



NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**FINDING THE MISSING LINK TO A SUCCESSFUL
PHILIPPINE COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGY**

by

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June 2007

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the 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 Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.				
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)		2. REPORT DATE June 2007	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's Thesis	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE: Finding the Missing Link to a Successful Philippine Counterinsurgency Strategy			5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR: Leonardo I Peña				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A			10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.				
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words) This paper analyzes the current Philippine counterinsurgency strategy in relation to the Philippine government past experiences of fighting insurgency nationwide. The Philippine government recognizes insurgency as a national threat that hampers sustained peace and development in the country, but government efforts in counterinsurgency have been less than successful. The thesis examines four historical case studies: the "All Out Friendship or All Out Force" program of President Ramon Magsaysay against the Huk Rebellion in 1950s; "Oplan Katatagan" during the Martial Law Era under President Ferdinand E. Marcos; "Lambat-Bitag Campaign" during the administrations of Presidents Corazon Aquino and Fidel V. Ramos; and "Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines" in the current administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. The thesis demonstrates that successful counterinsurgency operations require a collaborative interagency approach based on a clear and logical national strategy. This strategy cannot succeed at the national level only. The strategy must be pushed down to the local level where effective change can occur. Despite current perceptions, counterinsurgency operations are not the exclusive domain of the military. In fact, the possibility of success is often diminished when the military takes a dominant role in counterinsurgency operations. Finally, the thesis recommends that the Philippine government should internalize and adopt the "correct attitude" that has been missing in most of the early counterinsurgency efforts. Although focused on the Philippines, lessons from this thesis can be applied elsewhere.				
14. SUBJECT TERMS Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP), Counterinsurgency (COIN), National Internal Security Plan (NISP), barangay (village)			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 93	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UL	

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39-18

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COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGY**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DEFENSE ANALYSIS

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the current Philippine counterinsurgency strategy in relation to the Philippine government past experiences of fighting insurgency nationwide. The Philippine government recognizes insurgency as a national threat that hampers sustained peace and development in the country, but government efforts in counterinsurgency have been less than successful.

The thesis examines four historical case studies: the "All Out Friendship or All Out Force" program of President Ramon Magsaysay against the Huk Rebellion in 1950s; "Oplan Katatagan" during the Martial Law Era under President Ferdinand E. Marcos; "Lambat-Bitag Campaign" during the administrations of Presidents Corazon Aquino and Fidel V. Ramos; and "Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines" in the current administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. The thesis demonstrates that successful counterinsurgency operations require a collaborative interagency approach based on a clear and logical national strategy. This strategy cannot succeed at the national level only. The strategy must be pushed down to the local level where effective change can occur. Despite current perceptions, counterinsurgency operations are not the exclusive domain of the military. In fact, the possibility of success is often diminished when the military takes a dominant role in counterinsurgency operations. Finally, the thesis recommends that the Philippine government should internalize and adopt the "correct attitude" that has been missing in most of the early counterinsurgency efforts. Although focused on the Philippines, lessons from this thesis can be applied elsewhere.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Above all, I would like to thank the God Almighty for giving me this blessing of taking my Master's Degree and the wisdom to write a thesis on a subject that I really want to analyze. Lord, your permission is my success!

To my wife, Neri, and my children, Joshua, James, and Ruth, thank you all for giving me the inspiration that enables me to hurdle all the trials before me. You are the strength that God has given me and all of my successes are dedicated to you. Neri, thank you so much for the love, care, encouragement, and understanding that you keep on sharing with me.

To my thesis advisor, Prof. Peter J. Gustaitis II, and my second reader, Prof. Karen Guttieri, thank you so much for helping me to make this thesis a success. I would also like to thank Robin Longshaw for helping me in editing this thesis.

Lastly, this thesis is dedicated to all Filipino public servants who wish and work hard to achieve a peaceful and worth-living nation of which we can be proud.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

The Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP), particularly its security forces, has been fighting the same type of insurgents for more than three decades. The Local Communist Movement (LCM) and the Southern Philippines Secessionist Movements have been considered two of the world's longest existing insurgencies.¹ Several thousand lives have been lost on both sides, including a number of innocent civilians. Despite the costs, the insurgency continues to exist. It has long been recognized that the root causes of insurgent movements are multidimensional, encompassing both political and socio-economic dimensions.² The insurgents' use of violent activities poses a serious threat to the Republic of the Philippines' (RP) national security, and hampers the pursuit of sustained peace and development in the country.

Recognizing this problem of insurgency, the GRP developed the National Internal Security Plan (NISP)³ in 2001. The NISP, which promotes the "left hand and right hand approach,"⁴ is the government's holistic⁵ response against any form of insurgency. This plan can be considered a holistic approach because it involves four major components that provide sufficient tools to address the insurgencies. These components are peace and order/security,

¹ "Philippine Human Development Report 2005," *Peace, Human Security and Human Development in the Philippines 2nd Edition*, Published by the Human Development Network (HDN) in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID); available from http://hdr.undp.org/docs/reports/national/PHI_Philippines/Philippines_2005_en.pdf; accessed 26 Jan 2007. In this report the SPSPGs are also referred to as the Moro Insurgencies.

² RP Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security, *Philippine National Internal Security Plan (NISP)*, Malacanang, Manila, 2005, 8.

³ This document was promulgated under the Executive Order No.21 signed by the President on 19 Jun 2001, adopting the Strategy of Holistic Approach as the government response to situations of instability and insurgency.

⁴ Also categorically called the "fight and develop strategy" which is basically a combination of military/police operations and socio-economic development to address the root causes of insurgencies. See Chapter IV for more details.

⁵ I use the term "holistic" to mean 'all encompassing.'

political/legal/diplomatic response, socio-economic/psychosocial development, and informational dissemination.⁶ This plan basically taps all government agencies – military and civilian, including diplomatic offices – to promote good governance and public confidence in the government, to alleviate poverty, and to provide the people with a secure environment, one that is conducive to development.

However, this holistic approach might be considered “more easily said than done” because it is rarely implemented at the ground level where armed insurgents have the greatest influence. In most areas of the country, the necessary coordination and collaboration between and among different government agencies and stakeholders are lacking. Often, people at the ground level perceive that the military forces are the only lead agency addressing the problem of insurgency. In places where a visible military presence is not an option, people reason that they must cooperate with the insurgents out of fear, since there are no local military forces to protect them.⁷ Following this line of thinking from the people on the ground, it would seem that there is no other component of the government that can address the insurgency problem other than the military.

In this thesis, the author will demonstrate how the Philippines' lead government agencies have carried out their assigned tasks in pursuit of the government's counterinsurgency (COIN) operations. By exploring the current Philippine COIN strategy and comparing it to the country's historical COIN campaigns, the author will identify gaps or shortfalls that inhibit the GRP from achieving successful COIN efforts.

⁶ Operation Center - Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security, *Primer on National Internal Security Plan (NISP)*, Department of National Defense, Quezon City, Philippines.

⁷ Fr. Jovic E. Lobrigo, Sonia Imperial, and Noel Rafer, “Case Study on the Human Development and Economic Costs/Spillovers of Armed Conflict in Bicol” (A background paper submitted to the Human Development Network Foundation, Inc. for the Philippine Human Development Report 2005), 39-41.

B. SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

The Philippines, as an important partner with the United States in the Global War on Terror, has been a testing ground for effective COIN strategies. The U.S. considers the extensive operations carried out in Basilan province, located in the southern part of the Philippines, as a success story for COIN campaigns.⁸ As a result of the Balikatan ("Shoulder to Shoulder") exercises, in which thousands of U.S. personnel participated alongside their Philippine counterparts, the U.S. believes that the GRP has successfully addressed the problem about armed insurgents (specifically the Abu Sayyaf Group). More importantly, these efforts have also addressed the root causes of insurgency in that area. The GRP, with the assistance of the U.S. and various non-governmental organizations (NGOs), has invested heavily in education, local economies, public works, and social welfare programs, in order to wean the population away from the insurgents. This same strategy is currently being carried out in Sulu province, also in the southern Philippines.⁹

However, this "left hand and right hand approach" to COIN as applied in Basilan is not new to the Philippine government and its armed forces. The same strategy has already been implemented several times in the past and, despite its proven effectiveness, the strategy has never been sustained. Hence, the problem of insurgency continues to exist. It is the argument of this thesis that despite the current success of the "left hand and right hand approach" in the southern Philippines, which is largely credited to the influence of the U.S., the GRP lacks an efficient push to implement the strategy for the greater part of the country which in effect sustained both the insurgents and their *raison d'être*.

⁸ David P. Fridovich and Fred T. Krawchuk, "Winning in the Pacific: The Special Operations Forces Indirect Approach," *Joint Force Quarterly (JFQ) Forum*, Issue 44, (1st Quarter 2007), 26-27.

⁹ Paul Wiseman, "In Philippines, U.S. Making Progress In War On Terror," *USA Today*, (14 Feb 2007), 10.

C. THESIS METHODOLOGY

Using the “three-legged stool” model of Arthur F. Lykke as the framework for analysis and the writings of scholars, researchers, critics, and policy-makers, the thesis reviews four selected historical cases of Philippine COIN campaigns in order to identify the factors that led to success and failures of these campaigns. These four cases are the “All Out Friendship or All Out Force” program of President Ramon Magsaysay against the Huk Rebellion in 1950s, “Oplan Katatagan” during the Martial Law Era under President Ferdinand E. Marcos, “Lambat-Bitag Campaign” during the administrations of Presidents Corazon Aquino and Fidel V. Ramos, and “Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines” (OEF-P) in the current administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. These case studies are selected for having the same concept of national strategy but they differ in the implementation aspect at the local level. All these four campaigns have recognized that the problem of Philippine insurgency is deeply rooted in poverty, ignorance, disease, and injustice. However, they did not acquire the same outcome after implementation. Magsaysay’s program stands out to be the best illustration of a successful Philippine COIN strategy for his vision has been implemented from the national down to local levels because of his administration’s good leadership and close supervision. Marcos’ campaign failed because his administration lacked the dedication and reliability in the eyes of the Filipino people. The “Lambat-Bitag Campaign” in general also failed because the initial success gained by the military was not sustained by the government’s civilian agencies due to bureaucratic inefficiency and lack of appreciation of the campaign. Lastly, OEF-P succeed in its COIN campaign but the primary enabler to its success remains a question because of the U.S. pressure and oversight monitoring down to the local level.

By searching the *means* or the resources used by different Philippine government administrations in implementing their COIN operations, the *ways* or concepts applied on how they tried to achieve their objectives, and the *ends* or objectives that engulfed the overall conduct of their operations, the author finds

the “missing link” that can bridge the gap to have a successful Philippine COIN strategy. The Philippine government administrators and implementors must have the “correct attitude” which implies sincerity, integrity, and dedication to public service despite taking risks and making self sacrifices for the good of the people. This kind of attitude connotes readiness to go beyond “class and time” to check how policies and projects are implemented on the ground. The administrators must have uprightness to impose appropriate sanctions or punishments instead of coddling the “crooks” in the government.

The author organizes this thesis in such a way that readers will have a clear background about the primary insurgent organizations being confronted by the GRP. Likewise, they will have the capacity to analyze and compare the different COIN campaigns that were implemented in the past and relate them with the current COIN strategy of the Philippine government. Chapter II focuses on the major insurgent organizations confronting the GRP, such as the Local Communist Movement (LCM) and the Southern Philippines Secessionist Groups (SPSGs). This chapter reviews the different insurgents’ organizational strategies, resources, and current status necessary to evaluate their commonality and grievances that keep them active for several decades now. Chapter III reviews and analyzes the Philippine government's current national security strategy, the NISP, to overcome insurgency movements nationwide and to address the root causes of this problem. This chapter also identifies the lead government agencies that are tasked by the government with working for the components of the NISP’s strategy of holistic approach (SHA). The author uses the theory of systems dynamic in order to analyze the social dynamics of this multifaceted COIN strategy in relation to actual situations on the ground. Chapter IV reviews and analyzes the four different case studies of COIN operations in the Philippines as earlier mentioned. In addition, the above cited chapters demonstrate how the GRP has responded over time against the insurgents. This study reveals that the concept of GRP COIN strategy over time remains the same but they differ in the implementation aspects depending on the focus of the government

administration at its particular period of governance. Government administrators and implementors are found to have great influence to make COIN strategy works effectively or not.

Chapter V encompasses the comparison of the analyses between the case studies and the current GRP COIN strategy. The author tries to depict in this chapter the insurgents' behavior over time as they fight the different government administrations that come along their way. It also demonstrates how the insurgents exploit the opportunities whenever they find weakness in the government administration. Chapter VI concludes the thesis by identifying the "missing link" that prevents the GRP from attaining complete success in its COIN efforts.

This thesis finds that the Philippines has a successful COIN strategy documented in the past efforts. Other strategy that adopts the same concept of "left hand and right hand approach" unfortunately fails because of the GRP's inability to sustain the initial success. This gap or "missing link" is due in part to lack of "correct attitude," as defined earlier, of government administrators and implementors. At the end of this thesis, the author proposes solutions how to resolve the "missing link" in order to achieve a successful Philippine COIN strategy.

II. PHILIPPINE INSURGENTS

The most complex problem in the Philippines conflict is the array of insurgent groups representing the Local Communist Movement (LCM) and the Southern Philippines Secessionist Groups (SPSGs), which are considered to be two of the longest-running insurgencies in the world.¹⁰ As a result of these major ideological struggles, the government is confronted with three major threats: the Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army/National Democratic Front (CPP/NPA/NDF), identified with the LCM, and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), which fall under the category of the SPSGs.¹¹ These insurgencies continue to pose serious threats to the Philippines' national security and their violent activities hamper the pursuit of sustained peace and development in the country.¹²

A. THE LOCAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT (LCM)

It is widely known that the Communist insurgency in the Philippines is a deeply rooted and multi-faceted problem. It includes political, economic, psychosocial, and security issues as part of its complaints against the existing government. The LCM, spearheaded by the CPP/NPA/NDF, has long worked to arouse discontent among the local people by exploiting the issues of poverty, ignorance, disease and injustice. The LCM mobilizes these people, particularly peasants and workers, by agitating around the issues of U.S. imperialism, semi-colonialism, and semi-feudalism in Philippine society. In this way, they cause disillusionment and create a sense of helplessness and hopelessness among the people.¹³ The forerunner of this Communist movement is the Huk insurgency,

¹⁰ "Philippine Human Development Report 2005," 2-3. In this report the SPSGs are also referred to as the Moro Insurgencies.

¹¹ *Philippine National Internal Security Plan (NISP)*, 2-4.

¹² *Ibid.*, 1.

¹³ Jose Maria Sison (Joma) aka Amado Guerrero, "Author's Introduction," *Philippine Society and Revolution*, (30 Jul 1970); available from http://www.philippinerevolution.net/cgi-bin/cpp/pdocs.pl?id=lrp_e;page=03/; accessed 26 Jan 2007.

which was defeated by Ramon Magsaysay's administration in the 1950's.¹⁴ Both insurgent movements emerged out of the tensions between the "haves" and the "have-nots" where the problems of tenancy, poverty, demography and frustration with the government have long been the basic material used to incite their revolt.¹⁵ To date, the CPP/NPA/NDF continues to be the principal threat to Philippine national security.¹⁶

The Local Communist Movement (LCM) has split into two main factions, the Reaffirmists who favor Jose Maria Sison's Maoist strategy of waging revolution in the countryside and the Rejectionists who favor the insurrection in the cities similar to the strategy of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua.¹⁷ Jose Maria Sison is the overall leader of the CPP/NPA/NDF since 1987.¹⁸ Nevertheless, these factions share the common objective of seizing political power in order to eventually replace the country's democratic form of government with Communist rule.¹⁹ Of these two factions, the Reaffirmists are the primary concern of the government because they are far stronger in terms of manpower, firearms and the extent of their influence in driving a wedge between the government and the people.²⁰ The ultimate objective of the CPP/NPA/NDF remains unaltered; that is, to use violence to supplant the country's democratic government with Communist

¹⁴ David Joel Steinberg, "The Marcos Era," *The Philippines: A Singular and Plural Place*, Second Edition, Revised and Updated, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press Inc., 1990), Chapter 7, 123.

¹⁵ Ibid, 123-124.

