the sustainable agriculture to evade possible environmental impact of the extreme usage of chemicals like pesticides and fertilizers in farming. Job creation In the statement of Mr. Wallace “ give the poor a job, and they no longer poor” is absolutely right.

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In community organizing work for example, the intervention must be attitudinal change with the given technological skills/knowledge and not by just providing temporary solutions to the circumstances. For the case of humanitarian relief, there must be a timeframe of when to stop giving relief goods, as it will create a culture of dependency. And for the issue of providing skills, the TESDA must intensify its campaign in providing necessary skills training as this will propel individual income. The Court System The Supreme Court being the highest court of the land shall perform its mandated and expected functions as well.

While the integrity and competence of the justices are unquestionable, in some way or another, their knowledge on technical, economic and technological matters are somehow limited, thus, I support the call of Mr. Wallace that the justices before having a final verdict on issues pertaining to technical, economic and social consequences must have to consult to experts on the particular field where decision will have to be made. My statement however, does not pertain to mining as my personal judgment that mining exploration must be deferred awaiting political maturity and integrity of the public officials.

Security Frankly speaking, I am not convinced with the formula of Mr. Wallace that “ Security and Development = Peace + stability. In my own opinion though it could be bias for other as I am Moro, holistically seeing the matter, the only cure for the Moro rebellion is the granting of self-determination. Aside from that, there will no sustainable solution to the problem as the Moro are just retracting their decade’s stolen sovereignty

and freedom that their fore parents enjoyed for centuries long ahead of the Philippine republic.

My inclination to the self-determination is further backed by the experiences of Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) as the failure of the government to impose the desired development. My position, is why not let the Moro people chart their own destiny through Federal State and/or any other form? The notion is, you cannot impose development to the discontented and untrusting people, they [Moros] has the discretion to develop themselves. However, I support the statement of Mr. Wallace that government cannot win by fighting the rebels, and cannot negotiate peace in isolation.

For me, the statement is suggesting for more peaceful solution and not by fighting as in war, everyone is a loser. Conclusion What is my personal assessment on the statements and/or arguments of Mr. Peter Wallace? In a fair and square answer, I agree to most of the notions of Mr. Wallace, whether it is the negative aspect about Philippines and it's leaders/citizens and the suggestions and recommendations he offered, except for two aspects: (1.) the promotion of the mining industry, and (2. the formula of resolving Moro insurgency in Mindanao [but no comment on the NDF/NPA]. My stand is influenced by my belief that as long as the Philippine political environment including the judicial system would not be changed, then one cannot expect that the ideal regulations of extracting earth minerals will be followed by the mining companies. The foreign countries he referred were all successful in that endeavor [mining industry] considering that there

government are in good status unlike in us which corruption is becoming a phenomenal culture.

While we know that development could positive and/or negative effect on the environment, what I suspect is more on negative side effects considering the attitude of the government officials and the mining companies as well. And for the solution for the insurgency, I am not convinced with the formula as I support self-determination is the foundation of any peace and development in the concern areas. Now, to answer the question, does the Philippines have a chance? I am optimistic that there could be chance for the Philippines to develop socio-economically, as long as the recommendations of Mr.

Wallace and all other development planners must be considered by the government and by every one of us. The political leaders cannot solve the problem alone, so the cooperation and participation of its citizens is required, otherwise we cannot expect any change. The change we dreamed of must start in ourselves, by being vigilant, law abiding individuals. Indeed, development is a great challenge for each Filipino. No one but Filipinos only can develop its own country.