



# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

## **THESIS**

**WHEN ISLAMISTS TURN VIOLENT**

by

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June 2007

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**WHEN ISLAMISTS TURN VIOLENT**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis attempts to show that there are patterns to the behavior of Islamist groups that eventually resort to separatist violence against the state. The goal of the thesis is to create a framework illustrating certain indicators, or signs, that may indicate if or when acts of violence against the state will take place. The primary audience for the framework are military regional affairs officers (RAO).

Today, Islamic separatist violence is an ongoing phenomenon in several regions of the world and can have severe security and humanitarian implications that affect the entire region. RAOs are particularly concerned about the possible international repercussions: military and political involvement from nearby states, instigation of similar secessionist movements in neighboring states, or the creation of international refugees.

This thesis reviews the popular literature on ethnic, separatist, and religious violence and draws on the potential indicators of violence described in the literature. The relevance of each indicator is validated through two case studies involving Islamic separatist movements: the Filipino Muslims in the Southern Philippines and the Malay Muslims in Southern Thailand.

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. PURPOSE**

This thesis seeks to show that regular patterns exist for Islamist groups that resort to separatist violence against the state.<sup>1</sup> The goal of the thesis is to create a framework of indicators that could determine when or if such violence will take place.<sup>2</sup> The primary audience for the framework are military regional affairs officers; however, the framework could be equally useful to researchers and scholars alike.<sup>3</sup>

### **B. IMPORTANCE**

In a 2005 report, the Center for International Development and Conflict highlights the spread of violence in Muslim countries as a troublesome trend. Fourteen of the twenty-four major armed conflicts in early 2005

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<sup>1</sup> In this thesis, the term "Islamist" means "individuals, groups, organizations, and parties that see in Islam a guiding political doctrine that justifies and motivates collective action on behalf of that doctrine...Islamists are Muslims who feel compelled to act on the belief that Islam demands social and political activism, either to establish an Islamic state, to proselytize to reinvigorate the faithful, or to create a separate union for Muslim communities" (Mohammed M. Hafez, *Why Muslims Rebel: Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World* [Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003], 4). For further clarification, "Islam" refers to the religion, "Muslims" refers to the followers of Islam, "Islamic" describes things related to Islam, "Islamism" refers to political movements based on Islam, and, lastly, all Islamists are Muslims, but only a tiny percentage of Muslims are Islamists (Jillian Schwedler, "Islamic Identity: Myth, Menace, or Mobilizer?" *SAIS Review* 21, no. 2 [2001], 5).

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix B for the description and duties of a Regional Affairs Officer for each of the branches of the US armed forces.

involved Muslim groups.<sup>4</sup> Five of the six armed conflicts that emerged in 2005 involved Muslim countries or Muslim groups. Ted Gurr's extensive study of 227 politicized communal groups in conflict in 1990 found that of the 49 groups politicized by religion, 39 were Muslim groups.<sup>5</sup> These trends are particularly important to military regional affairs officers whose purpose is to make country and regional threat assessments and to recommend force protection levels. No framework of violence indicators currently exists to assist in such assessments of Islamist groups.

For this thesis, Islamist separatist violence was specifically chosen because it is an ongoing phenomenon in several regions of the world and, more important, because separatist violence can have severe security and humanitarian implications that affect entire regions.<sup>6</sup> Military regional affairs officers are particularly concerned about the international repercussions of separatist violence, which may include military and political involvement from nearby states, the instigation

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<sup>4</sup> Ted Robert Gurr, Monty G. Marshall, and University of Maryland Center for International Development and Conflict Management, *Peace and Conflict, 2005: A Global Survey of Armed Conflicts, Self-Determination Movements, and Democracy* (College Park, Md.: Center for International Development and Conflict Management, 2005), 6, 79-83.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Ted Robert Gurr, "Why Minorities Rebel: A Global Analysis of Communal Mobilization and Conflict since 1945," *International Political Science Review / Revue Internationale De Science Politique* 14, no. 2 (April 1993), 165-66.

<sup>6</sup> The Gurr et al. report, *Peace and Conflict 2005*, highlights twenty-four major armed conflicts in early 2005. Three involved Islamist separatist groups: the Kashmiri Muslims in India, the Moros in the Philippines, and the Chechens in Russia. Additionally, the report highlighted violence by two Islamist separatist groups: the Malay Muslims in Thailand and the Uigher Muslims in China. Interestingly, all eight of these groups are non-Arab Islamist groups in non-Arab secular states. The report found no instances in 2005 of separatist violence by Arab Islamist groups.

of similar secessionist movements in neighboring states, and the creation of international refugees.<sup>7</sup>

### **C. LITERATURE REVIEW**

There is a vast amount of literature on ethnic violence and separatist violence and some literature on violence by Islamist groups, but none that tailors the issue of Islamist separatist violence within a framework could be easily applied by military regional affairs officers. The literature offers many plausible indicators, but no single theory or group of theories that best explains the phenomenon of Islamist separatist violence. Based on their causal relationships, the theories are categorized as primordialism, instrumentalism, or constructivism. This literature review will discuss select theories from each of these three schools of thought and will highlight indicators of Islamist separatist violence that are applicable to this research. The theories were chosen according to their applicability to the issue of Islamist separatist violence and their clearly defined causal relationships.

#### **1. Primordialism**

The primordialist view identifies two main causes of ethnic violence: inherent ethnic tensions and a desire to protect the group identity. According to primordialists, some of the recent ethnic separatist violence can be attributed to long-standing ethnic hatreds that were rekindled after the removal of the stability, which they

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<sup>7</sup> Ted Robert Gurr and Barbara Harff, *Ethnic Conflict in World Politics* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1994), 19.

see as artificial, imposed by the bi-polar Cold War.<sup>8</sup> A classic example is the ethnic violence that erupted in the former Yugoslavia after the end of the Cold War. According to the primordialist theory, ethnic violence occurred in the Balkans because the Bosnians, the Croats, and the Serbs have always hated one another and always will, even though they lived together peacefully under Yugoslavian rule. Primordialists trace this ancient hatred back to the Battle of Kosovo in 1389.<sup>9</sup> While the facts surrounding the battle have become blurred and lost over time, the primordialists argue that after six centuries, the battle continues to be the basis for the primordialist ancient hatred explanation between these groups.

The main weakness of primordialism is that its definition of ethnicity as historically fixed fails to account for either the evolution or the creation of identity over time as the result of formative forces such as power struggles among group leaders. Primordialism leaves little latitude for changes in identity.<sup>10</sup> To demonstrate this weakness, David Horowitz proposed a simplistic, primordialist theory that proposes that deprived ethnic groups on the periphery of a state will

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<sup>8</sup> See Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (Summer 1993), 25; Donald L. Horowitz, "The Cracked Foundations of the Right to Secede," *Journal of Democracy* 14, no. 2 (2003), 6-7; and Michael E. Brown, "Ethnic and Internal Conflict: Causes and Implications," in *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict*, ed. Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela R. Aall (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001), 209.

<sup>9</sup> For more details see Robert D. Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey through History* (New York: Vintage books, 1994), 35-41.

<sup>10</sup> Ashley J. Tellis, Thomas S. Szayna, James A. Winnefeld, and Arroyo Center, *Anticipating Ethnic Conflict* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1997), 66.

resort to secession regardless of the costs.<sup>11</sup> The proposition totally negates the affects of group or state leaders and relegates the group to inevitable violence.

Clifford Geertz focuses on ethnic conflicts that tend to arise in new multi-ethnic states, such as India in 1948. He attributes such ethnic violence to the psychological differences between ethnic groups, for example, family (blood) ties, race, language, region, religion, and customs.<sup>12</sup> These qualities may create an undeniable bond or corporate oneness that supersedes loyalty to the state. Hence, "disaffection based on race, language or culture threatens partition."<sup>13</sup>

Samuel Huntington and Bernard Lewis cite religious differences as a primary source of conflict. Huntington discusses religion as the most divisive factor in the clash of civilizations.<sup>14</sup> Lewis powerfully highlights the humiliation felt by Muslims who are ruled by misbelievers or non-Muslims as blasphemous and unnatural.<sup>15</sup> Both find a link between religious differences and conflict.

There are four indicators evident in the primordialist literature that are applicable to this research. Horowitz

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<sup>11</sup> Donald L. Horowitz, "Patterns of Ethnic Separatism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23, no. 2 (April 1981), 167, 192-94.

<sup>12</sup> Geertz uses the term "region" to describe geographically heterogeneous or geographically separated areas such as the Indonesian archipelago and the former East and West Pakistans, respectively (Clifford Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution," in *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa*, ed. Clifford Geertz, 106-57 [New York: The Free Press, 1963], 113). Geertz bases race on physical features such as skin color, facial form, stature, hair type, etc. (Ibid., 112).

<sup>13</sup> Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution," 111.

<sup>14</sup> Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" 25.

<sup>15</sup> Bernard Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage," *The Atlantic* 266, no. 3 (September 1990), 54.

discusses two, cultural revival and proportionate representation. A cultural revival implies that an ethnic group may be building an ethno-nationalist movement or reviving ethnic cleavages that existed before the current or former colonial rule.<sup>16</sup> First, as it pertains to religion, revival is a return to the supposed fundamentals of a faith so as to change the society and government from the bottom up and create a religion-based society.<sup>17</sup> Second, when a state ignores an ethnic group's demands for proportionate representation in politics and public service, the group may feel that it has no good reason to continue to support the state.<sup>18</sup> Third, the societal alienation of an ethnic group because it differs racially, linguistically, or culturally from the dominant group may lead to violence. Lastly, conflict is more likely to result when a group's religion is different than the religion of the government, the official state religion.

## **2. Instrumentalism**

The instrumentalist view attributes ethnic violence to "the use or manipulation of ethnic identity in the pursuit of material and political objectives."<sup>19</sup> A group of ethnic elites can influence the sentiments of the entire ethnic group in competition against the state. This rivalry can take the form of competition over resources, economic issues, political rights, autonomy, and even territory. One example of the instrumentalist theory of ethnic

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<sup>16</sup> Horowitz, "Cultural Movements and Ethnic Change," 8-13.

<sup>17</sup> John L. Esposito, "Religion and Global Affairs: Political Challenges." *SAIS Review* 18, no. 2 (1998), 23-24.

<sup>18</sup> Horowitz, "Patterns of Ethnic Separatism," 192.

<sup>19</sup> Gurr and Harff, *Ethnic Conflict in World Politics*, 191.

violence would be when ethnic elites motivate the masses to fight for independence against their colonial rulers.<sup>20</sup> The genocide in Rwanda in 1994 is another example. Leading up to the massacre of Tutsis and moderate Hutus, militant Hutu elites generated anti-Tutsi messages intended to emphasize Hutu ethnicity as superior and the Tutsi ethnicity as sub-human.<sup>21</sup>

One of the weaknesses of instrumentalism is that it fails to "explain how elites can convince their followers to adopt false beliefs and take actions that the followers would not want."<sup>22</sup> In other words, instrumentalism does not fully explain why followers follow. In addition, the notion of elites manipulating a group's identity underplays the durability and attractive power of culture, tradition, and history as the bases of identity.