¹⁶ This was the result of the review of AFP Internal Security Operations Plan codenamed BANTAY-LAYA conducted by the General Headquarters, Armed Forces of the Philippines at the AFP Command and General Staff College, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City from 14 to 17 December 2004.

¹⁷ The quarrel between Reaffirmists and Rejectionists factions is over strategy. To that end, the Rejectionists have, since 1992, concentrated on politicizing the urban squatters and industrial proletariat in preparation for their anticipated urban insurrection. However, they are still temporarily united in fight against the Arroyo administration.

¹⁸ He is also known as Joma, Armando Liwanag, and Amado Guerrero. He is currently in self-exile in Utrecht, the Netherlands.

¹⁹ *Philippine National Internal Security Plan (NISP)*, 2.

²⁰ Armed Forces of the Philippines Intelligence Estimate for 2006.

rule, with aims to restructure society along the socialist model.²¹ The party still adheres to the Maoist principle of "National Democratic Revolution," with the goal of overthrowing the government and restructuring Philippine society according to socialist model of a "People's Democratic Government."²² The party's general policies are against foreign monopoly capitalism, domestic feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism. The CPP/NPA, together with Jose Maria Sison, has been identified by the U.S. Department of State and the European Union as an international terrorist organization.²³

1. Organization and Leadership

The organizational structure of the CPP/NPA/NDF is based on democratic centralism²⁴, which includes both centralized leadership and decentralized operations. This structure is a commission type of organization, consisting of the party delegates from different regions who make up its National Congress, or Central Committee, as its highest governing body. This Central Committee (CC) directs and supervises the activities of the functional staffs and the Regional Committees (RCs). In turn, the RCs supervise the activities of the provincial, front, section and sub-section committees. Lastly, the party branches established in the *barangays* (villages), poor urban communities, and factories form the basic units of the organization. The CPP, founded on 26 December 1968, provides political leadership to the movement and determines the general line and direction of the revolution. The NPA, organized on 29 March 1969, serves as the military arm of the party and carries out armed struggle through the Maoist concept of People's Protracted War. The NDF, established on 24 April 1973,

²¹ Armando Liwanag, "Win the Armed Revolution in the 21st Century," *Ang Bayan*, Special Issue, (29 Mar 2000), 1-2. Message during the 31st Anniversary of the New People's Army; available from <http://www.philippinerevolution.net/>; accessed 02 Nov 2006.

²² "Knowing the Enemy: Are We Missing the Point?" Armed Forces of the Philippines, (29 Sep 2004).

²³ Center for Defense Information, "Terrorism Project: List of Known Terrorist Organizations;" available from <http://www.cdi.org/terrorism/terrorist-groups.cfm/>; accessed on 14 Feb 2006.

²⁴ Central Committee, "Reaffirm Our Basic Principles and Carry the Revolution Forward," 23rd Anniversary of the Communist Party of the Philippines, (26 Dec 1991), 1; available from <http://www.philippinerevolution.net/cgi-bin/cpp/pdocs.pl?id=reafe:page=01/>; accessed 26 Jan 2007.

provides umbrella organizations to shield the CPP/NPA through united front building, solicitation of international support, and recognition from other Communist organizations abroad. Jose Maria Sison, despite in the Netherlands, provides guidance to the organization through modern communication facilities.²⁵

2. Strength and Disposition

In 2005, the strength of the CPP/NPA was estimated at 9,860 party members and armed regulars with approximately 5,980 firearms available to carry out political and military operations. However, it is also known to be able to mobilize some 121,660 additional combat and support elements including members of its people's militias, self-defense units, mass activists and reliable contacts in rural and urban areas nationwide.²⁶ In addition, the Communist Party has 613,230 mass base elements in rural areas, although its supporters and sympathizers in urban areas cannot be readily quantified.²⁷ The CPP/NPA claims to have established 128 guerrilla fronts which effectively cover a vast area of the country; in contrast, the GRP, through its armed forces and police forces, has identified only 107 guerrilla fronts.²⁸

3. Strategy

The CPP/NPA/NDF adheres to a combined strategy of armed and legal struggles to fight the Philippine government. The party exploits and integrates all available resources; however, it largely relies on the support of the masses to move forward with its struggles in all aspects – military, political, ideological, economic, and cultural.

²⁵ Armed Forces of the Philippines Intelligence Estimate for 2006.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

a. Armed Struggle

The CPP/NPA/NDF still maintains the Maoist principle of a Protracted People's War (PPW) which calls for the encircling of cities from the countryside through armed struggle, as its primary strategy.²⁹ This strategy is carried out by creating stable guerilla bases in the countryside, from where the revolutionary struggle can advance towards urban centers. The CPP/NPA observes three strategic stages: a strategic defensive stage, a strategic stalemate stage, and a strategic offensive stage. At the strategic defensive stage, the NPA is militarily weaker than government forces; at the strategic stalemate stage, the NPA has achieved a degree of parity with the government forces. Finally, at the strategic offensive stage, the NPA has reached relative superiority over the government forces and becomes capable of conducting large-scale armed offensives against government forces in major cities in order to facilitate the final takeover of political power.³⁰

As instigated by factions within the organization of the LCM and as a result of the GRP's counterinsurgency efforts through the "Lambat-Bitag Campaign,"³¹ the Communist insurgents' suffered a great decline in strength. This brought the Communist Party to implement a rectification program in 1992 with the goal of reiterating the ideological and political lines of the party and intensifying recruitment and organizational expansion to recover its lost grounds.³² At present, the armed struggle is still at the strategic defensive stage;

²⁹ Message of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines to the Party Cadres, Red Commanders, and Fighters of the New People's Army, "Fight to Hasten the Ouster of Arroyo and Strengthen the Revolutionary Movement," *Ang Bayan*, (29 Mar 2006); available from <http://www.philippinerevolution.net/cgi-bin/ab/text.pl?issue=20060329;lang=eng;article=01/>; accessed 26 Jan 2007.

³⁰ Victor N. Corpus, "CPP/NPA Strategies for the War as a Whole," *Silent War*, (Quezon City, Philippines: VNC Enterprises, 1989), 25-57.

³¹ Roy T. Devesa, "An Assessment of the Philippine Counterinsurgency Operational Methodology," *Thesis*, (Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Command and General Staff College, 2005), 35-36. The insurgents' strength was reduced from 25,000 in 1987 to 5,000 in 1994.

³² "Intensify the Armed Struggle!" *Ang Bayan*, (Editorial, 21 Mar 2006), Vol. XXXVII, No. 6; available from [http://www.philippinerevolution.net/cgi-bin/ab/text.pl?issue=20060321;lang=eng;article=01](http://www.philippinerevolution.net/cgi-bin/ab/text.pl?issue=20060321;lang=eng;article=01;); accessed 01 Feb 2007.

the CPP/NPA is striving to build enough strength to win larger battles and campaigns, in order to move to the next stage of the People's War.³³ The Party is trying to achieve this by conducting small-scale and limited tactical offensives while at the same time aggressively undertaking mass organizing work, establishing guerrilla fronts, and training its own militia in the countryside. In addition, the CPP/NPA engages in both selective and indiscriminate terrorist acts, such as kidnapping for ransom, murder, assassination, bombing, arson, and extortion in order to bleed and weaken government security forces.³⁴

b. Legal Struggle

The legal struggle is another form of strategy that the Party uses in its search for a national democratic revolution aimed at toppling the existing government in favor for its People's Democratic Government. This struggle puts special emphasis on united front-building and mass movements so as to isolate the government forces both politically and psychologically.³⁵ This strategy requires that the Party operates within the legal framework in order to facilitate the infiltration of legitimate organizations within the labor/peasants, women, student/youth, children, cultural activists, and urban poor sectors. The Party agitates these organizations to participate in CPP/NPA/NDF-initiated rallies, demonstrations, and other forms of protest.³⁶ This approach includes the infiltration and organization of the masses in different *barangays*, or villages, nationwide through a step-by-step process which includes the establishment of initial contacts, organizing groups and committees, forming solid mass

³³ "Intensify the Armed Struggle!"

³⁴ Ricardo C. Morales, "Perpetual Wars: The Philippine Insurgencies," *Thesis*, (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, 2003), 24. Morales' work cites this statement by Rodolfo Salas, originally published in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 10 Feb 2003.

³⁵ Jose Maria Sison, "Solving Some Problems in the Broad United Front and Mass Movement to Oust the Arroyo Regime," *Ang Bayan*, (21 Mar 2006); available from <http://www.philippinerevolution.net/cgi-bin/ab/text.pl?issue=20060312;lang=eng;article=01/>; accessed 01 Feb 2007.

³⁶ Message of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines, "Further Strengthen the Communist Party of the Philippines to Lead the People's Democratic Revolution," *Ang Bayan*, (26 Dec 2006); available from <http://www.philippinerevolution.net/cgi-bin/ab/text.pl?issue=20061226;lang=eng;article=01/>; accessed 01 Feb 2007.

associations, and establishing party branches, peoples' militia and Barangay Revolutionary Committees. Once a Barangay Revolutionary Committee (BRC) has been established, it indicates the existence of CPP/NPA shadow government, or the Party's so called People's Democratic Government in the locality. It is then easy for the CPP/NPA/NDF to incite peasants to rise up against the authority of their landlords, by combining armed struggle with an agrarian revolution program.

In addition to united front-building and mass movements, the Party's legal struggle includes participation in elections, peace negotiations, and acts of international solidarity. As a result of the implementation of the National Program for Unification and Development (NPUD), which offers amnesty to Communist insurgents, Muslim separatists, and coup plotters, and of the repeal of the Republic Act 1700 (also known as the Anti-Subversion Law) during the administration of President Fidel V. Ramos,³⁷ the Communist party began fielding candidates for both national and local elections as a means of influencing the Government's policy-making process. Through participation in these elections, the CPP/NPA/NDF is able to infiltrate the government bureaucracy, to facilitate the diversion of government funds in furtherance of Party objectives,³⁸ to intensify extortion operations from other candidates in exchange for permits to campaign in CPP/NPA influenced areas, and to conduct propaganda against the Government.³⁹ The Communist Party also views the conduct of peace negotiations as an important aspect of its legal struggle, because this process can be used as a venue for airing the party's demands. The Party exploits negotiations to its strategic advantage by making impossible and unreasonable demands, using negotiations as part of propaganda campaigns, and eventually

³⁷ Carolina G. Hernandez, "Institutional Response to Armed Conflict: The Armed Forces of the Philippines," *Philippine Human Development Report 2005*, (A Background Paper Submitted to the Human Development Foundation, Inc.), 13.

³⁸ Joel Guinto, "Bayan Muna Win Like Having Communist Rebel in Congress," *Inquirer.Net*, (05 Apr 2007); available from http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/topstories/topstories/view_article.php?article_id=58986/; accessed 06 Apr 2007.

³⁹ Armed Forces of the Philippines Intelligence Estimate for 2006.

blaming the government for any subsequent collapse of negotiations. Lastly, in 2001 the Communist Party created the International League of People's Struggle (ILPS) under the chairmanship of Jose Maria Sison as a means of taking advantage of foreign networks to carry out its acts of international solidarity. The ILPS is utilized by the CPP/NPA/NDF as a means of mobilizing its alliances abroad in order to gain sympathy and support from the international community.⁴⁰

B. THE MORO ISLAMIC LIBERATION FRONT

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) is a breakaway faction of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) that was created in late 1977.⁴¹ The MILF was formally founded in 1984 by Hashim Salamat, who was then the MNLF Vice-Chairman,⁴² due to differences in objectives, as well as charges of corruption and abuse of power against the MNLF Leadership.⁴³ Currently, the MILF is the largest Muslim insurgent group representing the Southern Philippines Secessionist Groups (SPSGs). Its goal is to establish an independent Islamic State in Mindanao through a four-point program of action: military offensives intensified diplomatic offensives, sustained mass actions, and negotiation with the government.⁴⁴ It is largely confined to Central Mindanao, particularly to the provinces of Maguindanao, Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, and North Cotabato. To finance its secessionist goals, the MILF carries out kidnap-for-ransom and extortion. It also solicits financial support from local supporters and international

⁴⁰ Armed Forces of the Philippines Intelligence Estimate for 2006.

⁴¹ International Crisis Group, "Southern Philippines Backgrounder: Terrorism and the Peace Process," *ICG Asia Report*, (13 Jul 2004), 4-5; available from http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/south_east_asia/080_southern_philippines_backgrounder_terrorism_n_peace_process.pdf/; accessed 11 May 2006.

⁴² Soliman M. Santos, Jr., "Evolution of the Armed Conflict on the Moro Front," A Background Paper Submitted to the Human Development Network Foundation, Inc. for the Philippine Human Development Report 2005, 4.

⁴³ Daniel Joseph Ringuet, "The Continuation of Civil Unrest and Poverty in Mindanao," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 24, Issue 1, April 2002, 41.

⁴⁴ *Philippine National Internal Security Plan (NISP)*, 3-4.

Islamic organizations.⁴⁵ In the pursuit of its goals, the MILF's military arm, the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF), carries out semi-conventional and conventional warfare against GRP forces.

The Philippine government has requested that the MILF not be included in the list of foreign terrorist organizations, so as not to undermine the ongoing truce between the two sides.⁴⁶ Under this truce, an International Monitoring Team, composed of Malaysian, Libyan, and Brunei delegations, has been monitoring the peace agreement, since October 2004, in order to ensure its success.⁴⁷ The cease-fire agreement between the GRP and the MILF resulted in a substantial reduction of violence and armed clashes. The International Monitoring Team also warned the MILF leadership to end its ties with the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and the Jemaah-Islamiyah (JI). Once this peace initiative succeeds, it will deprive the ASG and JI of their base of operations, making it difficult for them to establish a foothold in the Philippines, especially in Mindanao.

1. Organization and Leadership

Hashim Salamat died in 2003; he was replaced as head of the MILF by Ahod Ibrahim (also known as Al Haj Murad Ebrahim), who, like Salamat, came from the secular elite. Murad, the former MILF Chief of Staff,⁴⁸ is a pragmatic and flexible long-time military leader who believes in resolving the conflict through a peaceful means.⁴⁹ The MILF organizational structure is patterned after the

⁴⁵ Armed Forces of the Philippines Intelligence Estimate for 2006.

⁴⁶ Rommel C. Banlaoi, "Radical Muslim Terrorism in the Philippines," Forthcoming in Andrew Tan (ed), *Handbook on Terrorism and Insurgency in Southeast Asia*, (London: Edward Elgar Publishing, Limited, 2006), 8; available from http://www.kaf.ph/pdfdb/119_pub.pdf; accessed 03 Apr 2007.

⁴⁷ "International Monitoring Team to Arrive in Philippines This Week," *Relief Web*, (Agence-France Presse, 04 Oct 2004), Sourced by Relief Web through its News Edge Insight on 10 Oct 2004; available from <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/AllDocsByUNID/b0de81bfd18481b8c1256f23003626ee/>; accessed 11 May 2006.

⁴⁸ Anthony Davis, "Rebels Without a Pause," *Asiaweek Magazine.Com*; available from <http://www.asiaweek.com/asiaweek/98/0403/is1.html>; accessed 28 Feb 2007.

⁴⁹ Carolyn Arguillas, "Hot Seat: Al Haj Murad Ebrahim," *Philippine Facilitation Project*; available from <http://www.usip.org/philippines/newsbreak/hotseat.html>; accessed 28 Feb 2007.

Maududi⁵⁰ model of an Islamic state where executive functions are exercised by the Chairman and the Jihad Executive Committee (JEC) or Central Committee (CC). Legislative functions are carried out by the Majlis-Al-Shura⁵¹ and the judicial functions by the Shariah⁵² court. Among the three sections, the Central Committee is the most directly responsible in managing the affairs of the Front. The MILF-CC controls nine standing committees; but the most active committees are those in charge of Military Affairs and Internal Affairs, both headed by Aleem Abdulaziz Mimbantas, the committee for Political Affairs under Ghazali Jaafar (aka Toks Abu), and the committee of Information and Propaganda Affairs led by Datukan Abas (aka Mohagher Iqbal).⁵³

In addition, the MILF has several provincial committees, supervised by the CC, that act as its local shadow government to facilitate *zadat* (extortion) collection and expand the MILF's political influence in the local Muslim communities. These provincial committees are predominantly established in Muslim areas of Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Cotabato, and Sultan Kudarat where the Maranaos and the Maguindanaoans, both Muslim tribes, are the majority.⁵⁴ The MILF provincial committees, where some have already created Shariah courts, have been established as part of the Front's preparation for possible full governance of its claimed Bangsamoro ancestral domains, once a peace deal with the Philippine government is signed.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Abdul Maududi was one of the founding fathers of Islamic radicalism and a favorite author of Hashim Salamat. "Radical Islam and the Southern Philippines Secessionist Groups," Armed Forces of the Philippines, 30 Sep 2004, 1.

