

United States Marine Corps
Command and Staff College
Marine Corps University
2076 South Street
Marine Corps Combat Development Command
Quantico, Virginia 22134-5068

MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

PHILIPPINE TERRORISM AND INSURGENCY: WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE ABU SAYYAF GROUP

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

LtCol. Rustico O Guerrero, Philippine Navy (Marines)

AY 2001-2002

Mentor: LtCol. Chet C Young, USA

Approved: _____

Date: _____

Mentor: Dr Kamal A Beyoghlow

Approved: _____

Date: _____

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 12-04-2002		2. REPORT TYPE Student research paper		3. DATES COVERED (FROM - TO) xx-xx-2001 to xx-xx-2002	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Philippine Terrorism and Insurgency: What to do About the ABU SAYYAF Group Unclassified				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Guerrero, Rustico O. ;				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS USMC Command and Staff College Marine Corps University, MCCDC 2076 South Street Quantico, VA22134-5068				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME AND ADDRESS USMC Command and Staff College Marine Corps University 2076 South Street, MCCDC Quantico, VA22134-5068				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT APUBLIC RELEASE					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT See report.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:		17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON	
		Public Release	69	EM114, (blank) lfenster@dtic.mil	
a. REPORT Unclassified	b. ABSTRACT Unclassified	c. THIS PAGE Unclassified		19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER International Area Code Area Code Telephone Number 703767-9007 DSN 427-9007	
				Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98) Prescribed by ANSI Std Z39.18	

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				<i>Form Approved</i> OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 12-04-2002		2. REPORT TYPE MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES THESIS		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE PHILIPPINE TERRORISM AND INSURGENCY: WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE ABU SAYYAF GROUP				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) LTCOL RUSTICO O. GUERRERO PN(M) PHILIPPINE MARINE CORPS				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) USMC COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE 2076 SOUTH STREET, MCCDC, QUANTICO, VA 22134-5068				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) USMC COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE 2076 SOUTH STREET, MCCDC QUANTICO, VA 22134-5068				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT NO RESTRICTIONS					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT The paper is about the Philippine terrorism and insurgency problem. It answers the question: Is the current Philippine government counter terrorism strategy effective against the Abu Sayyaf Group(ASG)? If not, what can be done about it? As a background, the current national security threat groups such as the communist New Peoples' Army(NPA), the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), to include other minor threat groups were examined along with the history of Filipino Muslims in southern Philippines. Using the analytical framework of Bard O'Neill, the ASG was analyzed as to its history, organization, logistics, tactics, and training. Variables affecting the operational environment such as terrain, climate, infrastructure, political culture, socio-economic conditions, domestic and external popular support, and the criminal justice and law enforcement system were likewise analyzed. The Philippine government's strategy of "Holistic approach" is a two-pronged approach towards insurgency and terrorism. It is in the right direction, but its effectiveness cannot be gauged yet. The use of military force is necessary at this stage, but a multidimensional approach to get at the root causes of the terrorism must be done to reverse the unfavorable environment where terrorism thrives.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS: PHILIPPINE TERRORISM AND INSURGENCY, ABU SAYYAF GROUP, PHILIPPINE COUNTER TERRORIST STRATEGY					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF: Unclassified			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 58	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT	b. ABSTRACT	c. THIS PAGE			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code)

10 April 2002

Executive Summary

Title: PHILIPPINE TERRORISM AND INSURGENCY: WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE ABU SAYYAF GROUP

Author: LtCol. Rustico O Guerrero, Philippine Navy (Marines)

Thesis: This paper addresses the following research question: Is the current Philippine Government counter terrorism strategy effective against the Abu Sayyaf Group? If not, what can be done about it?

Discussion: To provide a clear background on the problem, there is need to get an insight into the Muslims struggle in the Philippines, from the time Islam was introduced, up to the contemporary involvement of Filipino Muslims in secessionist and terrorist movements. Three groups that are currently considered as national security threats have perpetrated acts of terrorism. These are the communist New Peoples' Army (NPA), the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and the terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has tagged the latter as a group of bandits, and later as terrorists. The government is conducting peace talks with the first two rebel groups. Massive military operations against the ASG are ongoing with the assistance of the American Special Operations Forces, while an American couple and one Filipino nurse are still in captivity. Other threats come from minor groups such as criminal elements, and the renegade bands of Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

Bard O'Neill's framework for analyzing insurgency and terrorism was used to examine the ASG. The variables and factors affecting the ASG and the operational environment show the critical vulnerabilities of the terrorist group and the weaknesses in the government system. Identifying these and assessing the effectiveness of the government's counter terrorist strategy is important, since it has implications on the international, regional, political, and socio-economic aspects. The inadequacies of the current systems and weaknesses in the implementation aspects were also focused.

Conclusion: The Philippine government's counter terrorism strategy against the ASG is a two-pronged approach towards insurgency and terrorism. Its effectiveness cannot be gauged yet but the strategy is a step in the right direction. It is a long term and expensive solution hence it needs more time and resources in order to be effective. A vigorous and sustained effort in the political and socio-economic aspects is necessary to address the dysfunctions. The use of military actions when terrorist acts occur is necessary at this stage, but it cannot address the problem completely as it offers only a short-term solution. Using a multi-dimensional approach to get at the root causes and reversing the unfavorable environment where terrorism thrives, are the most logical approach in tackling the ASG.

DISCLAIMER

THE OPINIONS AND CONCLUSIONS EXPRESSED HEREIN ARE THOSE OF THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT AUTHOR AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF EITHER THE MARINE CORPS COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE OR ANY OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY INCLUDING THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES. REFERENCES TO THIS STUDY SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOREGOING STATEMENT

Preface

Writing on a very current topic on terrorism, particularly in the light of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States of America, could not have been more relevant and timely. The terrorist group in the Philippines, the Abu Sayyaf, has recently been in the limelight after its links with the Al Qaeda terrorist network was exposed. This paper analyzes the counter terrorist strategy of the Philippine government in response to the threat. It answers the question: Is the current Philippine government's counter terrorism strategy effective against the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)? If not, what can be done about it?

The problem on the ASG is more complex than what appears on the surface as a mere terrorist group. To put the issue on a proper perspective, I looked into the Filipino Muslims from the time Islam was introduced in Southern Philippines, up to their involvement in the current secessionist and terrorist movements. This includes the other threat groups that affect the Philippines national security. The ASG was analyzed using the analytical framework of Bard O'Neill. Considering all implications on the international and regional scene, the ASG is analyzed as a product of an environment that is susceptible to insurgency and terrorism. The government's counter terrorist strategy is assessed to be in the right direction vis-à-vis the threat. However, its effectiveness cannot be measured yet. The neutralization of the ASG is critical to achieve the government's goals. Based on the analysis, I recommended some additional measures to complement the current administration's counter terrorism strategy. These are inputs for the future commanders, planners, and even the war fighters who will be facing this threat.

My interest in this topic started as early as August 2001 and was mainly influenced by my continuous exposure and experience in combating terrorism in my own country, the Philippines. My career in the Marine Corps from the platoon, up to the command of a battalion, and in field intelligence jobs, has been devoted mostly to counter terrorism. My recent two-and-a-half years in command of a marine battalion, two years of which were in the province of Sulu, exposed me to the different problems, factors, and challenges in confronting the Abu Sayyaf Group. I have read books and articles on Islam and the history of Filipino Muslims, as well as conferred and interacted with the different sectors of the populace of Sulu and adjoining areas in the hope of finding the right answers. Now armed with an analytical framework on how to address terrorism, a more effective approach could be formulated. Though some of the recommended solutions have been proven to be effective, the analytical approach to both the terrorist group and to the counter terrorism strategy did facilitate the formulation of new solutions.

I am indebted to my mentor and faculty advisor: Dr Kamal Beyoghlou and Lieutenant Colonel Chet C Young, USA, both of the Marine Corps University Command and Staff College faculty. Dr Beyoghlou mentored my work with utmost professionalism and patience, for which I am grateful. I am also grateful to my sponsor, LCdr Steve Unger USN for his support and encouragement. Many thanks to my wife Maricor, and my daughter Mia, for their patience and understanding during the late nights I spent while writing this paper.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DISCLAIMER	i
PREFACE	ii
THE PHILIPPINE TERRORIST THREAT	1
Background	1
Filipino Muslims Struggle (before Abu Sayyaf)	4
Contemporary Threats (1990-2001)	10
THE ABU SAYYAF GROUP	14
Organization and Unity	17
Logistics, Tactics and Training of the ASG	18
Terrain, Climate and Infrastructure	21
Political Culture	25
Socio-Economic Conditions	26
Popular Domestic Support	28
Popular External Support	30
Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement	33
THE STRATEGY OF HOLISTIC APPROACH	35
The Military Response	41
CONCLUSION	46
Assessment of Policy Effectiveness	46
CITED SOURCES	50
BIBLIOGRAPHY	54
MAPS	
Philippines	22
Basilan	23
Sulu	24

CHAPTER I

THE PHILIPPINE TERRORIST THREAT

Background

The problem of terrorism has been seriously plaguing the Philippine government since the start of the communist insurgency in the 60's. The use of terrorism in the conduct of an armed revolution, in order to set up a communist government or to secede a part of the country, had caused much trouble and casualties.

Bard O'Neill, an authority on insurgency and terrorism, defined terrorism as a form of warfare in which violence is directed primarily against non-combatants (usually unarmed civilians), rather than operational military and police forces or economic assets (public or private).¹ Compared to guerilla units, terrorist units are smaller and covert. Their actions range from assassinations, bombings, arson, kidnapping, and hijacking, with most of the victims or targets chosen for political or propaganda impact. International terrorism of today, has crossed borders, are carried out by non-state actors, and even sponsored by some states. As a form of warfare normally associated with insurgent conflicts, terrorism sits well with groups that cannot match the target government's military forces. Thus, asymmetric attacks conducted against a conventional force have the same devastating effect as that of an attack in a battleground between symmetrical forces.

¹ Bard O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism, Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare* (Washington: Brassey's (U.S.), Inc., 1990), 24.

Insurgency, on the other hand, is defined as a struggle between a nonruling group and the ruling authorities in which the nonruling group consciously uses political resources (e.g. organizational expertise, propaganda, and demonstrations) and violence to destroy, reformulate, or sustain the basis of legitimacy of one or more aspects of politics.² Using that definition, the communist New People's Army (NPA) is an insurgent force. It can be further classified as egalitarian type since it seeks to impose a new system and radically transform the social structure within an existing political community.³

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Southern Philippines is a secessionist group that wants to carve out a separate state with their own form of government and under Islamic rules. The two aforementioned groups threatening the Philippines' national security have clearly defined goals, organizational structure, and the resources to be considered as insurgent groups, based on universally accepted definitions. They also have the equivalent governing structure, just like a "shadow government."

The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) has been identified as a group of bandits and later as terrorists.⁴ This is due to its use of kidnapping, murder, bombings, assassinations, and beheadings to meet their ends. While this appears as a more popular and common classification when compared with the typical insurgent group such as the Communist Party of the Philippines/New Peoples Army (CPP/NPA) or the MILF, there are parameters by which a group can be classified as insurgent. Among the seven types of insurgencies described by Bard O'Neill, the ASG can also be called as insurgents. It is under the traditionalist and secessionist types, since it espouses the establishment of an

² Bard O' Neill, 13.

³ Bard O' Neill, 18.

⁴ Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, Interview on TV during her visit to Washington, DC, U.S.A. on November 20, 2001.

Islamic state, separate from the Republic of the Philippines. It is traditional in the sense that like most religion-based insurgent groups, the ASG purportedly wages actions in the name of Islam. It is a secessionist group similar to the MILF if classified in terms of its avowed goal of a separate state. This claim of creating a separate Islamic state is not backed up with particular documents, or with sufficient organizational structure resembling that of the CPP/NPA and the MILF. On the basis of several variables by which the ASG will be described and analyzed in this chapter, their categorization as a terrorist group may be more appropriate in the light of their purely military-type organization, and a consistent engagement in criminal activities, among others. Their avowed goal and known methods really differ. A guerrilla attacks soldiers in war while a terrorist attacks high impact targets in peacetime for propaganda.⁵ Ironically, the focus of ASG attacks is civilians and not the military, which is the greatest threat to its goal. Clearly, the intent and method of achieving its goal is through the financially rewarding kidnapping venture, and other terrorist activities.

A proper perspective on the Abu Sayyaf Group can be more clearly appreciated if there is an understanding first of the struggle of the Muslims in Southern Philippines. Knowing and understanding the roots of the problem in Southern Philippines could help in the analysis of this group, and to formulate ways to address the problem.

⁵ Christopher C. Harmon, *Terrorism Today* (Oregon: Frank Cass Publishers, 2001) 193.

