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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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Combined Kinetic and Non-Kinetic Approaches in defeating the Sword of God

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OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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Executive Summary

Title: Combined Kinetic and Non-Kinetic Approaches in Defeating the Sword of God

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Thesis: The most effective strategy to defeat the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) is a combination of calibrated kinetic action and dedicated non-kinetic approach employed by a well-trained and well-equipped military that is supported by a legal action agency and concerted agencies of the government.

Discussion: The resurgence of kidnapping-for-ransom (KFR) operations of the ASG from 2013 to date posed a regional security and economic concern not only for the Philippines but also for nations affected by the incidents. The Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) has been battling the Abu Sayyaf since 1991, utilizing political, economic, and military means to address the group. However, the GRP in recent months, employed purely kinetic approach to respond to the upsurge of KFR activities in southwestern Philippines.

An examination of the past GRP administrations reveals a number of successful methodologies that defeated various ASG cells and criminal organizations. A combination of these methodologies can form an effective strategy to finally stop Abu Sayyaf's reign of terror and banditry. There were numerous successful kinetic operations applied by the Philippine military and police in the 1990s and 2000s against the ASG and several lawless organizations. These kinetic operations were intelligence-driven, supported by law enforcement agencies, and involved surgical operations of small but well-trained and well-equipped special operations forces as opposed to more heavy-handed operations that used conventional infantry forces supported by massive air and ground firepower. Kinetic operations reduce the number of enemy forces but, "they do little to reduce recidivism" or to disrupt the emergence of lawless armed groups primarily due to social grievances such as inequality and lack of opportunities for the Muslim population.¹ Meanwhile, the GRP non-kinetic approaches applied heavily during the term of President Benigno Aquino III (2010-2016), were generally successful in addressing some of the primary grievances of people that led to the reduction of ASG-initiated activities in some parts of Sulu Archipelago and Zamboanga Peninsula in recent years. Non-kinetic approaches involved countering the narratives of the ASG through civil-military operations (CMO), poverty alleviation programs, and delivery of basic public services such as education, health, public safety, housing, welfare, and transportation. However, the overemphasis on non-kinetic actions during Aquino's term allowed the ASG to recruit, train, and equip, leading to its resurgence in 2013.

Conclusion: The GRP was applying approaches that can defeat the ASG but lacked the necessary focus and continuity brought about by changes in the Philippine leadership's internal and external policies. The Philippines needs to continue the non-kinetic measures it started since 2010 to address the issues of ASG exploitation and socioeconomic deprivation in the long-term and to counter the narratives of Abu Sayyaf. Non-kinetic actions drain the ASG of materiel support, human resources, and sanctuaries. However, continuous but calibrated military kinetic actions supported by a strong legal action group are necessary to eliminate the threat of Abu Sayyaf.

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Preface

I spent most of my younger military career in southern Mindanao, Philippines. As a Marine lieutenant, I was assigned in Central Mindanao, Sulu, Basilan, Zamboanga City, and Palawan. I participated in numerous combat operations against the Abu Sayyaf Group, Moro National Liberation Front, Moro Islamic Liberation Front, New People's Army, and other criminal organizations in the Philippines. I have experienced firsthand the difficulties of patrolling the jungles of Mindanao and the difficulties of locating a very elusive enemy to engage them in combat. I joined the intelligence community in August 2006, and from then on, I spent several years analyzing the intricacies of the ASG and the Southern Philippines Separatist Groups. I participated in many special operations that led to the neutralization of many ASG leaders and members. I also participated in intelligence activities that involved planning, collecting, analyzing, and disseminating of information for the strategic, operational, and tactical commands. I had experienced working with US SOF in Mindanao and came to understand the importance of the military partnership between the Philippines and United States and how valuable the support of the Americans was in the country's campaign against the ASG both in the tactical and operational level. Many of my colleagues will agree with me that the present behavior of the Abu Sayyaf is not in any way connected to a political aim but rather a selfish endeavor similar to the forms and motives of piracy. Hence, it is proper to treat the Abu Sayyaf based on how criminals involved in heinous crimes should be treated. However, addressing the grievances of the Muslims in southern Philippines is equally important in order to drain the ASG of human resources and will preempt the creation of similar groups in the future. With all my experiences, both in the tactical and operational commands, I came up with the arguments in this paper, hoping that it will provide a different perspective for those who are generally interested in security studies in Southeast Asia.

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Introduction:

The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) stole the limelight in the international and the Philippine media once again when it beheaded two of its Canadian hostages, John Risdell on 26 April 2016 and Robert Hall on 13 June 2016. The beheadings occurred when the victims' families failed to pay the ransom demands. The Canadians are two of the four tourists the ASG kidnapped from an island resort in Davao City, Philippines in September 2015.² Zachary Abuza describes the situation in southern Philippines, "the situation once again poses a regional security and economic concern as the ASG stepped-up its maritime piracy in recent years and posing a threat to regional trade in ways that it never had in the past."³ On 24 August 2016, the Abu Sayyaf beheaded a Filipino teenager, Patrick Almodovar after the victim's family failed to pay his ransom of at least 1 million pesos (\$20,000). Following Almodovar's beheading, the newly seated Philippine President, Rodrigo Duterte ordered the deployment of 9,000 troops in Sulu Archipelago to go after the Abu Sayyaf.⁴ The deployment was by far the biggest since the emergence of the ASG in 1991.

The reduced combat operations of the AFP from 2010 to 2016 apparently allowed the ASG to regain lost maneuver space leading to its resurgence in recent years. The response of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) in 2016 focusing on kinetic operations contributed to the decrease of KFR incidents to date. The heavy handed kinetic operations applied by the AFP however, might further alienate the local Muslim populace, which the GRP primarily avoided in the past. The anger and grievances resulting from the collateral damages, displacements, and damages to properties brought about by the large scale combat offensives might fuel violent extremism and sprout more insurgent groups in the near future. These were the reasons that prompted the AFP to apply intelligence-driven and surgical operations between 2005

and 2007 to minimize or avoid the collateral damages that massive air and ground firepower can accidentally produce when they are employed.

While it has long been proven that a military solution alone cannot address the roots of the problem in Mindanao, this paper will argue that the operational tempo of kinetic actions should not drop while the GRP performs non-kinetic measures to address the Muslim grievances, to discourage the Muslims from joining the ASG, or to form lawless armed groups. Kinetic operations are defined as “actions in the battlespace that involve direct fires, indirect fires and other resources specifically intended to violently kill the enemy.”⁵ However, in order for kinetic actions to be more effective, they must be done in a calibrated manner and focused by good intelligence. There are lesser possibility of causing collateral damages when the GRP applies calibrated kinetic actions as the actions only involve small but well-trained and well-equipped counteraction units. Conventional operations in the other hand, suffer more risk of causing collateral damages due to the utilization of massive firepower that inevitably cause damages to properties or loss of civilian lives.

Kinetic actions will counter the ASG atrocities and reduce the enemy forces. Meanwhile, non-kinetic actions, when performed in areas influenced by the ASG, drain the group of materiel support, human resources, and sanctuaries. Non-kinetic operations are “actions in the battlespace that shape the environment without directly engaging the target audience (TA) with violent weaponry.”⁶ Further, non-kinetic approaches involve countering the narratives of the ASG through CMO, information operations (IO), poverty alleviation programs, and delivery of basic public services such as education, health, public safety, housing, welfare, and transportation. Hence, to defeat the ASG, the GRP needs to employ a combination of calibrated kinetic and dedicated non-

kinetic approaches employed by a well-trained and well-equipped military that is supported by a legal action agency and concerted agencies of the government.