⁵¹ This is an Islamic traditional concept of consulting with learned and experienced citizens and elders.

⁵² This is a law based on the Koran and the *hadith*, or the deeds and words of the prophet. "Radical Islam and the Southern Philippines Secessionist Groups", 3

⁵³ Armed Forces of the Philippines Intelligence Estimate for 2006.

⁵⁴ Ariel R. Caculitan, "Negotiating Peace with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in the Southern Philippines," *Thesis*, (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, 2005), 29-30.

⁵⁵ Armed Forces of the Philippines Intelligence Estimate for 2006.

2. Strength and Disposition

The MILF's Islamization campaign has enabled it to influence and infiltrate a substantial number of barangays in Mindanao. It is from those barangays that the MILF gets its members and supporters. Moreover, this campaign paved the way for the establishment of military bases in those affected areas. In 2005, the MILF was estimated to have 10,140 members with 8,170 firearms.⁵⁶ The bulk of this strength belongs to the MILF's military arm, the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF), which has 14 Guerilla Base Commands (GBCs)⁵⁷ largely dispersed in the provinces of Central Mindanao.

3. Strategy

The MILF's political agenda is highlighted in the book, *The Bangsamoro Mujahid* by Salamat, which explains that the primary duty of the MILF is to "establish a just social order under the stewardship of leaders adhering to the Qur'an and the sunnah (the words and deeds of Mohammed.)"⁵⁸ Salamat also maintains that the word of Allah must be made supreme by creating a true Muslim community; an institution with a genuine Islamic system of government; and the application of true Islamic way of life.⁵⁹ He added that the means to achieve these objectives are through *dawah* (Islamic outreach)⁶⁰ and jihad. "In 2000, the MILF issued its Four-Point Program, which is aimed at Islamization and military build up for jihad, consisting of the following:

- Diplomatic offensive to strengthen its ties with other countries and bring about a UN/OIC intervention through a referendum in Islamic communities that have been Islamized. This is part of the MILF

⁵⁶ Armed Forces of the Philippines Intelligence Estimate for 2006.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ "Radical Islam and the Southern Philippines Secessionist Groups", 8.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ International Crisis Group, 9.

strategy to use international pressure to force the Philippine government to accede to its separatist demands.

- Massive mass action to show the Islamic world that the separatist aspiration of the MILF has mass support from the Bangsamoro people. This program would include the Islamization of [Muslim] communities and the conversion of Christians and Lumads [native tribes in Mindanao other than Muslim] to Islam.
- Peace negotiations for political concessions and military build-up. The peace negotiation is merely a strategy for the MILF to gain advantage over the government.
- Launching of military offensives once the peace talks bog down.”⁶¹

C. THE ABU SAYYAF GROUP

The Abu Sayyaf Group⁶² (ASG) remains the greatest threat to security in Southwestern Mindanao. The core members of the ASG are former MNLF,⁶³ who fought as Mujahideens in the Afghan-Soviet war.⁶⁴ They were motivated by their exposure to extremist Islamic teachings which they learned from Al Qaeda training in Khost, Afghanistan during the 1980's.⁶⁵ When this core group returned to the Philippines, they organized the ASG as a group of Mujahideen Commando Freedom Fighters (MCFF) whose aim was to wage jihad against the GRP, in reaction to the atrocities that the ASG claimed the GRP committed against

⁶¹ “Radical Islam and the Southern Philippines Secessionist Groups,” 9.

⁶² The Abu Sayyaf Group, which means “Bearer of the Sword,” is the violent offshoot of MNLF. Eusaquito P. Manalo, “The Philippine Response To Terrorism: The Abu Sayyaf Group,” *Thesis*, (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, 2004), 30.

⁶³ Kim Cragin and Peter Chalk, *Terrorism and Development: Using Social and Economic Development to Inhibit a Resurgence of Terrorism*, (CA: RAND Corporation, 2003) cited in Kim Cragin and Sara Daly, *The Dynamic Terrorist Threat: An Assessment of Group Motivations and Capabilities in Changing World*, (CA: RAND Project Air Force, 2004), 77.

⁶⁴ Council on Foreign Relations, “Abu Sayyaf Group,” (Updated: 23 Jan 2007); available from <http://www.cfr.org/publication/9235/>; accessed 28 Feb 2007.

⁶⁵ Larry Nicksch, “Abu Sayyaf: Target of Philippine-U.S. Anti-Terrorism Cooperation,” *World Terrorism*, ed. Edward Linden (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2002), 51.

Muslims in the Philippines.⁶⁶ Under the leadership of the founding father of ASG, Abdurajak Janjalani, the political goal of the group was to establish an exclusive, independent Islamic and Theocratic State of Mindanao. Janjalani's aggressive and intolerant religious beliefs also led the ASG to call for the deliberate and systematic targeting of all southern Filipino Christians.⁶⁷ In 1994, Janjalani renamed the ASG the Al-Harakatul Al-Islamiyah (AHA) in order to receive international funding and support.⁶⁸ Likewise, the group established links with the Al-Qaeda and the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), which enabled them to maintain and increase their power over time.⁶⁹ The ASG initially gained effectiveness as a terrorist organization capable of carrying out urban bombings with assistance from Al-Qaeda and JI. Eventually, the ASG ended up as a terrorist bandit organization that carried out sensational kidnap-for-ransom activities in the Philippines targeting several foreign nationals.⁷⁰ Like the CPP/NPA, the ASG has been declared by the U.S. and the E.U. to be an international terrorist organization, along with Al-Qaeda and JI.⁷¹

1. Organization and Leadership

Abdurajak Janjalani combined the ideological fundamentalism of the ASG with cohesion, as well as political and moral causes⁷². His death in 1998 resulted in the ASG becoming a "very loose coalition of many groups of radical Muslim

⁶⁶ Banlaoi, 11.

⁶⁷ Peter Chalk, "Al Qaeda and Its Link to Terrorist Groups in Asia," *The New Terrorism: Anatomy, Trends and Counter Strategies*, eds. Andrew Tan and Kumar Rama Krishna, (Singapore: Singapore Eastern University Press, 2002, 113.

⁶⁸ Banlaoi, 11.

⁶⁹ Niksch, 1-12.

⁷⁰ Jamail A. Kamlian, "Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Southern Philippines: A Discourse on Self Determination, Political Autonomy and Conflict Resolution," A lecture presented at the Islam and Human Rights Fellow Lecture, organized by the Islam and Human Rights Project, (School of Law, Emory University, Atlanta, GA, 04 Nov 2003), 11; available from <http://www.law.emory.edu/IHR/worddocs/jamail1.doc/>; accessed 14 Feb 2006.

⁷¹ Center for Defense Information, "Terrorism Project: List of Known Terrorist Organizations," available from <http://www.cdi.org/terrorism/terrorist-groups.cfm/>; accessed on 14 Feb 2006.

⁷² Maria Ressa, *Seeds of Terror: An Eyewitness Account of Al Qaeda's Newest Center of Operation in Southeast Asia*, (New York: Free Press, 2003), 109.

terrorist leaders commanding their own loyal followers in Southern Philippines.”⁷³ The death of Abdurajak resulted in a leadership change, bringing about the ascendancy of his younger brother, Khadafy Janjalani, as the next ASG leader. Despite the younger Janjalani’s attempts to revive the Islamist agenda of the ASG,⁷⁴ he failed because he did not appear to have the same ideological zeal and leadership charisma as his older brother.⁷⁵ Khadafy was seen only as a symbolic leader who could not exercise effective command and control over his subordinates.⁷⁶ As a result, the ASG split into two major groups, namely, the Basilan-based faction under Khadafy, and the Sulu-based faction under Galib Andang (aka Commander Robot) who was captured, imprisoned and eventually killed on 16 Mar 2005, after a failed escape attempt.⁷⁷ It is only on paper that the ASG has an Islamic Executive Council (IEC) under Khadafy Janjalani. Janjalani’s supporting advisers include Radullan Sahiron (aka Putol) and Isnilon Hapilon (aka Tuan).⁷⁸ Supposedly, the IEC includes the following five functional staffs: Personnel/Operations, Logistics/Supply, Finance/Budget, Liaison and Medical.⁷⁹ However, these functions are not well organized on the ground due to loose organizational structure of the ASG. This created decentralized decision making by the ASG territorial leaders. Essentially, the splintered structure of the group deviates from the original secessionist and Islamic movement, and is in fact a mere bandit organization.⁸⁰

Khadafy Janjalani was confirmed killed in an encounter with Philippine military forces sometime in September 2006 on Jolo Island; while, his likely successor, Abu Sulaiman, was also killed by Philippine troops on January

⁷³ Banlaoi, 15.

⁷⁴ Banlaoi, 15.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 14.

⁷⁶ Armed Forces of the Philippines Intelligence Estimate for 2006.

⁷⁷ Banlaoi, 14.

⁷⁸ Armed Forces of the Philippines Intelligence Estimate for 2006.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Banlaoi, 15.

2007.⁸¹ Due to these major losses in the ASG leadership, Radullan Sahiron has been designated as new leader of the ASG from January 2007; but, at the moment he has no clear vision for organizing the Abu Sayyaf's operations.⁸²

2. Strength and Disposition

From the ASG's initial strength of 1,270 in year 2000, it has decreased to around 510 members with 420 firearms.⁸³ Likewise, intelligence reports reveal that an undetermined number of ASG bandits fled to other areas, particularly in Lanao del Sur, Maguindanano, Sultan Kudarat and Tawi-tawi, in order to seek refuge from relatives and other Muslim armed groups based in those areas.

3. Strategy

As a result of the major setbacks in the ASG organization, it has no significant strategy at the moment other than its long-standing plans to conduct terrorist activities such as kidnapping and bombing operations far from its traditional areas of operations. In addition, the ASG is expected to intensify its build up of tactical alliances with other small Muslim secessionist groups and the MILF for support.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Council on Foreign Relations.

⁸² Council on Foreign Relations.

⁸³ Armed Forces of the Philippines Intelligence Estimate for 2006.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

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III. COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGY

A. THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT NISP

Recognizing the resurgence of insurgent threats, the current president, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, pronounced her government's seriousness about eradicating the insurgencies, which are deeply rooted and multi-dimensional as illustrated in Figure 1 below. She promulgated Executive Order Number 21, Series 2001, known as the "National Internal Security Plan," which serves as the government's Strategy of Holistic Approach (SHA) in response to insurgency threats and the root causes of these problems.⁸⁵

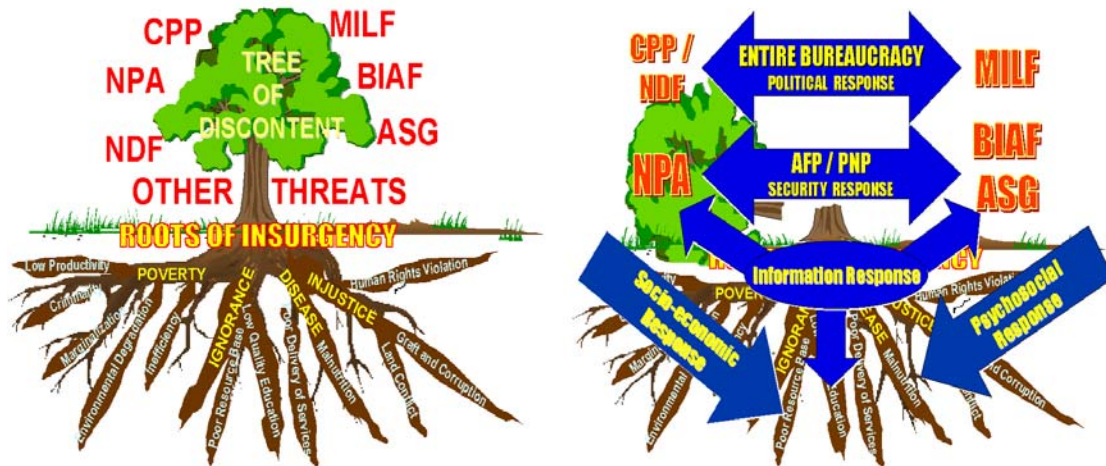


Figure 1. Representation of the Philippine Insurgency and the GRP Response (Source: From NISP, 8.)

President Arroyo's administration envisions creating a Strong Republic by means of a National Policy Goal which encompasses political and socio-economic dimensions to address the root causes of the insurgent movements and to neutralize the insurgents that exploit these conditions.⁸⁶ To attain this goal, the current government sets its political objectives as follows: (1) enhance

⁸⁵ Philippine insurgency problems stem from the core causes of poverty, ignorance, disease and injustice, and branches out and fuels discontent. *Philippine National Internal Security Plan (NISP)*, 8.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 11.

good governance by fighting corruption and promoting transparency and public accountability; (2) accelerate programs to reduce poverty and promote respect for human rights and right to development; and (3) apply the left hand and right hand efforts to resolve insurgency with the help of improved intelligence efforts.⁸⁷ Figure 2 illustrates how the Philippine government foresees the development of its holistic strategy. For the current government, this paradigm reveals the entirety of its vision for governance.

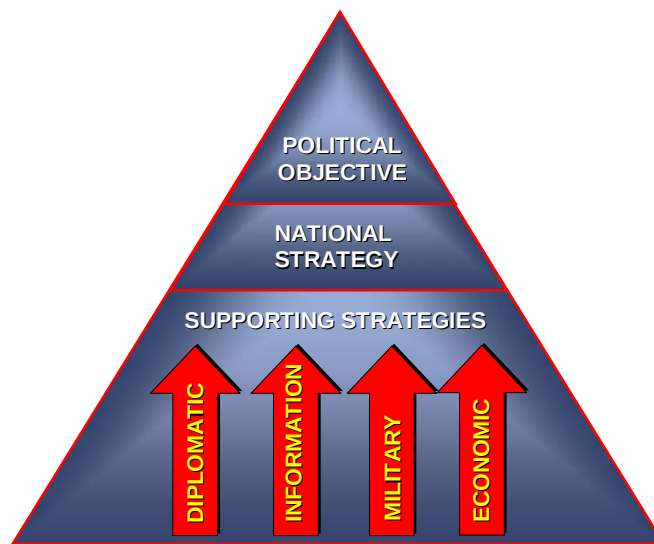


Figure 2. Strategy Development (Source: From AFP Bantay-Laya Briefing, 2005)

The Government is optimistic that the NISP objectives can be fulfilled through a focused and skillful application of the pillars of national power (diplomatic/political, informational, socio-economic and psycho-social, and security).⁸⁸ The imperatives of the NISP are: (1) to ensure a responsive and effective government demonstrating that it is a better choice than the insurgents' organizations; (2) to ensure unity of efforts with the understanding that insurgency is the concern of the entire bureaucracy, non-governmental

⁸⁷ *Philippine National Internal Security Plan (NISP)*, 8.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 11.

organizations (NGO's), people's organizations (PO's) and the entire citizenry; (3) to maximize the use of intelligence as a responsibility of all government agencies and as a critical pre-requisite to government response; (4) to manage violence and maintain law and order; and (5) to intensify public information campaign for a stronger link between the government and the people.⁸⁹ Interagency collaboration is greatly emphasized in this strategy to ensure effective delivery of public services.⁹⁰ Table 1 shows the responsibilities of different government agencies as regards to the above mentioned components of SHA:

COMPONENT	LEAD CONVENOR	MEMBER AGENCIES
Political	DILG/LGU	DND/AFP, DOJ, DFA, OPAPP, OPARD
Socio-economic and Psychosocial	NAPC	DSWD, DAR, DA, DBM, DepEd, DENR, DILG, DOF, DOLE, DOH, NEDA, PCFC, PCUP, DPWH, DND, OPAPP, LGU Leagues, Sectoral Representatives
Security	DND/AFP and DILG/PNP	NSC
Information	OPS/PIA	NAPC, DSWD, DND, OPAPP

Table 1. Government Agencies Responsible for SHA Components
(Sources: After NISP, 47-52 and NAPC Organizational Structure.)