Filipino Muslims Struggle (Before Abu Sayyaf)

“Moro history is gory. These people were not really beaten after three hundred years of Spanish effort. Americans brought them to terms only after decisive, bloody massacres which aroused the American public because women and children were done away with along with the men.”

Florence Horn ⁶

The history of the Republic of the Philippines had been replete with conflicts both against foreign aggressors and amongst Filipinos. From the Spanish "*conquistadors*," the American colonialists, up to the Japanese imperialists, there have been quite long occurrences of Filipino resistance. The Philippine Islands was discovered on 16 March 1521 by the Portuguese circumnavigator Ferdinand Magellan. Magellan worked for the Spanish empire and was killed in the island of Mactan by fierce warriors led by Lapu-lapu. The archipelago was later named *Las Islas Filipinas*, after Spanish King Philip II.⁷ From 1565, the Spaniards imposed their control and influence by establishing their first permanent settlement in this new possession.⁸ There is, however, a different story for the islands in Mindanao. In the 14th century, the first Arab missionaries arrived and established the first mosque in Simunul Island, Tawi-Tawi, located far south of the main island of Mindanao.⁹ This was a result of the interaction among Arab traders plying the Sulu seas and the island inhabitants. From there, the Islamic faith was propagated to other islands in Mindanao. Florence Horn describes the Muslim Filipinos as “Malayan-Indonesian people, like other Filipinos, the so-called Moros had been converted to

⁶ Florence Horn, *Orphans of the Pacific* (New York, Cornwall Press, 1941), 150.

⁷ EF Benson, *Ferdinand Magellan* (London, John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd, 1929), 175.

⁸ EF Benson, 177.

⁹ Philippine Information, *Philippine Government*, URL <<http://www.gov.ph/philinfo/genreralinfo.asp>> accessed December 19, 2001. Tawi-Tawi is formerly a part of Sulu, but is now a separate province.

Mohammedanism long before Magellan set foot on the Islands.¹⁰ Nevertheless, it was the Spaniards, unlike the Arabs who settled in the South, which made a lasting imprint by spreading the Catholic faith in most parts of the archipelago.

There were considerable effort, resources, and lives lost in the colonization of Mindanao. It was due to the warrior character of the Muslim tribes who fought fiercely, particularly the *Taosugs*¹¹ of Sulu. But as the Spanish tried to impose their rule in the southern islands, Moro pirates continued to roam the seas, raiding shipping fearlessly and ruthlessly, not only around the Philippines, but also around Borneo and Dutch East Indies as well.¹² These Muslim tribes have been able to maintain their tribes' hierarchy up until today. However, they are not considerably as powerful and influential as before the Muslim rebellion in the 1970's.

On April 25, 1898, the Spanish-American war erupted and culminated in the victory of Admiral George Dewey over the Spanish fleet in the Battle of Manila Bay.¹³ Consequently, the Treaty of Paris was concluded and the Philippine Islands was ceded to the United States of America in the amount of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00).¹⁴ This time, the American type of colonization began, which U.S. President William McKinley termed as "Benevolent Assimilation".¹⁵ It was an earnest military effort to win the confidence, respect, and affection of the inhabitants of the Philippines.

¹⁰ Florence Horn, 150.

¹¹ Philippines country study, URL < http://1cweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/country_study > accessed December 19, 2001. Taosug, a Muslim tribe in Sulu, was the first group to adopt Islam in the 14th century. Known for its warrior character, this tribe is one of the ten sub-groups identified on the basis of language. Others are Maranao of the two Lanao provinces, Maguindanao of Central Mindanao provinces, and the smaller tribes: Samal, Badjao, Yakan, Iranon, Sangir, Melabugnan, and Jama Mapun.

¹² Florence Horn, 151.

¹³ Spanish-American War/War of Philippine Independence 1898-1901, URL <<http://www.ualberta.ca/~vmitchel/fw4.html>> accessed on August 11, 2001. 1.

¹⁴ Spanish-American War.

Unfortunately, the Filipino revolutionaries were fighting for independence, not a new colonial master. This led to a 4-year conflict between the Filipino revolutionaries led by General Emilio Aguinaldo and the American forces. With Aguinaldo captured and the Filipinos worn down, the U.S. finally declared the “Philippine Insurrection” over by July 4, 1902.¹⁶ Nevertheless, the war was far from over in Mindanao, since the fierce Muslim tribes refused to be subjugated by another colonizer. Two bloody and lopsided battles between the Americans and Moros were fought in Mount (Bud) Daho and Mount Bagsak in 1906 and 1913 respectively.¹⁷ The Americans were however very clever in trying to win over the “sultans” and the “datus”¹⁸, who were the key figures in the tribal set-up in the South. The American Colonial Governor Frank W. Carpenter who tried to learn the culture, read the Koran and attempted to understand the Muslim law, exemplified this.¹⁹ During the Second World War, the Japanese Imperial Army occupied the islands after the American debacle in Bataan and Corregidor. The island of Mindanao was important to the Japanese forces since they used it as their base for further invasion of the Netherlands East Indies (Borneo). They occupied the city of Davao along with other areas in mainland Mindanao, and the island of Jolo in Sulu. True to their reputation, the Muslims in these parts of Mindanao continued the struggle through guerilla warfare. In Sulu alone, the Japanese had a hard time venturing out into the remote areas of the island since

¹⁵ Stuart Creighton Miller, "*Benevolent Assimilation*" *The American Conquest of the Philippines 1899-1903* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1982), 23.

¹⁶ Crucible of Empire-PBS Online, URL <<http://www.pbs.org/crucible/timeline> >accessed on September 25, 2001.

¹⁷ Florence Horn, 153. The word “Bud” in the local dialect in Sulu means “mountain”. Both mountains are found in the main island of Jolo in Sulu.

¹⁸ Philippines Country Study. The traditional structure of Moro society focused on a Sultan who was both a secular and a religious leader whose authority was sanctioned by the Quran. The family lineage is considered until today. The datos are the communal leaders who measured power by the number of followers. Sultans exercise suzerainty over the datos in his territory.

¹⁹ Florence Horn, 154.

they were always at the risk of being ambushed. Not even their confinement to key town centers where they established bases spared them from raids and harassment by the local guerillas. Before the American liberators came, the Japanese troops in the island were almost annihilated by the Muslim guerilla groups who were supported by American armaments secretly landed via submarines.²⁰

From the time of liberation by the Americans, to the subsequent Philippine independence in July 4, 1946, there was no major conflict of national significance in Mindanao, as well as in the rest of the islands. As the incipient communist Huk movement in Luzon started to bother the young Philippine government in the 1950's, only the roving bands of pirates and the typical inter-tribal conflicts caused trouble in Mindanao. The more significant piracy was in the Lanao-Cotabato provinces in mainland Mindanao.

In the late 60's, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) was organized as a sister organization of previous Muslim association called the Muslim Independence Movement (MIM) later renamed as Mindanao Independence Movement. Powerful Muslim leaders and politicians who advocated the separation of Mindanao since the Commonwealth period then headed the latter. The MNLF was born out of this political and armed independence movement. Founded by Nur Misuari, a Professor in the University of the Philippines, along with two other leaders, they led a group of 90 Filipino Muslims, collectively called as "Batch 90", that trained in Pulau Pangkor Island in Sabah, Malaysia.²¹ Aside from providing the sanctuary and training base, Malaysian

²⁰ Based on a limited issue book written by a Philippine guerilla leader in Sulu-Tawi-Tawi islands I read in 1999. I borrowed it from a former Captain who commanded a guerilla company during WWII, and who is currently residing in Jolo, Sulu.

²¹ Philippine Marine Corps, Intelligence Brief, Moro National Liberation Front, undated.

Army officers trained them on guerilla warfare. This support was apparently expected since religion and long association with neighboring islands of both countries through centuries of trade between its people, were the common denominators. More evident is the dispute between the Philippine and the Malaysian government over the ownership of Sabah, an island in Malaysia. From this group emerged the nucleus of the MNLF and its military arm, the Bangsa Moro Army (BMA). Other batches of trainees followed until they slipped back to Mindanao and started underground activities of recruitment, orientation, and training. When President Ferdinand Marcos declared Martial Law in 1972, the harsh rule further deteriorated the conditions.²² The MNLF exploited this by spreading anti-government propaganda alleging that the government was out to Christianize Mindanao by force. This became a serious internal security problem when the MNLF started the conflict in Marawi City on October 21, 1972, marking the beginning of the Moro "Jihad" against the Philippine Government.²³

In 1973, Misuari went to the Middle East via Malaysia to solicit support from Muslim countries like Libya. In an effort to persuade the MNLF leadership to the negotiating table, the government sent emissaries to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in 1974. This proved effective and by 1977, they signed a ceasefire agreement in Zamboanga City. This was based on the Tripoli Agreement signed by Misuari and the Philippine Defense Undersecretary in Libya in 1976.²⁴ However, sporadic clashes between government troops stationed in the islands and the rebels occurred even after the agreement.

²² Proclamation 1081, declaring Martial Rule in the entire Philippines was made on September 21, 1972, to contain the communist insurgency threat. It was lifted in 1981.

²³ PMC Intelligence Brief, MNLF, undated.

²⁴ Fred R Von der Mehden, *Two Worlds of Islam, Interaction between Southeast Asia and the Middle East* (Florida, University Press of Florida, 1993), 56-57.

In 1986, Misuari, who was then in self-exile in Saudi Arabia, was invited by then President Corazon Aquino to return to the country and find new solutions to the Mindanao problem. Upon his return, Misuari still insisted on his demand for an independent Muslim republic. Expectedly, there were quarters in the military that viewed the move for Misuari's return as a resurrection of a dying movement. Aquino's attempt was to take the peaceful path so the economy could develop. The strategy did provide a long needed respite from the major clashes between government troops and the rebels, and the scarce resources were channeled to activities in pursuit of peace and development.

In 1975, the Vice Chairman of the MNLF, Abdul Salam Hashim (commonly known as Hashim Salamat), due to policy and personal differences with Misuari, dissociated himself and formed his own faction. The group later became known as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in 1984. Meanwhile, Hashim's replacement, Dimasangkay Pundato, later on dissociated himself from the MNLF and formed his own MNLF Reformist Group.²⁵

The MILF continued the armed struggle to carve an Islamic state in Mindanao. Its armed component, the Bangsa Moro Islamic Armed Forces was slowly built up into military formations from battalion up to division size.²⁶ This group only resurrected in strength in the last decade when it received used war materials from Afghanistan. Its fighters or mujahideens benefited from the Afghan resistance to Russia in the 1980's

²⁵ PMC Intelligence Brief, MNLF, undated

²⁶ MILF divisions generally had about 6,000 men based on their roster and strength in their organization. Philippine military estimates of their strength as of early 2000 are from 11,000 to 15,000 men with roughly the same number of firearms.

through training and combat experience.²⁷ Chairman Salamat described and compared his organization: “the MILF adopts Islamic ideology and way of life and believes in the Islamic concept of state and government. In contrast to this, the MNLF is more inclined to secularism.”²⁸

The MNLF Reformist Group under Dimasangkay Pundato broke away from the mainstream Muslim rebels and retained a small-armed group but still dream of their goal of an independent Mindanao.²⁹

Contemporary Threats (1990-2001)

Today, the Philippines faces three threat groups with different causes and objectives. The first of these, the Communist Party of the Philippines - New People's Army (CPP-NPA) is the longest running communist insurgency in Asia. They evolved from the 1930's local peasant revolutionary group that embraced first Stalinism, and later Maoism in 1969.³⁰ These communists have disintegrated into three factions in the 90's after a bloody internal purge of suspected government agents in its ranks. It was further weakened by the government's effective counterinsurgency campaign, a revival of democratic and popular governance, and the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR).³¹

²⁷ Anthony Davis, “Southeast Asian bombings betray Islamic links”, Jane’s Intelligence Review, online edition, 8 February 2001, URL<http://www.janes.com/regional-news/asia_pacific> accessed December 19, 2001.

²⁸ Hashim Salamat, “The Moro Islamic Liberation Front” interview, *Nida’ul Islam magazine* April-May 1998. URL<<http://www.islam.org.au>> accessed September 2001.

²⁹ PMC Intelligence Brief.

³⁰ Victor N Corpuz, *Silent War* (Philippines, VNC Enterprises, 1968), 26.

³¹ PMC Intelligence Brief.

The second of these, the MILF had been recently weakened as a result of the massive military offensive from April to July 2000, which destroyed practically all their camps including their much-vaunted main base, Camp Abubakar³². After her take-over on January 2001, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo directed peace negotiations in Malaysia.