This paper discusses the contribution of Joint Special Operations Task Force – Philippines (JSOTF-P) through the Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines (OEF-P) in advising and training the AFP to enhance not only the latter’s counterterrorism (CT) capabilities but also its status as an organization in its pursuit of becoming a well-trained and well-equipped military. This paper also discusses the vital contributions of the Inter-Agency Legal Affairs Group (IALAG) as well as the Rewards for Justice Program in the campaign against the ASG in enhancing the law enforcement and intelligence operations respectively. Additionally, this paper analyzes the successful kinetic, non-kinetic, and law enforcement operations resulting from President Arroyo’s creation of the Anti-Terrorism Task Force (ATTF). Finally, this paper analyzes President Aquino’s “whole of nation” approach under the IPSP-*Bayanihan*.

An examination of the resurgence of the ASG kidnapping for ransom (KFR) operations in 2000, 2008, 2011, and 2013 reveals a definite pattern. Consistently, KFR incidents surge when the operational tempo of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) declines in Sulu Archipelago. The AFP as well as the Philippine media assessed that the resurgence of KFR incidents within and outside the ASG stronghold in Sulu Archipelago was indicative of the group’s renewed vigor. In the findings of a RAND Corporation report in 2016, while the ASG initiated incidents showed a declining trend from 2000 to 2014, there were noticeable upsurges of ASG initiated incidents in 2003, 2005, 2009, and 2011 (See Figure 3).⁷ As observed, when the AFP diverts its focus, the AFP’s offensives against the ASG also falter. The decline in the operational tempo allows the Abu Sayyaf to recuperate, recruit, train, and conduct atrocities.

Only two prominent Abu Sayyaf leaders remain today. They are Radullan Sahiron and Isnilon Hapilon, who were among the original leaders since the ASG's conception in 1991. These leaders still cling to the ideology of establishing a separate Islamic state in southern Philippines. However, the AFP did not continue pursuing these leaders with the same ferocity as it did between 2002 and 2007. In 2008, AFP civil-military operations (CMO) activities in Sulu Archipelago took precedence over kinetic operations.⁸ The JSOTF-P observed that while it was relatively easy for the AFP to perform CMO, the AFP units lacked the capacity to fix and finish targets.⁹ The drop of kinetic actions in early 2008 led to the resurgence of ASG KFR operations in the middle of that year. In late 2010, the AFP again shifted its focus to non-kinetic operations under former President Benigno S Aquino's "whole of nation" approach to counterinsurgency (COIN) – the Internal Peace and Security Plan (IPSP)-*Bayanihan*. IPSP-*Bayanihan* prompted AFP operations to focus on CMO in Sulu Archipelago rather than the relentless pursuit of the Abu Sayyaf leadership that significantly contributed to the resurgence of ASG KFR operations in 2013.

Philippine Army Colonel Eusaquito Manalo points out that,

The Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) since 1991 exhausted a number of approaches in addressing the ASG. It has retaliated militarily, prosecuted terrorists, preempted terrorist attacks, implemented defensive measures, and addressed some of the causes of terrorism. To some degree, all suffer from limited effectiveness and applicability.¹⁰

While the colonel may have identified all the GRP's methods to address the problems surrounding the ASG, his statement in 2004 that all the approaches of the government "suffer from limited effectiveness and applicability" may only have been true at that time. The GRP since 1991 has performed nearly all the suggestions of international security experts and analysts wherein the GRP's approaches were successful in most instances, but lacked the necessary focus

and continuity. It became clear for regional security analysts that not one approach is applicable to defeat a group that is composed of cells that behave differently.

Background: The Evolution of the ASG to a Criminal Organization

The ASG, which means “sword of God” is one of the smallest and most violent *Salafi* jihadist groups in southern Philippines. Founded by Abdurajak Janjalani in 1991, the group in its early years sought a separate Islamic state in the Philippines after splitting from the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). When Philippine police killed Janjalani in 1998, his younger brother, Khadafi Janjalani took over the leadership. Since then, the ASG lost its ideology and evolved into a mere KFR gang.

The GRP launched police and military operations targeting the leaders of the ASG in Basilan, Sulu, and the neighboring Zamboanga Peninsula from 1991 to 1998. These operations resulted in the death of most of the group’s key leaders. The reports of the “successes against the ASG in 1998 gave the public the impression that the ASG has been effectively decimated and no longer capable of terrorizing the nation.”¹¹ However, remnants of the ASG recuperated and reemerged in 2000 and conducted a daring raid in Sabah, North Borneo kidnapping a number of foreigners and took them to Sulu Province, Southwestern Mindanao.

Many studies about the ASG suggest that to quell this group, the GRP must address the Muslim grievances brought about by socioeconomic disparities, inequality, corruption, and injustice. These efforts are largely associated with the theme: “winning the hearts and minds” of the people. While this strategy was successful in most parts of Mindanao, this approach might not work against the ASG at present. Most cells of the ASG epitomize a lucrative opportunity for people living in the most impoverished and ungoverned areas in the Philippines. The motivation

of the new members of the Abu Sayyaf is primarily centered on greed, identity, and a sense of belonging.¹² Rommel Banlaoi says, “The majority of ASG members are not motivated by the promise of an Islamic State or the virtue of jihad, but by the allure of money and power that comes from the barrel of a gun.”¹³ These factors along with the weak law enforcement system in these parts of the country apparently encouraged young Muslims to join the ASG most especially when military and police operations extremely decreased. On the other hand, the presence of the two senior leaders (Sahiron and Hapilon), still indicates the existence of the ASG’s ideological agenda. In recent years, the ASG has chosen Sahiron, who is a native of Sulu and the most religious senior leader, as the overall Emir of the ASG. Meanwhile, Hapilon heads the ASG cells in Basilan who is advocating for a shift to the teachings of the Islamic State of Syria and the Levant (ISIL).¹⁴

It is interesting to note that at present, the ASG hold its KFR victims only in the island province of Sulu. In past decades, the Abu Sayyafs kept their kidnapping victims in the jungles of Basilan, Zamboanga Peninsula, and Tawi-Tawi (See Figure 1). In recent years however, most of the kidnap victims were brought only to Sulu. There were few reports identifying other localities in Mindanao, but the high-profile cases seem to point to Sulu alone. Meanwhile, the ASG faction in Basilan under Isnilon Hapilon has not engaged in KFR activities since 2014. Hapilon was the first in the Philippines to declare bai’at to Abu Bakar (the leader of DAISH).¹⁵ While Hapilon’s ASG cell may have turned to Islamic State (IS) teachings, such is not the case for ASG cells in Sulu even if the latter carry the IS flag. Abuza explains, “for the most part, ASG cells have simply used the imagery and threat of IS to raise the psychological stakes on the hostages, their families and governments, to command higher ransoms.”¹⁶ An example of this was the German couple who were captured and brought to Sulu in April 2014. Abuza adds, “The ASG made the German government’s withdrawal from the anti-IS coalition a condition in addition to the 250 million

pesos (\$5.5 million) ransom. But as soon as the ransom was paid, the demand for Germany's withdrawal from the coalition was dropped immediately. It is as if they really didn't have any ideological affinity."¹⁷

The ASG is composed of cells with leaders as its center of gravity. Most often, these cells act on their own. When a leader of a cell is killed, or arrested, his group will lose direction and eventually crumble.¹⁸ However, if there are other cell leaders that remain, they will absorb some of the underlings of the leaderless cells, but most members of leaderless cells return to civilization to blend with the populace and lie low. While the ASG cells have certain similarities, treating them as one and the same would be a severe misconception. As established by Bob East, the "Abu Sayyaf had fractured into several criminal cells whose sole agenda was kidnapping for ransom."¹⁹ Both Banlaoi and Abuza agree that each Abu Sayyaf cell has a leader who can act independently. Hence, it is safe to assume that the ASG in Sulu is different from the ASG in Basilan. This assumption is supported by a 2016 RAND report stating that the differences of the Abu Sayyaf groups in Sulu and in Basilan are largely based on each of the island provinces' culture and history.²⁰