Writing separately, Michael Brown and Ted Gurr agree that there are antecedent conditions that prime an ethnic group for political mobilization and potential violence. Brown organizes these conditions into four categories: *structural*: weak states, intrastate security concerns, and ethnic geography; *political*: discriminatory political institutions, exclusionary national ideologies, intergroup politics, and elite politics; *socio-economic*: economic problems, discriminatory economic systems, and economic development and modernization; and *cultural*: patterns of cultural discrimination and problematic group histories.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Gurr, "Why Minorities Rebel," 161-62.

<sup>21</sup> Peter Uvin, "Prejudice, Crisis, and Genocide in Rwanda," *African Studies Review* 40, no. 2 (September 1997), 109-111.

<sup>22</sup> James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity," *International Organization* 54, no. 4 (Autumn 2000), 853.

<sup>23</sup> Brown, "Ethnic and Internal Conflict," 214.

Gurr explains the conditions as persistent grievances over relative deprivation, where relative deprivation is "a situation of perceived discrepancy between value expectations and value expectancies in a society."<sup>24</sup> In both theories, these conditions lead to a situation in which the state's continued neglect makes an ethnic group vulnerable to elite manipulation.

Four significant indicators of possible or probable violence emerge from the instrumentalist literature. First, when a repressed ethnic group perceives new state policies as merely a continuance of the existing political or economic discrimination or as an unequal economic opportunity, then the probability of violence increases.<sup>25</sup> Second, an ethnic group that has used violence in the past is more likely to use it again when there is an expansion of state power that threatens the group's political rights. Third, if a Muslim group has ties to a similar Muslim group elsewhere that has successfully used violence to achieve its goals, the former group is more likely to also use violence.<sup>26</sup> Fourth, a state's use of violence by the state against an ethnic group is an indicator that the group will respond in kind.

### **3. Constructivism**

The constructivist approach is unique in that it views ethnicity as a socially constructed identity, that is, an identity based on human actions and choices, and thus, one that can change over time. The constructivist view of the

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<sup>24</sup> Tellis et al., *Anticipating Ethnic Conflict*, 293.

<sup>25</sup> Brown, "Ethnic and Internal Conflict," 217-19.

<sup>26</sup> Gurr, "Why Minorities Rebel," 189.

causes of ethnic violence not only incorporates both the primordialist theory of ancient hatreds and the instrumentalist theory of elite manipulation, but also attributes ethnic violence to either a group's alienation from or the weakening of social or state institutions.<sup>27</sup> The fall of the multi-ethnic state of Yugoslavia between 1987 and 1991 can be considered an example of the constructivist theory of ethnic violence.<sup>28</sup>

In 1987, the new Yugoslav president, Slobodan Milosevic, rallied Serbians to support nationalism on the grounds of certain historical injustices. However, the nationalist rhetoric alienated the Slovene and Croat members of the nation. During the economic collapse and the breakdown of the Yugoslav state, the terms "Muslim," "Serb," and "Croat" became highly politicized and markers of potential violence.<sup>29</sup>

Another example is the post-Cold War security dilemma that altered the balance of global power relations, forcing states and ethnic groups to compete for power.<sup>30</sup> One shortcoming of constructivism is that it can be overly subjective in explaining the basis, formation, and importance of ethnic identity.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Brown, "Ethnic and Internal Conflict," 211.

<sup>28</sup> Earlier in this chapter, Yugoslavia was used as an example for the primordialist school of thought. This dichotomy of examples shows that neither school of thought is necessarily correct or better than the other, but that the schools of thought can be used to explain the same situation in different ways.

<sup>29</sup> Fearon and Laitin, "Violence and Ethnic Identity Construction," 858, 867.

<sup>30</sup> Fearon and Laitin, "Violence and Ethnic Identity Construction," 855; and David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild, "Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict," *International Security* 21, no. 2 (Autumn 1996), 43-44.

<sup>31</sup> Jessica Piombo, "Elite Manipulation" (Lecture, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, Calif., April 11, 2006).

In his book *Why Muslims Rebel*, Mohammed Hafez offers a constructivist theory of Islamist violence. Hafez theorizes that socio-economic deprivation and cultural alienation will lead some Muslims to use Islam as a form of political mobilization, thus making them Islamists. If the state responds to Islamists with institutional exclusion and repression then a select group of these Islamists will further transform their identity by forming exclusive radical Islamist organizations that espouse anti-state ideologies.<sup>32</sup> The final outcome is usually ethnic separatist violence.<sup>33</sup>

There are three indicators of violence in the constructivist literature that are applicable to this research. The constructivists focus on the actions of Islamists, radical Islamists, and radical Islamist elites, each group being a subset of the preceding group. The likelihood of violence increases when any of the following conditions occur: a group transforms into a radical Islamist organization with anti-state ideologies; a group justifies hatred or violence toward other Muslims or Islamists; or group elites seek to purify the culture or

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<sup>32</sup> Hafez defines "radical" Islamists as "those who reject accommodation with the state regime, refuse to participate in its institutions, and insist on the necessity of violent revolution or mass mobilization to Islamize society and politics" (Hafez, *Why Muslims Rebel*, 5). In contrast, the adjective "moderate" describes Islamists who "shun violence and insurgency as a strategy to effect social change and, instead, seek to work through state institutions, civic associations, or nonviolent organizations to Islamize society and politics" (ibid., 5). To Hafez, "radical Islamists" are a subset of "Islamists," a term that includes "individuals, groups, organizations, and parties that see in Islam a guiding political doctrine that justifies and motivates collective action on behalf of that doctrine" (ibid., 4).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 21-22.

alter the social content of the group as a whole.<sup>34</sup> While an explanation of when and why these conditions occur is beyond the scope of this research, they are, nonetheless, useful indicators of potential violence.

#### **4. Overall Literature Assessment**

Eleven prominent independent variables emerge in the literature that portend the likelihood of an Islamist group resorting to separatist violence against the state. These variables were selected for three reasons. First, the focus of the framework is to produce a narrative model for the target audience that is free of complex statistical analyses. Second, variables were chosen based on their potential causality of violence and anticipatory capacity. Third, the selection sought a combination of state, group, and policy-oriented indicators so as to capture a wide range of political, economic, social, and cultural aspects of the situation.

For the purposes of this framework, therefore, the eleven independent variables are indicators of a situation's conflict potential. The indicators are categorized as three groups: preconditions, signals, and catalytic events. The "preconditions" comprise indicators that exist prior to a group's separatist violence against the state. They are the necessary conditions required for violence to occur but their existence does not guarantee future violence. The "signals" are indicators whose emergence increases the likelihood of violence but are not in and of themselves triggers of violence. The "catalytic events" are indicators that trigger either immediate or

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<sup>34</sup> Fearon and Laitin, "Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity," 865.

impending violence. Table 1 categorizes the eleven indicators and illustrates their value and anticipated influence on the propensity for violence.

| Indicator                                                                                                                                                       | Description                                                                                                                                                   | Values                                                                      | Propensity for Violence        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Preconditions:                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                             |                                |
| 1. Political Representation                                                                                                                                     | The degree of proportionate representation in politics.                                                                                                       | -Underrepresented<br>-Proportionate or overrepresented                      | -High<br>-Low                  |
| 2. Societal Alienation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• language</li> <li>• race</li> <li>• culture</li> <li>• religion</li> <li>• education</li> </ul> | The degree of societal alienation of the group from the dominant group of the state caused by differences in language, race, culture, religion, or education. | -High on all factors<br>-Varying on multiple factors<br>-Low on all factors | -Highest<br>-Varies<br>-Lowest |
| 3. Past Use of Violence                                                                                                                                         | The group's use of violence in the past against the state.                                                                                                    | -Yes<br>-No                                                                 | -High<br>-Low                  |
| 4. State Regime Type                                                                                                                                            | The degree of participation allowed in the government.                                                                                                        | -Exclusionary<br>-Inclusionary                                              | -High<br>-Low                  |
| Signals:                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                             |                                |
| 5. Religious Revival                                                                                                                                            | Presence or absence of a religious revival.                                                                                                                   | -Yes<br>-No                                                                 | -High<br>-Low                  |
| 6. Group Ideology                                                                                                                                               | Ideology of the Islamist organization.                                                                                                                        | -Radical<br>-Moderate                                                       | -High<br>-Low                  |
| 7. Group Justification of Violence                                                                                                                              | Group justification of hatred or violence towards other Muslims or Islamists.                                                                                 | -Violence Justified<br>-Hatred Justified<br>-Neither Justified              | -Highest<br>-High<br>-Low      |
| 8. Group Purification                                                                                                                                           | Group elites seek to purify or alter the social content of their group.                                                                                       | -Yes<br>-No                                                                 | -High<br>-Low                  |
| 9. Link to Violent Islamists                                                                                                                                    | Link to similar Islamist groups elsewhere that have successfully used violence to achieve their goals.                                                        | -Strong<br>-Suspected<br>-None                                              | -Highest<br>-High<br>-Low      |
| Catalytic events:                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                             |                                |
| 10. Perception of New State Policies                                                                                                                            | The group's perception of new state policies.                                                                                                                 | -Discriminatory<br>-Fair                                                    | -High<br>-Low                  |
| 11. State Use of Violence                                                                                                                                       | State use of violence targeted at specific individuals or indiscriminately against random members of the group's community.                                   | -Indiscriminate<br>-Targeted<br>-None                                       | -Highest<br>-High<br>-Low      |

Table 1. Potential Indicators of Violence

#### D. METHODOLOGY

The thesis uses a case-study methodology—more specifically, process tracing—to test the importance of the

eleven indicators. Two case studies have been selected for this thesis: the Filipino Muslims in the Southern Philippines and the Malay Muslims in Southern Thailand. These case studies were chosen because of their similar dependent variable. Both case studies had positive values on the dependent variable; in both case studies, Islamist separatist violence occurred against the state.

Comparing these case studies provided a means to test the importance of the eleven indicators. It also provided an opportunity to highlight other indicators not identified by the theories examined in the literature review. Indicators present in both case studies had the greatest importance for the thesis framework. Likewise, indicators present in only one of the case studies could be eliminated from the framework of indicators of Islamist separatist violence against the state.

## **E. MEASURING THE INDICATORS OF VIOLENCE**

The case studies seek to determine whether any of the eleven indicators were present. If an indicator was evidenced in a study, then the case study tried to determine whether there was a direct relationship between the indicator and any propensity for violence. This section describes how to determine the presence of each indicator.