The Philippine government promotes the operational methodology of Clear-Hold-Consolidate-Develop (C-H-C-D) in order to address this strategy,

⁸⁹ *Philippine National Internal Security Plan (NISP)*, 8-10.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 17.

which defines the functions of different government agencies in addressing insurgency.⁹¹ The “Clear and Hold stages” are the responsibility of the DND-AFP and the DILG-PNP. The “Clear stage” refers to the defeat of armed insurgents and the neutralization of insurgents’ politico-military infrastructures. The “Hold stage” is the occupation and control of the cleared and adjacent areas in order to protect the people and to secure the vital facilities and installations in the communities. On the other hand, the latter stages rely on the involvement of the civil government agencies. The “Consolidate stage” is the reestablishment of government control and authority while the “Develop stage” entails the significant reduction of the causes of insurgency.⁹² These stages can be conducted sequentially or simultaneously depending on the existing situation and specific phase of government response.⁹³ Figure 3 illustrates this operational methodology.

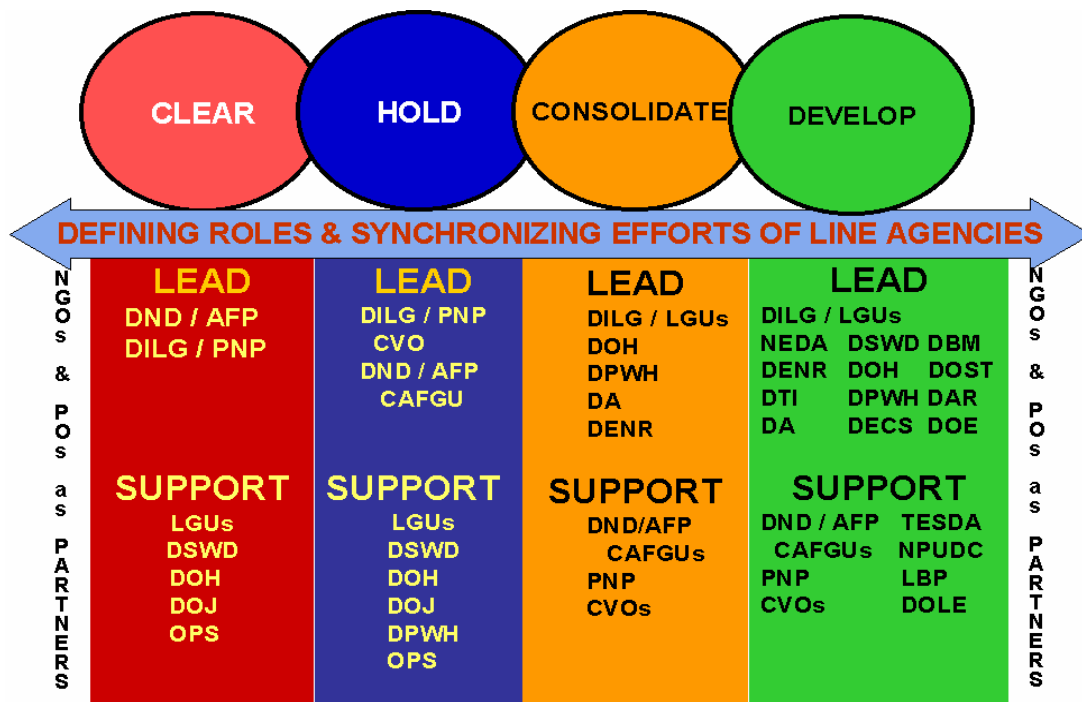


Figure 3. Synchronizing the Agencies' Efforts (Source: From NISP, 42.)

⁹¹ *Philippine National Internal Security Plan (NISP)*, 24.

⁹² *Ibid*, 24-27.

⁹³ *Ibid*.

B. THE LEAD GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The following GRP agencies are tasked with being the lead convenors in instituting, improvig and integrating the delivery of government services that address the insurgencies and their root causes.

1. Cabinet Oversight Committee On Internal Security (COC-IS)

The Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security (COC-IS) is the overall coordinating and integrating body of the Government responsible for providing direction and guidance for the implementation of the NISP; it is also responsible for providing guidance towards the development of policies, plans, programs, and projects pertaining to peace, order and security development. In addition, it is also tasked with encouraging and facilitating the participation of the different government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs), local government units (LGUs), NGOs, POs, and civil society for the government's peace advocacy programs. Finally, it also monitors and evaluates the outcome of NISP implementation.⁹⁴ The COC-IS is headed by the Executive Secretary and vice-chaired by the Secretary of National Defense; its members are the different lead convenors for the implementation of NISP and the secretaries of other government agencies.⁹⁵

2. Department of National Defense (DND)/Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP)

The Department of National Defense (DND) with the Armed Forces of the Philippines is the lead convenor for the NISP's Security Component.⁹⁶ The DND is the civilian oversight agency that supervises and provides policy guidance to the AFP in order to ensure a well coordinated and integrated security response against the insurgents.⁹⁷ The AFP takes the lead role in directly confronting the

⁹⁴ *Philippine National Internal Security Plan (NISP)*, 49.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 35-36.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 17.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 49.

insurgents' army and provides advice to the DND and other agencies on matters related to security situation in the insurgent affected areas. To implement these roles, the DND-AFP formulated a strategy called "Oplan Bantay-Laya" (Defend the Freedom) in 2001 to defend local communities and protect the people.⁹⁸ "Bantay-Laya" closely resembles the previous government strategy of "Lambat-Bitag."⁹⁹ However, "Bantay-Laya" is more encompassing as it addresses all the insurgent threat groups in the country. It clearly defines the military role by adopting an adjusted operational methodology of the Clear-Hold-Consolidate-Develop (C-H-C-D) approach provided in the NISP. Instead of C-H-C-D phases, the DND-AFP applies Clear, Hold and Support (C-H-S) phases in the military strategy. This means that the AFP has cast itself only in the support role to other government agencies that implement consolidation and development programs, rather than being and not necessarily in charge of carrying out the development projects as it did during "Lambat-Bitag."¹⁰⁰

3. Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG)/Philippine National Police (PNP)/Local Government Units (LGUs)

In 2006, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), with the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Local Government Units (LGUs), was officially empowered by President Arroyo to partner with the DND-AFP in the fight against insurgency, pursuant to Presidential Order No. 546 dated 14 Jul 2006.¹⁰¹ This executive order institutionalized further the involvement of DILG-PNP-LGU in the counterinsurgency program as outlined in the NISP. In addition, the DILG is tasked as the lead convenor in the NISP's Political Component.¹⁰² This agency is responsible for coordinating and integrating political, legal and

⁹⁸ AFP Operations Briefing, "Bantay-Laya 2005."

⁹⁹ See Chapter IV where the "Lambat-Bitag Campaign" is discussed in more details.

¹⁰⁰ "Bantay-Laya" 2005.

¹⁰¹ DILG Memorandum No. 2006-154 dtd 15 Nov 2006, signed by Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary and National Police Command (NAPOLCOM) Chairman Ronaldo V. Puno.

¹⁰² *Philippine National Internal Security Plan (NISP)*, 15.

diplomatic responses in insurgency affected areas. Likewise, it is responsible for orchestrating the full cooperation of the PNP and LGUs in the implementation of the NISP.¹⁰³ The PNP, on the other hand, now has a more active role in the internal security concerns supporting the Armed Forces in suppressing insurgency and other serious threats to national security. Aside from being a direct partner of the AFP in conducting security offensives against the armed insurgents,¹⁰⁴ the PNP is still responsible for the maintenance of the peace, order, and security of urban centers and vital government installations.¹⁰⁵ Having these tasks assigned to it, the DILG is expected to be fully active not only in security offensives, but even more in pursuing political offensives to confront the insurgent parties and their mass movements.

In carrying out the provisions outlined in both Executive Order (EO) No. 546 and the NISP, the DILG Secretary requires all local chief executives (Provincial Governors, Mayors, and Barangay Captains), DILG Regional Directors, and National Police Command (NAPOLCOM) Regional Directors across the country "to incorporate a counterinsurgency component in their integrated public safety plans."¹⁰⁶ The PNP is authorized to deputize the barangay tanods (village guards) and civilian volunteers as police auxiliaries or "force multipliers" under the peace and order plan, subject to the approval of the local peace and order councils.¹⁰⁷ On the side of the local chief executives, E.O. 546 has documented and formalized their roles to lead the fight against insurgencies in their respective localities.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ *Philippine National Internal Security Plan (NISP)*, 50.

¹⁰⁴ Freddie G. Lazaro, "Army Official Cites E.O. 546 as Effective Tool to Fight Insurgency," *Philippine Information Agency Daily News Reader*, (Press Release, 31 Oct 2006); available from <http://www.pia.gov.ph/?m=12&sec=reader&rp=5&fi=p061031.htm&no=49&date=10/31/2006/>; accessed 21 Mar 2007.

¹⁰⁵ *Philippine National Internal Security Plan (NISP)*, 50.

¹⁰⁶ "Analysis: EO 546 Empowers Local Chiefs, PNP in Fight vs Terrorism," *Philippine Information Agency Daily News Reader*, (Press Release, 15 Mar 2007); available from <http://www.pia.gov.ph/?m=12&sec=reader&rp=6&fi=p061025.htm&no=56&date=10/25/2006/>; accessed 21 Mar 2007.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

Agencies that are expected to support the lead convenor in the Political Component are the DND-AFP, the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace Process (OPAPP), and the Office of the Presidential Adviser for Regional Development (OPARD).

4. National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC)

The National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) is a policy formulation agency that monitors implementation of the Government's socio-economic and psychosocial strategies and programs and ensures a collaborative participation of concerned agencies and community organizations as potent partners. It also coordinates with national and local government bodies and private sectors the implementation of micro-financing and other development programs in order to alleviate poverty.¹⁰⁹ This entity is chaired by none other than the President of the Philippines, which makes the presidency, the lead convenor for the NISP's Socio-economic and Psychosocial Component.¹¹⁰

In support of the NISP, the NAPC developed the "Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan" (KALAHl) or (Linking Arms Against Poverty) as the national strategy for reducing poverty in the country.¹¹¹ The KALAHl is the government's comprehensive program for poverty reduction, which employs a strategy of convergence by bringing together the resources of the different national government agencies, civil society groups, legislators, local governments, business and private sectors. It is particularly implemented at the barangay level

¹⁰⁹ "Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan," (NAPC Official Website); available from <http://www.napc.gov.ph/kalahi.htm/>; accessed 13 Apr 2007.

¹¹⁰ "The Vow to Crush Poverty Within the Decade: The Chairperson Speaks," *NAPC Accomplishment Report 2001-2004*, (NAPC Official Website), 3; available from <http://www.napc.gov.ph/The%20Vow%20to%20Crush%20Poverty%20Within%20A%20Decade.pdf/>; accessed 13 Apr 2007.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, 1-2.

in order to bring progress in the country's poorest local communities.¹¹² This strategy is a multi-level approach which has been propagated by the different agencies through their implementation of programs such as the following:

- **KALAHI-KALAYAAN** (Freedom) is a joint effort of the DND, AFP, and the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), which aims to address the needs of the poor communities in conflict areas. So far this project has benefited a total of 600 barangays as of 2006.¹¹³

- **KALAHI-CIDSS** (Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services) is spearheaded by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)¹¹⁴ to empower the local communities in terms of governance. This project enhances the participation of barangays in decision making and promotes active involvement in designing, implementing and managing anti-poverty initiatives at their respective levels.¹¹⁵ Out of its objective to reach 5,378 barangays in five years, the program had reached 3,759 barangays as of 12 July 2006.¹¹⁶

- **KALAHI-Agrarian Reform Zone** is a development program implemented by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) that focuses on helping qualified beneficiaries "to acquire land, improve tenancy, enhance productivity, generate

¹¹² Veronica F. Villavicencio, "Addressing Poverty: Kapit-bisig Laban sa Kahirapan (KALAHI) Realizing Poverty Reduction Through Regional Convergence," *Mobilizing Communication Support for a Strong Republic*, (Published in Quezon City Philippines, Oct 2003), 69; available from <http://www.op.gov.ph/publications/luzcomnet.pdf>; accessed 12 Apr 2007.

¹¹³ "Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan."

¹¹⁴ World Bank, "Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Loan in the Amount of US \$100 Million to the Republic of the Philippines for KALAHI-CIDSS Project," *Environment and Social Development Unit East Asia and Pacific Region Document*, (Report No. 24642-PH, 23 Aug 2002), 13; available from http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSCContentServer/WDSP/IB/2002/09/13/000094946_0208300414439/Rendere d/PDF/multi0page.pdf; accessed 12 Apr 2007.

¹¹⁵ "Oct 17-23 is National Week for Overcoming Extreme Poverty," *Philippine Information Agency Daily News Reader*, (Press Release, 21 Oct 2005); available from <http://www.pia.gov.ph/default.asp?m=12&sec=reader&rp=2&fi=p051021.htm&no=11&date=/>; accessed 12 Apr 2007.

¹¹⁶ "Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan."

income, provide physical infrastructure and micro-credit, and manage the environment, among others. It has a total of 9,130 barangay beneficiaries.”¹¹⁷

• **KALAHI-Poverty Free Zones** is implemented by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) to provide livelihood opportunities for the people in poor communities. As of July 2006 this project had benefited a total of 44 barangays.¹¹⁸

Figure 4 illustrates the organizational structure of the NAPC and the flow of its coordination efforts to alleviate poverty:

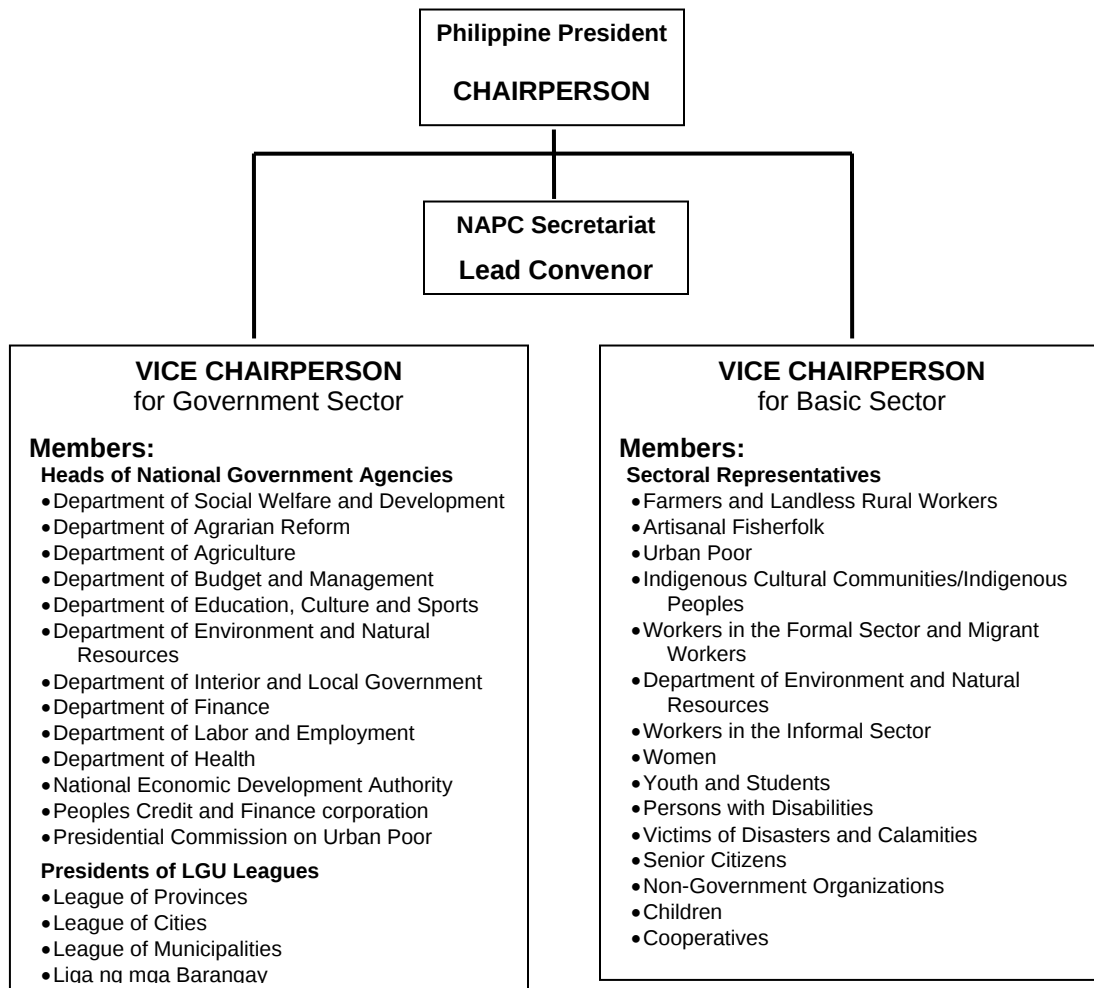


Figure 4. NAPC Organizational Structure¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ “Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan.”