The third and the smallest, the Abu Sayyaf Group, emerged to prominence in recent years. Self-described as an Islamic fundamentalist organization fighting for the Islamic faith, the ASG, unlike previously discussed groups, has consistently employed terrorism through extortion, raids, arson, bombing, assassination, beheading, and most recently, kidnapping for ransom of foreign nationals. Unlike the MNLF and the MILF, the ASG does not have a “shadow government” to speak of, as well as the credible mass base and territory from which it obtains its strength. Its reported links with international terrorist groups has placed it on top of the list of Osama Bin Laden's terror network.³³ With the kidnapping of foreign nationals by this group and the alleged ties to Osama Bin Laden's international terrorist group, the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (CSAFP) has recently declared the ASG as a national security threat, the same status as that of the CPP-NPA and the MILF.

MNLF's Misuari, agreed with President Fidel V Ramos on September 2, 1996, to an autonomous government. It provided for the separate political administration of those provinces and cities covered in the Tripoli Agreement that voted for inclusion in the

³² Author's personal knowledge and involvement as the Commanding Officer of Marine Battalion Landing Team 2 that participated in the campaign in Central Mindanao from April to June 2000.

³³ Office of the Secretary of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2000* (Washington, Department of State, April 2001)

Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).³⁴ This set-up continued while Misuari retained his leadership and his armed organization remained intact. When he ran for its Regional Governor position, he readily won the elections, and ruled until November 2001. In the early part of 2001, he was repudiated by his leaders in the MNLF, who signed a document stripping him of his post as Chairman. On November 19, 2001, Misuari's hard-core followers, along with ASG elements, attacked army posts, including the Philippine Army Brigade headquarters in Sulu, to disrupt the November 26, 2001 ARMM elections that Misuari did not participate in and wanted postponed. Dr. Parouk Hussin, an MNLF core leader, recently won as governor in the elections for the autonomous region. Replaced as ARMM governor, Misuari fled to Malaysia, and was arrested by the Malaysian police on November 24, 2001 for violating immigration laws. The Malaysian prime minister considered Misuari a national security threat for his alleged links to the ASG that raided a Malaysian diving resort in 2000.³⁵ That incident could have been avoided or deterred through the power and influence of Misuari as the incumbent governor of the autonomous region. The latter includes the provinces of Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, from where the ASG launched their raid and kept their hostages. This is further bolstered by the common knowledge in that part of the country that the ASG leaders in Sulu are former sub-leaders of the MNLF, one of whom is the son of Misuari's former provincial commander in Sulu. Misuari and his staff were turned over to the

³⁴ The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, created by law on 01 August 1, 1989 and officially implemented on November 6, 1990, is composed of the provinces of Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi, and the city of Marawi. Out of thirteen provinces stipulated in the Tripoli Agreement of 1976, only these four provinces and one city voted for their inclusion in the Autonomous Region through a plebiscite on November 19, 1989.

³⁵ "Government case against Misuari on role in two kidnappings strong, says Golez" Philippine Government news, URL <http://www.gov.ph/news_release> accessed January 07, 2002.

Philippine authorities by the Malaysian government on 7 January 2002, to face charges in court along with some of his staff, the ASG leaders in Sulu, and some MNLF integrees.³⁶

From among the groups currently threatening the security of the Philippines particularly in Mindanao, only the ASG has gained notoriety both on the domestic and the international fronts due to its brutality. It has victimized a number of foreigners, and had been linked with the international terrorist network of Osama Bin Laden. There is potential for more terrorist activities and the expansion of the ASG if no determined and sustained effort to neutralize this group is undertaken. Possible linkage with extremist groups in countries in the region could exacerbate the threat it poses. Thus, the appropriate response to this threat is a priority concern not only of the Philippine government but also of the international community.

³⁶ “Government case. MNLF integrees refer to rebels who were integrated into the Philippine National

CHAPTER II

THE ABU SAYYAF GROUP

This chapter deals on the history, organization, logistics, tactics, and training of the ASG, and other variables by which the group can be analyzed. The terrain, climate, and infrastructure in Basilan and Sulu provinces, as well as the political culture and socio-economic conditions, explain the environment in which the ASG operates. The domestic popular and external supports show the extent of connection and support system available to the group.

The AL-HARAKA AL-ISLAMIA / ABU SAYYAF Group (AHAI/ASG) is the exponent of Islamic extremism in the Philippines. It was founded in early 1990's by the late Ustadz Abdurajak Abubakar Janjalani, a Muslim scholar who studied Islamic law in Egypt as well as Jihad and Islamic revolution in Pakistan.³⁷ He was killed by police forces in Basilan in December 18, 1998.³⁸

Police and Philippine Army as part of the peace agreement

³⁷ Philippine Marine Corps, and Armed Forces of the Philippines Intelligence Briefs, undated. Hereinafter referred to as PMC, AFP Intel Briefs.

³⁸“Kidnapping Crisis: groups behind abductions in the Philippines”, Jane’s Sentinel, 12 January 2001
URL<[http:// www.janes.com/regional news/asia-pacific](http://www.janes.com/regional news/asia-pacific)> accessed December 21, 2001.

Ustadz Janjalani was originally a member of the *Dahwa Jama't Tabligh*, a fundamentalist group at Marawi City founded by Professor Amilhussien Jumaani of Western Mindanao State University, and Abe Dologan of the Mindanao State University.

³⁹Janjalani turned to extremism due to Jihad teachings that all deeds are justified in the eyes of Allah as long as they are in the pursuit of Islam. He espoused the radical view that a true believer could practically do all forms of *Jihad Fi-Sabilillah* (an Arabic term which means a broad and endless struggle for the cause of Allah) to “defeat the non-Muslims who subjugate the abode of Allah.” ⁴⁰ In the Islamic indoctrination, it is their belief that Muslim areas are “part of Allah abode,” therefore, non-believers have no place therein.

Janjalani used the nom de guerre “Abu Sayyaf,” an Arabic term which means “Bearer of the Sword,” to conceal his identity. The name “Sayyaf” was apparently inspired by an Afghan leader, Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, who led the Saudi and United Arab Emirates-funded Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan.⁴¹ The Filipino Muslim volunteers, including Janjanlani, who joined the International Islamic Brigade as Afghan-Arab Islamist mujahideens and fought against Soviet forces in Afghanistan in the 1980s, returned to the Philippines and started their own brand of revolution. Together with Amilhussin Jumaani, who trained in Iran, and Wahab Akbar, who studied in Syria, they envisioned of establishing not only a Bangsa Moro Republic but also an Islamic state free from non-Muslims.⁴²

³⁹ PMC, AFP Intel Briefs.

⁴⁰Dr Rohan Gunaratna, "The evolution and tactics of the Abu Sayyaf Group", (United Kingdom: Janes Intelligence Review, July 2001).

⁴¹ Dr Rohan Gunaratna

⁴² Dr Rohan Gunaratna. Bangsa in the local dialect means nation.

The group is known in the Southern Philippines as Al-Haraka Al-Islamia, which means the Islamic Movement, in Arabic. The Al-Haraka is an international organization of Muslim fundamentalists based in Pakistan whose chairman or Amir is identified as Sibani Huruz Talib, a Pakistani. This organization envisioned of re-shaping the Islamic world through Jihad Fi-Sabilillah. They are composed mostly of the religious and Amirs like Janjalani.⁴³

The ASG became notorious after it had initiated a series of bombing in Zamboanga City starting with the M/V Doulos incident in August 1991 resulting in the death of two foreign missionaries and wounding of about forty others.⁴⁴ An international and inter-denominational movement committed to world evangelization used that motorized vessel, docked at the city pier. It was having a cultural and farewell program dubbed as “Doulos International Night” when two grenades were thrown at them. Since the newly found terror group had no formal name at that time, they were identified by Janjalani’s nom de guerre, “Abu Sayyaf” which sticks until now.⁴⁵

The group had conducted several terrorist attacks, the most daring and bloody of which was the raid in the Christian-dominated town of Ipil, Zamboanga del Norte in 1995, where it massacred fifty people mostly unarmed residents, and looted and burned houses and business establishments.⁴⁶ From then on, terror activities continued to disturb Mindanao. Foreign nationals, particularly priests and members of the Catholic religion

⁴³ Amir in Arabic means Prince. In this context, however, it refers to those who followed the Prophet Muhammad footsteps as leader of the Islamic community.

⁴⁴ Dr Rohan Gunaratna.

⁴⁵ PMC, AFP Intel Briefs.

⁴⁶ Joshua Kurlantzick, "Opening up a second front", US News and World Report, Dec. 24, 2001. p. 26.

based in communities particularly in Sulu, Basilan and the Zamboanga peninsula, were kidnapped.⁴⁷

Though the group was borne out of Islamic fundamentalist ideals by its founders, the methods by which it expanded its organization and supporting infrastructure are not different from other existing criminal bands in Basilan and Sulu. Violence was the main feature of its activities, something that is unexpected of a group led by intellectual leaders. The founding leaders were the key to their avowed goal hence; leadership is one of the Centers of Gravity of the group. The succeeding variables will bare the true nature of the ASG.

Organization and Unity

The ASG is under the overall leadership of Khadaffy Janjalani, the younger brother of the late Ustadz Abdurajak Janjalani. Its central committee in Basilan, the highest governing body, is under the supervision of Isnilon Hapilon also known as (AKA) Tuan Isnilon.⁴⁸ It has six functional and one special staff. These are the Personnel and Operations, Urban Demolitionist and Intelligence, Logistics/Supply/Budget, Finance, Liaison, and Medical. Hector Janjalani heads the special staff. This Basilan-based ASG in the first quarter of 2000 had an estimated strength of two hundred ten (210) armed men belonging to eight groups operating in different municipalities of Basilan.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Philippine Marine Corps, Intelligence Summary, ASG initiated kidnap for ransom activities in western Mindanao, December 2000.

⁴⁸ PMC Intelligence Brief.

⁴⁹ Headquarters Philippine Army, *The Final Option*, (Manila, Philippine Army, undated), 4.

The ASG based in Sulu has no formal organization though there are sixteen (16) armed groups operating in the municipalities of Talipao, Indanan, Patikul, Lugas, Tapul, Siasi, and Jolo. The more prominent ASG commanders are those based in Patikul and Talipao: Galib Andang AKA Robot⁵⁰, Radullan Sahiron AKA Putol,⁵¹ and Susukan Agga.⁵² The aggregate strength of the Sulu-based ASG for first quarter of 2000 was 464 with 177 firearms.⁵³

It must be noted that the ASG has no identified political arm. Therefore, the means to attain its goal of an independent Islamic state is through violence, which can be facilitated through a military-type of organization. In Morgan Norval's *Triumph of Disorder*, he described that *"Islam is more than a religion - it constitutes a complete social system to be embraced by all Muslims."*⁵⁴ If there is no distinction between politics and religion, then the ASG operates with a precarious organizational set-up. Once the entire leadership is eliminated and the central committee has collapsed, it would be difficult to resurrect with a leadership vacuum.

Each group, more often than not; operate as separate entities, particularly centered on its leader. They support and reinforce each other when in the face of a common enemy during combat, mainly because they share the same culture, religion, historical roots, status in the society, and former organization (MNLF). However, when questions or doubts in the division of the loot or sharing of ransom arise, they come into conflict and revert to their basic motivation of money. Various interests of their leaders and

⁵⁰ Referring to the manner he walks i.e. like a robot.

⁵¹ The local word for "cut", referring to his decapitated arm.

⁵² The first two were former MNLF leaders while the third is a son of the former MNLF field commander of Sulu. All these three leaders and their armed group figured in several gun battles with the author's battalion from 1998 to early 2000.

⁵³ PMC Intelligence Brief.

individual members include personal interests on money, vendetta against another group, family or individuals, and connections or relations with politicians. Undoubtedly, there is no serious attempt to propagate their organization's ideals since they continuously engage in purely terrorist and criminal activities.

Logistics, Tactics and Training of the ASG

The ASG relies heavily on raising funds through illegal means. It primarily relies on the support of the residents in their area of operations. It imposes monthly taxes on the residents. Teachers, businessmen, and illegal loggers are subjected to forced taxation and extortion. Kidnap for ransom is the most lucrative source of funds and logistics for the rebel group. The victims are released upon a payment of so called "board and lodging fees" to the kidnappers.⁵⁵ With the residents comprising most of its victims, the fear and survival factor prevailing among the majority of the populace favors the ASG more than the government. Hence, it is necessary to consider the people as a critical factor that affects the continued existence of the ASG.

Most of its members personally own firearms, like most of the residents in Mindanao, particularly in Muslim-dominated areas. The ASG's inventory includes pistols, M-16, M1, and M14 rifles, Browning automatic rifle, M60 Light Machine Gun, rocket propelled grenades (RPG), 90mm and 57mm recoilless rifles, 60mm mortars and Heavy Machine Guns. These types of firearms are used by the Philippine military except for the RPG. The group accumulates firearms and ammunition through raids of

⁵⁴ Morgan Norval, *Triumph of Disorder, Islamic Fundamentalism, the New Face of War* (Oregon, Sligo Press, 1999), 27.