### **1. Political Representation**

The determination of the presence and extent of political representation as an indicator of potential violence is a purely objective process. It is based on a given group's percentage of the population either in a

specific region or in the entire country, or both, depending on the political system. In this process, both elected and government-appointed political positions—for example, cabinet members and provincial governors—are considered, because both are forms of political representation. To measure this indicator, compare the population demographics of the country and individual regions to the demographics of the elected and government-appointed national and regional officials.

## **2. Societal Alienation**

The determination of societal alienation as an indicator of potential violence begins with the assumption that it is not caused by differences in language, race, culture, religion, or education, in and of themselves. Rather, societal alienation is assumed caused by the negative affects of those differences on the interaction between the dominant group and a given subject group in the society under discussion. Specifically, it is the subject group's *perceptions* of the interactions that provide a true measure of this violence indicator.

For example, if a group perceives the linguistic differences between it and the dominant group in the society as a barrier between them, societal alienation will result, whether the language differences are actually a barrier or not. To measure this indicator, determine what differences exist in the language, race, culture, religion, and education between the dominant group and the Muslim group; and how these differences preclude Muslims from the rights or privileges of the dominant group. Determine if laws prohibit expression of the Muslims' identity. For

example, are headscarves illegal to wear or is the Muslims' native language prohibited in public? Determine if Muslims are excluded from higher education because of requirements not readily obtainable, for example, fluency of the dominant group's language. Lastly, to confirm racial discrimination, determine if non-Muslims of the same race as the Muslim group face discrimination based on their shared physical appearance. When available, public opinion poll data provides evidence of the actual perceptions of alienation.

### **3. Past Use of Violence**

Measuring this indicator is an objective process that is based on a group's past behavior in the society under discussion. The central question here is whether the group has taken responsibility for a violent action in the past or been reasonably suspected of violence. To measure this indicator, look at past incidences of violence against the state, and ask: How recent is the use of violence? Was it intended? What degree of violence was used? For suspected incidences of violence, seek out unbiased sources of information whenever possible.

### **4. State Regime Type**

Measuring the state regime type is not a binary process, because exclusive and inclusive state regimes share commonalities. The dividing line between the two is a subjective decision. An exclusive state regime lacks competitive elections, prohibits the right to assembly, restricts or censors the media, lacks the ability to check executive power, and has weak or nonexistent forms of

tolerance. An inclusive state regime has competitive elections free from fraud or intimidation and peaceful transitions of power, allows the right to assembly, does not restrict or censor the media, limits executive power, and has tolerance norms.<sup>35</sup> To measure this indicator, determine the existence or absence of these indicated qualities. Tolerance norms are evident by the effort expended by the government to exclude or include certain groups in the political process.<sup>36</sup> For example, the absence or presence of an Islamist political party would be one indication of a government's tolerance efforts.

## **5. Religious Revival**

Determining whether a religious revival has taken place is an objective process that can be difficult to measure. A religious revival is a group's return to what it perceives as the fundamentals of its professed religion in order to seek changes in society and government from below. The group's ultimate purpose is to create a religion-based society. Religious revivalists seek a self-defining identity, political and social authenticity, and community. They fault the impact of colonialism, the injustice of despotic governments, the entrenched elites, and, often, the religious establishment. They seek a return to the foundation or cornerstones of faith; emphasize the primacy of divine sovereignty and the equality of all within the community; and see religion as a total way of life.<sup>37</sup> The ideal situation for measuring this

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<sup>35</sup> Tellis et al., *Anticipating Ethnic Conflict*, 51.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>37</sup> Esposito, "Religion and Global Affairs," 21-24.

indicator is the existence of scholarly literature on the religious revivalism of a subject group. Lacking such literature, such measurement can be based on newspaper articles, speeches by group leaders, or communiqués from the group.

## **6. Group Ideology**

The adjectives “radical” and “moderate,” often used to describe an ideology adopted by a group, comprise a straightforward binary measurement. Islamist groups with a radical ideology, for example, work outside the political system, use inflammatory anti-state rhetoric, and engage in violence and terror in order to destabilize or overthrow the government. Groups with a moderate ideology work within the political system, form legitimate political parties, and, possibly, espouse the de-secularization of society as social and political activists.<sup>38</sup>

## **7. Group Justification for Violence**

Confirming the existence of this indicator requires some proof that the group in question condones either hatred or violence, or both, against other Muslims or Islamists. Other Muslims and Islamists are broken out from the general population because hatred or violence justified against these religiously and ideologically like-minded groups indicates that the group will let no obstacles stand between it and its goal. This indicator is evidenced by speeches from group leaders or communiqués from the group.

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<sup>38</sup> Esposito, "Religion and Global Affairs," 19.

Easy access to weapons heightens the probability that a group's justification of violence is an indicator of potential violence.

## **8. Group Purification**

Group purification is a process in which a group narrows its membership to include only those who share the group ideology and level of commitment. It is a signal that the group is becoming narrowly exclusive. Inclusive organizations have loose membership requirements, require less dedication, and impose few commitments on their members. An exclusive organization has strict membership requirements, imposes a high level of discipline, requires a great deal of personal commitment, and "permeates all sections of the member's life, including activities with non-members."<sup>39</sup> Measuring this indicator is largely dependent on published interviews with current or former group members or leaders, or scholarly literature or intelligence reports on the subject group.

## **9. Link to Violent Islamists**

There are a number of ways that an Islamist group can be linked to violent Islamists. The links can be in the form of financial, moral, or training support, or assistance in the execution of violent acts. In these cases, the propensity for violence increases as the breadth and depth of support increases. Such links can be discovered and demonstrated by researching news coverage, media assessments, interrogation reports, and interviews of group members. In addition, links can be gleaned by

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<sup>39</sup> Hafez, *Why Muslims Rebel*, 109-10.

comparing the speeches, communiqués, tactics, and strategies of both the subject group and the external Islamist groups.

#### **10. Perception of New State Policies**

Measuring this indicator requires access to the subject group's written or verbal responses to the state's adoption or declaration of new policies. Since this indicator is a matter of perception, its measurement hinges on the group leaders' speaking out on the issues. Without their publicly stated views, it may still be possible to gauge the opinions of the group members, but it will be more difficult. Mass protests will provide ample evidence of this indicator.

#### **11. State Use of Violence**

The state's use of suspected or confirmed cases of officially mandated violence, whether directed at specific members of the subject group or at random members, may provide ample evidence from which to measure this indicator. However, suspected cases of violence should be considered only if the group perceives that they were conducted by the state. In determining this indicator, as with several others, perception outweighs factuality.

### **F. CONCLUSION**

This chapter draws on the prominent literature pertaining to ethnic, separatist, and religious violence to create a framework of indicators that, in various combinations, may be used to determine a given Islamist

group's potential for separatist violence against the state. The operational definitions presented for the eleven indicators show various methods for measuring the presence and level of the indicators. Table 1 summarizes the indicators and their anticipated influence on the overall propensity for violence.

The next two chapters are case studies of separatist violence against a state. Each case study seeks to determine whether any or all of the eleven indicators existed prior to the separatist violence against the state and whether there was a corresponding relationship between the indicators and the propensity for violence. Each case study begins with a description of the historical background of Islam in that state to show its relevance to the conflict. The case study will then analyze the historical outcome of the separatist violence in each case in terms of the framework so as to demonstrate the role of each indicator. The last chapter summarizes the findings of the two case studies and presents a further refinement the framework of indicators.

## II. CASE STUDY #1: THE SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES

### A. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: ISLAM IN THE SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES

Prior to the introduction of Islam in the southern Philippines, the indigenous people were predominantly Hindus or animists. Their social hierarchy was based along ancestral lines with clear divisions between unrelated clans or tribes. No centralized government existed at the time to unify these cleavages.

The Philippines falls along the trade routes of Arab merchants who traveled between India and China as early as the tenth century. During their travels, the Arab merchants and Islamic scholars began interacting with communities along the coast of the Sulu archipelago (see Figure 1). Their interaction led to the introduction of Islam in the southern Philippines.<sup>40</sup> While it is hard to accurately date the establishment of the first Muslim community in the Philippines, Islamic graves and tombstones dating back to the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries have been found in the southern portion of the Sulu archipelago. Those discoveries have led many scholars to accept that same timeframe for the introduction of Islam in the Philippines.<sup>41</sup>

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Arab merchants, Malayan Muslim clerics, and Chinese Muslim missionaries arrived on Mindanao, the southernmost island

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<sup>40</sup> Moshe Yegar, *Between Integration and Secession*, (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2002), 185.

<sup>41</sup> Cesar Abid Majul, "The Muslims in the Philippines: An Historical Perspective," in *The Muslim Filipinos*, ed. Peter G. Gowing and Robert D. McAmis, (Manila: Solidaridad, 1974), 3.

of the present-day Philippines. The Muslims peacefully converted many local chiefs, married into local ruling