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ “NAPC Organizational Structure,” (NAPC Official Website); available from http://www.napc.gov.ph/napc_structure.htm; accessed 13 Apr 2007.

5. Office of the Press Secretary (OPS)/Philippine Information Agency (PIA)

The Office of the Press Secretary (OPS), together with the Philippine Information Agency (PIA), is the lead convenor for the Information Component. The Executive Press Secretary who serves as the presidential spokesman is the OPS head. On the other hand, the PIA, which maintains regional, provincial, and municipal offices throughout the country, is the primary agency to deliver information nationwide regarding government peace efforts and development programs and projects.¹²⁰ A Communications Group in the Office of the President is established under the provisions of Executive Order No. 511, dated 06 Mar 2006 in order to rationalize, integrate and ensure close supervision of the public information functions of the executive branch. The Communications Group is also headed by the Press Secretary and its members are the PIA Director-General and the Chairman of government mass media organizations.¹²¹ In support of the NISP, the OPS and PIA formulate and implement programs on public information and news to counter the propaganda of the LCM, SPSPG and ASG at the national, sub-national and local levels.

C. ANALYSIS OF CURRENT COIN STRATEGY

Although the NISP's operational methodology follows the C-H-C-D approach, it still maintains the concept of "left hand and right hand approach" to counterinsurgency, which is a combination of military operations and civilian agencies focused on socio-economic and psychosocial development. Taking into consideration all the concerns and objectives of the NISP as promoted by the present Philippine government administration, the author has developed a systemic structure using a causal loop diagram¹²² to illustrate how the NISP is

¹²⁰ "Philippine Media and Information," (Philippine Culture and Information); available from <http://www.pia.gov.ph/philinfo/default.asp?fi=media&i=mediaops/>; accessed 01 Apr 2007.

¹²¹ Executive Order Number 511 (Rationalizing the Public Information Functions and Duties of the Executive Branch), dated 06 March 2006 and signed by Executive Secretary Eduardo R Ermita.

¹²² Virginia Anderson and Lauren Johnson, *Systems Thinking Basics: From Concepts to Causal Loops*, (Waltham, MA: Pegasus Communications, Inc, 1997), 51-64.

envisioned to have a successful Philippine counterinsurgency strategy. Figure 5 provides an illustrative perspective of the NISP to shape up a more dynamic and multifaceted approach to insurgency.

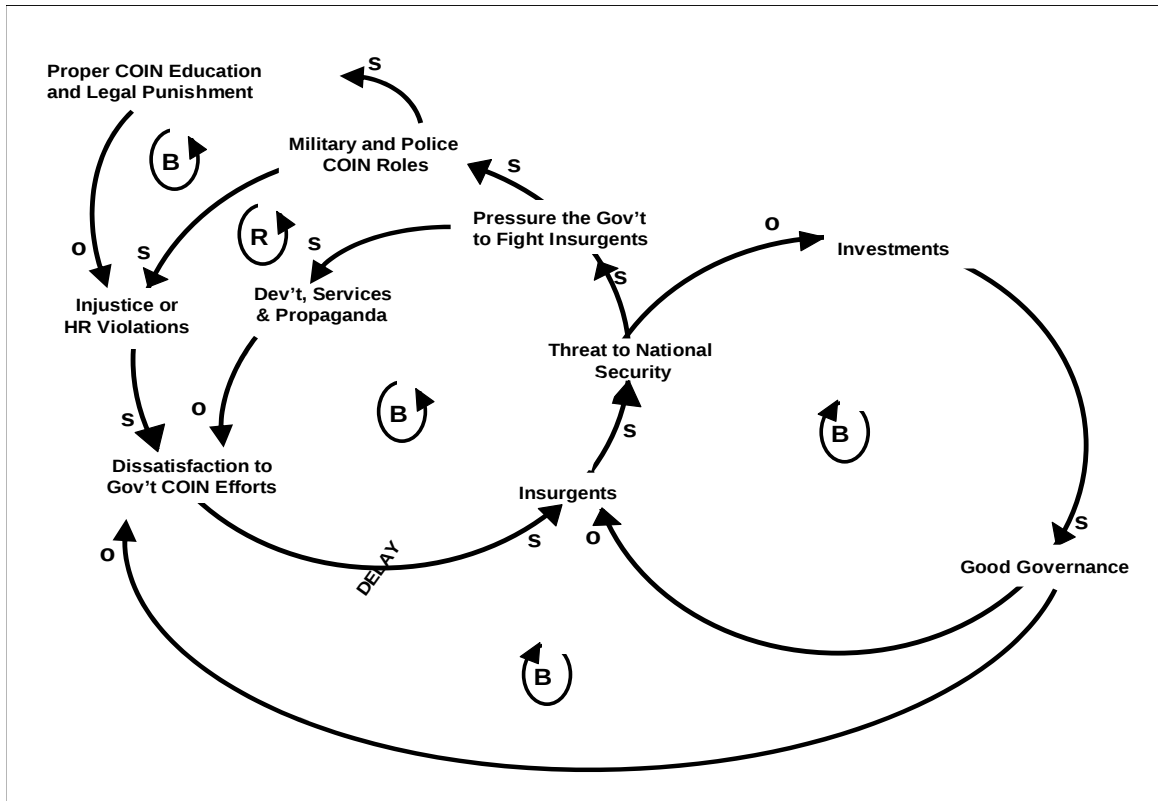


Figure 5. Systems Overview of the Philippine Government's NISP to Achieve a Successful Counterinsurgency Strategy

The above diagram shows that insurgency begins by instigating threats to the RP's National Security. Eventually, insurgents increase pressure on the government to fight. In turn, this pressure increases the roles of the government's security forces - military and police - since they are the most immediately available agencies that can be tapped for COIN campaign.

If there is lack of proper education in carrying out COIN operations and the government oversight and monitoring mechanisms are not functioning as the security forces implement their efforts on the ground, there will be a greater tendency for security forces to abuse their power and commit human rights

violations. Such negative actions will intensify the outcry of insurgents and their sympathizers against the government's injustice and abuses. This will eventually increase the dissatisfaction of the populace. After a while, due to insurgent recruitment and propaganda efforts among disgruntled individuals and groups, the insurgents will correspondingly increase in strength making it to be a reinforcing loop as illustrated by Figure 5.

However, this can change to a balancing loop if the soldiers and police will be given appropriate and continuous reeducation and retraining to enhance their understanding of the causes of insurgencies. Certainly, such sort of education and training will make them more aware of and accountable for their actions in the public service. Moreover, this process must be coupled with proper sanctions for any violations. In this manner, they can be prevented from fostering injustice and perpetrating human rights abuses. Eventually, it will lead to a reduction of the people's dissatisfactions with government actions.

In addition, the government must increase its propaganda and must create and implement development services such as health, education and job opportunities all the way down to the barangay level, especially in insurgency-affected communities. These policies will promote socio-economic and psychosocial development, allowing people to feel that a legitimate government is a better choice than insurgent organizations and propaganda. Although a threat to national security reduces opportunities for local and foreign investments, a balancing loop can still be achieved in favor of the Government through good governance. Good governance can be achieved by way of combating corruption, providing justice, and resolving the root causes of insurgency problem. If these efforts are sustained, insurgency escalation and resulting threat to national security will decrease and eventually die down.

The holistic approach of the NISP towards accomplishing the imperatives of this strategy shows the seriousness of the Government's counterinsurgency efforts. After reviewing the NISP, it is indeed in total agreement to the principles stated in Figure 5. The NISP can be described as not only focused on fighting the

armed insurgents and their organizations; but also as concerned with resolving the root causes of the insurgency problem. In short, its goals are to eradicate corruption and poverty, which are the two primary causes of the problem. However, it must always be acknowledged that the principal gauge for determining the plan's effectiveness is its implementation.

The current government recognizes and promotes good governance at the national, sub-national, and local levels by denouncing the corruption that has been creeping into several areas of the Philippine society and politics for many decades now.¹²³ However, perceptions of leading officials' insincerity and inaction in fighting corruption still exist¹²⁴ because of unresolved corruption charges against officials in the civilian agencies¹²⁵ and even in the military.¹²⁶

Regarding poverty reduction, 12,896 barangays are reported to have benefited from the programs of KALAHI as of July 2006.¹²⁷ However, this number is only about 30% of the total number of barangays nationwide. Currently, the country has 17 regions, 81 provinces, 118 cities, 1,510 municipalities, and 41, 995 barangays.¹²⁸ It is clear that the effect of these anti-poverty efforts has not been felt by the majority of the Filipino communities.

¹²³ "Statement of Secretary Ignacio R. Bunye Re: Corruption," *Philippine Information Agency Daily News Reader*, (Press Release, 15 Mar 2007); available from <http://www.pia.gov.ph/?m=12&sec=reader&rp=1&fi=p070315.htm&no=9&date=03/15/2007/>; accessed 21 Mar 2007.

¹²⁴ Cyril Bonabente, "RP Most Corrupt in Asia – PERC," *Inquirer.Net*, (Inquirer Headlines/Nation, 14 Mar 2007); available from http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/inquirerheadlines/nation/view_article.php?article_id=54661/; accessed 01 Apr 2007.

¹²⁵ A former agriculture secretary was tagged as the architect of the P700M (\$14M) fertilizer scam in the Department of Agriculture. Pia Lee Brago, "Bolante Wants to Go to Jakarta but Manila Officials Doubtful," *MidWeek Balita*, The Leading Filipino-American Newspaper in the USA, Vol. XV, No. 183, (20-22 Dec 2006), 1 and 12.

¹²⁶ Former Army Generals (Garcia and Ligot) have been charged for corrupt practices after going through lifestyle checks. "Surrender General Garcia to Sandiganbayan, President Orders AFP Chief of Staff," *The Official Website of the Republic of the Philippines*, [online: Copyright (C) 2007 Gov.Ph]; available from <http://www.gov.ph/news/default.asp?i=6067/>; accessed 15 Mar 2007. Lira Dalangin-Fernandez, "Palace Rejects Ex-General P20-M [approx \$400,000.00] Offer," *Inquirer.Net*, (21 Mar 2007); available from http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/breakingnews/nation/view_article.php?article_id=56121/; accessed 21 Mar 2007.

¹²⁷ "Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan."

¹²⁸ Sourced from Philippines-Archipelago.Com as of 2006; available from http://philippines-archipelago.com/politics/administrative_map.html/; accessed 05 Mar 2007.

IV. HISTORICAL CASES OF PHILIPPINE COUNTERINSURGENCY CAMPAIGNS

The successes and failures of the past administrations' counterinsurgency (COIN) strategies show how each leader addressed insurgencies differently, despite having the same basic strategic approach: the "left hand and right hand approach." This chapter reviews four case studies: (1) the "All Out Friendship or All Out Force" program of President Ramon Magsaysay; (2) "Oplan Katatagan" during the period under President Ferdinand E. Marcos; (3) "Lambat-Bitag Campaign" during the administrations of Presidents Corazon Aquino and Fidel V. Ramos; and (4) "Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines" (OEF-P) in the current administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. The objective for this chapter is to determine common trends, strengths and weaknesses of the mentioned case studies.

A. THE "ALL OUT FRIENDSHIP OR ALL OUT FORCE" AGAINST THE HUK REBELLION

According to Charles T. R. Bohannon, Ramon Magsaysay's, "All Out Friendship or All Out Force" program against the Huk insurgents (aka "Hukbong Magpapalaya ng Bayan" or "People's Liberation Army") is the best illustration of "stealing the enemy's thunder" because it provided them with an opportunity that was more appealing than subversion.¹²⁹ Bohannon emphasizes that this approach required nearly the same energy, intelligence, resourcefulness, and dedication as a successful guerrilla movement. He also points out that it is greatly dependent on two successful traits; first, the behavior of the forces in contact with local civilians and, second, forceful and dynamic leadership.¹³⁰ His argument suggests that a successful counterinsurgency is not primarily measured by the high technological capability of combat troops. Major Lawrence

¹²⁹ Charles T. R. Bohannon, "Antiguerrilla Operations," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, (Vol. 341, Unconventional Warfare, May 1962), 19-29; available from <http://www.jstor.org/>; accessed 30 Oct 2006.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

M. Greenberg explains in his historical accounts of the Huk insurrection that the Filipino soldiers developed the first of these successful traits on their own. This might be due to the fact that the Philippine military did not receive significant foreign aid, only surplus American World War II (WWII) stocks.¹³¹ The latter successful trait was embodied in Magsaysay's support and close supervision. This became the primary factor that maintained the military's initiative and commitment to service.¹³² As a government administrator, he was viewed as especially dedicated because of his concern with "improving the quality of life for its citizens than with self-enrichment."¹³³

Magsaysay's campaign against the Huk insurgents started when he was appointed Secretary of National Defense in September 1950, and he applied a two-pronged approach: the "right hand and left hand approach."¹³⁴ The "right hand" was an armed response; Magsaysay convinced President Elpidio Quirino's administration to merge the police force (Philippine Constabulary) with the AFP and to engage in the reorganization and retraining of both.¹³⁵ The "left hand" represented socio-economic development, which during that period was also administered by the military through the Economic Development Corps (EDCOR). The EDCOR project became the answer to counter the Huk slogan of "land for the landless" by engaging with a more publicized presentation than the Huk organization.¹³⁶ Although the military had previously engaged in non-military ventures related to civic action and socio-economic development activities,

¹³¹ The author has cited this from Edward G. Lansdale. Lawrence M. Greenberg, "The Hukbalahap Insurrection: A Case Study of a Successful Anti-Insurgency Operation in the Philippines, 1946-1955," *Historical Analysis Series*, (Analysis Branch U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1987), 144-149; available from <http://www.army.mil/cmh/books/coldwar/huk/huk-fm.html>; accessed 11 Oct 2006.

¹³² Ramon Magsaysay became the focal point of close contact with the villagers and the massive reform in the military and in the government. Benedict J. Kerkvliet, "The Rise and Fall," *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1977), Chapter 6, 238-241.

¹³³ Greenberg, 145.

¹³⁴ Hernandez, 1.

¹³⁵ The Philippine Constabulary which was the National Police Force beginning in 1901, was put under Army control on 23 Dec 1950. Greenberg, 88-89; Kerkvliet, 240-241.

¹³⁶ Greenberg, 90; Kerkvliet, 239.

Carolina G. Hernandez notes that these endeavors still took place under civilian oversight institutions.¹³⁷ The civilian agency of the Secretary of National Defense had been very active in monitoring the implementation of the program and in coordinating with other government agencies. This ensured that the stakeholders would stay focused on the objectives of the program. Colonel Ricardo C. Morales explains that the propaganda measures in this campaign were merely “icing on the cake,” because the beneficiaries represented only a fraction of the entire Huk movement. A large part of the campaign's success, according to Morales, laid both in the actions of a reformed military and Magsaysay's dynamic leadership.¹³⁸ As an administrator, “Magsaysay was equally fast to reward and to punish.”¹³⁹ He was completely dedicated to support his strategy from the ground level up, even though it could have cost his life.¹⁴⁰ Greenberg notes that Magsaysay remained simple in his appearance as well as in his dealings with the people. He did not mind walking to far-flung barangays just to ensure that his people would understand his intent and vision.¹⁴¹ If he found graft and corruption in his organization, he would immediately act against those involved.¹⁴² Although he knew that he was targeted for assassination by the Huks, he never stopped making unannounced visits to military installations and civilian communities. His attitude and actions ensured that the campaign was properly implemented. According to Edward Lansdale, all assassination attempts against Magsaysay failed because his leadership had an equally powerful effect on the insurgents themselves.¹⁴³ In one instance, Magsaysay's would-be assassin, Thomas

¹³⁷ Hernandez, 1.