⁵⁵ The term "board and lodging" was indicated on demand letters and conversations between the ASG with the victims' families and negotiators.

paramilitary detachments; or through purchase; individually or by group, from other armed groups, including the MILF and MNLF, or from some corrupt government officials, police, and military sources. Curtailing the sources or preventing access to firearms and ammunition of the ASG will make its expansion and firepower capability critically vulnerable.

In tactics, the ASG fighters are capable of reinforcing beleaguered comrades when in the general area of conflict, or sometimes from one island to another island like in the case of the ASG from Basilan reinforcing comrades in Sulu by watercraft. It can conduct offensive action against platoon, section, or squad-sized military formations, and disable armor assets using rocket propelled grenades, 90mm, and 57 mm recoilless rifles. Its fighters usually employ “hit and run” tactics in view of their limited ammunition. Having no concern even for the Muslim residents, it resorts to hostage taking, to delay pursuing government troops and whenever cornered. Tactically, the ASG cannot sustain a prolonged armed engagement against the government forces. The islands and vast water area favors the ASG as it affords freedom of movement. Therefore, the curtailment of movement along mobility corridors would be their critical vulnerability.

The ASG creates political, economic, and social disorders to force Christians and non-Muslims to vacate areas it claims as its own. This is best exemplified by the ASG’s raid and massacre in Ipil town mentioned earlier, but the results were obviously unfavorable to them. It has exploited the power of media to discredit the administration and prop up their cause.⁵⁶ This included the use of a popular Filipino actor who is an

⁵⁶Indira A.R. Lakshmanan, "Guerilla Group Vows To Kill US Troops", Boston Globe, Jan 29, 2002, p 8.

Islam convert, as a negotiator in one of their hostage activity in their Basilan jungle hideout.

While some of the ASG members were former MNLF rebels, it is most certain that some of them were trained in the Middle East and Malaysia. Most of the recruits were locally trained on guerrilla warfare in Basilan and Sulu. Their training included combat tactics, demolition, marksmanship, and other military subjects. Comparatively speaking, the ASG is inferior to the military forces arrayed against it. However, the mastery of the terrain and ability to survive in extreme jungle conditions makes the ASG fighter more adept to his environment. This is a major challenge in Philippine counter terrorism operations.

Terrain, Climate and Infrastructure

The two main areas of operations of the Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines (see Fig 1) are the provinces of Sulu and Basilan, though they still conduct terrorist activities in the neighboring islands and urban centers in mainland Mindanao. They are capable of operating in urban centers like Zamboanga and even Manila, by bombing public facilities primarily to divert the attention of the government and ease the pressure when military operating units are closing in on them.

Basilan province (see Fig 2) is composed of a group of islands south of the Mindanao mainland, accessible by fast ferries from Zamboanga City pier. Accessibility to the interior is through a circumferential road, a large stretch of which is unpaved. Most of its mountains have thick forest cover that are ideal to insurgent bases since they cannot be observed by aerial reconnaissance. Armored vehicles are restricted to established roads and vastly constricted to lanes through coconut and other tree

plantations. The thick-forested jungles of Basilan accommodated the best camps of the ASG, which they used for training and refuge. A perfect example of the difficulty posed by the jungles on this island was the ASG's Al-Madinnah complex that the reconnaissance unit and battalions of the Philippine Marine Corps penetrated and captured in 1993. The terrain is favorable to the ASG and covers up for the superiority of government troops in strength. Compared to the Philippine military that had fielded about 6,000 ground troops composed of Army and Marine battalions including special



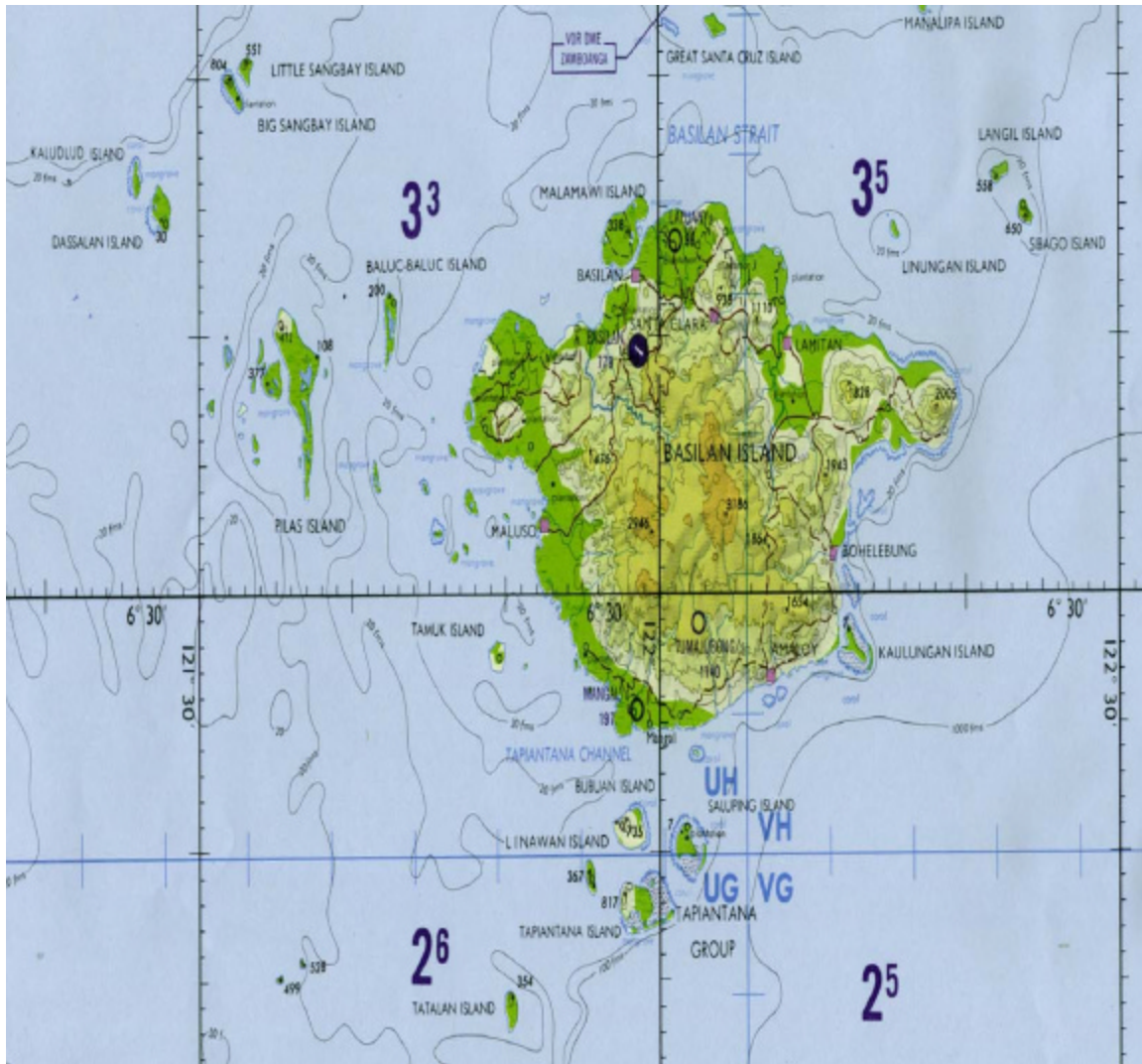


Figure 2. Map of Basilan

forces, scout rangers and reconnaissance companies, the military to ASG ratio in the current operations (2002) in Basilan alone stands at 30:1.⁵⁷

The other important area of operation of the Abu Sayyaf is the province of Sulu (see Fig 3), which is about sixty miles southwest of Basilan. Its main island of Jolo is where the main center of trade, communications, and transportation is located. Mountain strongholds characterize the island. Their inhabitants were the Muslim fighters who

⁵⁷ Modest estimate for a 200-strong ASG in Basilan based on year 2000 strength. The number may be lesser as a result of continuous military operations for the past two years; thus, the ratio may go up to 50:1.

resisted American occupation in the early 1900s. In fact, Mount Bagsak, the site of the battle between Moros and the Americans in 1913, is near the main camp of ASG faction

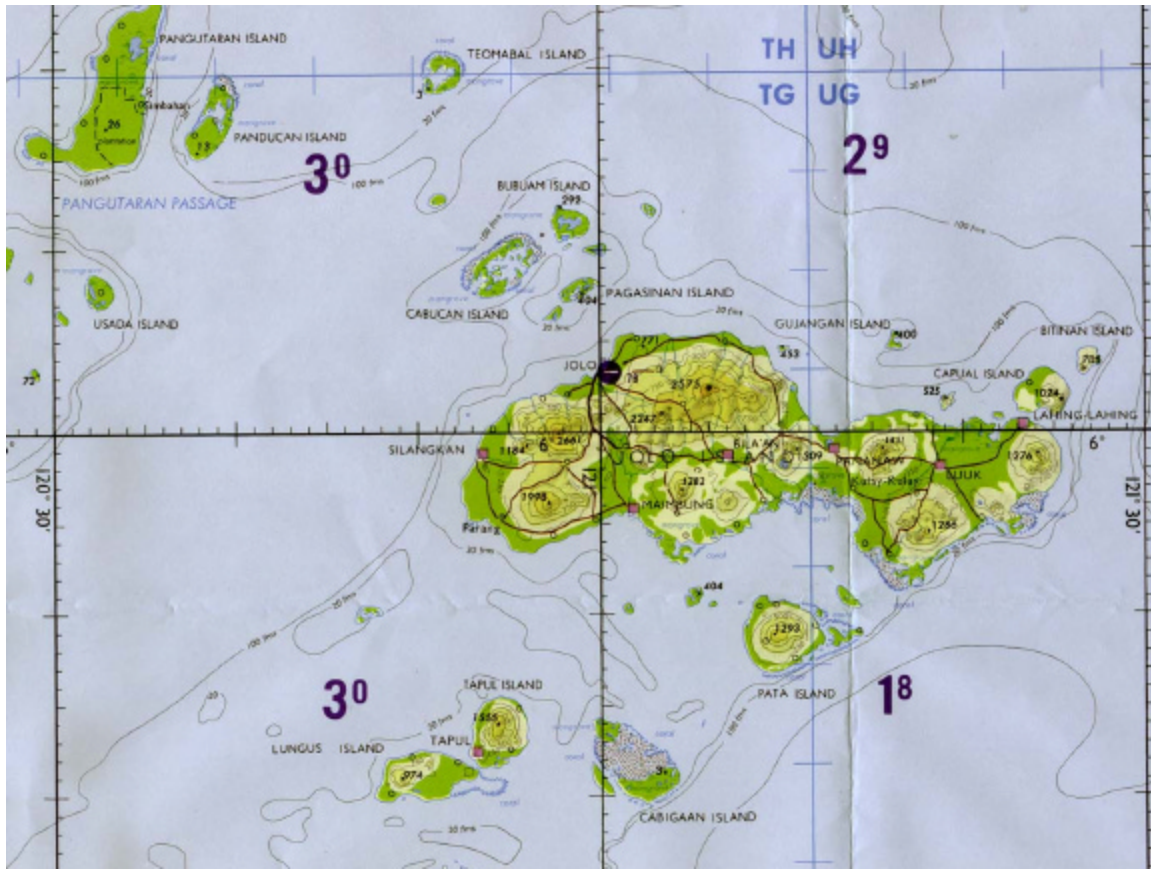


Figure 3. Map of Sulu

in Sulu. The main roads are made of concrete and asphalt, while most of the secondary roads are unpaved. A domestic airport in the town of Jolo can accommodate a C130 aircraft. Its port facilities can accommodate at least the Landing Ship Transport/ Logistics Support Vessel types, but unloading of cargoes is still done through manual labor and small moving equipment.

The two-season climate affects these two provinces as well as the entire Mindanao. The rainy season is from the month of June until November, with a mean temperature of 78 degrees Fahrenheit.⁵⁸ This greatly affects mobility on unpaved roads particularly in areas where rain bogs will hamper movement of wheeled vehicles. The

⁵⁸ Philippines, Philippine Tourism Brief, Department of Tourism, CD ROM, 1997.

summer months of March to May, with an average temperature of 83 degrees Fahrenheit, is not an obstacle for the conduct of military operations. Cloud formations and occasional precipitation near the mountainous areas may affect the conduct of close air support or air reconnaissance over ASG lairs. Thus, Basilan offers a favorable terrain and climate to the ASG for its terrorist operations.