Declines of the AFP Op Tempo and Fluctuations of ASG Violent Incidents

In 2000, the AFP pulled most of its forces from Sulu Archipelago to address the growing threat posed by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in mainland Mindanao. That same year, the ASG reemerged and attacked an island resort in Sipadan in the state of North Borneo taking twenty hostages who were mostly foreigners. In May 2001, the Abu Sayyaf raided a resort in Palawan Island, taking several tourists, including some Americans. These attacks came when the AFP was engaged in an offensive campaign against the MILF. The military returned and stepped-up its operations in Sulu Archipelago between 2002 and 2003. In this period, KFR activities were

noticeably scant but interspersed with combat engagements and IED attacks in the southern cities of Mindanao. Although the AFP deployed troops back to Sulu and Basilan, they maintained the bulk of the military in Central Mindanao to contain the MILF. The GRP's attention was divided into two fronts that still afforded the ASG of substantial space to operate and conduct atrocities.

The AFP deployed troops near the Liguasan Marsh in Central Mindanao in November 2002 to respond to the terrorist attacks perpetrated by the MILF and Pentagon Gang in some areas in Southern Philippines.²¹ Skirmishes between the military and MILF occurred from December onwards. In February 2003, the AFP launched a major operation against the MILF in a camp near Pikit Town in North Cotabato, Mindanao. These events, along with other issues confronted by the AFP that year, such as the July 2003 mutiny mounted by AFP junior officers caused certain distractions on the campaign against ASG in Sulu Archipelago.²² Immediately after the mutiny incident, the AFP focused its efforts on indoctrinating and monitoring units that were tagged as potential government destabilizers, further neglecting the ASG campaign in Mindanao.

Several bombings perpetrated by the ASG in 2005 pushed the AFP to deploy troops in cities and population centers to assist the Philippine National Police (PNP) in safeguarding vital infrastructures. The bombings caused another distraction and divided the attention of the AFP in the ongoing campaign against the ASG in Sulu Archipelago.²³ Successful kinetic operations in Sulu Archipelago increased only when JSOTF-P established a permanent presence in Zamboanga City at Camp General Basilio Navarro. Since then, JSOTF-P elements immersed with Philippine military units deployed in Sulu and Basilan to better synchronize the AFP operations with U.S SOF.²⁴ The move led to more concerted kinetic operations combined with non-kinetic actions that eventually resulted in the killing of several ASG senior leaders. However, a 2016 RAND report stated that in early 2008 "the AFP shifted the balance of their efforts from largely kinetic to an

approach that favored CMO.”²⁵ The shift of operations largely contributed to the increased KFR incidents in mid-2008.

There were twenty four reported cases of kidnapping with as many as fifty victims in mid-2008 to 2009.²⁶ Two of the recorded high-profile kidnappings within this period were that of journalist Ces Drilon and her TV crew in June 2008 and three International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) officials in January 2009.²⁷ Zachary Abuza argues that the spate of kidnappings was attributed to the reduced operational tempo of the AFP in 2008.²⁸ The focus of the AFP in August 2008 was the MILF atrocities in Central Mindanao involving Commander Umbra Kato of the MILF who led an attack on Lanao Del Norte following the Supreme Court’s nullification of the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain.²⁹ More so, the significant gains of the AFP between 2002 and 2007, wherein about 127 ASG were killed and 38 captured, apparently “prompted the Philippine Army to withdraw a large number of its forces from Sulu, leaving the bulk of operations with the Philippine Marines by mid-April 2008.”³⁰ In 2009, the Philippine Marines amplified its offensive operations to address the increased kidnapping incidents. The Philippine Marines killed Albader Parad in February 2010.³¹ With no hostages remaining in captivity in 2010, the frequency of the military and police kinetic operations once again declined.³² Moreover, the US SOF personnel started pulling out from deployment in Sulu and Basilan as early as 2009 due to “a combination of budget pressures in Washington and higher priorities for SOF in spots like Iraq” and Afghanistan.³³ The phasing out of US forces from their deployment in Sulu and Basilan Provinces also meant the decrease of technical support provided to the AFP units, which also affected the operational tempo of the AFP. Despite this shortfall, the AFP still was able to contain the ASG from conducting KFR operations. The AFP shifted its operations to CMO beginning in 2010.

After a short period of inactivity, the ASG resurfaced in July 2011, abducting three Filipinos in a coastal area in Zamboanga City. Later kidnappings include a Filipina in Ipil town in Zamboanga Peninsula in September, an Australian national in same town in December, and two Europeans in the island of Tawi-Tawi in February 2012.³⁴ It is interesting to note that although some of the victims were foreigners in the kidnappings between 2002 and 2012, these incidents were confined to Sulu Archipelago and Zamboanga Peninsula with few high-profile KFR cases. Beginning in 2013, however, the ASG went out from its traditional sanctuaries and initiated kidnappings in the Tri-Border Area (TBA) (See Figure 2).

It was in 2013 when the Abu Sayyaf KFR operations aimed at foreigners became rampant in the TBA. The TBA is part of a Sea Line of Communication (SLOC) that connects the Lombok and Makassar Straits to the Celebes and Sulu Seas and the surrounding coastal areas of Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines (See Figure 3). The ASG conducted raids along Malaysian coasts in Semporna in 2013, Lahad Datu in 2014, and Sandakan in 2015.³⁵ The ASG have not been this audacious since the Sipadan hostage crisis in 2000 and the Dos Palmas kidnapping in 2001. The new ASG leaders seemed to have emulated their predecessors who masterminded the numerous overseas and domestic high-profile kidnappings in the 1990s and early 2000s.³⁶

In 2016 alone, the ASG held an estimated fifty-five individuals for ransom, most of whom were foreigners from Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Germany, and South Korea.³⁷ Philippine media services reported that the ASG pocketed at least 353 million pesos (\$7.3 million) from ransom payments in the first half of 2016.³⁸ These developments in the region posed a concern to countries using the TBA as a trade route. The increased kidnappings in the region infuriated the Malaysian and the Indonesian governments, prompting them to pursue increased military cooperation with the Philippines.³⁹ In September 2016 during the Association of Southeast Asian

Nations (ASEAN) Summit, the Australian Prime Minister voiced concerns on the growing threat of terrorism in Southeast Asia (SEA) and proposed more intelligence sharing and stronger coordinated measures in the region.⁴⁰

The Need for a well-trained and well-equipped Military to fight Terrorism

During OEF-P, the US SOF under the JSOTF-P trained, advised, equipped, and assisted the AFP. In its pursuit to be more effective in fighting the ASG, the AFP received capabilities from JSOTF-P in the tactical, operational, and intuitional levels in terms of doctrine, organization, training, and materiel. A well-trained and well-equipped military entails these capabilities that were less existent in the Philippine military decades before OEF-P. These capabilities include sophisticated technical intelligence-gathering equipment, modern communications, reliable command and control, various mobility assets, and enhanced operational know-how and tactical skills that were vital in the AFP's CT efforts conducted from 2002 until today.