¹³⁸ Morales, 19-20.

¹³⁹ Greenberg, 85.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 92-95.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Rodney S. Azama, “The Insurgencies,” *The Huks and the New People's Army: Comparing Two Postwar Filipino Insurgencies*, (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Command and Staff College, 01 Apr 1985), Chapter 2; available from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/1985/ARS.html>; accessed 26 Jan 2007.

¹⁴³ Sourced by Greenberg from Edward Lansdale, *In the Midst of Wars*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 46.

Santiago (aka Manila Boy) surrendered to him, after hearing about Magsaysay's efforts from other people and talking to him personally.¹⁴⁴

Edward Lansdale, as Magsaysay's U.S. adviser and close friend, ensured that U.S. support for this campaign went directly to the Department of National Defense. Magsaysay achieved three major successes in his years as Secretary of Defense; first, he transformed the corrupt and demoralized military into an organization with a sense of purpose and *esprit de corps*.¹⁴⁵ Second, he seized documents bearing lists of Huk sympathizers and arrested en masse the Politburo of the Communist Party through information compiled by AFP intelligence.¹⁴⁶ Third, he managed to use the military to ensure a relatively honest 1951 congressional election.¹⁴⁷ David Joel Steinberg also recognizes that "the rise of Ramon Magsaysay altered the history of the Philippines."¹⁴⁸ Magsaysay's popularity grew due to these achievements because people perceived him as honest and truthful, which was a critical aspect of successful COIN operations, and despite the fact that he was affiliated with the corrupt administration of President Quirino. Quirino was reluctant to support the campaign and contented himself with staying within the confines of Malacanang, the presidential palace.¹⁴⁹ Eventually, Magsaysay's popularity led him to win the 1953 presidential election. He also continued to support the program against insurgency that eventually led to the collapse of the Huk movement in 1955.¹⁵⁰ In summary, the success of this campaign was due to a highly dedicated and

¹⁴⁴ Sourced by Greenberg from William O. Douglas, *North From Malaya: Adventure on Five Fronts*, (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc. 1953), 103-105.

¹⁴⁵ David Chandler and others, "The Philippines, 1896-1972: From Revolution to Martial Law," *The Emergence of Southeast Asia: A New History*, ed. Norman G. Owen, (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), Chapter 19, 293.

¹⁴⁶ Sourced by Greenberg from Douglas, *North From Malaya*, 111.

¹⁴⁷ David Joel Steinberg, "Collaboration and Restoration," *The Philippines: A Singular and Plural Place*, Second Edition, Revised and Updated, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press Inc., 1990), Chapter 6, 109.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Greenberg, 112.

¹⁵⁰ Rodney S. Azama, "Abstract," *The Huks and the New People's Army: Comparing Two Postwar Filipino Insurgencies*, (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Command and Staff College, 01 Apr 1985); available from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/1985/ARS.htm/>; accessed 26 Jan 2007.

honest civilian administrator, who was given both the autonomy to implement his plan and the resources to support it. This success was coupled with the support of the reformed and reeducated armed forces, including the police force, that were perceived by the people as their protectors and not as their oppressors.

B. OPLAN KATATAGAN (OPLAN STABILITY)

Despite the defeat of the Huk insurgents by Magsaysay's administration, after several subsequent administrations, inequality re-emerged in Philippine society.¹⁵¹ This paved the way for the resurgence of Communist idealism among young intellectuals. In 1968, the new Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) was formed, led by Jose Maria Sison and others.¹⁵² A year later, the remnants of the former Huk movement joined the CPP and became the New People's Army (NPA).¹⁵³ Remembering the success of Magsaysay's campaign, succeeding administrations replicated its approach of a mixture of military and socio-economic initiatives involving different government agencies. However, no administration was able to produce the same success as Magsaysay.¹⁵⁴ Perhaps they lacked the vision and political will necessary for a successful COIN operation. Even President Ferdinand E. Marcos attempted to implement the same strategy before and immediately after the declaration of Martial Law in 1972.¹⁵⁵ However, he did not succeed either, largely due to the hunger for power and possessions of his family and close associates, which created disorder in the country.¹⁵⁶ In order to secure the military's support, Marcos expanded the military leaders' role in the society, giving them the opportunity to amass great wealth.

¹⁵¹ Steinberg, 110.

¹⁵² Alex Turpin, "Birth of Maoist Party," *New Society's Challenge in the Philippines*, (The Institute for the Study of Conflict, No. 122, Sep 1980), 6.

¹⁵³ Ibid, 6-7.

¹⁵⁴ Steinberg, 109-110

¹⁵⁵ Devesa, 33-34.

¹⁵⁶ Marcos permitted the emergence of monopolies; the economy was restructured in such a way that he, his wife, her family and their circle of friends could take a portion of the profits ruining small producers. Steinberg, 120 and 128.

This eventually led the military to become inefficient, corrupt and abusive.¹⁵⁷ As Marcos and his “cronies” grew tremendously rich, others in the society grew less and less satisfied, allowing the Communist armed insurgents, the New People’s Army (NPA), to grow quickly.¹⁵⁸ In addition, because secessionists perceived that Muslim areas were not given a fair share of allocated resources by the central government in Manila, the Muslim secessionist rebellion in Mindanao grew in number and strength.¹⁵⁹

The uncontrollable rise of insurgencies in the country led the Marcos administration in 1981 to formulate an integrated counterinsurgency program called “Operation Plan Katatagan” (Oplan Stability). According to Jose P. Magno, Jr. and A. James Gregor, this plan was strongly influenced by the U.S., and was based on the idea that the causes of the rebellions were rooted in political, social and economic problems.¹⁶⁰ The plan involved the effort to unite the military and civilian agencies in a combined program of security and local development in order to address the critical safety and welfare needs of the population in operational areas.¹⁶¹ The main objective of this campaign was to win the “hearts and minds” of the people similar to the objectives of Magsaysay’s campaign; however, during its implementation, it failed miserably to defeat the insurgents. The Philippine population simply did not believe in the goals of the government’s campaign.¹⁶² This was because the implementation of the campaign was not totally founded on the dedication and political will necessary to resolve the root causes of insurgencies; rather, it was based on manipulating the military and other government agencies so as to maintain the administration’s power. Marcos’ strategy failed, despite the plan might have been similar to Magsaysay’s

¹⁵⁷ Steinberg, 126

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 120.

¹⁶⁰ Jose P. Magno Jr. and A. James Gregor, “Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the Philippines,” *Asian Survey*, (Vol. 26, No. 5, May 1986), 507-510; available from <http://www.jstor.org/>; accessed 11 Oct 2006.

¹⁶¹ Hernandez, 9-10.

¹⁶² Ibid, 10.

campaign, because his administration was in a continuous grip of corruption and the Filipino people were under fear of military domination resulting from injustice and human rights violations. The success of COIN operations does not rely on the strength of any given plan as much as on the dedication and reliability of those who are charged with administering and implementing them.

C. THE LAMBAT-BITAG (DRAGNET) CAMPAIGN

After twenty years of Marcos dictatorship, Philippine society experienced once more the rise of democracy as a result of Corazon Aquino's inauguration as the freely elected President on February 25, 1986 and of her promotion of "national reconciliation with justice."¹⁶³ In April 1986, Aquino replaced "Oplan Katatagan" with "Oplan Mamamayan" (People) but it also failed to end Communist insurgency.¹⁶⁴ This failure eventually provided the foundation for the issuance of a new strategy, the "Lambat-Bitag Campaign," on 16 September 1988.¹⁶⁵

The "Lambat Bitag" emphasized a heavy focus on the integration of civil-military operations, intelligence, and combat operations and proposed the military tactics of clear, hold, consolidate, and develop.¹⁶⁶ Basically, this methodology was derived from the "right hand and left hand approach," wherein the objectives were to neutralize the growth of the insurgency and to achieve socio-economic development with the inclusion of civilian government agencies (CGAs) and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs). One of the most effective parts of this campaign was the reform initiated in the military by reeducating its armed forces about human rights, values, and the importance of popular support in counterinsurgency operations. Additionally, this campaign introduced the

¹⁶³ National reconciliation also involved negotiations with the insurgents, releasing political prisoners, a balik-baril (surrender of firearms) program which provided money in exchange for guns, livelihood projects and amnesty for the rebel returnees. Steinberg, 147-148.

¹⁶⁴ Hernandez, 11-12.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 12.

¹⁶⁶ Devesa, 36.

“Special Operations Team” (SOT) concept¹⁶⁷ for dismantling the insurgents’ political infrastructure in the barangays. Likewise, the employment of Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Units (CAFGUs)¹⁶⁸ was implemented during this campaign in order to have auxiliary territorial forces that secured the cleared barangays while the military was pursuing the insurgents. By institutionalizing “Lambat-Bitag,” this campaign became a viable response against insurgents’ threats, particularly in the northern provinces of the country.¹⁶⁹ This strategy was continued by the administration of President Fidel V. Ramos, which succeeded the Aquino presidency. President Ramos had direct knowledge about the campaign because he was President Aquino’s Secretary of National Defense from 1988 to 1991.¹⁷⁰ It was only during the implementation of “Lambat-Bitag” that a significant decline in the strength of Communist insurgents was noted.¹⁷¹ However, the MILF and the ASG gradually increased during the 1990’s,¹⁷² in part due to the “Lambat-Bitag” campaign’s primary focus on the Communist insurgents because ongoing peace talks between the GRP-MNLF and the GRP-MILF were making progress.¹⁷³ Additionally, the threat from the ASG only began to develop in late 1995.¹⁷⁴ Intervening operation plans were crafted by the DND-

¹⁶⁷ SOT is a concept originated by Captain Alex B. Congmon of the Philippine Army; it was proven effective and introduced by the Philippine Army 4th Infantry Division in Mindanao. This concept focuses on a dialogue with the villagers in order to dismantle the politico-military structure of the insurgents within the community. Victor N. Corpus, “Master Plan for a General Offensive,” *Silent War*, (Quezon City, Philippines: VNC Enterprises, 1989), 144.

¹⁶⁸ CAFGUs are the indigenous forces in the Philippine COIN strategy which are utilized as the government’s auxiliary security forces against the insurgents. CAFGUs are armed by the government while CVOs are not. Joseph H. Felter, Ph.D., “Taking Guns to a Knife Fight: A Case of Empirical Study of Counterinsurgency,” *Dissertation*, (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University, 2005), 47.

¹⁶⁹ Lambat-Bitag was reportedly successful in the provinces of Kalinga, Apayao, and Cagayan. Human Rights Committee, “Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 40 of the Covenant: The Philippines,” *UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, 2nd Periodic Report (CCPR/C/PHL/2002/2, 18 Sep 2002), 16.

¹⁷⁰ David G. Timberman, “Introduction: The Philippines New Normalcy,” *The Philippines New Directions in Domestic Policy and Foreign Relations*, ed. David G. Timberman, (Asia Society, 1998), 15-16.

¹⁷¹ Hernandez, 24; (Sourced from the Armed Forces of the Philippines).

¹⁷² Ibid, 26; (Sourced from AFP).

¹⁷³ Soliman M. Santos, Jr., “Evolution of the Armed Conflict on the Moro Front,” 14.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 15.

AFP during the administration of President Ramos up to the election of President Joseph E. Estrada, including “Oplan Pagkalinga” (1996-1997), “Oplan Kaisaganaan” (1997-1998), “Oplan Makabayan” (1998-1999) and “Oplan Balangai” (1999-2001).¹⁷⁵ These plans were built on the gains of “Lambat-Bitag” by establishing development programs in the cleared areas. In this case, after certain areas were declared free of insurgent threats, the DILG-PNP, together with the LGUs, would take responsibility on those areas and would focus on the implementation of consolidation and development programs.¹⁷⁶

Roy T. Devesa notes that as a result of these gains against the Communist insurgents, the Philippine national government and armed forces shifted their focus to military modernization programs for external security and to the problems of the MILF and ASG. The military efforts against the Communist insurgents were placed on a lower priority.¹⁷⁷ These changes drew attention away from traditional military operations and developmental aspects which had been entrusted to the DILG-LGU as their primary responsibility; instead, the DILG-PNP took over the responsibility on internal security operations (ISO) from the DND-AFP in 1995.¹⁷⁸ Devesa points out that these changes caused a major setback in the overall counterinsurgency campaign because the police force was neither totally prepared for nor educated to handle ISO responsibilities. They were not fully involved in the campaign because they were preoccupied with the challenges of drugs, kidnappings, and other types of organized crime.¹⁷⁹ Likewise, the Human Rights Committee points out that the “civilian counterparts, in most instances, fell short of fulfilling their corresponding tasks”¹⁸⁰ on the development side. The national government made a hasty and poorly thought-out transition because of the sudden shift of focus towards modernizing the AFP

¹⁷⁵ AFP Primer 2004: Sourced from OJ3, GHQ, AFP.

¹⁷⁶ Human Rights Committee, 16.

¹⁷⁷ Devesa, 37.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 36.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 36-37.

¹⁸⁰ Human Rights Committee, 16.

and toward external security concerns despite the fact that there was no immediate external threat to be addressed.¹⁸¹

This error in the government's focus eventually caused the resurgence of Communist insurgency which was further enhanced by political instability during the regime of President Joseph E. Estrada. The drastic reduction of CAFGU strength (which created security vacuums in formerly cleared areas), the repeal of Republic Act 1700 or the Anti-Subversion Law, the reduction of the AFP budget, the termination of Foreign Military Sales (FMS) support, and the deterioration of socio-economic conditions brought about by the rising cost of living, unemployment, weak delivery of public services, and everyday hardships caused some people to lose trust and hope in the government.¹⁸² As for the CPP/NPA, they claimed that their Second Great Rectification Movement in 1992 gave them their resurgence a resounding victory.¹⁸³ The CPP/NPA affirmed that the resoluteness and militancy of their cadres and fighters for wide-range mass actions expanded their base, and built up their political work in terms of united front building and legal participation in politics.¹⁸⁴ As a result of the Communist insurgents' recovery, the responsibility for ISO was consequently returned to the AFP's jurisdiction from 1998, where it remains up to the present. This campaign revealed that success in counterinsurgency would be hard to achieve without collaboration among different government agencies (military, police and civilian) from the national level down to the local level, COIN education, and dedication by civilian oversight organizations such as the DILG and DND.

D. OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM-PHILIPPINES (OEF-P)

The September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the United States revitalized the alliance between the Republic of the Philippines and the United States (RP-

¹⁸¹ Devesa, 37.

¹⁸² "Philippine National Internal Security Plan (NISP)," 5.

¹⁸³ "The Second Great Rectification Movement: Documents of the 10th Plenum of the CPP Central Committee," *Ang Bayan*, (1992); available from <http://www.philippinerevolution.net/cpp/index.shtml/>; accessed 02 Nov 2006.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

US). President Arroyo was the first ASEAN head of state to offer the use of her nation's air space and ports to support U.S. military operations in Afghanistan.¹⁸⁵ She also explained that the struggle against international terrorism drove her pro-U.S. stand because it was linked with a national interest against insurgents' terrorism within the Philippines.¹⁸⁶ Since 2001, the United States has fully supported the Philippines in its counterterrorism efforts. Regional and local terrorist groups with ties to Al-Qaeda also pose a serious threat to the U.S., allies, and its interests in the U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR).¹⁸⁷

Combating terrorism is now one of the main pillars of the bilateral relationship between the RP and the U.S.¹⁸⁸ The two governments share this interest due to growing evidence of links between local terrorist organizations, particularly the ASG, and international terrorist organizations, such as the JI¹⁸⁹. The U.S. government deploys troops to the southern Philippines for the purpose of joint military training exercises and advisory assistance; at the same time, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) maintains full operational responsibility in its fight against terrorism within the country.¹⁹⁰ In October 2001, the U.S. sent military observers to Mindanao to assess AFP operations against the ASG and to

¹⁸⁵ Marites Sison, "Politics: War on Terror Ups U.S Role in the Philippines," *Global Information Network*, (25 Mar 2002), 1; available from <http://proquest.umi.com/pgdweb/>; accessed 10 May 2006.