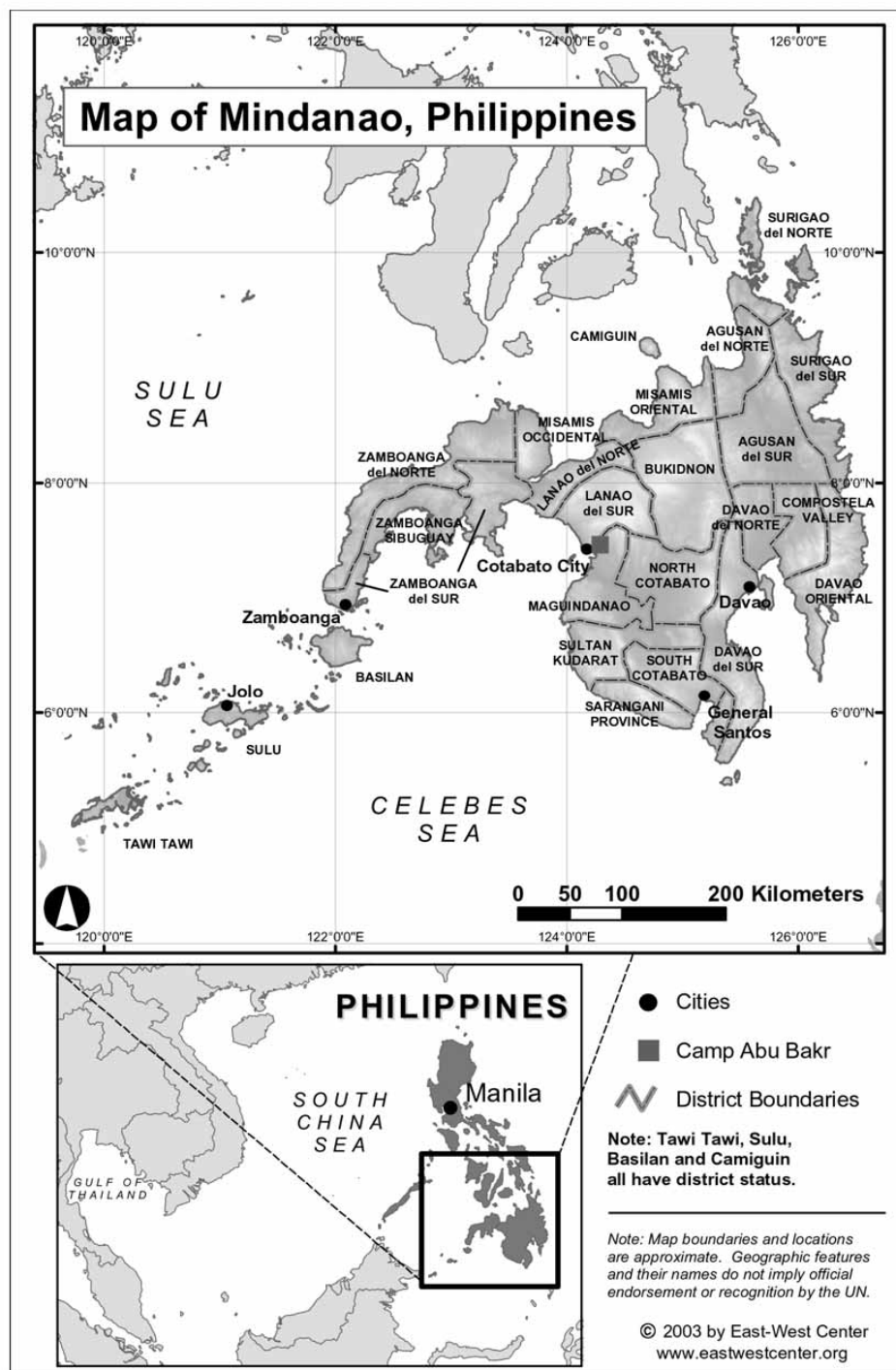


Figure 1. Maps of Mindanao and the Philippines

families, and subsequently brought entire social hierarchies under the influence of Islam.<sup>42</sup>

By the middle of the fifteenth century, a Muslim community had emerged in Sulu and a sultanate was established. The first sultan was an Arab Muslim who was believed to be a descendant of the Prophet Mohammed. Shortly thereafter, as Islam continued to spread, a sultanate was established in Maguindanao on the main island of Mindanao. It was led by a Yemeni Muslim who was also believed to be a descendant of the Prophet Mohammed.<sup>43</sup> With no central government to resist the expansion of the Sultans, Islam spread peacefully throughout Mindanao and by the sixteenth century was firmly established.

The attractiveness of Islam to the people in the southern Philippines is attributable to two factors. First, the spread of Islam to other nations throughout Southeast Asia made commerce and political ties easier to establish because of their shared religion.<sup>44</sup> Second, Islam offered island leaders an alternate political concept to that of the Hindu empire that dominated the region; it also offered the locals greater equality and an end to the Hindu caste system.<sup>45</sup> Essentially, Islam offered a new way of life that combined religion, culture, behavior, and politics within an ideology.

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<sup>42</sup> Majul, "The Muslims in the Philippines," 4.

<sup>43</sup> Najeed M. Saleeby, "History of Maguindanao," in *The Muslim Filipinos: Their History, Society, and Contemporary Problems*, ed. Peter G. Gowing and Robert D. McAmis (Manila: Solidaridad, 1974), 186.

<sup>44</sup> Yegar, *Between Integration and Secession*, 186.

<sup>45</sup> Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines*, (New York: Random House, 1989), 40.

The impact of the spread of Islam in the southern Philippines is still evident today. Islam unified various indigenous groups under a common ideology and created a new cultural identity for those who embraced it. The Islamization of Mindanao generated an ideological bond that differentiated the Muslims from the non-Muslims on Mindanao and elsewhere in the country. This differentiation has also prevented a bond to form between the Filipino Muslims and the central government.<sup>46</sup> The religious, political, and historical bonds created by Islam on Mindanao still comprise a divisive factor in the present-day conflict between Muslim and Christian Filipinos.

#### **B. THE EMERGENCE OF MUSLIM SEPARATISM**

The creation of the Republic of the Philippines in 1946 did not gain widespread acceptance among the Filipino Muslims, who saw themselves as culturally different from the Christian-dominated government.<sup>47</sup> By the 1960s, failed integration efforts, a weakened central government, and a rising sense of Muslim consciousness among the populace created an environment ripe for a separatist movement.<sup>48</sup>

Tensions between the Filipino Muslims and the Philippine government came to a tipping point in March 1968 because of an incident, later known as the Jabidah massacre, in which the Philippine Army executed over two

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<sup>46</sup> Yegar, *Between Integration and Secession*, 191.

<sup>47</sup> Syed Serajul Islam, "The Islamic Independence Movements in Patani of Thailand and Mindanao of the Philippines," *Asian Survey* 38, no. 5 (May 1998), 445-46.

<sup>48</sup> Lela Garner Noble, "The Philippines: Autonomy for the Muslims," in *Islam in Asia: Religion, Politics, and Society*, ed. John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 98.

dozen Muslim recruits on Corregidor Island.<sup>49</sup> As a consequence of this massacre, in May 1968, a former provincial governor of Cotabato, Udtog Matalam, announced the formation of the Muslim Independence Movement (MIM) and issued a manifesto demanding the independence of Sulu, Palawan, and much of Mindanao. An underground movement within the youth section of MIM would eventually go on to form the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in 1969. In an interview in 1974, an MNLF commander gave three causes for the formation of the MNLF: "The Corregidor Massacre, land grabbing, and the disappointment of the broad masses toward government failure to solve social, political and most of all, economic problems."<sup>50</sup>

While the MNLF initially demanded autonomy and Islamic law for the Muslim regions of Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan; in April 1974 the MNLF issued an official manifesto that advocated armed struggle to achieve an independent Moro nation, covering an area that consisted of Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan. Though Islam was central to their cause, the MNLF based its ideology on a nationalistic "Moro" identity that encompassed both Muslims and non-Muslims who lived in the Moro homeland and who embraced the Moro revolution. The MNLF's desired goal was to establish a Moro nation "to uphold the culture of Islam in its homeland and to develop it without prejudice against other religions or indigenous cultures."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> For a more detailed description of this incident, see Lela Garner Noble, "The Moro National Liberation Front in the Philippines," *Pacific Affairs* 49, no. 3 (Autumn 1976), 407-8.

<sup>50</sup> Noble, "The Moro National Liberation Front in the Philippines," 409.

<sup>51</sup> Yegar, *Between Integration and Secession*, 277.

In September 1972, in response to widening law and order problems, the Christian-dominated government declared martial law in the southern Philippines.<sup>52</sup> This was followed by four years of violent conflict between government forces and the MNLF which resulted in an estimated 120,000 deaths.<sup>53</sup> Cease-fire negotiations between the government and the MNLF magnified the ideological differences that existed among the MNLF leaders and by 1978 resulted in the fracture of the MNLF into three factions.<sup>54</sup>

One of the splinter factions eventually founded the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in 1984. The MILF adopted a more moderate and conciliatory approach than the MNLF and sought to establish an independent Islamic state under Islamic law for the Moro nation. The leaders of MILF were mostly Islamic scholars who emphasized an Islam-oriented ideology that appealed to more fundamentalist Muslims. In 1991, an even more radical Islamic separatist group splintered away from the MNLF. The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), like the MILF, advocates an independent Islamic state under Islamic law but, unlike the MILF, it refuses to negotiate with the Philippine government and espouses "violent religious intolerance, advocating the deliberate targeting of all southern Filipino Catholics (including the beheading of women, children, and the elderly)."<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Ronald E. Dolan, *Philippines: A Country Study* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1991), <http://countrystudies.us/Philippines/28.htm> (accessed on April 19, 2007).

<sup>53</sup> Peter M. Sales, "War in Mindanao," *Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter*, (October-November 2000), 8, 10.

<sup>54</sup> Yegar, *Between Integration and Secession*, 269-70 and 311-12.

<sup>55</sup> Peter Chalk, "Separatism and Southeast Asia: The Islamic Factor in Southern Thailand, Mindanao, and Aceh," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 24, no. 4 (July 2001), 248.

Since the late 1980s, the MILF has regularly clashed with Filipino army and police units. Its first act of separatist violence against the state was in January 1987 when three hundred MILF guerillas attacked fourteen government installations in five provinces of Mindanao in what was described as the worst outbreak of Muslim violence since 1977. The guerillas burned buildings, destroyed bridges, cut power lines, and attempted to attack Mindanao State University. Thirty-four people were killed during the five-day long offensive.<sup>56</sup> MILF violence peaked in May 2000, with simultaneous attacks on several towns on Mindanao that resulted in dozens of civilian deaths. Shortly after President Gloria Arroyo came to office in 2001, the Philippine government and the MILF entered peace talks and signed a ceasefire agreement. However, this agreement was short-lived and the Philippine government and MILF forces continue to clash today.

Instances of violence by ASG have been much more severe and frequent. Since their founding, they have been responsible for hundreds of violent acts including deadly village attacks, tourist kidnappings and killings, bombings, and high-profile assassination attempts. The most deadly attack by the ASG was the bombing of a Philippine ferry boat on February 27, 2004, which resulted in 116 deaths. ASG attacks continue until the present day.

### **C. APPLICATION OF THE FRAMEWORK**

This case study will focus on the MILF starting from its formative years in 1978 until its first attack against

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<sup>56</sup> "Aquino Offers Talks to Moslem Rebels," Chicago Tribune, January 17, 1987.

government targets on Mindanao in January 1987. The creation of the MILF is significant because it represents a clear shift in the ideology of the separatist movement, from the ethno-nationalist ideology of the MNLF to the religious-based ideology of the MILF. This case study will not focus on the ASG because it was formed after the focus period of the case study.

**Political Representation.** Historically, Filipino Muslims have long been under-represented in politics. Since the time of Spanish colonialism, Christian-dominated governments in the Philippines have sought to control and convert the Filipino Muslims.<sup>57</sup> Even educated Muslim elites were denied the opportunity "to become part of the ruling political elite in their region nor were any administrative jobs open to them."<sup>58</sup>

In 1972, President Marcos declared martial law and dissolved the Senate and House of Representatives. During martial law, political power was centralized in an almost exclusively Christian-dominated government, and legitimate political activity was reduced to mere acceptance of the regime and its promises.<sup>59</sup> Although some *datus* (the traditional Filipino Muslim aristocracy) collaborated with the martial law regime and gained strength in local Muslim

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<sup>57</sup> Chalk, "Separatism and Southeast Asia," 247.

<sup>58</sup> Islam, "The Islamic Independence Movements in Patani of Thailand and Mindanao of the Philippines," 453.