Political Culture

The current political system in Sulu and Basilan are complex. Most political leaders come from the traditional political families who are backed up by their respective armed groups. The latter will be further explained later in this paper. These politicians come mostly from the rich and the powerful elite of the province. In Sulu, known families that dominated politics since Martial Law distinguish political turfs. They are mostly those who fought with the government as para-military groups or those called “Rebel Returnees.”⁵⁹ Others made it to positions of influence through sheer possession of a political power base i.e. large voting population. These two provinces are uniquely characterized by coalitions based on blood relations, a common enemy, and political expediency. The incumbents have a great advantage over other candidates in an election. Political violence is an expected occurrence in every elections especially those involving local officials. Candidates resort to killing, harassment, and other forms of violence to win. That is why the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) always puts out a list of “hot spots” or areas assessed by the police and the military to be prone to violence based on the presence of armed groups and the intensity of the political contest. Thus, it is not

⁵⁹ Rebel Returnees or “Balikbayan” in the local language, are those who surrendered or returned to the folds of the law. They contributed to the weakening of the MNLF ranks.

uncommon to see soldiers and policemen securing the voting centers and administering elections in some remote areas in Mindanao.⁶⁰

Socio-Economic Conditions

The socio-economic conditions of the people in the affected areas are definitely important factors in this multi-faceted problem. Insurgency easily thrives in a society where basic social and economic needs are not provided. Poverty is one of the causes of peasant revolutions in the world. Relative deprivation and the discontent it causes in a society explain the potential for its politicization, and finally its actualization to violent actions against political objects and actors.⁶¹

Based on 2000 census, Basilan has a population of 332,828, with an average household of 5.41 people. It has the smallest population in Western Mindanao or Region IX to which it belongs.⁶² Sulu, on the other hand, has a population of 619,668, with an average household of 6.31. Its economy is the slowest growing in the ARMM, although the ARMM is the nation's fastest growing region in terms of population.⁶³

The infrastructure to support the educational needs of the populace is inadequate. Although the functional literacy rate of the country is at 83.79 %, the literacy rate in the ARMM and Western Mindanao, is only 61.19 %, and 75.38 % respectively.⁶⁴ This could

⁶⁰ Marines had been deputized by the COMELEC to administer past elections in places where violence or threat of violence had occurred, replacing teachers who refuse to serve out of fear. Aside from securing voting centers, Marines had to cope with many additional tasks.

⁶¹ Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970) p 12-13.

⁶² Philippine National Statistics Office, 2000 Census of population and housing highlights, URL<<http://www.census.gov.ph>> accessed 7 January 2002.

⁶³ Philippine National Statistics Office.

⁶⁴ Philippine National Statistics Office. The literacy rate for Basilan may be comparatively high since the province falls under the Western Mindanao region together with Zamboanga City, the center of higher educational opportunities and accessible by fast watercraft from Basilan.

be attributed to many factors such as poverty, and traditional attitude of some families to make their children work in the fields. Poor and inadequate instructional facilities, and disruption of classes due to armed conflicts add to the education problem. Teachers in the remote areas are at risk especially those non-Muslims who are constantly harassed by the ASG. Thus, few volunteer to teach in far-flung areas where education is seriously needed. If there are volunteers, chances are they are residents of the place. Moreover, for those assigned through no choice of their own, they end up leaving their job or work out their transfer.

With low literacy rate and scarce job opportunities, an average family in Sulu and Basilan and in many parts of Mindanao, have incomes below the poverty line. Countrywide, a great percentage of families in the bottom 40% are unemployed, while 15 % of children within the ages of 5 to 17 years old are working.⁶⁵ More depressing to note is that the ARMM and Western Mindanao were the two lowest regions in terms of average family income, having 2.8% and -1.6% growth rate respectively, whereas the country had a growth rate of 17.3% from 1997 to 2000.⁶⁶

The health services available to the people in the two provinces are still inadequate. Some of the facilities one expects in a standard hospital are available only in Zamboanga City. Even the recreation centers in a typical urban setting are mostly available in Zamboanga City.

Ownership of business establishments is concentrated mostly on very few, rich Muslim and Chinese mestizo families. Thus, the wealth distribution is so much tilted in favor of very few people who have the means, while the majority of the populace is

⁶⁵ National Statistics Office, April 6, 2001 Poverty Indicators Survey of October 1999.

⁶⁶ Philippine National Statistics Office.

below the poverty line. This big disparity in terms of living standards make available a veritable source of discontented people who can be exploited by any anti-government movements that offer solutions to the society's ills. Sad to note that these people engaged in business had been the usual victims of extortion and kidnapping, often with fatal consequences for non-compliance to demands.

The practice of barter trading with neighboring countries like Malaysia that dates back to as far as the 15th century is still a lucrative form of business. It is allowed by the Philippine government subject to customs duties. However, payment of duties is evaded by skipping the port of entries, or by cutting underground deals and passing off "grease money" to those in charge of enforcing the taxing of goods. Hence, revenues for both the national and local governments are affected. Consequently, it reduces the funds for basic services. Thus, there is no significant increase for the income level of most workers and self-employed entrepreneurs since untaxed goods compete with domestic produce. Meanwhile, the farm and fish products remain at low prices when sold to middlemen and the local businessmen who then transport and sell it to Zamboanga City.

Popular Domestic Support

An important element that sustains an insurgent or a terrorist group is popular support, or "mass base" in the local communist terminology. The Muslim people, composing the majority of the population, are what could be considered as the Center of Gravity. Bard O'Neill describes several techniques for gaining popular support of which three are being applied by the ASG.⁶⁷ One is the esoteric appeal i.e. the appeal of Islamic

⁶⁷ Bard O'Neill, 74

fundamentalism. The second is terrorism, and third is the demonstration of potency by conducting atrocities through bombing, and beheading of captives while highlighting it thru media outlets.

The popular support may be classified into two categories: the active, and the passive. The active category includes those that belong to armed or unarmed members of the populace that are allied or sympathetic to the ASG. They provide security in their own territories on an individual basis or as a group, but expect to receive a share of the ransom. The passive category includes those victims who refuse to cooperate with the authorities, and opt to suffer in silence; and those peaceful-living residents, that compose the majority, who refuse to squeal on the ASG activities also out of fear. The prevalent apathetic attitude of some members of the populace towards the military must also be considered, since the latter are mostly non-Muslims. The military's frequent presence in the remotest areas is perceived as the only semblance of government existence. The military and the government are then perceived to be only after the pacification and control of their fellow Muslims.

The ASG seeks support from Muslim sympathizers to carry out their terrorist activities and in the course of a hostage taking; they employ relatives and other lawless groups as force multiplier, in exchange for a share in the ransom or a promise of a better firearm. It must be noted that the proliferation of firearms in most of Mindanao had been a security problem since the pacification campaign of Marcos during the 70's. To fight the MNLF, the government then utilized the rebel groups that surrendered and retained its firearms. Many of its leaders are now holding both elected and appointed positions in the government. They are referred to by the military as Partisan Armed Groups (PAGs). A

former Governor of Sulu admitted that the firearm is part of an ordinary household in his province and some areas in Mindanao, just like an appliance.⁶⁸ That is why many personal, family or group differences and grudges are resolved violently because many residents are armed.

Another critical vulnerability of the ASG is its relation with other armed groups. Its members who have long standing and unresolved personal or family feuds, or conflict with other groups, often end up in a firefight whenever they cross into their enemy's territories.⁶⁹

Another critical vulnerability is the general sentiment of the entire Philippine population, which is obviously against terrorism in any form. The majority of 85 percent of the populace who are Christians and the peace-loving Muslims certainly do not subscribe to criminality and violence. The government could exploit this weakness against the ASG.

Popular External Support

"You know that al-Qaeda exists from Algeria to the Philippines . . . it's everywhere."

from a conversation secretly taped by the Italian police on

March 22, 2001, the speaker was Essid Sami ben Khemais, a Tunisian

arrested the next month for alleged terrorist offenses.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Governor's speech at the opening ceremony of a shooting competition in Bud Datu, Sulu sometime in 1998.

⁶⁹ Based on personal experience of the author from 1998-early 2000 as a Battalion Commander in Sulu.

⁷⁰ Michael Elliott, "Special Report 'Hate Club' ", Time magazine, Nov 12, 2001,59.

This particular factor deals on the type of support the ASG received from foreign states and groups, an important one in the face of a superior enemy (government) that has full logistic support and other resources at its disposal. The ASG was reported to have received financial and material support from the International Jamihiriyah Relief Center in Tripoli, Libya through the Southern Philippines Relief Assistance and from the International Haraka'tul Al-Islamia in Pakistan.⁷¹

They were reported to have invited foreign nationals as observers while undertaking atrocities to popularize their group to other Islamic countries they are courting for support.⁷² Expansion of international connections to Iran, Iraq, and Egypt were monitored especially before the September 11 incident.⁷³

One of the noted supporters is Libya, which had been supportive of the other Muslim rebel organizations before, particularly the MNLF. Libya's President Moammar Ghaddafi was the single most active Middle Eastern supporter who gave arms to the MNLF and called for jihad and economic sanctions against the Philippine government before the Tripoli agreement in 1976.⁷⁴ However, in the recent kidnap case involving foreign nationals taken from the Malaysian diving resort of Sipadan in 2000, the government allowed former Libyan ambassador to the Philippines Rajab Azzarouq to negotiate for the release of the hostages in exchange for about 25 million U.S. dollars.⁷⁵ This arrangement was in direct contradiction to the government's oft-repeated

⁷¹ PMC Intelligence Brief, ASG, undated.

⁷² Very reliable information in 1998-2000 about Arabs who visited ASG camps in Sulu, and were monitored to have video taped ASG activities and distributed "Desert Storm" type of camouflage uniforms.

⁷³ PMC Intelligence Brief, ASG, undated.

⁷⁴ Fred R Von der Mehden, 57.

⁷⁵ PMC Intelligence Brief, Philippine Marine Corps, ASG, undated.

pronouncements of a “No Ransom Policy,” and appears to be a legitimate cover for the transfer of funds to a terrorist organization.⁷⁶

Worth mentioning also is the active role of the Libyan leader’s son Seif Al-Islam Al-Ghaddaffi who visited Mindanao in December 1999 to support economic development in Muslim communities. Libya has pledged funds to build roads, bridges, and mosques. Ghaddafi was escorted by Governor Nur Misuari of the ARMM.⁷⁷ Though this type of development assistance from foreign Muslim countries would help, there is no assurance that funds would be properly spent for development projects, and not for procurement of firearms and other equipment for use in terrorist activities. The experience with the NPA, with their front organizations that served as conduit of funds for its armed struggle, is just too recent to be forgotten.

In the case of the ASG, its links with the international terrorist organization of Osama Bin Laden has been admitted to a Philippine newspaper reporter by no less than an ASG leader in Sulu, Galib Andang AKA Commander Robot, in June 2000.⁷⁸ An arrested ASG member also admitted that the ASG received support from Bin Laden.⁷⁹ One more revelation came from a member of Bin Laden’s terrorist group involved in the clash with US forces in Somalia. He claimed that there is a significant presence of Osama’s followers in the Philippines.⁸⁰ A look at previous incidents will confirm external links or presence of foreign terrorist organization in the country. The police raid

⁷⁶ Christopher C Harmon, “Advancing U.S. National Interests Through Effective Counter terrorism”, Speech at the Secretary’s open forum, U.S. Department of State, October 22,2001, accessed at the U.S.M.C. C.S.C. website, 3.

⁷⁷ Author was present during the visit of the subject with Misuari in Sulu province.

⁷⁸ Richard C Paddock, “U.S. to help Philippines battle terrorist threat”, Los Angeles Times, December 16, 2001.

⁷⁹ “Bandit admits Bin Laden funding Abu Sayyaf”, ABS CBN news, September 17, 2001.URL:<http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/abs/newsflash> accessed September 17, 2001.

in 1995 of a Manila apartment, occupied by two people linked with Ramzi Yousef, yielded a laptop that contained plots to assassinate the Pope during his visit to the Philippines, and bomb several commercial airplanes over the Pacific Ocean.⁸¹ Ramzi Ahmed Yousef, a friend of Janjalani, was later convicted for the 1993 World Trade Center bombing in New York.⁸² Bin Laden's brother-in-law, Mohammed Khalifa, was also reported to have established cells in the Philippines using a business establishment in Manila as a front in the early 1990's. But this had since folded up when Khalifa left the country, thus, there are no more reported cell or activity linked with the al-Qaeda after that, a claim President Arroyo made with the New York Times in October 2001.⁸³ The latest references by the media to current links of the ASG to international terrorists have yet to be proven further by Philippine authorities.

Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement

An important aspect in the containment of terrorism is the swift administration of justice and effective law enforcement. There are obstacles to this even as police and military units conduct joint police operations to arrest ASG members. The police are burdened by the fact that most of them are natives of the place, making it hard for unbiased law enforcement. The strong family ties and the long list of relatives sometimes interfere with a devoted and earnest police work. The advantage of most policemen is

⁸⁰ Kamran Khan, "Pakistan: Shadiq on Osama's War Against U.S., Met ISI", Islamabad The News, Pakistan, (August 19, 1998), Document ID Oex22w500zvv9 accessed 21 December 2001.