Immediately following 9/11, the United States, in its global CT efforts, suddenly took notice of the growing threat on terrorism in SEA. The United States Government (USG) targeted the ASG and the Jemaah Islamiyah, an Indonesia-based terrorist organization that has links with Al Qaeda (AQ) and has also been involved in violent extremism from the 1990s up to the present. The USG immediately negotiated with the GRP and offered to assist, train, and equip the nation's CT forces. The two governments reached agreement in early 2002 and immediately convened the OEF-P. The USG instantly deployed approximately 1,300 US forces in the Philippines in 2002, and eventually, an average of 500 to 600 SOF personnel rotated for deployment thereafter.⁴¹

The US SOF personnel, who were initially under the Joint Task Force (JTF) -10 and later under the JSOTF-P, performed Foreign Internal Defense (FID) from 2002 to 2014 that was summarized in a 2016 RAND report:

They (US SOF) provided operational advice and direct support to Philippine Security Force (PSF) operations against the designated threat groups, they helped train, equip, and improve the Philippine forces' capabilities, and they conducted CMO and IO in conjunction with Philippine forces to enable combat operations, increase the population's support for the Philippine government, and reduced the safe havens available to the armed groups.⁴²

SOF units trained, advised, and assisted PSF to be more effective in the latter's fight against the ASG and elements of the JI. In 2003 to 2004, US SOF assisted the AFP to form additional Light Reaction Companies (LRC) for the first Light Reaction Battalion of the Philippine Army by training and equipping the LRCs with night fighting equipment, secure communications, and appropriate weapons that further enhanced the CT capabilities of the AFP.⁴³ In 2005, the HQ of the US JSOTF-P moved to southwestern Mindanao and became the SOF hub for the remaining years of the OEF-P. JSOTF-P expanded advisory activities in Central Mindanao as well as in Sulu Archipelago by embedding SOF teams to Philippine military field units with the intent of advising and assisting the lowest tactical levels to be more effective in the CT efforts.⁴⁴

The assistance of JSOTF-P in the CT efforts of the AFP led to the degradation of the ASG capabilities in Sulu Archipelago. However, JSOTF-P culminated in 2014 after the transition phase of the operation to the AFP had been completed. Nevertheless, the US SOF were successful in providing operational advice and direct support to PSF operations against the threat group.⁴⁵

One of the vital contributions of JSOTF-P in the Philippine CT efforts was Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) Support.⁴⁶ ISR enhanced the AFP's operational capabilities and effectiveness by reinforcing the human intelligence (HUMINT) operations of

Philippine intelligence services. Starved of funding for decades, the AFP mostly relied with HUMINT and very limited signal intelligence (SIGINT) to support the conduct of its combat operations.⁴⁷ The JSOTF-P provided the AFP with the needed intelligence-collection disciplines such as advanced SIGINT, imagery intelligence (IMINT), and measurement and signature intelligence (MASINT) that led to the many successful operations against the ASG.⁴⁸ The US deployed a variety of ISR platforms such as the P-3 aircraft and tactical unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) that were used by PSF extensively.⁴⁹

Among the successful calibrated kinetic operations of the AFP that were supported by US SOF and US ISR equipment were the following: the sophisticated satellite tracking and eventual killing of Aldam Tilao aka Abu Sabaya off the coast of Zamboanga Peninsula on 22 June 2002;⁵⁰ the early morning raid in the hinterlands of Sulu Island that led to the killing of the ASG Emir, Khadaffy Janjalani on 04 September 2006;⁵¹ the recruitment of an ASG informant using US money that led to the pre-dawn raid on the mountains of Sulu Island ending in the killing of the ASG leader, Jainal Antel Sali Jr aka Abu Solaiman on 16 January 2007;⁵² the insertion of snipers in the hinterlands of Maimbung in Sulu island guided by a US tracking system that led to the killing of Albader Parad on 21 February 2010; and the use of precision-strike capability or smart bomb that led to the killing of Abu Sayyaf commander, Gumbahali Umbra Jumdaile aka Dr Abu in the hinterlands of Patikul town in Sulu Island on 02 February 2012.⁵³

The GRP also recognized that the use of “special operations capability for the conduct of direct action, including surgical operations and stealth exploitation, counter-terror operations and unconventional warfare will also be needed.”⁵⁴ Due to the successes of kinetic operations supported by modern equipment during OEF-P, the GRP seemed fit to require “additional availability of rotary-wing assets with night vision capabilities for vertical lift and enhanced

intelligence capabilities, to support both SOF and general purpose forces, for a more effective and precise counter-terror as well as counter-insurgency operations.”⁵⁵ While the AFP modernization program during Aquino’s term pointed to the enhancement of active deterrence against foreign intrusion in Philippine territories, the defense department considered the COIN and CT aspects in procuring modern military equipment. Hence, the procured military assets as seen today can address both internal and external concerns of the country.

Inter-Agency Legal Action Group to Support Kinetic Actions

Gerard Bradley in his article concludes that, “Punishment assures society both that crime does not pay and that observing the law is important; by doing so, it restores fundamental fairness and equality.”⁵⁶ Lawfulness against lawlessness must be instilled to the minds of people in Sulu Archipelago. The absence or the limited law enforcement operations in this part of the country encouraged people to resort to lawlessness as most people who committed crimes were not brought to justice. Hence, this evolution of the ASG to criminality must also be treated by the GRP with a legal approach that would show to the people that once a crime has been committed, there is a corresponding punishment for it.

Realizing the weakness of COIN and CT effort of the country, President Arroyo created the IALAG on 17 January 2006.⁵⁷ IALAG was “tasked to investigate, prosecute, monitor, and handle litigation processes of cases involving national security.”⁵⁸ The members of IALAG were the following: Office of the National Security Adviser, Departments of Justice, National Defense, Interior and Local Government, National Intelligence Coordinating Agency, AFP, PNP, and the National Bureau of Investigation.⁵⁹

IALAG was a concerted effort created for law enforcement operations that criminalized and delegitimized the insurgent and terrorist groups. IALAG hastened the litigation process against the enemies of the state and became a very effective tool in both COIN and CT efforts as it reinforced the legal aspect of the military and police campaigns. IALAG significantly changed the operational environment since law enforcement agencies were embedded with the military in the field to file criminal cases against the members of insurgent and terrorist groups. The military used the arrest warrants of insurgents and terrorists to pursue them even in population centers. Years before the implementation of IALAG, insurgents and terrorists without arrest warrants can freely visit their relatives and roam in towns and cities. IALAG, filed cases against all identified insurgents and terrorists that provided effective means for the military and police to pursue the latter anywhere in the country.⁶⁰ With coordination to the International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO) or INTERPOL, the GRP also was able to pursue insurgents and terrorists hiding abroad.

Due to the potency of IALAG in the COIN and CT campaigns, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), through its front organizations organized protest rallies against the IALAG all over the country, alleging widespread human rights violations of the AFP and PNP.⁶¹ Fearing for her drop in popularity rating (that would definitely affect the candidacy of her successor as the Presidential election was fast approaching), President Arroyo disbanded IALAG in June 2009.⁶²

Even Aquino recognized that, “fighting insurgency in the courtroom requires readiness to employ legal action and counter-action capabilities. When done hand in hand with military’s use-of-force, these will help in effectively neutralizing the vicious threats that insurgency brings to the security of the people.”⁶³ However, the GRP made little effort to enhance the legal battle against

the terrorists as no visible coordinating body was created or took the lead on the campaign against the ASG during Aquino's term.