<sup>59</sup> Syed Serajul Islam, "Ethno-communal Conflict in the Philippines: The Case of Mindanao-Sulu Region," in *Ethnic Conflict & Secessionism in South & Southeast Asia*, ed. Rajat Ganguly and Ian Macduff, 195-224 (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2003), 203.

politics, their fellow Filipino Muslims did not view them as their legitimate representatives.<sup>60</sup>

With the resumption of Parliamentary elections in 1978, Filipino Muslim politicians, one of which was a member of the Mindanao Alliance Party, won six of the one hundred and eighty-three seats. All six represented districts on Mindanao. Filipino Muslims also won six of the thirty-five seats on Mindanao, which closely approximates the percentage of Filipino Muslims on the island.<sup>61</sup>

Follow-on parliamentary elections in 1984 nearly mirrored the percentages in 1978. Filipino Muslims won six of the one hundred and eighty-one seats; one was a member of the Mindanao Alliance Party.<sup>62</sup> Although Filipino Muslims gained some political representation during the time frame of this case study, there are three factors that substantiate their underrepresentation in politics. First, most of the Filipino Muslim politicians were *datus* who had been co-opted by the Marcos regime and hence were viewed as illegitimate representatives by many Filipino Muslims. Second, the MNLF was "prohibited from participating in all elections held under the auspices of the American-supported

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<sup>60</sup> Thomas M. McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels: Everyday Politics and Armed Separatism in the Southern Philippines* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 168-69.

<sup>61</sup> Official Web site of the Philippines Commission on Elections, [www.comelec.gov.ph](http://www.comelec.gov.ph) (accessed on April 19, 2007). The Filipino Muslim population on Mindanao decreased from 75% in the early 1900s to 25% in 1960 to less than 18% by 1990. Nathan G. Quimpo, "Options in the Pursuit of a Just, Comprehensive, and Stable Peace in the Southern Philippines," *Asian Survey* 41, no. 2. (March-April 2001), 274. Additionally, the percentage of Muslims in the whole population was 5% in 1989. Dolan, *Philippines: A Country Study* <http://countrystudies.us/Philippines/28.htm> (accessed on April 19, 2007).

<sup>62</sup> Official Web site of the Philippines Commission on Elections, [www.comelec.gov.ph](http://www.comelec.gov.ph) (accessed on April 19, 2007).

Marcos regime."<sup>63</sup> Lastly, in 1979, Marcos severely limited the regional legislative assemblies' powers regarding natural resources. This was a major concern of the Filipino Muslims because Mindanao has an abundance of natural resources.<sup>64</sup>

**Societal Alienation.** The Filipino Muslims have been alienated from the main society of the Philippines dating back to Spanish colonialism. This historical alienation was clearly evident in a memorandum that a group of Mindanao leaders submitted to the U.S. government prior to the Philippines' independence in 1946.

We do not want to be included in the Philippines Independence. For once independence is launched, there will be trouble between us and the Christian Filipinos because from time of immemorial these two peoples have not lived harmoniously.<sup>65</sup>

The memorandum accurately predicted the near-term future of the Filipino Muslims, for within "two decades after the Philippines became independent, Muslims in Mindanao were a devitalized people, their economic conditions stagnant, their social conditions in jeopardy, their laws and customs in danger of disintegrating. Thus, the Moros [Muslims in Mindanao] had little choice but to resort to violence and to a war of attrition."<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Luzviminda G. Tancangco, "The Electoral System and Political Parties in the Philippines," in *Government and Politics of the Philippines*, ed. Raul P. de Guzman and Mila A. Reforma (Oxford University Press, 1988), 98.

<sup>64</sup> David Wurfel, *Filipino Politics: Development and Decay* (Cornell University Press, 1988), 162-63.

<sup>65</sup> Islam, "The Islamic Independence Movements in Patani of Thailand and Mindanao of the Philippines," 445-46.

<sup>66</sup> Islam, "Ethno-communal Conflict in the Philippines," 219.

The single issue that caused the greatest alienation between the Filipino Muslims and the Philippine government, and hence the Filipino Christians, was the government's population resettlement program. Beginning in the American colonial period and continuing until the late 1960s, public land on Mindanao was offered to Filipino Christians from the north and to Filipino capitalists and American companies. The Filipino Muslims had long considered public land as communal property and thus had not established formal ownership with the government. As a result of this program, Filipino Muslim land ownership on Mindanao decreased from 100 percent before colonization to less than 17 percent in 1981,<sup>67</sup> which "created a deep sense of frustration in the minds of Muslims in the Mindanao and Sulu region."<sup>68</sup> The Christian-Muslim demographics on Mindanao mirrored this change, making the Filipino Muslims a minority in their traditional homeland.<sup>69</sup>

In a 1998 interview, the long-time leader of the MILF accused the Philippine government of genocide, citing the "systematic killing of individual Muslims, group or mass massacres of Muslims including women, children and the aged, and burning Muslim houses, Mosques, [and] Madrasas."<sup>70</sup> This perception was no doubt created by incidents such as the Jabidah massacre in 1968, the 1971 Bario Manili Mosque

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<sup>67</sup> Ricardo A. David Jr., "The Causes and Prospect of the Southern Philippines Secessionist Movement" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2003), 55.

<sup>68</sup> Islam, "The Islamic Independence Movements in Patani of Thailand and Mindanao of the Philippines," 445.

<sup>69</sup> Quimpo, "Options in the Pursuit of a Just, Comprehensive, and Stable Peace in the Southern Philippines," 274.

<sup>70</sup> "Interview with Sheikh Salamat Hashim," *Nida'ul Islam*.

massacre,<sup>71</sup> and long-running military operations on Mindanao. These operations included aerial bombardments, large-scale ground assaults, and drunken shootouts. One scholar notes that the military "probably contributed as much to disorder as to order because their indiscriminate firing and other undisciplined behavior encouraged Muslims to flee their lands and/or join the rebels in the hills."<sup>72</sup>

Religious alienation affected the educational system and indirectly led to great disparities in literacy rates between Filipino Muslims and Christians. The American colonialist government adopted a secular education curriculum in English and replaced religious teachers in the Mindanao public schools with non-Muslim teachers. The Filipino Muslims perceived this change as an attack on their religious beliefs and many refused to send their children to public schools, opting for religious schools instead, thus resulting in a high percentage of illiteracy.<sup>73</sup>

**Past Use of Violence.** Prior to the attack in January 1987, the MILF as an organization had not engaged in separatist violence against the state. The early years of

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<sup>71</sup> During this massacre "armed "Christians" entered Manili, a barrio in North Cotabato, when most of the men were out working their fields; they summoned the remaining residents—old men, women, and children—into a mosque for a "peace conference" and killed at least seventy of them with grenades, guns, and knives." Noble, "The Philippines," 101.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>73</sup> Islam, "The Islamic Independence Movements in Patani of Thailand and Mindanao of the Philippines," 445. In 1996, the nationwide literacy rate in the Philippines was 95%; whereas, the southern provinces included in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao ranged from 69-84% for an average literacy rate of 80%. Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO, [www.accu.or.jp/litdbase/literacy/wed/statis1.htm](http://www.accu.or.jp/litdbase/literacy/wed/statis1.htm) (accessed on May 1, 2007). Furthermore, a 1997 education index for the 77 provinces in the Philippines ranks 6 of the 7 worst provinces in the Mindanao region. Eric Gutierrez and Saturnino Borras, Jr., *The Moro Conflict: Landlessness and Misdirected State Policies* (Washington, D.C.: East-West Center, 2004), 21.

the MILF were “focused on strengthening Islamic identity and consciousness while developing a political community centered on Islam that would form the foundation for the struggle for an independent Bangsamoro Islamic state.”<sup>74</sup> However, many members of the MILF were previously members of the MNLF and partook in the separatist war against the government from 1972 to 1976. Likewise, hundreds of MILF members fought alongside the Mujahedeen in the Afghan War in the 1980s. Even though the MILF as an organization did not engage in violence against the state prior to 1987, many of its members had personal experience in such activities.

**State Regime Type.** During the timeframe of this case study, from 1978 to January 1987, the Philippines’ form of government was in transition, moving from an exclusionary to an inclusionary regime. Under an exclusionary regime, disenfranchised groups have no legitimate means to air their grievances to the government and, therefore, resort to violence. After enacting martial law in 1972, the Philippines became a purely exclusionary regime. Curfews were imposed, public assemblies banned, the free press rescinded, protest movements outlawed, opposition parties arrested, and the Senate and House of Representatives dissolved. A puppet assembly was created to ratify decrees.<sup>75</sup> In 1978, the Philippines began to transition away from being an exclusionary regime, holding Parliamentary elections, ending martial law, and having a

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<sup>74</sup> Joseph Chinyong Liow, *Muslim Resistance in Southern Thailand and Southern Philippines: Religion, Ideology, and Politics* (Washington, D.C.: East-West Center, 2006), 13.

<sup>75</sup> Dolan, *Philippines: A Country Study*, <http://countrystudies.us/Philippines/28.htm> (accessed on April 19, 2007).

Presidential election in 1981. However, the opposition parties largely boycotted the 1981 presidential election due to the perception that corruption had occurred during the 1978 Parliamentary elections. As a result of the boycott, the incumbent, President Marcos, was reelected by 91 percent<sup>76</sup>. In 1986, the Philippines' political transition was almost complete, with a new, democratically elected president. In 1987, Senate elections were held for the first time since 1972, making the form of government in the Philippines a fully inclusionary regime.

**Religious Revival.** The Filipino Muslims underwent a religious revival during the time frame of this case study. The worldwide revival of Islam triggered by the 1979 Iranian Revolution, the Mujahedeen successes in the Afghan War against the Soviet Union, and a windfall of Middle East oil revenue had a profound effect on Muslims and Islam in the Philippines. Middle East countries funded Islamic academic scholarships for Filipino Muslims on Mindanao and the construction of hundreds of mosques and over a thousand religious schools on Mindanao.<sup>77</sup> Muslim pilgrimages to Mecca and academic scholarships brought more Filipino Muslims into direct contact with Middle East Muslims. "These Filipino Muslims brought back a heightened sense of Islamic dignity, identity, greater enthusiasm for the universal Islamic brotherhood and greater religious zeal."<sup>78</sup> Likewise, some 3,000 Iranian students were studying in the

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<sup>76</sup> Official Web site of the Philippines Commission on Elections, [www.comelec.gov.ph](http://www.comelec.gov.ph) (accessed on April 19, 2007).

<sup>77</sup> Willem Wolters, "Muslim Rebel Movements in the Southern Philippines: Recruitment Area for Al-Qaeda Terrorists?" *Focaal*, no. 40 (2002), 157.

<sup>78</sup> David, "The Causes and Prospect of the Southern Philippines Secessionist Movement," 57-58.