⁸¹ PMC Intelligence brief.

⁸² Richard C Paddock.

⁸³ "RP has no Al Qaeda Terrorist Cells Now, Says GMA", Philippine government news datelined Shanghai, October 20, 2001, URL: <<http://www.gov.ph.news>> accessed January 9, 2002.

their familiarity with the population and the operational area, while the military had to learn it the hard way.

A very pronounced phenomenon in most Muslim-dominated provinces is that only a few crimes ever produce a witness to testify against a suspect. This condition is not true to the rest of the country. Many victims' relatives usually opt to avenge a death or a crime committed against them by killing the perpetrator or his relatives rather than testify in court. Many factors can be attributed to this vengeance-type of justice.⁸⁴ An accepted practice sanctioned by the elders, the local government, and the MNLF, is the settlement of deaths resulting from fights through payment of "blood money."⁸⁵ This is done through intermediaries, usually Muslim priests called "imams" or elders and local government officials, who settle differences between parties according to an agreed amount, and conclude it with signed documents.⁸⁶ This results in a criminal with no criminal records and the justice system is undermined. Sometimes, judges refuse to hold court fearing the power and influence of those charged. The apparent weakness of the criminal justice system therefore, works in favor of the ASG.

⁸⁴ The phrase "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" perfectly describes the settlement of some disputes for those who do not agree with the penal system, or simply defy the law and impose their own brand of justice based on vendetta.

⁸⁵ A common practice in Sulu and other Muslim-dominated areas where the death of a person is settled through the payment of an amount of money based on the educational attainment of the victim (cost of education) and social stature.

⁸⁶ Author personally witnessed one settlement case sometime in 1999 between the family of a Muslim man and a Christian male who killed the former in a rock-throwing incident. A town mayor and some MNLF leaders certified the settlement papers.

CHAPTER III

THE STRATEGY OF HOLISTIC APPROACH

“ The fight against terrorism is a fight against poverty”

Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo⁸⁷

This chapter deals with the Philippine government's counterterrorism and antiterrorism strategy against the Abu Sayyaf Group. Nevertheless, it is important to analyze first the previous actions that failed and succeeded in addressing the Muslim problem as a whole in Mindanao. The strategy of the current administration is very critical since the lessons of the past may not have been learned. This strategy of the top leadership sets the direction to all government agencies as it tries to address this particular problem.

The peace and order problem especially in Mindanao is paralyzing the economic development of the country. Economic and social measures have failed due to the continuing armed conflict between the government and the different rebel groups. Both foreign and local businessmen refuse to invest in an environment of terror and sporadic armed clashes. Philippine presidents from Marcos to Estrada had formulated and tried several solutions, but none so far has succeeded. Marcos unleashed the full force of the military that resulted to the devastation of Mindanao especially the province of Sulu. President Corazon Aquino and President Fidel V Ramos made peace with MNLF Chairman Nur Misuari. President Ramos likewise poured million of pesos in the

⁸⁷. “GMA Says Gov’t Determined To Win Against Local Terrorism”, Philippine news, October 28, 2001, URL:<<http://www.gov.ph>> accessed January 7, 2002.

infrastructure and economic development of Mindanao while negotiating peace with the MILF. The establishment of the ARMM with Misuari as governor brought temporary peace in the area. Infrastructure projects were implemented that paved way for the surge of economic development in the region. The establishment of the East Asian Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA) with neighboring countries of Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia, accelerated the growth of trade and tourism activities. Davao and Cagayan de Oro Cities started carving a name for themselves as ideal convention and recreation centers. Trade activities between Zamboanga and Sandakan flourished. The opening of direct air and shipping routes between the BIMP - EAGA countries propelled the development of business and tourism in Mindanao. Unfortunately, all these developments were paralyzed by the kidnap for ransom activities of the Abu Sayyaf victimizing foreigners. The armed conflict between the MILF and the government forces last March to July 2000 was also a factor in the deterioration of the economic situation in Mindanao.

The current administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has taken steps to reverse the situation. Executive Order No. 21 was signed by the President on June 19, 2001, adopting the “strategy of Holistic Approach” to address insurgency and terrorism problems.⁸⁸ A two-pronged approach was in response to the insurgency problem on the MNLF and MILF, and the ASG's terrorist activities. A Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security (COC-IS) was established. Four government agencies, the Department of Health, Department of Foreign Affairs, Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police have been tapped for the government’s anti-terrorism programs. The COC-IS conducted field and central monitoring visits on insurgency and

⁸⁸ Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, State of the Nation Address updates, Philippine government, URL:<<http://www.gov.ph>>accessed January 7, 2002.

terrorist related concerns in Sulu, Basilan, and Tawi-Tawi. The government is also planning to conduct “All-Muslim Leaders’ Summit for Peace.” Meanwhile dialogue with Catholic Mindanao bishops, Muslim religious leaders and Protestant bishops are held when necessary, to keep the communication line open among and between these different religious groups in Mindanao.

Local government units and concerned agencies are upgrading their investment promotion capabilities in anticipation of the renewed BIMP-EAGA activities. Efforts to improve port facilities are in support of the existing ferry services between Zamboanga City and Sandakan, Malaysia. Result of an Asian Development Bank (ADB)-funded study on harmonizing Customs, Immigration, Quarantine, and Security (CIQS) is forthcoming. A harmonized CIQS among BIMP-EAGA countries would greatly curtail smuggling and other illegal activities of the terrorists.

The government has also pledged to provide Five hundred million pesos funding from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Fund for community projects in Mindanao. This will cover fifteen provinces and fourteen cities considered conflict-affected areas in Mindanao. These community projects will give the target communities access to basic social and economic infrastructure services. So far, 210 sub-project sites have been identified by the national government in consultation with the MNLF and the local government units.

The Department of Education has likewise pledged to build school buildings in each village to ensure that all villages nationwide shall have elementary schools by 2004.⁸⁹ This step is expected to improve the functional literacy rate of the people of Sulu and Basilan, where the Abu Sayyaf encamps. Providing education to the children in

these provinces is, however subject to the peace and order situation. The terrorists also kidnap teachers and school children, thus parents and teachers alike are reluctant to go to schools.

In her recent speech before the members of the Philippine Constitution Association on September 28, 2001 in Manila, President Arroyo presented her administration's 14-point policy.⁹⁰ Briefly, they were the following:

1. Organize, and delineate clear lines of responsibility through the creation of the Cabinet Oversight Committee in Internal Security headed by her Executive Secretary.
2. Anticipate events through intelligence.
3. Strengthen internal focus against terrorism.
4. Neutralize through legal sanctions all public and private organizations aiding or abetting terrorism.
5. Synchronize internal effort with international and regional effort.
6. Legal measures combine with and supplement the tactical counterforce.
7. Broader inter-faith dialogue.
8. Vigilant monitoring by police and government agencies.
9. Disaster preparedness.
10. Security of vital installations.
11. Contingency plan for evacuation of overseas Filipinos.
12. Modernization of the police and the Armed Forces must consider the needs versus local terrorism.
13. Ensure mass media support.
14. Consider measures that affect the political, social, and economic conditions.

Although several projects are in the pipeline, the amount of money is certainly not enough to address the economic and social cost of development. The effect will not also be felt immediately since development efforts are long-term solutions.

On the regional effort, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has declared war on terrorism during the Seventh ASEAN summit on November 5-6, 2001 in Brunei Darussalam. Specifically, the joint declaration that adopted much of the program

⁸⁹ *Barangay* is the official (Tagalog) term for a village, the lowest political unit in the Philippines.

⁹⁰ Philippine President. 2-4.

sought by President Arroyo, called for a region-wide approach in eliminating the global menace.⁹¹ The move was earlier initiated by President Arroyo's call for Malaysia and Indonesia to form a regional coalition together with the Philippines, to fight terrorism along its common borders. Aside from terrorist activities, the ASEAN Action Plan would deal on transnational crimes, as well as, exchange of intelligence or information.

⁹² This concerted move is a good step toward regional cooperation in solving a common problem. Recent arrests of Islamic militants linked to several bombings and attempts to bomb targets in the region have caught the interest of the U.S. in its worldwide campaign against the terrorists. Malaysia had supported the MNLF rebels in the 70's but its government had recently acted positively on the current problem in Mindanao, when its police arrested former Governor Nur Misuari when he fled to Sabah. Relations with Malaysia had been warm despite the ASG's raid and seizure of tourists from a resort in Sipadan. The Philippines has an existing border crossing agreement with Indonesia. Both countries share a terrorist threat from its Islamic extremist groups. Indonesian extremist elements were linked before with the MILF, in the aftermath of the bombing of the Philippine embassy in Jakarta in December 2000. Recent arrests in Malaysia and Singapore, of militant Islamic groups linked to Al Qaeda, suggest a presence of a terrorist network in the region.⁹³

The September 11, 2001 terrorist attack in the United States of America brought world focus on Osama Bin Laden. In the aftermath of the attack, the United Nations Security Council immediately issued Resolution Number 1368 against terrorism that was

⁹¹“RP Able To Push For Regional Collective Security, Economic Stability in Forums”, Philippine news, November 8, 2001, URL: <[http:// www.gov.ph](http://www.gov.ph) > accessed November 8, 2001.

⁹² RP Able

adopted on September 12, 2001.⁹⁴ Consequently, the focus of international effort against terrorism was spearheaded by the United States. U.S. President George W. Bush issued an Executive Order on September 23, 2001, declaring a national emergency to deal with the terrorist threat.⁹⁵ Included in the list of organizations that would face sanctions contained in that order, was the ASG. The ASG had been included in the list of terrorist groups that was released by the U.S. State Department in October 8, 1997.⁹⁶

Amidst all these terrorist incidents, Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo publicly denounced the attacks on the United States.⁹⁷ While a number of Filipino nationals and many Filipino-Americans perished in the World Trade Center attack, there was no doubt for the Philippine leader to support U.S. moves to deal with the terrorists since her country has been facing the same problem for a long time. On September 22 to 26, 2001, access through the Philippine airspace and landing rights were allowed to U.S. forces transiting through the country.

During President Arroyo's visit to the U.S. on November 20, 2001, President Bush committed a military aid package worth 92 million dollars that included a C130 plane, helicopters, a patrol gunboat, rifles and ammunition, as well as training on special operations.⁹⁸ Some of the equipment had arrived at the end of 2001, while training activities are scheduled in 2002 with the arrival of about 100 members of the U.S. Special

⁹³Leslie Lopez, "Asian Militants With Alleged Al Qaeda Ties Are Accused of Plotting Against Embassies", Wall Street Journal, January 7, 2002, 1-3.

⁹⁴ Philippine President.

⁹⁵President George W Bush, Executive Order, September 24, 2001, NewsHour online, URL:<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/terrorism/july-dec01/executive-order-9-24.html> >accessed October 10, 2001.

⁹⁶ Patterns of Global Terrorism

⁹⁷ Mia Gonzalez, "Attacks on Taliban are just, Arroyo", Abs Cbn news, October 8, 2001, URL: <<http://www.abs-cbnnews.com>>accessed October 9, 2001.

⁹⁸ "Arroyo Secures P230 Billion Economic Package From U.S.", Abs Cbn news, November 21, 2001, URL: <<http://www.abs-cbnnews.com>>accessed November 21, 2001.

Forces in mid-January.⁹⁹ Visits of high-ranking U.S. officials included Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Forces in the Pacific, Admiral Dennis Blair, and Congressman Todd Tiahrt.¹⁰⁰ This very positive U.S. response to the Philippine request will certainly and significantly help in containing the ASG's threat and severing its international links with foreign terrorist groups that provide support.

A limitation on the possible involvement of U.S. ground forces in the ongoing fight against the ASG in the Philippines is the Philippine Constitution. It does not allow foreign troops to conduct combat operations without new legislation. Currently, the heightened level of assistance and cooperation with the United States is taking place within the framework of the Philippine-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty, the Visiting Forces Agreement, and the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1368.¹⁰¹

The Military Response

The Philippine government primarily confronts the ASG with military and police forces. Guided by the Crisis Management Manual published by the Department of National Defense, all available machinery is utilized to fight the terrorists, with the bulk of the tasks given to Army and Marine units. First to react to terrorist attacks are the police and military units nearest to the scene. Though most of the Philippine police and military personnel have experience in counterterrorism, the methods and equipment used may not be as effective as can be desired.

⁹⁹ William Cole, "Hawaii Troops Likely For Philippine Count terrorism "Honolulu Advertiser, January 5, 2001.

¹⁰⁰ Gerald Seib, "A Time To Remember Two Terror Victims Being Held Hostage Outside The Limelight", Wall Street Journal, January 9, 2002.

¹⁰¹ Marian Trinidad and Reuters, "More U.S. Advisors To Help Fight Sayyaf ", Manila Times, January 4, 2002.