One of the prominent contributions of the USG to the Philippines' legal fight against the ASG was the Reward for Justice Program. Under this program, "the US Secretary of State may offer rewards for information that lead to the arrest or conviction of anyone who plans, commits, aids or attempts international terrorist acts against US persons or property."⁶⁴ The program immensely enhanced the intelligence capabilities of the AFP and PNP resulting to the convictions of Abu Sayyaf leaders and the killing of the senior leaders of the ASG between 2002 and 2010.⁶⁵ Due to the large reward involved, Philippine intelligence agencies easily recruited informants even from within the ranks of the ASG. However, the GRP did not put emphasis on the reward program during Aquino's term. When Aquino's presidency ended, the Philippine Congress passed the House Bill No. 1703 on 19 July 2016 dubbed as "An act of establishing a rewards for information concerning terrorism program and appropriating funds therefor."⁶⁶ The House Bill which "seeks to provide a reward system for persons who provide information leading to the arrest or prosecution of terrorist or prevention of terrorist acts." The filing of the bill only showed that the GRP recognized the valuable contribution of the program in the campaign against terrorists referencing the GRP experience during OEF-P.⁶⁷

Concerted Effort of Government Agencies

The GRP formed the Anti-Terrorism Task Force (ATTF) on 24 September 2001.⁶⁸ The ATTF embodied the cooperation and cohesion of the entire government to fight terrorism. Manalo cites President Arroyo's fourteen Pillars of Policy and Action against Terrorism as he examines the CT efforts of the GRP at that time.⁶⁹ The fourteen pillars provided direction on interagency coordination and "integration of efforts and responses of the entire government machinery."⁷⁰

These pillars were supervision and implementation of policies and actions of the government against terrorism, intelligence coordination, internal focus against terrorism, accountability of public and private corporations and personalities, synchronizing internal efforts with global outlook, legal measures, promotion of Christian and Muslim solidarity, vigilance against the movement of terrorists and their supporters, equipment, weapons and funds, contingency plans, comprehensive security plans for critical infrastructure, support of overseas Filipino workers, modernization of the AFP and the PNP, media support, political, social and economic measures.⁷¹

With all the government entities involved, the effort provided the needed focus against the terrorists. The AFP, PNP, and other law enforcement agencies pursued the terrorist groups utilizing both kinetic and law enforcement operations. All other government agencies meanwhile, supported the AFP and PNP through non-kinetic means that focused on degrading the capabilities of the terrorists as exemplified in the 14 pillars. Furthermore, the ATTF was successful because of Arroyo's remarkable emphasis on the use of intelligence against the terrorist groups.⁷² Arroyo poured intelligence funds into the ATTF to support the military and police kinetic actions as well as to support other government agencies performing non-kinetic actions. Arroyo's policy seemed effective as the Abu Sayyaf were nearly decimated by the end of 2010. Arroyo's administration ended in June 2010 along with the ATTF.

In his thesis, Lt Col Charlton Gaerlan identifies the vital government agencies that should collaborate to support the AFP's COIN operations such as the Departments of Education, Health, Public Works and Highways, Interior and Local Government, Agrarian Reform, Agriculture, and Justice.⁷³ These departments along with the National Economic Development Authority, Cooperative Development Authority, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, PNP, National Intelligence Coordinating Agency, and National Bureau of Investigation in a concerted effort will be able to perform the following: Delivery of Basic Services, Education, Livelihood, Law Enforcement, Criminal Justice System, Re-integration of Rebel Returnees, Land

Reform, Cultural Understanding, Interfaith Dialogue, Strategic Communication, and Intelligence.⁷⁴ While the thesis of Gaerlan was narrowed to COIN campaigns, the tenet of his paper can be applied in the campaign against the ASG. Retired Marine General Juancho Sabban, who commanded the AFP units in Sulu Archipelago between 2005 and 2009, declared that the GRP needs to create a CT task force solely for the Abu Sayyaf.⁷⁵ It was during the general's time, when the ATTF backed by the US military was in full swing that led to the neutralization of the ASG Emir, Khadafi Janjalani in 2006 and ASG spokesman, Jainal Antel Sali aka Abu Solaiman in 2007.⁷⁶ The general believed in performing two-pronged approaches in the fight against the ASG. These approaches were the combination of kinetic and non-kinetic approaches, which he described metaphorically, "The Marines are carpenters in the morning, building houses and infrastructures for the people of Sulu. In the evening however, the Marines hunt the ASG."⁷⁷

The GRP did not continue the program of Arroyo during Aquino's term. Aquino instead opted to "uphold the primacy of the peace process."⁷⁸ The GRP adopted non-kinetic approaches immensely during the tenure of Aquino under IPSP-*Bayanihan*. The IPSP sought to shift the military solution to a whole-of-nation-approach.⁷⁹ The strategic directive was a people-centered security strategy that emphasizes the protection of human rights and civil liberties. The plan highlighted the "need to engage more stakeholders, national government agencies, local government agencies, civil society organizations, and community-based groups" in addressing insurgency.⁸⁰ The IPSP's end state was "Winning the Peace" by "winning the hearts and minds" of the people.

Regional security analyst observed that the IPSP downplayed the military and police kinetic actions. When the IPSP was implemented in 2010, the AFP focused its efforts on CMO in Mindanao. There was a dramatic decrease in kinetic operations against the remaining leaders of

the ASG. The strategy of the Philippines under President Aquino was centered on the government agencies' targeted annual activities for 'poverty alleviation'. Examples of which were "construction of community projects such as farm-to-market roads, footbridges, day care centers, solar dryers, school buildings, health centers, water systems, and small irrigation systems, among others."⁸¹ Moreover, government services to the poor included conditional cash transfer program (cash regularly provided to impoverished families), health related missions, livelihood projects, etc.⁸²

President Aquino's "soft" stand against the Abu Sayyaf was attributed to his peace talks with the MILF, which began in 2011. He did not want to instigate MILF factions and escalate the situation when the AFP attacks the Abu Sayyaf since the MILF "has forged new cooperation between the two organizations (ASG and MILF)," says Margaret Read.⁸³ In October 2011, nineteen Special Forces (SF) soldiers were killed in an ambush by a combined group of ASG and MILF in Al Barka, Basilan.⁸⁴ There was a public clamor for President Aquino to react punitively to the ASG and MILF forces involved in the ambush. However, Aquino instead ordered an investigation to the leadership of the SF, faulting the soldiers of the ambush and court martialing the unit's officers. The Department of Defense even reminded the AFP to observe the "status quo" of no troop movements in Mindanao in observance on the signing of the peace framework agreement between the GRP and MILF.⁸⁵ These GRP actions sent wrong signal to the terrorist groups as they saw the government being tangled with its commitment to the peace process, thereby, providing freedom for the Abu Sayyaf to step up terror operations as shown through the increased KFR incidents in Mindanao in recent years.⁸⁶ Further, due to the situation surrounding the GRP-MILF peace talks, a number of new terrorist groups emerged: Khalifa Islamiyah Mindanao (KIM) in August 2013, Ansar Dawlah Fi Filibbin in May 2014, al-Khilafah Philippines

(AKP) in August 2014, and Ansar Khalifah Sarangani (AKS) in September 2014.⁸⁷ The AFP could only sit down and watch as these developments unfold.

Conclusion

Since 1991, the Philippines has tried numerous approaches in addressing the ASG. While many analysts say that the GRP only achieved modest success in its campaign against the ASG, a close examination to the past efforts presented potential solutions that can readily be applied by the GRP today. While the country needs to continue the non-kinetic activities of the GCAs it has started since 2010 to address the issues of ASG exploitation and socioeconomic deprivation, the effort must be concerted to ensure that the area or people targeted for non-kinetic operations will produce the desired effect against the ASG. In consonance to these non-kinetic efforts, the GRP must pursue a calibrated kinetic action that is supported by legal action group and other law enforcement agencies of the GRP. The Philippines, can defeat the Abu Sayyaf only if there is continuity and focus in this strategy and this can be done through the creation of a task force composed of all the GRP entities.