Philippines during the Iranian Revolution. These students, as well as the Iranian Embassy, openly distributed Islamic literature, pamphlets, and newspapers and helped fuel Islamic revivalism in the Philippines.<sup>79</sup>

The creation of the MILF is evidence of the Islamic revival. The founders of the MILF broke away from the MNLF, proclaiming that they would follow a "more militant, faith-based agenda"<sup>80</sup> and viewed the secular government as a threat to their Islamic way of life. Islamic revivalism was also evident at the local level. Local Muslim leaders on Mindanao began an effort to instill a sense of Islamic unity in the populace. And local Islamic teachers preached political equality through religion and sought to perfect the peoples' religious beliefs and practices.<sup>81</sup>

**Group Ideology.** Prior to 1986, the MILF did not have a radical ideology. Its founder and leader, Salamat Hashim, was inspired by the Islamic scholar Syed Abul A'la Maududi, among others.<sup>82</sup> Maududi was the founder and leader of the Jama'at-i Islami Islamist party in Pakistan, which achieved its goal of creating an Islamic state through conventional politics rather than violence. During the MILF's early years, it focused on creating a political community centered on Islam and the ideal of an independent Islamic state. MILF members and sympathizers "increasingly asserted themselves in mainstream political affairs. Urban

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<sup>79</sup> Yegar, *Between Integration and Secession*, 320.

<sup>80</sup> International Crisis Group, "Southern Philippines Backgrounder: Terrorism and the Peace Process," *International Crisis Group Report Asia Report 80* (July 13, 2004), 4.

<sup>81</sup> McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels*, 215, 232-3.

<sup>82</sup> "Interview with Sheikh Salamat Hashim," *Nida'ul Islam* 23 Vol. 5 (April-May 1998), <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/31890/20031025/www.islam.org.au/articles/23/index.htm> (accessed on April 17, 2007).

Muslim professionals and intelligentsia [began] campaigning openly through the mainstream political and civil society channels for the MILF's goals.<sup>83</sup> Thus, initially, the MILF generally sought to achieve its goal through the political system.

**Group Justification of Violence.** Notably, prior to 1987, the MILF had not engaged in or espoused violence as a method for achieving its goals. And even when it turned to violence during and after the 1987 attack, the MILF mostly engaged military targets using traditional guerilla warfare tactics. It did not emphasize "indiscriminate violence against civilian and non-combatant targets."<sup>84</sup> Salamat often spoke of jihad but, like other moderate Islamic scholars, he did not emphasize the lesser jihad, known as jihad by the sword. Salamat emphasized the greater jihad which includes jihad by the soul, jihad by the tongue, jihad by the pen, and jihad by the hand—that is, essentially, the nonviolent forms of jihad.<sup>85</sup>

**Group Purification.** The splintering of the MNLF and subsequent creation of the MILF is an example of group purification. Before he founded the MILF, Salamat had been a senior leader within the MNLF. But, in 1976, when the MNLF agreed to a deal for autonomy with the Philippine government, Salamat accused other senior MNLF leaders of compromising their Islamic values. In an interview in 1998, Salamat said that it was the MNLF's inclination toward secularism and recognition of the Philippines

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<sup>83</sup> Liow, *Muslim Resistance in Southern Thailand and Southern Philippines*, 14.

<sup>84</sup> Chalk, "Separatism and Southeast Asia," 248.

<sup>85</sup> Liow, *Muslim Resistance in Southern Thailand and Southern Philippines*, 16.

government that inspired him to lead a sizable portion of the MNLF membership to form a new separatist group with a purer, more dedicated approach to the Islamic way of life.<sup>86</sup> With these like-minded individuals, he then went on to form the MILF.

Salamat continued the group purification process by recruiting thousands of Filipino Muslim youths to study Islam in the Middle East. When the youths returned to Mindanao, "they served as Salamat's aides in the implementation of the MILF Islamization program and jihad activities in the homeland."<sup>87</sup>

**Link to Violent Islamists.** During the timeframe of this case study, the MILF had strong ties with violent Islamists outside the Philippines, namely, the Mujahedeen in Afghanistan and the future founder of Al Qaeda, Osama bin Laden. Both Salamat and his vice-chairman for military affairs, Al Haj Murad, developed ties with bin Laden in the 1980s.<sup>88</sup> However, the MILF's ties with the Mujahedeen run much deeper and broader than those with bin Laden. While in college in Cairo in the 1960s, Salamat went to school with two of the future leaders of the Afghan Mujahedeen. During the 1978-1987 time frame, as Salamat lived and traveled between the Middle East and Pakistan, those school bonds were strengthened. He arranged for up to five hundred MNLF and MILF guerillas to train with the Mujahedeen along the Afghan-Pakistan border. Eventually,

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<sup>86</sup> "Interview with Sheikh Salamat Hashim," *Nida'ul Islam*.

<sup>87</sup> Cecil Morella, "MILF Leader Prepares for Public Life," [www.islamicity.com/articles/Articles.asp?ref=IV0108-1481](http://www.islamicity.com/articles/Articles.asp?ref=IV0108-1481) (accessed on April 22, 2007).

<sup>88</sup> International Crisis Group, "Southern Philippines Backgrounder," 4, and C.S. Kuppaswamy, "The Moro Islamic Liberation Front Imbroglio," *South Asia Analysis Group Paper*, no. 765 (August 18, 2003), 3.

these guerillas made their way back to Mindanao where, in the late 1980s, they employed their newfound bomb-making skills.<sup>89</sup>

**Perception of New State Policies.** The Filipino Muslims have long perceived the government's policies as discriminatory and unfair. The population resettlement program discussed earlier had an extremely negative impact on the politics and economy of Mindanao. The Filipino Muslims viewed this policy as deliberate political repression and economic exploitation. Furthermore, in 1972, it was rumored among Filipino Muslims that martial law was to have "been declared to convert Muslims forcibly to Christianity."<sup>90</sup> Between 1978 and January 1987, two specific government policy decisions stand out as unfair: the Tripoli Agreement in 1976 and the 1986 peace talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the MNLF (GRP-MNLF).

The 1976 Tripoli Agreement, signed by the MNLF and the Philippines government, stated that the MNLF would abandon its quest for independence in exchange for the creation of an autonomous Islamic region in the southern Philippines that would consist of thirteen provinces and nine cities. After signing the agreement, however, President Marcos reneged and referred ratification of the agreement to a referendum vote whereby the residents of each province and city would vote for or against inclusion in the new Autonomous Regions in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). The government knew that Christians outnumbered Muslims in most of these areas and, predictably, none of the cities and

<sup>89</sup> International Crisis Group, "Southern Philippines Backgrounder," 3-4, 12.

<sup>90</sup> Noble, "The Philippines," 112.

only four provinces voted for inclusion in the ARMM.<sup>91</sup> The Filipino Muslims viewed the unilateral actions of President Marcos and the Philippine government as deceitful and became suspicious of the government's original intentions.<sup>92</sup>

The MILF attributed its January 1987 attack to the Philippine government's policy to exclude it from the 1986 GRP-MNLF peace talks. Dissention among the MNLF leaders concerning the terms of the Tripoli Agreement led to the creation of the MILF and a bitter competition for legitimacy between the two groups. But when President Aquino came to power in February 1986, the MNLF and MILF agreed to set aside their differences and negotiate side by side with Aquino's new government.<sup>93</sup> However, in September of that year, Aquino met with the leader of the MNLF and recognized him as the sole leader of the Filipino Muslim separatist movement. Not surprisingly, the MILF felt highly slighted by their exclusion from the peace process and the discussions regarding the future political arrangements for Mindanao.<sup>94</sup>

**State Use of Violence.** In the months leading up to the MILF's January 1987 attack on Mindanao, the Philippine government did not commit any acts of violence against the Filipino Muslims or the MILF that could be categorized as a catalytic event. Even though the government had (and has)

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<sup>91</sup> Islam, "Ethno-communal Conflict in the Philippines," 204-5.

<sup>92</sup> McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels*, 168.

<sup>93</sup> Paul A. Rodell, "The Philippines and the Challenge of Terrorism," in *Terrorism and Violence in Southeast Asia: Transnational Challenges to States and Regional Stability*, ed. Paul J. Smith, (New York: Sharpe, 2005), 130-31.

<sup>94</sup> "Aquino Offers Talks to Moslem Rebels," Chicago Tribune, January 17, 1987, and "Manila Reports Attacks by Moslems in Mindanao," The New York Times, January 15, 1987.

a well-documented historical record of violence against Filipino Muslims, no previous events triggered the 1987 attack.

#### **D. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

Table 2, which is based on the case study of the Southern Philippines, summarizes the values determined for each indicator of potential violence, its predicted relationship to the propensity for violence, and its actual relevance to the propensity for violence. Of the eleven indicators of violence, or independent variables, only six indicators occurred and led to the dependent variable, that is, the likelihood that an Islamist group would resort to separatist violence against the state. Five of the indicators of violence did not occur and are, therefore, inconclusive for the purposes of this case study.

The six indicators that occurred are Political Representation, Societal Alienation, Religious Revival, Group Purification, Links to Violent Islamists, and Perception of New State Policies. The five indicators that did not occur are Past Use of Violence, Exclusionary State Regime, Radical Group Ideology, Group Justification for Violence, and State Use of Violence.

| <b>Indicator</b>                     | <b>Situation in the Southern Philippines from 1978 to 1986</b> | <b>Predicted Propensity for Violence</b> | <b>Relevant (+) or Irrelevant (-)</b> |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Political Representation          | Under-represented                                              | High                                     | +                                     |
| 2. Societal Alienation               | High on all factors except language                            | High                                     | +                                     |
| 3. Past Use of Violence              | No                                                             | Low                                      | -                                     |
| 4. State Regime Type                 | Transition to an inclusionary regime                           | Low                                      | -                                     |
| 5. Religious Revival                 | Yes                                                            | High                                     | +                                     |
| 6. Group Ideology                    | Moderate                                                       | Low                                      | -                                     |
| 7. Group Justification of Violence   | Violence and hatred not justified                              | Low                                      | -                                     |
| 8. Group Purification                | Yes                                                            | High                                     | +                                     |
| 9. Link to Violent Islamists         | Strong                                                         | Highest                                  | +                                     |
| 10. Perception of New State Policies | Discriminatory and unfair                                      | High                                     | +                                     |
| 11. State Use of Violence            | None                                                           | Low                                      | -                                     |

Table 2. Indicators of Violence: Southern Philippines Case Study

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### **III. CASE STUDY #2: THAILAND**

#### **A. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: ISLAM IN SOUTHERN THAILAND**

The people of Southern Thailand are ethnic Malays, kin to the people of present day Malaysia. In the early first millennia, the area of what is now southern Thailand and northern Malaysia was a Hindu Malay kingdom, Langkasuka, which in the fourteenth century became the kingdom of Pattani. Before the introduction of Islam in the twelfth century the Malays of Pattani were Hindus and Buddhists.<sup>95</sup>

Between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, Arab merchants spread Islam throughout Malaya. The most significant development occurred in 1457 when the king of Pattani personally converted to Islam and declared Pattani an Islamic state. Shortly thereafter, Islam and Muslim religious leaders dominated Pattani's institutions, culture, and political system.<sup>96</sup>

In 1511, the Portuguese conquest of Malacca and the simultaneous rise in power of Ayutthaya (Thailand) forcefully brought Pattani under the Ayutthaya's control.<sup>97</sup> Over the ensuing four centuries, Pattani was involved in an armed struggle for autonomy. After a final military defeat in 1909, the kingdom was divided and incorporated into Siam (Thailand).<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Islam, "The Islamic Independence Movements in Patani of Thailand and Mindanao of the Philippines," 443.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Daniel J. Pojar Jr., "Lessons Not Learned: The Rekindling of Thailand's Pattani Problem" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2005), 9-11.