In Basilan, the hostage crisis in 1993 involving the son of a transportation magnate mobilized many military units, mostly Marines.¹⁰² The rescue effort took several months of continuous combat operations and negotiations, before the victim was rescued. When negotiations were feasible, military operations provided support through pressure and containment of the ASG in its identified lairs. In 1994, terrorists abducted a local community parish priest together with 21 schoolteachers, after executing 15 male residents in a remote village in Basilan. The priest and the teachers were later released after a former governor of the province negotiated with the terrorists. Several other abductions of residents and some local and foreign Catholic missionaries were conducted by both the ASG and the criminal elements in Basilan. In all cases, military units were in the forefront of the rescue effort supported by the police, while government and private negotiators tried their diplomatic ability to facilitate the release.

In Sulu, there had been a number of abductions, in the past decade, of rich local businessmen and professionals, and members of the Catholic clergy that included foreign priests and nuns.¹⁰³ The same method of addressing a hostage crisis is applied. With military operations combined with negotiations, majority of the kidnap cases were concluded with the payment of ransom in exchange for the release, particularly in the past four years (1998-2001).

Although there were abductions of foreign nationals within the Philippines in previous years, the daring raid of a Malaysian diving resort in April 2000 was the first ASG venture outside the country. It was timed right after the movement of Marine units from Sulu and Tawi-Tawi to Central Mindanao, where a massive military campaign was

¹⁰² PMC Intelligence Summary.

about to be launched. Hence, token replacement forces from the Army, unfamiliar with the area, were caught unprepared to confront the ASG that had brought in several foreign hostages to Sulu. A Marine battalion monitored and planned counter actions on the ASG's presence at the staging point in Tawi-Tawi province, but was preempted by its pullout. The crisis was further complicated with the abduction of foreign journalists, and several members of a Christian religious minority group. This crisis was almost concluded with the release of most of the hostages after payment of ransom. It was arranged through a series of negotiations, one of which was led by a former Libyan ambassador to the Philippines. The last of the victims, American Jeffrey Schilling, escaped after his abductors clashed with a Marine reconnaissance unit. With the money they amassed, the ASG was able to purchase firearms and high-speed watercraft, which they used in another raid in a Philippine resort in 2001. Despite the big number of casualties (both killed and wounded) on both sides for the current military operations in Basilan, the hostage crisis remains unresolved.

Assessing the previous military actions in both Basilan and Sulu, the sustained military operations do not always result to successful and safe rescue of hostages. At the strategic level, the government lacked focus in fighting the group. There are other threat groups to confront as they pose greater danger to national security than the ASG's terror activities. While confronting other threats, the military units consequently react only to ASG initiated actions, and thus lose the initiative. The foreign forays of the ASG and mass abduction of foreigners forced the government to pay more attention to this group.

¹⁰³ High school, elementary schools and a college are run by several Catholic religious orders, aside from the church and charitable organizations helping the poor. A bishop is the highest Catholic official in Jolo.

At the operational level, many areas of concern need attention. The intelligence collection effort is being stymied by lack of surveillance and detection equipments and the dependence on Human Intelligence (HUMINT), supported by basic Signal Intelligence (SIGINT) gadgets. An effective information collection network is directly related to good civil relations and popular support to the government since the population is one of the best sources of information. As majority of the residents do not report ASG activities to the authorities because of fear, it limits the military's access to critical tactical information necessary to aid military operations in the remote ASG areas of operation. Even when the police or military has secured high-risk targets and those who have received kidnap threats, the ASG still finds a way to get other local victims.

Another operational factor to consider is the presence of other local armed groups as discussed earlier. Like the U.S. experience in Somalia, the other armed groups tend to support the ASG when faced with a common enemy, the Philippine military. However, the main motivation is monetary, a share of the ransom money. This tie-up can be significantly reduced if the no-ransom policy is observed.

The military and police units face the risk of engaging the ASG that is supported by other armed groups. The government-recognized MNLF camps are no-fire zones that becomes obstacles that should always be considered in operational planning both in Sulu and Basilan. The MILF in Basilan cannot be trusted even if its chairman announced his non-support to the ASG. It is very much different on the ground when religious, tribal, and blood kinship provides the common bond against a common "enemy."

Another dangerous factor in the fight against the ASG is its connection with some local government officials through either blood relations, monetary considerations, or

sympathy to the cause. The latter may prove to be difficult to determine than the blood and money connections, although many former rebels currently hold elective and appointive positions. This includes the current governor of Basilan province, Wahab Akbar.

The media is certainly considered a major factor in the counter-terrorism effort, but it sometimes plays into the hands of the ASG's propaganda. Through press interviews and photo opportunities highlighting its terror activities such as beheading of captives, the ASG exploits the media to the maximum. They also become victims as some were held for ransom a number of times in the past. This adds burden to military operations.

At the tactical level, the use of civilian hostages as shield for the ASG's escape or withdrawal, poses a big risk to military commanders. In the same vein, terrorists blend well into the villages whose residents may be sympathetic or forced to give support to the ASG. Therefore, the element of surprise is difficult to attain when troops pass through populated areas, since some sympathetic residents, relatives or members usually alert the ASG through couriers or commercially available radios.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Assessment of Policy Effectiveness

The Philippine military had been implementing a portion of the government's strategy i.e. the use of military force in dealing with the ASG. The use of force had variable levels of intensity since the military had to face other national security threats like the MILF in Central Mindanao, and the CPP/NPA in other parts of the country. The government's development thrust, goes hand in hand with offers of peace to the different rebellious Muslim groups. The MNLF came close to a successful termination, albeit for some respite from violence, but recently resurrected as another rebellious faction. It appears now, that the problem has become a vicious cycle of a rebel group emerging or splitting into several factions, with some making peace with the government or continuing the fight, receiving concessions in peace negotiations, but later getting dissatisfied and ended up fighting the government again. The ASG is a product of the different Muslim rebel groups in this vicious cycle. Perhaps the total approach of the current administration will finally solve the problem on the ASG.

The Philippine military is capable of neutralizing the ASG, but there are factors that will impede this goal. This paper has discussed some of the most important variables that affect the operating environment in general, and the strategic, operational, and tactical considerations in dealing with the ASG. With adequate training and appropriate

equipment to improve detection, surveillance, tracking, night fighting, and targeting capabilities, the military's effectiveness will drastically improve. The vast combat experience of many Philippine Army and Marine units is an advantage that can offset some limitations and weaknesses in the operational areas. Once the ASG is neutralized, the government's effort must continue. Other government agencies must come in and take the lead in the development phase.

The analysis of the entire spectrum affecting the problem had to be viewed in the context of the threat group, vis-à-vis the counter measures taken against it. The variables presented by Bard O'Neill with some addition, had delved into the roots of the problem of not only the ASG as an organization, but also the factors that contribute to its existence and sustenance. The ASG's claim for Islamic fundamentalist goals is overshadowed by its criminal activities. Hence, it tries to present a credible cause before the public, which it found in Islamic fundamentalism. Its activities typify a criminal group with an ulterior motive of financial and material gain, coupled with a desire for power and media attention. This group appears to be a resurrection of the Muslim pirates in Mindanao before the middle half of the 20th century. It does not represent the true Islam, a faith that does not profess uncalled for violence.

The government's effort concerning international and regional cooperation against terrorism would gain the most impact and results if pursued with sustained vigor. This is an important part of the solution. Certainly, there is no fixed set of solutions to address this type of terrorist problem, nor the use of force alone, without the concomitant actions of other government agencies, could ever address the terrorist problem. The ASG would continue to exist for as long as the society's dysfunctions provide a cause for such

terrorist groups. Hence, a multi-faceted approach must be adopted in order to address and correct all the variables that contribute to the continued existence of the ASG and the other threat groups.

A government total approach, much like the 14-point program of the President, should be immediately pursued and sustained. The people, who are the center of gravity, must be won to the side of the government through several measures. It must be noted that the terrorists represent only a small fraction of the Muslim population in Basilan and Sulu. Its people are tired of violence and wants it to end immediately. They only want the government to attend to the problems confronting them. The majority of the people views even the current U.S. forces' training assistance positively.¹⁰⁴ The key to it is the public and private organizations that can be mobilized to support the government's effort, more particularly the military operations to neutralize the threat.

In more concrete terms, the following are the recommended measures to complement President Arroyo's 14-point program:

- a. Sustain military operations by taking the initiative so that the ASG is always on the defensive.
- b. The government's response to terrorist threats must be proactive.
- c. Appropriate government agencies should be tapped to manage refugees as a result of military operations.
- d. Security emphasis should be in high-risk areas. The feeling of security among the people could be promoted through passive and active security measures.
- e. Sustain civil-military operations in coordination other government agencies in order to gain the people's trust and increase cooperation to the government. This includes psychological operations to generate support towards military operations.
- f. Organize, train and appropriately equip reaction forces from both the police and military units. This recommendation definitely entails a big amount of fund, but training has already started with the U.S. forces' assistance, while the equipment may be procured through normal acquisition programs or foreign assistance.
- g. Revitalize the intelligence units and agencies with more training and better equipment. The ASG's use of commercially available radios and portable phones makes

¹⁰⁴ Michelle Malkin, "From Bataan to Balikpapan", Washington Times, April 8, 2002. p15.

it vulnerable to interception, detection, and tracking. Better intelligence is vital in fighting the terrorists.

h. The existing peace or ceasefire agreements with the MNLF and the MILF should be amended in regard to recognition of MNLF or MILF camps.

i. Emphasize the rule of law, including gun laws. The strict enforcement of the law and the swift prosecution of the ASG leaders and members would regain the trust of the people in the justice system.

Several variables and factors affecting the ASG and the government's counterterrorism strategy show the complexity of the terrorist and the insurgency problems. Relating this to the historical background of Mindanao, and the struggle of the Filipino Muslims, would reveal a more profound problem that must be addressed with a deep understanding of the issues. This is indeed a multidimensional problem that requires a comprehensive solution. The government's holistic approach is a step towards the right direction. However, the military must first succeed in eliminating the armed threat until it becomes a mere police concern. It is imperative that the ASG leadership is eliminated by military force or brought to justice so that the development effort could take the lead. At this stage, the effectiveness of the government's counterterrorism strategy cannot be gauged yet. The strategy would be effective if the implementation is focused, aggressive, and sustained over a long period of time. When the Filipino Muslims start to trust the government and the Philippine Constitution more than the ASG, there is hope for peace and development in southern Philippines.

Cited Sources

Books

Benson, E. F. *Ferdinand Magellan*. London: John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd, 1929.

Corpuz, Victor N. *Silent War*. Philippines: VNC Enterprises, 1968.

Ekstein, Harry. *Internal War, Problem and Apprehension*. London: The Free Press of Glencoe, Collier-Macmillan Ltd., 1964.

Gurr, Ted Robert. *Why Men Rebel*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970.

Harmon, Christopher C. *Terrorism Today*. Oregon: Frank Cass Publishers, 2001.

Headquarters Philippine Army. *The Final Option*. Manila: Philippine Army, 2000.

Horn, Florence. *Orphans of the Pacific, The Philippines*. New York: Cornwall Press, 1941.

Miller, Stuart Creighton. *Benevolent Assimilation, The American Conquest of the Philippines, 1899-1903*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982.

Norval, Morgan. *Triumph of Disorder, Islamic Fundamentalism, The New Face of War*. Oregon: Sligo Press, Bend, 1st edition 1999.

O'Neill, Bard. *Insurgency and Terrorism, Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare*. Virginia: Brassey's (US), Inc., 1990.

Van der Mehden, Fred R. *Two Worlds of Islam, Interaction between Southeast Asia and the Middle East*. Florida: University Press of Florida, 1993.

Digests and Publications

US Department of State. *Patterns of Global Terrorism, 1999*. Washington, DC: Department of State Publication, 2000.

US Department of State. *Patterns of Global Terrorism, 2000*. Washington, DC: Department of State Publication, 2001.

Michael Elliott, "Special Report 'Hate Club' ", Time magazine, Nov 12, 2001.

Loose Leaf

Armed Forces of the Philippines, Intelligence Brief, *The Abu Sayyaf Group*, Undated. (Unclass)

Philippine Marine Corps, Intelligence Brief, *The Abu Sayyaf Group*, Undated. (Unclass)

Philippine Marine Corps, Intelligence Brief, *MNLF*, Undated. (Unclass)

Philippine Marine Corps, Intelligence Summary, *Kidnapping incidents in Western Mindanao*, December 2000. (Unclass)

Electronic Sources

Anthony Davis, "Southeast Asian bombings betray Islamic links", *Jane's Intelligence Review*, online edition, 8 February 2001, URL<<http://www.janes.com/regional-news/asia/pacific>> accessed December 19, 2001.

"Arroyo Secures P230 Billion Economic Package from U.S.," ABS CBN news, November 21, 2001, URL: <<http://www.abs-cbnnews.com>> accessed November 21, 2001.