Additionally, the AFP is still the viable force to assume the primarily role in the conduct of kinetic action against the ASG. For non-kinetic operations, the AFP has been studying the ASG for more than two decades and gained enough credibility to initiate programs that can be supported by the GCAs. The AFP and PNP can provide the information needed by the GCAs to implement their respective programs especially vital information that is beyond the GCAs capacity to obtain from areas plagued by ASG and other lawless elements or areas where government services cannot reach.

Moreover, the requirement for the AFP to effectively perform the campaign against the ASG is serious training and education coupled with advanced equipment and weaponry that can effectively decimate not only the ASG but the other enemies of the state as well. Having a well-trained and well-equipped military can already deter the emergence of lawless armed groups as the GRP will have the credibility under the eyes of the people that it can effectively decimate any armed group intending to sow terror and lawlessness in any part of the country.

The GRP must be able to show the people of Sulu Archipelago that it can bring criminals to justice while it continues to address the people's grievances. Intensifying the law enforcement capacity of the security forces will eventually ensure regard to the rule of law. There is a need to revive IALAG or create a similar organization that promotes cohesive efforts on law enforcement against the ASG and other lawless elements. This organization saves time and money as it ensures focus and continuity of law enforcement. As opposed to having no organized legal affairs group, the AFP and PNP will be in disarray as there will be no coordinating body that will interlock the kinetic and law enforcement operations into one collective effort.

The success of kinetic operations of the AFP in Sulu Archipelago was largely attributed to the partnership of the Philippines and United States during OEF-P. In fighting a common enemy and achieving common interest, the GRP must further capitalize on the willingness of other nations to fight the Abu Sayyaf.

To mitigate the effects of "distractions" on the campaign against the ASG, a task force armed with all the needed components of both kinetic and non-kinetic approaches of the GRP must be created. A task force entails focus and continuity, which are vital ingredients of an effective campaign against the ASG as shown in the past. Changes in the country's political environment and government policies contributed to the failure of the GRP to finally defeat the ASG. If Aquino

continued Arroyo's ATTF and other anti-terrorist programs, this paper may not be discussing about how to defeat the ASG by now.

Figure 1. Map of the Philippines



Figure 1. The Philippines. Source: http://www.vidiani.com/maps/maps_of_asia/maps_of_philippines/detailed_administrative_map_of_philippine

Figure 2.

Security Threats and Shipping Lanes in the Tri-Border Area

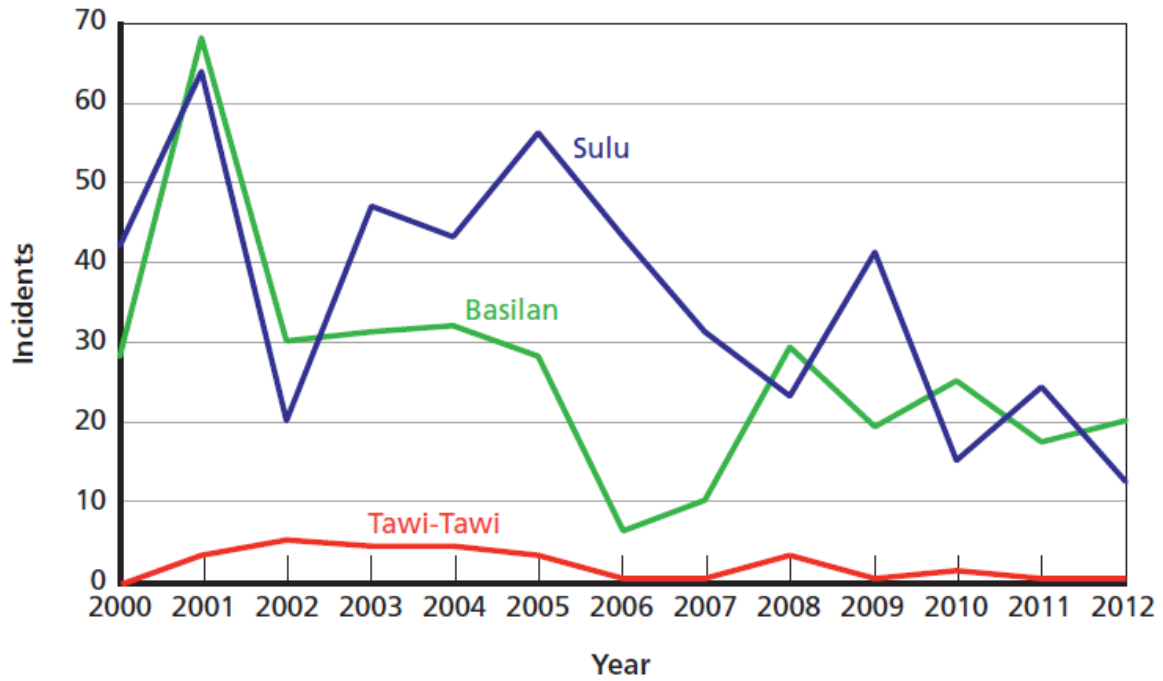
Trade in the tri-border area often involves supertankers that are unable to use the narrow, shallow Strait of Malacca. However, weak governance and security gaps threaten trade flows and fishing activities in the waterway.



Figure 2. Southeast Asian Sea Lanes. Source: https://www.stratfor.com/sites/default/files/styles/stratfor_large__s_/public/main/images/southeast-asia-shipping-insurgency.png?itok=dmKLPJRO

Figure 3.

Enemy-Initiated Attacks, by Province and Year



SOURCE: ESOC data.

RAND RR1236-8.1

Figure 3. ASG Initiated Attacks by province and year. Source: Linda Robinson, Patrick Johnston, and Gillian Oak, U.S. Special Operations Forces in the Philippines, 2001-2014," RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, Calif., 2016, 116.