<sup>98</sup> Islam, "The Islamic Independence Movements in Patani of Thailand and Mindanao of the Philippines," 443.

Today, a violent separatist movement is taking place in the three southernmost provinces of Thailand (see Figure 2), which trace their roots back to the Islamic kingdom of Pattani. The movement began in earnest in the 1960s with the creation of over twenty unaffiliated separatist groups, most notably the Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO), which espoused an ethno-nationalistic ideology and sought an independent Islamic state. They were poorly organized politically and mainly employed mostly hit-and-run, guerilla-warfare tactics in the jungle against authorities of the state. Thailand's booming economy in the late 1980s and early 1990s quelled the violence but tensions continued to simmer.

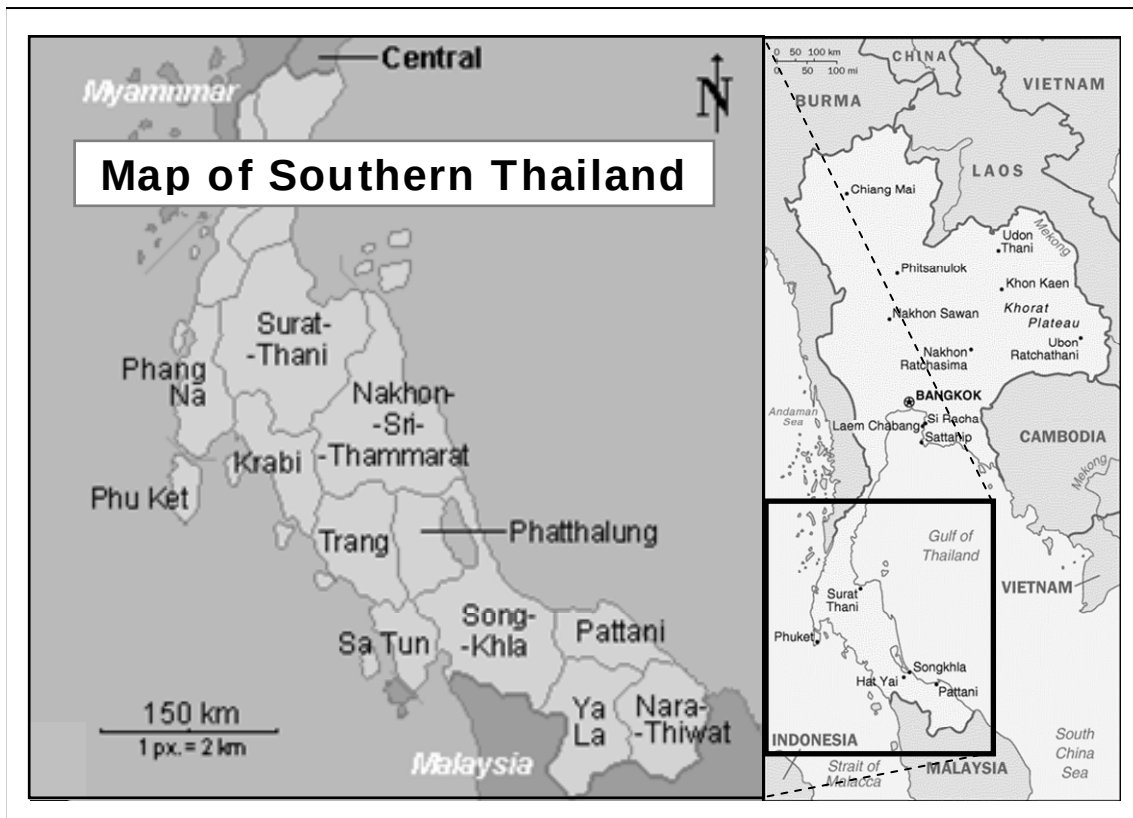


Figure 2. Maps of Southern Thailand and Thailand<sup>99</sup>

<sup>99</sup> The author created this figure using maps from two sources: <http://flagspot.net> and [www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov) (both accessed on April 7, 2007).

On January 4, 2004, after nearly a decade of relative calm, Islamic separatists in the southern provinces of Thailand conducted coordinated attacks by raiding an army arsenal and torching schools and police stations. During the last three years the violence, tactics, targets, and nature of the conflict have escalated at an exponential rate, and the conflict now threatens to destabilize the country and possibly the region.

## **B. APPLICATION OF THE FRAMEWORK**

Although the separatist groups had engaged in occasional violence against the state since the early 1960s, the attack on January 4, 2004, evidences the dependent variable of Islamist groups engaging in separatist violence against the state. This case study will focus predominantly on the three years leading up to the January 4 attack for three reasons. First, the escalation of violence currently underway in Southern Thailand was precipitated by the government's response and the insurgents' counter-response to that attack.<sup>100</sup> Second, violence during this period was sporadic and uncoordinated, which indicates that the Islamist groups were not yet committed to separatist violence against the state but were most likely contemplating such actions. Lastly, the violence both in the 1990s and earlier was primarily ethnic strife, whereas the few years leading up to January 2004 saw a distinct shift to a predominantly religious

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<sup>100</sup> In the ten months after the 4 January 2004 attack, more than 900 insurgent-related incidents occurred resulting in the deaths of over 500 civilians and government personnel. Aurel Croissant, "Unrest in South Thailand: Contours, Causes, and Consequences Since 2001," *Strategic Insights* Volume IV, Issue 2 (February 2005), 3.

conflict.<sup>101</sup> The remainder of this section will assess each of the indicators of violence in Table 1 in the context of the situation in Southern Thailand. The results are summarized in Table 3.

**Political Representation.** In Southern Thailand, the Thai Muslims are proportionately represented in elected positions but are severely underrepresented in government-appointed positions. Immediately after World War II, there was an "absence of political participation of Patani elites"<sup>102</sup> and, continuing into the 1970s, Thai Muslims remained a distinct minority in the local administration.<sup>103</sup> In the three southern provinces of Thailand, 81 percent of the population is Thai Muslim, yet as many as 90 percent of the government administrators are Thai Buddhists.<sup>104</sup>

Recently, Thai Muslims have served as members of parliament and in various government-appointed positions.<sup>105</sup> Since the 2001 elections, Muslim politicians have held 25

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<sup>101</sup> S. P. Harish, "Ethnic or Religious Cleavage? Investigating the Nature of the Conflict in Southern Thailand," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 28, no. 1 (April 2006), 48.

<sup>102</sup> Islam, "The Islamic Independence Movements in Patani of Thailand and Mindanao of the Philippines," 446.

<sup>103</sup> Astri Suhrke, "Loyalists and Separatists: The Muslims in Southern Thailand," *Asian Survey* 17, no. 3 (March 1977), 239.

<sup>104</sup> These statistics are for Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala provinces as of 2002. Thailand National Statistics Office website, [web.nso.go.th](http://web.nso.go.th) (accessed on March 14, 2007) and Bertinel Litner, "Peace stays far away in southern Thailand," *Asia Times*, [www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast\\_Asia/HC15Ae02.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/HC15Ae02.html) (accessed on March 14, 2007).

<sup>105</sup> Surin Pitsuwan, from Nakon Si Thammarat province in Southern Thailand, was elected as a Member of Parliament (MP) in 1986 and that same year became the Secretary to the Speaker of the House of Representatives. In 1988, he was appointed as the Assistant Secretary to the Minister of Interior. From 1992 until 1995, he served as the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs before becoming the Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1997, serving in this capacity until 2001. Similarly, Wan Muhammad Nor Matha, an MP from Yala province in Southern Thailand, became speaker of the Thai Parliament, Minister of Transport, and later Minister of the Interior.

of the 600 seats<sup>106</sup> in the parliament, or 4.2 percent comparable to the overall Muslim population in Thailand at 4.75 percent.<sup>107</sup> Forty-eight of the fifty-four members of parliament representing the three southern provinces of Thailand are from the Democratic Party.<sup>108</sup> Unfortunately, party politics in Thailand negates the influence of these Muslim politicians and members of the Democratic Party, since 342 of the 600 Members of Parliament are from the Thai Rak Thai Party.<sup>109</sup> Thailand is a "bureaucratic polity where effective political power—to protect and promote individual or group interests—resides in the centralized administration, leaving little scope of activity for the elected representatives or local leaders."<sup>110</sup> Hence, even if more Thai Muslims were elected or appointed to the local government they would not have much influence or power. More important, numerous sources support the notion that when a Thai Muslim is elected or appointed to a government position, that person then becomes part of the problem.<sup>111</sup>

**Societal Alienation.** In regard to societal alienation, major cleavages exist in all areas between the Thai Muslims and the dominant Thai Buddhist society. These differences equate to a propensity for violence.

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<sup>106</sup> Minorities at Risk website, [www.cidcm.umd.edu](http://www.cidcm.umd.edu) (accessed on March 14, 2007).

<sup>107</sup> Thailand National Statistics Office website, [web.nso.go.th](http://web.nso.go.th) (accessed on March 14, 2007).

<sup>108</sup> Election Commission of Thailand website, [www.ect.go.th](http://www.ect.go.th) (accessed on March 14, 2007).

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Suhrke, "Loyalists and Separatists," 240.

<sup>111</sup> Examples include Suhrke, "Loyalists and Separatists," 246 and author interviews with Professors Panitan Wattanayagorn and Surachart Bamrungsuk at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand on 30 and 31 January 2007, respectively. Panitan served as an advisor to Prime Minister Chuan from 1997 to 2001 and Surchart served as an advisor to Prime Minister Thaksin from 2001 to 2005.

Immediately following the official incorporation of the Pattani provinces into Thailand in 1909, the Thai government embarked on a most detrimental assimilation policy that only highlighted the differences between the Thai Muslims and Thai Buddhists. The creation of the term "Thai Muslim" was itself a negation of the Pattani Malay Muslims' historical identity. In addition, the assimilation policies enacted by Prime Minister Phibun, both before and after World War II, denied Thai Muslims the right to speak their native language, to have Muslim names, and to continue their cultural practices, such as wearing of Malay clothing or even carrying items Malay-style on their heads.