"Bandit admits Bin Laden funding Abu Sayyaf", ABS CBN news, September 17, 2001. URL: <http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/abs/newsflash> accessed September 17, 2001.

Christopher C Harmon, "Advancing US National Interests Through Effective Counter Terrorism", Speech at the Secretary's open forum, US Department of State, October 22, 2001, accessed at the USMC CSC website, 3.

Crucible of Empire-PBS Online, URL<<http://www.pbs.org/crucible/timeline>> accessed on September 25, 2001.

Dr Rohan Gunaratna, "The evolution and tactics of the Abu Sayyaf Group", *United Kingdom: Janes Intelligence Review*, July 2001.

Gerald Seib, "A Time To Remember Two Terror Victims Being Held Hostage Outside The Limelight", *Wall Street Journal*, January 9, 2002.1

"GMA Says Gov't Determined To Win Against Local Terrorism", *Philippine news*, October 28, 2001, URL:<<http://www.gov.ph>> accessed January 7, 2002.

"Government case against Misuari on role in two kidnappings strong, says Golez" *Philippine Government news*, URL<<http://www.gov.ph/news/release>> accessed January 07, 2002.

Hashim Salamat, interview March 25, 1998 Jane's regional news. URL< [http://www.Janes.com/regional news](http://www.Janes.com/regional%20news)> accessed December 21, 2001.

Hashim Salamat, "The Moro Islamic Liberation Front" interview, *Nida'ul Islam magazine* April-May 1998.URL<<http://www.islam.org.au>> accessed September 2001.

Indira A.R. Lakshmanan, "Guerilla Group Vows to Kill U.S. Troops," *Boston Globe*, Jan 29, 2002, p 8.

Joshua Kurlantzick, "Opening up a second front," *US News and World Report*, Dec. 24, 2001. p. 26

Kamran Khan, "Pakistan: Shadiq on Osama's War Against US, Met ISI", *Islamabad The News, Pakistan*, August 19, 1998, Document ID Oex22w500zvv9 accessed December 21, 2001.

"Kidnapping Crisis: groups behind abductions in the Philippines", *Jane's Sentinel*, 12 January 2001 URL<[http:// www.janes.com/regional news/asia-pacific](http://www.janes.com/regional%20news/asia-pacific)> accessed December 21, 2001.

Leslie Lopez, "Asian Militants With Alleged Al Qaeda Ties Are Accused of Plotting Against Embassies", *Wall Street Journal*, January 7, 2002, 1-3.

Marian Trinidad and Reuters, "More US Advisors To Help Fight Sayyaf ", *Manila Times*, January 4, 2002.

Mia Gonzalez, "Attacks on Taliban are just, Arroyo", *ABS CBN news*, October 8, 2001,URL: <<http://www.abs-cbnnews.com> >accessed October 9,2001.

National Statistics Office, April 6, 2001 Poverty Indicators Survey of October 1999.

Philippine Information, *Philippine Government*, URL<<http://www.gov.ph/philinfo/genreralinfo.asp> >accessed December 19, 2001.

Philippine National Statistics Office, 2000 Census of population and housing highlights, URL<<http://www.census.gov.ph>> accessed January 7, 2002.

Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, State of the Nation Address updates, Philippine government, URL:< <http://www.gov.ph>> accessed January 2002.

Philippines Country Study, URL < [http://1cweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin country study](http://1cweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/country%20study)> accessed December 19, 2001.

Philippines, Philippine Tourism Brief, Department of Tourism, CD ROM, 1997.

President George W Bush, Executive Order, September 24, 2001, NewsHour online, URL <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/terrorism/july-dec01/executive-order-9-24.html>>accessed October 10,2001.

Richard C Paddock, "US To Help Philippines Battle Terrorist Threat", Los Angeles Times, December 16, 2001.

"RP Able To Push For Regional Collective Security, Economic Stability in Forums", Philippine news, November 8, 2001, URL: <[http:// www.gov.ph](http://www.gov.ph)> accessed November 8, 2001.

"RP has no Al Qaeda Terrorist Cells Now, Says GMA"Philippine government news datelined Shanghai, October 20, 2001, URL: <<http://www.gov.ph.news>> accessed January 9, 2002.

Spanish-American War/War of Philippine Independence 1898-1901, URL<<http://www.ualberta.ca/~vmitchel/fw4.html>> accessed on August 11,2001. 1.

William Cole, "Hawaii Troops Likely For Philippine Count terrorism "Honolulu Advertiser, January 5, 2001.

Bibliography

Books

- The American Heritage Dictionary, 3rd edition. New York: Dell Publishing, 1994.
- Benson, E. F. *Ferdinand Magellan*. London: John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd, 1929.
- Cordes, Bonnie and 2 others. *A Conceptual Framework For Analyzing Terrorist Groups*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation June 1985.
- Corpuz, Victor N. *Silent War*. Philippines: VNC Enterprises, 1968.
- Ekstein, Harry. *Internal War, Problem and Apprehension*. London: The Free Press of Glencoe, Collier-Macmillan Ltd., 1964.
- Gurr, Ted Robert. *Why Men Rebel*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970
- Harmon, Christopher C. *Terrorism Today*. Oregon: Frank Cass Publishers, 2001.
- Headquarters Philippine Army. *The Final Option*. Manila: Philippine Army, 2000.
- Horn, Florence. *Orphans of the Pacific, The Philippines*. New York: Cornwall Press, 1941.
- Houle, Edward H Major USAF. *The Use Of Military Force To Counter International Terrorism – A Policy Dilemma*. Master of Military Art and Science, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: US Army CGSC, 1987.
- Hubard, Mark. *Warriors of the Prophet. The Struggle for Islam*. Boulder, CO: Westview Pres, 1999.
- Jalali, Ali Ahmad and Grair, Lester W. *The Other Side of the Mountain: Mujahideen Tactics in the Soviet-Afghan War.*, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Foreign Military Studies Office, 1995.
- Kirk, Donald. *Looted, The Philippines after the Base*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998.
- Livingston, Neil C. *The War Against Terrorism*. Toronto: D.C. Heath and Company, 1982.
- Mezerik, A. G. *Malaysia-Indonesia Conflict*. New York: International Review Service, Inc, 1965.

Miller, Stuart Creighton. *Benevolent Assimilation, The American Conquest of the Philippines, 1899-1903*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982.

Norval, Morgan. *Triumph of Disorder, Islamic Fundamentalism, The New Face of War*. Oregon: Sligo Press, Bend, 1st edition 1999.

O'Neill, Bard. *Insurgency and Terrorism, Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare*. Virginia: Brassey's (US), Inc., 1990.

Sans, Andrew D. *A Summary of the US Role in Insurgency Situation in the Philippine Islands, 1899-1955*. Washington, DC: Special Operations Research Office, The American University, 18 Dec 1964.

Van der Mehden, Fred R. *Two Worlds of Islam, Interaction between Southeast Asia and the Middle East*. Florida: University Press of Florida, 1993.

USMC, *Small Wars Manual*. Washington: US Government Records Office, 1940.

Digests and Publications

De la Cruz, Milner F. Major PN(M). "Re-examining the Abu Sayyaf Group". Office of Strategic and Special Studies, Armed Forces of the Philippines, 3rd & 4th Quarter Digest, 2000: 6 pages

US Department of State. *Patterns of Global Terrorism, 1999*. Washington, DC: Department of State Publication, 2000.

US Department of State. *Patterns of Global Terrorism, 2000*. Washington, DC: Department of State Publication, 2001.

Michael Elliott, "Special Report 'Hate Club' ", Time magazine, Nov 12, 2001,59.

Loose Leaf

Armed Forces of the Philippines, Intelligence Brief, *The Abu Sayyaf Group*, Undated. (Unclas)

Philippine Marine Corps, Intelligence Brief, *The Abu Sayyaf Group*, Undated. (Unclas)

Philippine Marine Corps, Intelligence Brief, *MNLF*, Undated. (Unclas)

Philippine Marine Corps, Intelligence Summary, *Kidnapping incidents in Western Mindanao*, December 2000. (Unclas)

Electronic Sources

Anthony Davis," Southeast Asian bombings betray Islamic links", Jane's Intelligence Review, online edition, 8 February 2001, URL<<http://www.janes.com/regional-news/asia-pacific>> accessed December 19, 2001.

"Arroyo Secures P230 Billion Economic Package from U.S.," ABS CBN news, November 21, 2001,URL: <<http://www.abs-cbnnews.com>>accessed November 21, 2001.

"Bandit admits Bin Laden funding Abu Sayyaf", ABS CBN news, September 17, 2001.URL:<http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/abs/newsflash> accessed September 17, 2001.

Christopher C Harmon, "Advancing US National Interests Through Effective Counter Terrorism", Speech at the Secretary's open forum, US Department of State, October 22,2001, accessed at the USMC CSC website, 3.

Crucible of Empire-PBS Online, URL<<http://www.pbs.org/crucible/timeline>>accessed on September 25, 2001.

Dr Rohan Gunaratna, "The evolution and tactics of the Abu Sayyaf Group", United Kingdom: Janes Intelligence Review, July 2001.

Gerald Seib," A Time To Remember Two Terror Victims Being Held Hostage Outside The Limelight", Wall Street Journal, January 9, 2002.1

"GMA Says Gov't Determined To Win Against Local Terrorism", Philippine news, October 28, 2001, URL:<<http://www.gov.ph>> accessed January 7, 2002.

"Government case against Misuari on role in two kidnappings strong, says Golez" Philippine Government news, URL<<http://www.gov.ph> news release> accessed January 07, 2002.

Hashim Salamat, interview March 25, 1998 Jane's regional news. URL< [http://www.Janes.com/regional news](http://www.Janes.com/regional%20news)> accessed December 21, 2001.

Hashim Salamat, "The Moro Islamic Liberation Front" interview, *Nida'ul Islam magazine* April-May 1998.URL<<http://www.islam.org.au>> accessed September 2001.

Indira A.R. Lakshmanan, "Guerilla Group Vows to Kill U.S. Troops," Boston Globe, Jan 29, 2002, p 8.

Joshua Kurlantzick, "Opening up a second front," US News and World Report, Dec. 24, 2001. p. 26

Kamran Khan, "Pakistan: Shadiq on Osama's War Against US, Met ISI", Islamabad The News, Pakistan, August 19, 1998, Document ID Oex22w500zvv9 accessed December 21, 2001.

"Kidnapping Crisis: groups behind abductions in the Philippines", Jane's Sentinel, 12 Jan 2001 URL<[http:// www.janes.com/regional news/asia-pacific](http://www.janes.com/regional_news/asia-pacific)> accessed Dec 21, 2001.

Leslie Lopez, "Asian Militants With Alleged Al Qaeda Ties Are Accused of Plotting Against Embassies", Wall Street Journal, January 7, 2002, 1-3.

Marian Trinidad and Reuters, "More US Advisors To Help Fight Sayyaf ", Manila Times, January 4, 2002.

Mia Gonzalez, "Attacks on Taliban are just, Arroyo," ABS CBN news, October 8, 2001,URL: <<http://www.abs-cbnnews.com> >accessed October 9,2001.

National Statistics Office, April 6, 2001 Poverty Indicators Survey of October 1999.

Philippine Information, *Philippine Government*,
URL<<http://www.gov.ph/philinfo/genreralinfo.asp> >accessed December 19, 2001.

Philippine National Statistics Office, 2000 Census of population and housing highlights, URL<<http://www.census.gov.ph>> accessed January 7, 2002.

Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, State of the Nation Address updates, Philippine government, URL:< <http://www.gov.ph>> accessed January 2002.

Philippines Country Study, URL < <http://1cweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin> country study> accessed December 19, 2001.

Philippines, Philippine Tourism Brief, Department of Tourism, CD ROM, 1997.

President George W Bush, Executive Order, September 24, 2001, News Hour online, URL<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/terrorism/july-dec01/executive-order-9-24.html>>accessed October 10,2001.

Richard C Paddock, "US To Help Philippines Battle Terrorist Threat", Los Angeles Times, December 16, 2001.

"RP Able To Push For Regional Collective Security, Economic Stability in Forums," Philippine News, November 8, 2001, URL: <[http:// www.gov.ph](http://www.gov.ph)> accessed Nov 8, 2001.

"RP has no Al Qaeda Terrorist Cells Now, Says GMA" Philippine government news datelined Shanghai, Oct 20, 2001, URL:<<http://www.gov.ph.news>> accessed Jan 9, 2002.

Spanish-American War/War of Philippine Independence 1898-1901,
URL<<http://www.ualberta.ca/~vmitchel/fw4.html>> accessed on August 11,2001. 1.

William Cole, "Hawaii Troops Likely For Philippine Counter terrorism "Honolulu
Advertiser, January 5, 2001.