¹⁸⁶ Mark Landler, "Philippines Offers US Its Troops and Bases," *New York Times*, (03 Oct 2001), 1; available from http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/a/gloria_macapagal_arroyo/; accessed 12 May 2006.

¹⁸⁷ "U.S. Security Policy In Asia And The Pacific: Restructuring America's Forward Deployment," Hearing before the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific of the Committee on International Relations House of Representatives One Hundred Eighth Congress First Session, (26 Jun 2003, Serial No. 108-52); available from http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/intlrel/hfa88000.000/hfa88000_0.htm#1#1/; accessed 19 Jan 2006.

¹⁸⁸ Thomas Lum and Larry A. Niksch, "The Republic of the Philippines: Background and U.S. Relations," *CRS Report for Congress*, (10 Jan 2006) [journal online]; available from <http://library.nps.navy.mil/uhtbin/hyperion/CRS-RL33233.pdf>; accessed 19 Jan 2006.

¹⁸⁹ Also termed as Jemaah Islamiyah, is a militant Islamic terrorist organization dedicated to the establishment of a fundamentalist Islamic theocracy in Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei, Malaysia, and southern Thailand and the Philippines.

¹⁹⁰ James Brooke, "Philippines Said to Have Refused Bush Offer of G.I.'s in November," *New York Times*, (18 Jan 2002); available from Pro Quest Database; accessed 13 May 2006.

examine AFP equipment needs. By late December 2001, AFP units on Mindanao began to receive U.S. military equipment. In January 2002, the U.S. deployed 650 troops to the southern Philippines, particularly to Zamboanga and Basilan for training and advisory functions. This campaign was called Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines (OEF-P).

OEF-P was based on Balikatan¹⁹¹ (Shoulder to Shoulder) 02-1, a Joint Coalition Annual Training Exercise; eventually OEF-P would become known as the "Basilan Model." In this exercise, the Philippine Government and the AFP took the lead role on all activities, while the U.S. military played the supporting role in terms of advisory, training assistance, and continuous civic action activities.¹⁹² This responsibility gave the GRP the opportunity to implement the COIN concept stated in the NISP at the provincial level. The legitimacy and credibility of the Philippine Government, in the eyes of the Basilan populace, were enhanced. OEF-P activities focused on increasing the security, humanitarian assistance, and civic action projects, which isolated the ASG from their local support networks. Soon enough, the government and the military were gaining active local support in terms of cooperation and information, paving the way the exposure of ASG lairs and the eventual reduction of their strength. LTC Gregory R. Wilson recognizes that this endeavor provided a framework for developing a holistic approach for effective counterinsurgency operations despite the fact that ASG, as an organization, were not totally destroyed.¹⁹³ Although the entire operation was just a micro element of the macro campaign against insurgencies nationwide, this activity served as a strong model based on the "left hand and right hand approach." The most positive aspect of this local counterinsurgency campaign was the collaboration among the GRP agencies,

¹⁹¹ "Balikatan" is a Filipino word used as codename for the series of joint military exercises conducted between the U.S. and the Philippines under the auspices of the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty. It means "shoulder-to-shoulder."

¹⁹² "Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines," available from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/enduring-freedom-philippines.htm/>; accessed 10 Feb 2006.

¹⁹³ Gregory R. Wilson, "Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines: The Indirect Approach," *Civilian Research Project*, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, 2006), 6-20.

particularly the DND-AFP, the DILG-PNP, and the local government of Basilan along with the assistance of the U.S Government, particularly USPACOM and the U.S. Agency for Internal Development (USAID), as well as different NGOs. They invested heavily in education, local economies, public works and social welfare programs as a means of weaning the population away from the insurgency, while the AFP conducted military operations to hunt down armed insurgents. This holistic approach to counterinsurgency created an environment of peace and development on the island of Basilan.

E. ANALYSIS OF CASE STUDIES

The “three-legged stool” model of Arthur F. Lykke is an effective tool for analyzing the means, ways, and ends that were adopted in the above case studies. Table 2 illustrates how this model fits into the analysis of the campaigns outlined in the four case studies.

Criteria	All Out Friendship or All Out force	Oplan Katatagan	Lambat-Bitag Campaign	Operation Eduring Freedom-Philippines
Means (Resource s)	DND-AFP (with PC)	AFP (with PC)	DND-AFP	DND-AFP with direct U.S. Foreign Military Support
	U.S. Foreign Military Support	U.S. Foreign Military Support	Civilian Agencies (DILG, LGU and PNP); U.S. Foreign Military Support	NGOs, USAID, DILG-PNP, LGU of Basilan
Ways (Concepts)	Left Hand and Right Hand Strategy	Left Hand and Right Hand Strategy	Left Hand and Right Hand Strategy	Left Hand and Right Hand Strategy
	Reeducation & Retraining of AFP	Status Quo	Reeducation & Retraining of AFP	Reeducation and Retraining of AFP w/ U.S. assistance
	Active Civilian Oversight Monitoring	Inactive Civilian Oversight Monitoring	Active Civilian Oversight Monitoring - eventually turned inactive due to shift in focus	Active Civilian Oversight Monitoring as brought by International Pressure
Ends (Objectives)	Destruction of Huk Insurgent Movement	Destruction of Communist and Secessionist Movements	Destruction of Communist Movement	Destruction of ASG Organization
	Rehabilitation of insurgency victims	Retention of Marcos to power	AFP Modernization and External Security	Peaceful and Orderly Basilan
	Good Governance	Corruption, Injustice and Human Rights Violations persisted	Consolidation and Development were not sustained	Good Governance, Local Development, Education, Livelihood

Table 2. Case Studies Analysis Based on Arthur F. Lykke’s Three-Legged Stool Model

Out of the four cases cited, three campaigns, namely: the “All Out Friendship or All Out Force,” “Oplan Katatagan,” and the “Lambat-Bitag Campaign,” had similarities in their means of addressing insurgency; foreign military support from the U.S., in exchange for the presence of U.S. military bases in the Philippines, which became part of the resources that sustained AFP operations. However, U.S. support ended in the early 1990’s with the pull out of its bases.¹⁹⁴ Because of the pull out, the “Lambat-Bitag” campaign required the support of civilian government agencies such as the DILG, LGU and PNP to form part of the backbone for the consolidation and development phases.

It should be noted that the U.S. had no direct oversight responsibility during the stint of the first three campaigns and so could not verify how its support was used by the GRP. Instead, the utilization of the resources during these first three campaigns depended much on the seriousness and dedication of the Philippine leadership and government to overcome insurgency problems. In contrast, during OEF-P, when U.S. military support for Philippine counterterrorism was revived in the name of the Global War on Terror (GWOT),¹⁹⁵ the U.S. government did have the means of verifying how its support was utilized by the GRP. Due to the presence of U.S. personnel assisting the AFP on the ground, there was international pressure, on the part of the national government, including the local government of Basilan and the AFP, to make positive responses in performing their tasks and accomplishing their projects. This pressure was further enhanced by the participation of the USAID and other NGO’s on the ground.

All the four campaigns recognized that the problem of Philippine insurgency is deeply rooted in poverty, ignorance, disease, and injustice. Hence, every government administration decided to use a variation of the concept of “left hand and right hand approach” in order to address both the insurgencies’ armed organizations and their root causes. The ways adopted in the “All Out Friendship

¹⁹⁴ “Bantay-Laya” 2005.

¹⁹⁵ Fridovich, 26-27.

or All Out Force” program, the “Lambat-Bitag Campaign,” and “Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines” (OEF-P) focused on reeducation and retraining of the security forces. This enhancement process gave them a better understanding of the problem and proper preparation for addressing the challenges brought about by situations on the ground that were not strictly combat-oriented. In the same manner, it can be observed from these three campaigns that with the active participation of the civilian oversight agencies and civilian administrators other than the AFP leadership, the campaigns ended positively. For “All Out Friendship or All Out Force,” the DND under Ramon Magsaysay was the primary civilian agency that monitored and coordinated both military and civilian concerns. Eventually, it also included the Office of the Philippine President when Magsaysay was elected to the presidency in 1954. For “Lambat-Bitag,” responsibility for oversight lay with the Office of President Corazon Aquino and the DND under Fidel V. Ramos up to the early years of his term as elected president in 1992; however, this close supervision and support eventually died down when the responsibility for counterinsurgency was turned over to DILG-PNP-LGU as a result of lack of appreciation for the campaign. For OEF-P, the Office of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, together with her Cabinet Oversight Committee for Internal Security, became the focal agencies to ensure collaboration between military and civilian entities in Basilan; a great deal of credited is also due to the pressure brought by the close monitoring of the U.S.

In contrast, it is important to note that in the Marcos administration’s campaign of “Oplan Katatagan,” civilian oversight monitor was glaringly absent because the administration relied too much on a military leadership that was engulfed with corruption. Neither was there massive reeducation nor retraining conducted for the soldiers on the ground to understand the concept of the campaign. The national government was not perceived by the people as serious and dedicated to alleviate their sufferings or to stop the corruption in the rank and file of the government; hence, despite the fact that “Oplan Katatagan” was a comprehensive counterinsurgency plan, its implementation was deeply flawed.

Although Magsaysay primarily used the military forces as his main tool for implementing his campaign against the Huks, he enabled the AFP by closely supervising the reeducation and retraining of the military entities, including the AFP's reorganization by integrating the police force in 1950. Magsaysay himself served as the primary link between the armed forces and the different civilian government entities that could help the military. Likewise, the military became self sustaining in its socio-economic and psychosocial projects through EDCOR. Even though Magsaysay received meager resources from the national government as Secretary of Defense, he was entrusted by the Philippine government and the U.S. with managing the use of U.S. support which he intelligently and honestly used for his campaign.

Like Magsaysay, Aquino and Ramos used the military as the primary means of implementing the "Lambat-Bitag Campaign." Their administrations also gave emphasis to reeducating the AFP, particularly the Philippine Army (PA), in the concept of SOT in order to understand both the goals of the Communist insurgents and the objectives of the government. As a result, the Army was successful in relating and explaining to the Filipino people, through community dialogues, that what they were fighting for was for the benefit of the people. However, the police force was not included in these military reeducation and retraining programs for counterinsurgency. Instead, this was brought by the reorganization of the Philippine National Police (PNP) in early 1990's, by detaching the Philippine Constabulary (PC) from the AFP and merging it into the Integrated National Police (INP) under a different civilian government department, the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG). A negative view of the personnel of DILG, PNP, and local government agencies working on the ground flourished because these civilian entities perceived that "Lambat-Bitag" was just a military counterinsurgency campaign. Their lack of involvement during the initial stage of the preparations resulted in a failure to sustain the initial gains achieved by the military during the clear-and-hold stages of the campaign. Civilian agencies were not able to uphold the campaign's consolidation and

development stages for a lack of understanding and appreciation of the military efforts. In addition, this failure was aggravated by an early celebration of victory against the Communist insurgents and a sudden shift of focus on AFP modernization for external security measures. As a consequence, those mistakes clearly resulted in the resurgence of Communist threats nationwide.

OEF-P required a more complex organization of different stakeholders, specifically, the AFP with direct U.S. military logistics and training support and the participation of NGOs, USAID, and LGU of Basilan. In this case, the factor that led to success was the international oversight that put pressure on the Philippine government to establish close civilian oversight and monitoring in order to ensure collaborative implementation. Similar to previous campaigns, reeducation and retraining of AFP personnel was given emphasis, but this time the civilian agencies were also included during the preparation stage. This was brought about by the lessons learned in “Lambat-Bitag” and by the pressure of international stakeholder participation. The procedures carried out to make the concept effective were not greatly different from the concepts of Magsaysay or “Lambat-Bitag.” The campaign in Basilan made it clear that the success of any strategy depends on the coordinated and collaborative efforts of military and civilian organizations. OEF-P is considered a victory because it has reduced ASG influence and re-established peace and order in Basilan.

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V. COMPARISON OF THE ANALYSES OF CASE STUDIES AND CURRENT COIN STRATEGY

From the case studies, the first clear lesson is that to have a successful counterinsurgency (COIN), a government must first have a comprehensive COIN campaign; there must also be a dedicated and honest civilian administrator who provides civilian oversight and monitoring. In addition, this administrator must have the resources and power to implement the plan, and be willing to go out of the four walls of his office to ensure that his directives are properly implemented on the ground and not just rely on reports. Lastly, he must not be concerned about facing sacrifices and while being firm about avoiding self-enrichment by not falling into the grip of corruption. Another important lesson is that the government must have motivated and educated armed forces (military and police) that will protect the community without encouraging oppression. In addition, government must also have dedicated civilian agencies that will take charge of the socio-economic and psychosocial development of the people. These government entities (military, police and civilian agencies) must additionally be sure to perform their tasks collaboratively. These factors are the ones proven important during the implementation of Magsaysay's campaign and OEF-P. These are the factors neglected during "Oplan Katatagan" of Marcos administration and the factors not sustained in "Lambat-Bitag Campaign." These are the same factors needed to be sustained to make the NISP a working strategy (as presented in Figure 5, Chapter III) in order to shape up a more dynamic and multifaceted approach to insurgency. If international support is available, foreign sponsors must have a means of checking and monitoring the expenditure or utilization of their aid in order to put pressure on government administrators and implementors to ensure that the support will be used according to plan.

There is no doubt that from among the four campaigns mentioned in the previous chapter, Magsaysay's "All Out Friendship or All Out Force" program is the best illustration of a successful Philippine COIN strategy. This campaign met

all the criteria of a successful COIN strategy presented in the above paragraph. As David Galula cites, common grievances against the government serve as an effective motivator and attractive cause for gaining more supporters and members for the insurgents.¹⁹⁶ As a result of Magsaysay's campaign, the Huk insurgency died a natural death because the government resolved the root causes of grievances being exploited by insurgents. However, with the successive Philippine administrations, the insurgency rose up from its tomb because the roots of the problem intensified once again. Steinberg points out that the administrations of President Carlos Garcia (1957-1961) and President Diosdado Macapagal (1961-1965) lacked the vision and political will to maintain the momentum that Magsaysay began.¹⁹⁷ During their administrations, there was a growing sense of frustration with lawlessness, a propensity for violence, and a seeming drift in society to which they did not give much attention because they were incapable of going beyond their "class and time."¹⁹⁸ These grievances became even more intense during the 20-year Marcos regime and dictatorship. Social grievances brought about by corruption, injustice, human rights violations, and fear of military domination were the effective recruitment tools that increased the insurgents' membership and support of the masses.

The big picture of the Philippine COIN efforts from 1968 to 2005 is outlined in Figure 6. This illustration shows the periods of Philippine governance, from Marcos up to the early years of Arroyo, in relation to the insurgents' behavior within the period of their respective administrations. This graph indicates that such an increase or decline in insurgents' strength has a direct relationship to opportunities that insurgents acquire at certain periods of time. Such opportunities are taken advantage of by the insurgents based on how the Philippine administrations carried out their respective governance.

¹⁹⁶ David Galula, "The Prerequisites for Successful Insurgency," *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 1964), 11-28.