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- ² The other tourists are Kjartan Sekkingstad, a Norwegian, and Marites Flor, a Filipina.
- ³ Zachary Abuza, "Trouble in the Southern Philippines: Problems and Prospects," *The Diplomat*, Apr 28, 2016. <http://thediplomat.com/2016/04/trouble-in-the-southern-philippines-problems-and-prospects/>
- ⁴ Cynthia Balana and Julie Alipala, "Army pours troops into pursuit; Abus ready for 'last war'," *Inquirer.Net*, September 2, 2016. <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/812066/army-pours-troops-into-pursuit-abus-ready-for-last-war>
- ⁵ Jordan Stern, "Civil Military Operations & Military Information Support Operations Coordination: A Non-Kinetic Ballast for Disciplined Counterinsurgency Operations," *Small Wars Journal*, November 01, 2011. <http://www.quantico.marines.mil/Portals/147/Docs/MCIIOC/IORcruiting/CMOandMISOCoordinationCaptSternSWJ.pdf>
- ⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁷ Linda Robinson, Patrick Johnston, and Gillian Oak, *U.S. Special Operations Forces in the Philippines, 2001-2014*, RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, Calif., 2016, xix.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 71.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, 71.
- ¹⁰ Eusaquito Manalo, *The Philippine Response to Terrorism: The Abu Sayyaf group*, Thesis for the Naval Postgraduate School, December 2004, 12, 73.
- ¹¹ Eusaquito Manalo, *The Philippine Response to Terrorism: The Abu Sayyaf group*, 3. The public impression was largely attributed to the death of Janjalani in 1998.
- ¹² Jamela Alindogan, "Inside Abu Sayyaf: Blood, Drugs, and Conspiracies," *Aljazeera*, July 24, 2016. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/07/abu-sayyaf-blood-drugs-conspiracies-160724090604857.html>
- ¹³ Rommel Banlaoi, "The Sources of the Abu Sayyaf's Resilience in the Southern Philippines," *Combating Terrorism at West Point*, May 3, 2010. <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-sources-of-the-abu-sayyaf%E2%80%99s-resilience-in-the-southern-philippines>
- ¹⁴ The two senior leaders, Radullan Sahiron aka Commander Putol and Isnilon Hapilon aka Tuan are original members of ASG under its Emir, late Abdurajak Janjalani. The groups/cells under these leaders still clung to their political ideologies. While most ASG cells (led by younger leaders) view KFR as their main agenda, the two leaders "support" these incidents/atrocities as they (Sahiron & Hapilon) also benefit from them (a cut from ransom payments to fund their individual groups). Additionally, even if other ASG cells do not follow any ideology, Sahiron and Isnilon's groups need them so as not to narrow the AFP's kinetic efforts to them. Furthermore, the two senior leaders still have influence over the other ASG cells. However, the extent of their influence is not readily known. Also in 2014, in an apparent attempt to push the ideological agenda of the ASG, Sahiron (although he did not openly declare allegiance) and Hapilon declared allegiance to the IS. They did this to emulate the late Aldam Tilao aka Abu Sabaya's declaration in 2001 of the ASG's allegiance to Al Qaeda that somehow granted them some funding in early 2000s. They need the funds in the pursuit of a separate Islamic State.
- ¹⁵ Abuza, "Trouble in the Southern Philippines."
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁸ David Santos, "Abu Leader Parad, 5 others killed in Sulu Clash," *ABS-CBN News*, Feb 21, 2010. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ssfJ2ZIM4Fo>.
- ¹⁹ Bob East, *472 Days Captive of the Abu Sayyaf: The Survival of Australian Warren Rodwell*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015, xx.
- ²⁰ Linda Robinson, Patrick Johnston, and Gillian Oak, *U.S. Special Operations Forces in the Philippines*, 46.
- ²¹ Global IDP, *Philippines: Insecurity and insufficient assistance hampers return*, Norwegian Refugee Council, August 13, 2003. <http://www.internal-displacement.org/assets/library/Asia/Philippines/pdf/Philippines-Overview-13-August-2003.pdf>
- ²² Some military junior officers deployed in Mindanao particularly in Sulu Archipelago discreetly trooped to Manila to join the Magdalo, a group composed of young officers who rebelled against President Gloria Arroyo and the

corruption in the military. On 27 July 2003, some 300 officers with ranks of 2nd lieutenant to Captain forcibly took over the Oakwood Premier in the Ayala Center, Makati City, which was later dubbed as, "The Oakwood Mutiny." GMA News, "Oakwood Mutiny Backgrounder," GMA News Online, April 08, 2008.

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/33181/news/oakwood-mutiny-backgrounder>

²³ Linda Robinson, Patrick Johnston, and Gillian Oak, *U.S. Special Operations Forces in the Philippines*, 47.

²⁴ Linda Robinson, Patrick Johnston, and Gillian Oak, *U.S. Special Operations Forces in the Philippines*, 47-48.

²⁵ *Ibid*, xvi.

²⁶ Erik French, "Kidnapping risk on the rise in the Philippines."

²⁷ Maria Althea Teves and Purple Romeo, "Timeline: Kidnapping of ICRC Hostages by the Abu Sayyaf Group," Newsbreak, abs-cbnNEWS.com, Apr 24, 2009. <http://news.abs-cbn.com/nation/03/31/09/timeline-kidnapping-icrc-hostages-abu-sayyaf-group>

²⁸ Zachary Abuza, "The Demise of the Abu Sayyaf Group in the Southern Philippines," Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, June 15, 2008. <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-demise-of-the-abu-sayyaf-group-in-the-southern-philippines>

²⁹ The MILF seeks an autonomous region in the Philippines under the proposed memorandum of agreement on ancestral domain (MOA-AD), the planned homeland also referred to as the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity (BJE) was to include the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (Sulu, Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Tawi-Tawi, Basilan and Marawi City); six municipalities in Lanao del Norte; hundreds of villages in the provinces of Sultan Kudarat, Lanao del Norte and North Cotabato, which voted in 2001 to become part of the ARMM; and parts of Palawan. <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/285604/what-went-before-the-proposed-moa-ad#ixzz4Vlufvino>

³⁰ Abuza, "The Demise of the Abu Sayyaf Group in the Southern Philippines."

³¹ Parad was one of the most notorious ASG leaders who masterminded the local TV news crew and ICRC kidnappings.

³² Chiara Zambrano, "Former marine general blames gov't over Abu Sayyaf resurgence," ABS-CBN News, Jun 21, 2016. <http://news.abs-cbn.com/nation/regions/06/21/16/former-marine-general-blames-govt-over-abu-sayyaf-resurgence>

³³ Floyd Whaley and Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Phasing Out its Counterterrorism Unit in Philippines," The New York Times, Jun 26, 2014. https://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/27/world/asia/us-will-disband-terrorism-task-force-in-philippines.html?_r=1

³⁴ Carmela Fonbuena, "Abu Sayyaf frees Australian captive," Rappler, Mar 23, 2013.

<http://www.rappler.com/nation/24438-abu-sayyaf-free-rodwell>

David Yu Santos, "Birds, adventure and kidnapping in Tawi-Tawi," Rappler, Feb 05, 2012.

³⁵ Erik French, "Kidnapping risk on the rise in the Philippines," Global Risk Insights, Apr 9, 2016.

<http://globalriskinsights.com/2016/04/kidnapping-risk-philippines/>

³⁶ *Restructuring the Marine Area Research Coordinating Center (MARCC) to Marine Intelligence Unit (MIU)*, Office of the Assistant Chief of Marine Corps Staff for Intelligence, HQS Philippine Marine Corps, 2014.

³⁷ Agence France-Presse, "Timeline of Abu Sayyaf Atrocities," GMA News Online, Apr 26, 2016.

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/564081/news/nation/timeline-of-abu-sayyaf-atrocities>

³⁸ Jim Gomez, "Abu Sayyaf got \$7.3 million from kidnappings," NEWSINFO/Headlines, Inquirer.net, Oct 27, 2016.

<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/835021/abu-sayyaf-got-7-3-million-from-kidnappings>

³⁹ Public Affairs Service, "Press Release: Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia conduct Trilateral Defense Ministers Meeting, Department of National Defense, June 21, 2016.

⁴⁰ World News, "Australia's PM gives terror warning at ASEAN summit," BBC News, Sept 7, 2016.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-37283792>

⁴¹ Linda Robinson, Patrick Johnston, and Gillian Oak, *U.S. Special Operations Forces in the Philippines*, xv.

⁴² *Ibid*, xiii.

⁴³ *Ibid*, xiii & 39.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, xiii & 41.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, xiii.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 26.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 30.

⁴⁸ Mark Munson, "Has Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines Been a Success?"

⁴⁹ Linda Robinson, Patrick Johnston, and Gillian Oak, *U.S. Special Operations Forces in the Philippines*, 30.

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- ⁵¹ The Associated Press, "DNA Test Confirms Death of Philippine Separatist Leader," *The New York Times*, January 21, 2007. <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/21/world/asia/21filip.html>
- ⁵² Linda Robinson, Patrick Johnston, and Gillian Oak, *U.S. Special Operations Forces in the Philippines*, 87.
- ⁵³ Jim Gomez, "Philippines using US smart bombs," *Inquirer.Net*, March 22, 2012. <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/165819/philippines-using-us-smart-bombs>
- ⁵⁴ PDT White Paper, 16.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 16.
- ⁵⁶ Gerard Bradley, *Retribution: The Central Aim of Punishment*, *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*, Vol 27, Sep 2003, 23. http://winst.org/wp-content/uploads/Bradley_Retribution_the_Central_Aim_of_Punishment.pdf
- ⁵⁷ Executive Order No. 493, *Providing for the creation of the Inter-Agency Legal Action Group (IALAG) for the coordination of National Security Cases*, Office of the President of the Republic of the Philippines, Malacanan, Manila, January 17, 2006. <http://www.gov.ph/2006/01/17/executive-order-no-493-s-2006/>.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid*.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid*.
- ⁶⁰ An example of the effectiveness of kinetic actions supported by IALAG was the demise of the Pentagon Gang. Luz Rimban, a seasoned investigative journalist wrote in her article how the GRP addressed the growing threat posed by the Pentagon Gang. The Pentagon Gang was much like the Abu Sayyaf, with leaders and members who were also former members of the MNLF and MILF. The Pentagon Gang, which was included in the U.S. list of foreign terrorist groups, was responsible for numerous bombing operations in the country in the 1990s. Like the ASG, the gang used terrorism in the guise of funding the group. Formed by Faisal Marohombsar in the 1990s, this group numbering just over 200, was "one of the many groups in the country that have made an industry out of kidnapping-for-ransom." The organization and operation of the Pentagon Gang were very similar to the present Abu Sayyaf. The Pentagon Gang have taken hundreds of Filipino and foreign hostages and netted millions of pesos from ransom payments. President Arroyo formed Task Force Sanglahi-Pentagon in 2002 to go after the members of the group with little success. When the GRP formed the IALAG in 2006, the legal affairs group immediately filed cases against the members of the Pentagon Gang. In August 2008, combined police and military forces killed the leader of Pentagon Gang. Since then, the gang disintegrated and its members were arrested or killed in the subsequent military and police operations.⁶⁰ The AFP and PNP crushed another terrorist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement (RSM). Philippine Forces arrested many of the RSM vital leaders, which eventually led to the disintegration of this group in succeeding years.
- ⁶¹ The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) is the hierarchy of the Maoist Communist in the Philippines. The armed component of the CPP is the New People's Army operating mainly in Luzon, Visayas, and northern Mindanao.
- ⁶² Karapatan National Press Statement, "IALAG Abolition does not wash blood from GMA's hands," Karapatan website, October 21, 2007. <http://www.karapatan.org/about>
- ⁶³ PDT White Paper, 14.
- ⁶⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Rewards for Justice Program*, Washington D.C., <https://www.state.gov/m/ds/terrorism/c8651.htm>
- ⁶⁵ Office of the Spokesman, "Rewards for Justice Pays \$10 Million in Philippines; \$5 Million Reward Paid for Two Abu Sayyaf Terrorist Leaders," U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC, June 27, 2007. <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2007/jun/86174.htm>
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- ⁶⁸ Rommel C Banlaoi, *Al Harakatul Islamiyah: Essays on the Abu Sayyaf Group*, Philippine Institute for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, Quezon City, 2008, 39.
- ⁶⁹ Eusaquito Manalo, *The Philippine Response to Terrorism: The Abu Sayyaf group*, 12.
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 12.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid*, 12.

⁷² Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, *Messages of the President Book 14: Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo*, Vol. 5, Presidential Communications Development and Strategic Planning Office, Office of the President, Manila, 2016, 373-374.

⁷³ Charlton Sean Gearlan, *Integrating the Interagency in the Armed Forces of the Philippines Approach to Counterinsurgency*, Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University, Quantico, Virginia, March 23 2010, 18.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

⁷⁵ Chiara Zambrano, "Former marine general blames gov't over Abu Sayyaf resurgence," ABS-CBN News, June 21, 2016. <http://news.abs-cbn.com/nation/regions/06/21/16/former-marine-general-blames-govt-over-abu-sayyaf-resurgence>

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ PDT White Paper, 12. Enhance capacity to support and participate in the peace-building discourse instituted by the national government. Besides that, the Aquinos and the Arroyos developed animosity years back. Aquino faulted Arroyo of the many alleged failures in governance that he removed or discontinued most of her programs. Aquino sent Arroyo to jail in 2012. Aquino's party – the Liberal Party accused Arroyo of alleged misuse of P366 million in Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) intelligence funds from 2008 to 2010. Arroyo was acquitted on 19 July 2016. <http://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/iq/140221-timeline-gloria-arroyo-plunder-acquittal>

⁷⁹ "Internal Peace and Security Plan-Bayanihan," DND, Jan 1, 2011.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Department of Social Welfare and Development, "DSWD's poverty alleviation program completes 7,531 community projects," Official Gazette, GOVPH, March 25, 2017.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Margaret Read, "Abu Sayyaf Crime, Ideology, Autonomy Movement? The Complex Evolution of a Militant Islamist Group in the Philippines," Small Wars Journal, Oct 22, 2012. <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/abu-sayyaf-crime-ideology-autonomy-movement-the-complex-evolution-of-a-militant-islamist-gr>

⁸⁴ Julie Alipala, "19 Soldiers slain in Basilan," Inquirer.net, Oct 20, 2011. <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/78739/19-soldiers-slain-in-basilan>

⁸⁵ George Mendoza, "Remembering Al Barka," Rappler, Oct 17, 2012. <http://www.rappler.com/nation/14318-remembering-al-barka>

⁸⁶ On 25 January 2015, a combined group of Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) and MILF killed forty-four members of the Special Action Force (SAF) of the PNP in the town of Mamasapano, Maguindanao Province, Southern Philippines. The SAF police commandoes went in Mamasapano to serve the arrest warrant for Zulkifli Abdhir alias Marwan, a Malaysian national who is involved in the 2002 Bali bombings in Indonesia and included on the FBI most wanted terrorists. The SAF killed Marwan but, during their extrication, the Moro rebels surrounded and ambushed the police commandos. To appease the mounting public outcry for retaliation against the perpetrators of the ambush, President Aquino ordered the AFP to go after the BIFF, but not the MILF. After several days of military offensives, the AFP withdrew, leaving the BIFF still strong and capable to launch terror operations. Aquino failed to capitalize on the use of kinetic operations to go after the BIFF despite it being widely supported and demanded by the Filipino people. The president perceived that the peace process with the MILF will definitely be affected if the combat operations continued. Greer and Watson advocates for two-pronged approach in addressing the Abu Sayyaf. They conclude that, "governments need to both refine and improve retributive measures that deter and punish terrorism, and invest heavily in restorative approaches that disrupt the cycles of radicalization."

⁸⁷ Jamie Laude, "New Moro Rebel Group Emerges," The Philippine Star, March 5, 2015.

<http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2015/03/05/1430193/new-moro-rebel-group-emerges>

Rommel Banlaoi, "ISIS Threat to Philippine Security," Rappler Philippines, July 11, 2015.

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Glossary

AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASG	Abu Sayyaf Group
CMO	Civil-Military Operation
CPP	Communist Party of the Philippines
CT	Counterterrorism
COIN	Counterinsurgency
DAISH	Al-Dawlah Al-Islamiyah fe Al-Iraq wa Al-Sham
DND	Department of National Defense
GRP	Government of the Philippines
IALAG	Inter-Agency Legal Affairs Group
IS	Islamic State
ISIL	Islamic State of Syria and the Levant
IO	Information Operation
IPSP	Internal Peace and Security Plan
JSOTF-P	Joint Special Operations Task Force - Philippines
JTF	Joint Task Force
KFR	Kidnap for Ransom or Kidnapping for Ransom
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
NDF	National Democratic Front
NPA	New People's Army
ATTF	Anti-Terrorism Task Force
OEF-P	Operation Enduring Freedom – Philippines
PDT	Philippine Defense Transformation
PNP	Philippine National Police
SEA	Southeast Asia
SF	Special Forces
SLOC	Sea Line of Communication
SOF	Special Operations Forces
TBA	Tri-border Area

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