¹⁹⁷ Steinberg, 109-110.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

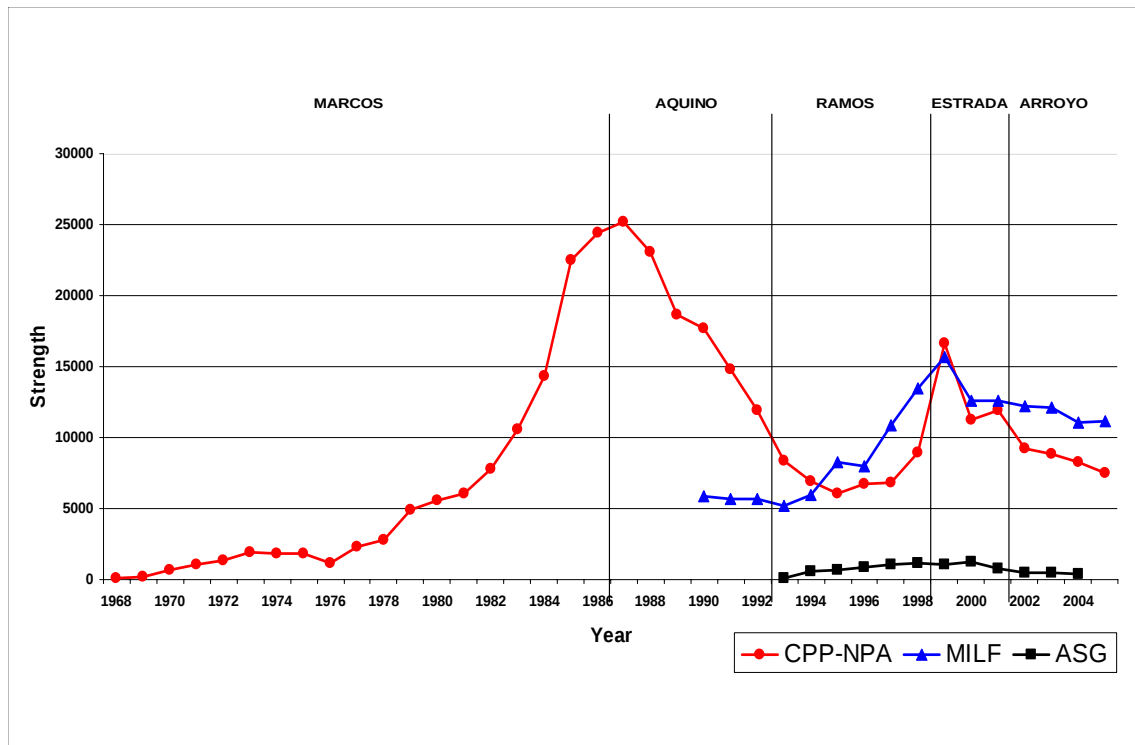


Figure 6. Insurgents' Behavior Over Time (BOT) in the Philippines (Source: After OJ3, GHQ, AFP, 2005)

Historically, the Philippine insurgents' outcry for revolution was based on "the context of persistent poverty and the concentration of economic and political power in the hands of a few."¹⁹⁹ Such conditions were further exacerbated when Marcos was re-elected into power and subsequently declared Martial Law in 1972. This declaration affected the basic political and civil rights of the people. Marcos temporarily suspended the elections and disbanded the political parties. He abolished the bicameral Congress and, instead, enacted laws by Presidential Decree. He directed the restructuring of the local governments' decentralization process in order to facilitate his control over them.²⁰⁰ Such changes meant that in order to get funds for a project, local officials needed the approval of the "Manila-

¹⁹⁹ Maria Cynthia Rose B. Bautista, "Ideologically Motivated Conflicts in the Philippines: Exploring the Possibility of an Early Warning System," *Philippine Human Development Report 2005*, 20.

²⁰⁰ "Country Governance Assessment: Philippines," *Asian Development Bank Report 2005*, (Published by ADB), 11.

based bureaucrats.”²⁰¹ This worsened graft and corruption in the government, increased the disparity of wealth distribution, and intensified political, economic, and cultural oppressions. Marcos tyranny led to the massive increase of insurgents nationwide, as depicted in Figure 6, because the insurgents took the opportunity of agitating the people over these grievances.

The “people power” movement led to Marcos’ overthrow in 1986, which once again paved the way for the “redemocratization” of the country under Corazon Aquino. She led the ratification of the 1987 Constitution as the new fundamental law of the land. This was done to eliminate the laws promulgated by Marcos that led to tyranny. She also spearheaded the enactment of a number of laws and policies, especially the Republic Act 7160 known as the Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991,²⁰² which had many provisions for citizen participation. These laws empowered local government units (LGUs) to begin delivering “basic services” such as providing health care and building infrastructures like schools, clinics, and public roads. Under this Code, the LGUs were able to create their own revenue sources at certain limits and could engage in international aid agreements. Under these terms, the president would exercise only “general supervision” to ensure the legality and appropriacy of the LGU’s actions. In the case that LGUs were found engaging in anomalous deals, the central government could suspend them.²⁰³ In addition, Aquino created the Presidential Committee on Public Ethics and Accountability (PCPEA) and the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) to restore government integrity and public confidence.²⁰⁴ She also restored freedom of the press

²⁰¹ Nina T. Izsatt, “Legislating for Citizens’ Participation in the Philippines,” [Research Online], (Logolink Southeast Asia Institute for Popular Democracy, Jul 2002), 41; available from <http://www.ipd.ph/logolinksea/resources/SEA%20Regional%20Paper1.pdf>; accessed 02 Mar 2007.

²⁰² Alex B. Brillantes Jr, “Decentralization, Devolution and development in the Philippines,” *UMP-Asia Occasional Paper No. 44*, (Published by the Urban Management Programme Regional Office for Asia-Pacific (UMP-Asia) with funding support from UNDP), 2.

²⁰³ Omar Azfar, Tugrul Gurgur, Satu Kähkönen, Anthony Lanyi, and Patrick Meagher, “Decentralization and Governance: An Empirical Investigation of Public Service Delivery in the Philippines,” *Research Paper*, (College Park, MD: IRIS Center, University of Maryland and World Bank, 19 Dec 2000), 10.

²⁰⁴ ADB, 11.

throughout the country, allowing the media to write anything about the government or even its opponents.²⁰⁵

Recognizing that insurgents still posed a serious threat to national security and nation-building, Aquino sought to end the problem through a combination of military actions and reconciliation programs,²⁰⁶ as outlined in the case study of “Lambat-Bitag” campaign. However, in spite of a noticeable decline in Communist insurgents, as shown in the graph, they continued to exist; meanwhile, the problem on MILF started to escalate. The insurgents were able to take advantage of the opportunity resulting from complaints of Aquino’s unfulfilled promises brought by bureaucratic inefficiency, an extended and fragmented government structure, and the proliferation of political appointees.²⁰⁷

The administrations of Presidents Fidel V. Ramos and Joseph E. Estrada did not create major reforms in the civil service efforts; however, Ramos gave life to the concept and obtained the desired key results of Aquino’s public administration.²⁰⁸ Ramos further enhanced local governance and decentralization. He promoted the privatization of government-owned and government-controlled corporations²⁰⁹ which, during the Marcos regime, were riddled with corruption by government officials and military officers. Ramos also organized the National Unification Commission (NUC) whose members came from the legislative, executive and private sectors. This Commission implemented the reconciliation policy known as the National Program for Unification and Development (NPUD) which offered amnesty to Communist insurgents, Muslim secessionists, and even coup plotters.²¹⁰ In line with these

²⁰⁵ Bautista, 5.

²⁰⁶ David Joel Steinberg, “Collaboration and Restoration,” *The Philippines: A Singular and Plural Place Second Edition, Revised and Update*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press Inc., 1990), 147-148. National reconciliation also involved negotiations with the insurgents, the release of political prisoners, and the balik-baril (surrender of firearms) program - money for guns, livelihood projects and amnesty.

²⁰⁷ ADB, 11.

²⁰⁸ Ibid, 11-12.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Hernandez, 13.

efforts, the GRP repealed the Republic Act 1700 or Anti-Subversion Law, to show the government's sincerity regarding reconciliation. This led to the acceptance of the Communist Party as a legal political party, allowing it to express its social and political goals through parliamentary means, instead of armed struggle.²¹¹ While carrying out these "left hand approaches," the government still retained its "right hand approach" to deal with the insurgents who insisted on fighting the government in a violent way. Despite these intensive approaches to policy-building, the Ramos government gained little public confidence because the Philippine bureaucracy was still perceived as generally weak, uncommitted to reform, uncoordinated, corrupt, financially burdened and incapable of coping with the needs of development and reform.²¹² Although, it was during Ramos administration that the Communist insurgency reached the lowest point of its history (see Figure 6), the Communists, including the MILF and ASG, began to rise up again during the latter part of Ramos term because of his government's failure to sustain the last two stages of "Lambat-Bitag Campaign." The insurgents found the same opportunities as they did during the Aquino administration, agitating the people and increasing their dissatisfactions with the government.

This dissatisfaction became much worse during the short-lived presidency of Joseph E. Estrada. Although Estrada initially intended to continue the economic and peace programs of the Ramos administration,²¹³ the public lost its confidence in Estrada when he himself was impeached for being implicated in corruption charges. Estrada was charged with accepting bribes from gambling operators from whom he allegedly acquired some four billion pesos (\$80 million). He was also charged with skimming tobacco excise taxes and taking advantage

²¹¹ Hernandez, 13.

²¹² ADB, 12.

²¹³ Nathan Gilbert Quimpo, "Options in the Pursuit of a Just, Comprehensive, and Stable Peace in the Southern Philippines," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 41, No. 2. (Mar – Apr, 2001), 118.

of government business deals.²¹⁴ These complaints led to his ouster from office after widespread popular demonstration in 2001.²¹⁵

Then, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo was appointed as the new President in order to restore the nation's credibility.²¹⁶ Her administration established a vision of creating a Strong Republic. Adhering to this vision, President Arroyo now advocates for a "National Policy Goal" of eliminating the root causes of insurgency by promoting good governance and denouncing corruption. Her NISP, being the national COIN strategy has been proven effective when the concept was applied in the OEF-P. The OEF-P proves that the NISP is no doubt a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach to insurgency problem. The NISP agrees with the principles first developed in Magsaysay's "All Out Friendship or All Out Force" program.

The COIN campaigns of Magsaysay and the OEF-P are both considered as success stories in the GRP's fight against insurgency using the strategy of "left hand and right hand approach." However, they differ in several aspects such as the extent of success, the roles that the U.S. performed, and the primary enablers in these campaigns. In Magsaysay's campaign, it was basically the entire Luzon area²¹⁷ that felt the impact of Huks downfall; the U.S. has no direct representation on ground to oversee implementation of the strategy, and it was proven that Magsaysay served as the primary enabler of the campaign's success. On the contrary, OEF-P's impact on the insurgency was largely felt in Basilan province alone rather than in the whole of Mindanao. The U.S. had direct representatives on ground, monitoring the COIN activities of the campaign and assisting the AFP in terms of training and civil affairs activities.

²¹⁴ Alfredson and Vigilar, "The Rise and Fall of Joseph Estrada."

²¹⁵ Soliman M. Santos Jr., "Evolution of the Armed Conflict on the Communist Front," *Philippine Human Development Report 2005*, (A Background Paper Submitted to the Human Development Foundation, Inc.), 7.

²¹⁶ Ricardo A. David, Jr., "The Causes and Prospect of the Southern Philippines Secessionist Movement," *Thesis*, (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, 2003), 106.

²¹⁷ The Philippines is divided into 3 main island groups namely: Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Luzon is composed of 40 provinces, Visayas of 16 provinces and Mindanao of 25 provinces.

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VI. CONCLUSION

“Who is the primary enabler in the local campaign of COIN operations in the province of Basilan?” This question remains unanswered in the minds of the greater Filipino community. Epictetus E. Patalinghug comments that the monitoring mechanism of the Philippine government is biased by favoring foreign assisted projects. He further points out that locally funded projects are not accorded the same scrutiny and attention in terms of monitoring and fund usage.²¹⁸ Scott Harrison asks, “Once the money and the Americans go, how far will the Philippines be able to keep up the community development [in southern Philippines]?”²¹⁹ Considering the statements of Patalinghug and Harrison, can the GRP attain the same success as the Basilan model if there is no U.S. pressure or American presence during that counterinsurgency campaign? Possibly, the outcome will be similar to the “Lambat-Bitag Campaign,” where the initial success was not sustained because of unfulfilled promises, bureaucratic deficiencies, and lack of collaboration among concerned agencies.

The Philippine government must examine these questions and confirm the sincerity and dedication of the administrators and implementors of the country’s COIN strategy. Although, the underlying roots of insurgencies in the country are poverty and corruption, the crucial missing link to make the strategy work effectively is the “correct attitude” of both administrators and implementors. The “correct attitude” implies sincerity and dedication to performance without hesitation or personal interest in undue advancement. An attitude of carrying out continuous public services despite taking risks, and often sacrificing one’s own self for the good of the people is necessary. It is also an attitude of not coddling the “crooks” in the government, but of imposing appropriate sanctions or

²¹⁸ Epictetus E. Patalinghug, “Globalization and State Capacity: The Philippines,” *Philippine Institute for Development Studies*, (Discussion Paper Series No. 2003-20, Dec 2003), 24; available from <http://www3.pids.gov.ph/ris/dps/pidsdps0320.pdf>; accessed 07 Apr 2007.

²¹⁹ Simon Montlake, “Where US Is Helping To Make Gains Against Terrorism,” *Christian Science Monitor*, (15 Feb 2007), 1. Scott Harrison is a security consultant and a former CIA officer.

punishments on them. Finally, it is an attitude of going beyond “class and time” exactly as Magsaysay did. If this kind of behavior is inculcated in every public servant, especially in leadership, there will be no need for foreign sponsors to put pressure on the Government to get the job done. This kind of attitude also provides a needed link for good governance. If the administrators’ and implementors’ attitude is the opposite of the one outlined above, the roots of insurgency will certainly escalate and insurgents will continue to exist and multiply. If government administrators and implementors possess the “correct attitude,” they can achieve a more consistent and effective counterinsurgency program.

After considering the four historical cases of the Philippine COIN campaigns and the insurgents’ behavior overtime, it is clear that the effectiveness of any COIN campaign lies in the hands of those who carry it out with dedication and diligence. The Office of the Philippine President, with its principal government agencies, particularly the DND-AFP, the DILG-PNP, and the local government units, represents the key stakeholders in pursuit of the “left hand and right hand approach” for fighting insurgency. History tells us that if the government is focused on and dedicated to addressing the root causes of insurgencies and it has the initiative and commitment to monitor down to the ground level (as the Magsaysay administration did, for example), the implementing agencies will also perform properly. However, if the ruling administration is unconcerned, corrupt, and power-hungry and yet, has the full control of the resources needed for the campaign (as was the case with Marcos administration), the responsible agencies will not perform correctly. Instead, this will create unstructured consequences such as bureaucratic inefficiency and lack of coordination among different government agencies.

The Filipino people do not simply expect the GRP to provide security and to deliver the “physical infrastructure” needed for socio-economic development. More importantly, they also expect the government to demonstrate “moral infrastructure” in terms of discipline, respect for human rights, and knowledge of

the people's needs. These are the qualities that were emphasized in the re-education of the military forces during the campaigns of Magsaysay and Aquino. These are also the factors neglected by the Marcos administration. OEF-P shows that successful counterinsurgency operation can be achieved and sustained if there is collaboration among different government agencies from the national level down to the local level. If this process can be replicated in all areas of the country, then the Philippines will have a holistic and effective response against insurgency nationwide.

The NISP, as the current government's national strategy against insurgency, is both a viable plan and an effective tool for coordinated COIN operations. This plan has been proven effective in Basilan which represents a micro aspect of the macro problem of insurgency. However, the government has to work hard to replicate the same success in other provinces of the country. This strategy must be fully recognized and internalized not only by national leadership but also by all government workers down to *barangay* level through a program of nationwide education and dissemination. The experience and lessons learned from "Lambat-Bitag" about government bureaucratic inefficiency and lack of appreciation by more civilian agencies must not be repeated in the current NISP. The NISP can be effective only if the administrators and implementors have the willingness to go beyond their "class and time." The support and full cooperation of NISP identified "lead convenors" and other agencies are needed to make this COIN strategy work effectively. This is also true if greed, "crab mentality,"²²⁰ and organizational differences are prevented from hampering the collaborative efforts from the national level down to the local level.

The GRP must ensure that NISP becomes a workable approach and not a "book shelf policy." Likewise, it greatly requires close monitoring and supervision from all agency heads, not only the President, to ensure that the vision of the national government is properly implemented on the ground. Senior leadership

²²⁰ For "crab mentality," the author means the attitude of pulling down or destroying the image of those people that succeed because of envy.

must learn to adapt, listen, assess, and allow the ground leaders to become more innovative at their level. Lastly, a closer collaborative relationship between the government administrators and the tactical leaders will increase the opportunities for success in implementing any COIN strategy.²²¹

²²¹ John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 192.

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