What is more, the Patronage of Islam Act of 1945, and subsequent legislation, integrated the Islamic religious community into the government bureaucracy, institutionalized a spiritual leader appointed by the king for all Thai Muslims, and attempted to register all mosques and pondoks, the village-level religious schools in Southern Thailand. Not surprisingly, the "Muslims perceived this centralization as government interference in religious affairs."<sup>112</sup> Religious intrusion continues to be a most divisive factor in the Thai Muslims' alienation, and the Thai government's continued attempts to regulate the pondoks are a focal point for separatist groups, because the pondoks are such a revered institution in the Thai Muslim culture. Lastly, "the relatively low educational attainment of the southern Muslims makes economic

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<sup>112</sup> Gunaratna, Rohan, Arabinda Acharya, and Sabrina Chua, *Conflict and Terrorism in Southern Thailand*, (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish, 2005), 11.

advancement correspondingly difficult"<sup>113</sup> and keeps them within a low socio-economic strata.

**Past Use of Violence.** Since the founding of the first Islamic separatist group in the 1960s, separatist groups have used violence intermittently against the state. Since the 1970s, the PULO and other separatist groups have conducted religiously motivated attacks against schools, railway stations, and transportation nodes. As an extreme example, in two roadway attacks in 1980, though both Muslim and Buddhist passengers were removed from the vehicles, only the Buddhists were killed, nine deaths in all.<sup>114</sup> Separatist groups also used violence against the state on several occasions in the three years prior to January 2004. Insurgents bombed a train station in Hat Yai, raided several law enforcement offices for weapons, and killed more than a dozen police officers.<sup>115</sup> Because many of the police officers were killed during insurgent weapons raids, it is not clear whether the insurgents' primary goal was to capture weapons, kill police officers, or both. None of the insurgent violence before January 2004 parallels the brutality seen after January 2004.

**State Regime Type.** Thailand's centralization of power has been a longstanding characteristic of the Thai monarchy, especially under the authoritarian regimes that ruled Thailand from 1932 to 1992, which scarcely allowed minority groups to express themselves politically.<sup>116</sup> From

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<sup>113</sup> Suhrke, "Loyalists and Separatists," 241.

<sup>114</sup> Harish, "Ethnic or Religious Cleavage?" 56-57.

<sup>115</sup> Jeremiah Lumbaca, *Islamic Insurgency and Transnational Terrorism in Thailand*, (Monterey: Naval Postgraduate School, 2005), 124-29.

<sup>116</sup> Michel Gilquin, *The Muslims of Thailand*, (Chiang Mai: Silkworm, 2005), 117.

1932 until 1973, the military ruled Thailand and pledged their support and loyalty to the monarchy, the nation, and Buddhism as the state religion.<sup>117</sup> Prolonged military rule institutionalized a sense of entitlement among the military officers and emboldened them to suppress any group that opposed their rule. In the 1980s, Thailand began a slow transition to democracy when it held parliamentary elections. Subsequent general elections were held in 1992, 1995, 1996, and 2001. The 2001 election was of pivotal significance because it was a multi-party election overseen by an independent election commission.<sup>118</sup> Hence, as of 2001, Thailand was an inclusive regime.

**Religious Revival.** In regard to the separatist groups in Southern Thailand, this research substantiates the existence of a relationship between a religious revival and the propensity for violence. The goals of most of these groups are to reclaim their lost Malay Muslim identity and the ancient kingdom of Pattani and to establish an independent Islamic state under Shariah law. These goals receive support from below, even down to the level of the individual. There have been many Thai Muslim youths, who either studied Islam abroad in Muslim countries or fought for the Islamic cause in the Afghan War, who upon their return to Thailand sought a purer, more fundamental form of Islam to follow. Many of these individuals became involved in separatist groups or became religious teachers at

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<sup>117</sup> Saitip Sukatipan, "Thailand: The Evolution of Legitimacy," in *Political Legitimacy in Southeast Asia*, ed. Muthiah Alagappa (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 196.

<sup>118</sup> Duncan McCargo and Ukrist Pathmanand, *The Thaksinization of Thailand*, (Denmark: NIAS Press, 2005), 2-3.

pondoks where they preached distorted versions of Islam that espoused violence and hatred.<sup>119</sup>

**Group Ideology.** Since the formation of the first Muslim separatist groups in Southern Thailand, radical views have formed their core ideologies. The common goal of these ideologies is the creation of an independent Islamic state formed around the ancient kingdom of Pattani; the common strategy is to use guerilla and terrorist tactics to achieve their goals.<sup>120</sup> An example is the Barisan Nasional Pembebasan Patani (BNPP), formed in 1959, whose objective "was complete independence and the establishment of an Islamic state" through the use of armed guerilla warfare.<sup>121</sup>

In the last decade, many of these separatist groups have taken on fundamentalist ideologies. "The rise of more puritanical and radical strains of Islam in southern Thailand is also often cited as an important contributor to the upsurge of violence."<sup>122</sup> A booklet published in August 2002, entitled *Berjihad Di Pattani, or The Fight for the Liberation of Pattani*, illustrates this shift to radical ideologies clearly and specifically.<sup>123</sup> A group of Thai Muslims commissioned the booklet, which is significant

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<sup>119</sup> McCargo, *The Thaksinization of Thailand*, 51 and Islam, "The Islamic Independence Movements in Patani of Thailand and Mindanao of the Philippines," 447.

<sup>120</sup> Thammanoon Maisonti, "A Proposal to Address the Emerging Muslim Separatist Problem in Thailand" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2004), 9.

<sup>121</sup> Islam, "The Islamic Independence Movements in Patani of Thailand and Mindanao of the Philippines," 446.

<sup>122</sup> International Crisis Group, "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad," *International Crisis Group Report Asia Report 98* (May 18, 2005), 32.

<sup>123</sup> For an English translation of this booklet see Appendix 1 in Gunaratna and others, *Conflict and Terrorism in Southern Thailand*.

because it is one of the few communiqués issued by Thai Muslim separatists. It is a call to arms for Thai Muslims to rise up against the government and fight “till the last drop of your blood”<sup>124</sup> to achieve an independent Islamic state ruled by a Muslim king and under Shariah law. The booklet is believed to have been very influential and closely followed because it was found on the bodies of some insurgents killed in an attack at the Krue Se mosque on April 28, 2004.<sup>125</sup>

**Group Justification of Violence.** Many of the separatist groups have openly justified violence against and the killing of fellow Muslims as a means to obtain their goals, especially Thai Muslims who support or work for the government. Thai Muslims educated in the Middle East in the fundamentalist Wahhabi doctrine have adopted “a stronger, more violent strategy of jihadist ambition aimed at killing infidels and non-believers.”<sup>126</sup> This justification of violence has been documented throughout the past three decades. In 1971 a spokesperson for the United Patani Freedom Movement said, “Sometimes it is necessary to kidnap or kill Muslims in order to show the people that they must work with us.”<sup>127</sup>

Most recently, the *Berjihad Di Pattani* booklet extols violence towards fellow Muslims and justifies the killing of Muslim hypocrites or disbelievers, even if the

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<sup>124</sup> Gunaratna and others, *Conflict and Terrorism in Southern Thailand*, 118.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 9. See Ibid. 24-27 for a detailed description of this event.

<sup>126</sup> Maisonti, “A Proposal to Address the Emerging Muslim Separatist Problem in Thailand,” 22.

<sup>127</sup> Suhrke, “Loyalists and Separatists,” 244.

disbelievers are one's own relatives or parents. The booklet refers to disbelievers in numerous passages:

Do not feel sorry for them, and love them, for they are your most dangerous enemy today ... and the punishment that they receive from Allah in the Hereafter is hell at the lowest level. Know that they are no longer your relatives and parents ... let us come together to fight and eradicate them until we are safe from their disturbances.<sup>128</sup>

Allah has stated clearly to the believers that on the surface they may appear as our parents and relatives but the truth is they are no longer among us ... slaughter and kill the disbelievers until they are defeated.<sup>129</sup>

**Group Purification.** There is no significant evidence that substantiates the group purification indicator's propensity for violence. However, both the booklet *Berjihad Di Pattani* and an interview with Professor Surachart from Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok provide some evidential insights into this indicator. Surachart says that the Thai Muslim insurgents view themselves as "good" Muslims and will not associate with Muslims they view as "bad" Muslims, particularly Muslims associated with the state, such as the Monarch-appointed spiritual leader for all Thai Muslims. Their rationale is that Thai Muslims who associate with or support the state have become part of the government and, hence, part of the problem.<sup>130</sup>

**Link to Violent Islamists.** International Islamist groups such as Al Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiya have operated

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<sup>128</sup> Gunaratna and others, *Conflict and Terrorism in Southern Thailand*, 126.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 137-39.

<sup>130</sup> Author interview conducted on 31 January 2007. Groups of Muslims exist elsewhere in Thailand such as Muslims of Chinese ancestry in Northern Thailand and ethnic-Thai Muslims in Central Thailand.

out of Thailand for years. Some Thai Muslims are suspected of receiving support and training from these and other groups in Afghanistan, Indonesia, Libya, the Philippines, and Syria; however, no solid links have been established between them.<sup>131</sup> Gunaratna and others suggest that the booklet *Berjihad Di Pattani* is not in line with international jihadist ideology, although some insurgents have been observed using tactics specifically associated with a prominent external Islamist group, which indicates that a link may exist between the groups.<sup>132</sup>

In 2005, a rare interview was conducted with one of the few, if not the only, publicly known separatist leaders. Dr. Wan Kadir Che Man, who has been the head of the Patani Bersatu movement since 1998, is living in exile in Sweden. Che Man claims that external violent Islamist groups like Al Qaeda have neither influenced nor supported their cause. According to Che Man,

They [Thai Muslims] do not want this Islamic heritage to be compromised by the Thai government, nor by foreign Arab influences. This is why the Patani Malays tend to reject Arab or Indian Muslim missionary groups that have tried to come to teach us Islam, and why Patanis are not receptive to Arab-Wahhabi influences or even other schools of thought like the Shias, etc. Patani Muslims have a strong cultural reaction to outsiders, and we do not like being treated like second-class Muslims by foreign Muslims,

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<sup>131</sup> See Zachary Abuza, *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: Crucible of Terror*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2003), 171-72; Andrew D. W. Forbes, "Thailand's Muslim Minorities: Assimilation, Secession, or Coexistence?" *Asian Survey* 22, no. 11 (November 1982), 1063; Gilquin, *The Muslims of Thailand*, 96; and Joseph Chinyong Liow, "The Security Situation in Southern Thailand: Toward an Understanding of Domestic and International Dimensions," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 27 (2004), 537-38.

<sup>132</sup> Author interview with a Thai military officer speaking on condition of anonymity.

especially from the Arabs. Based on this, it is not that easy for outsiders to come and try to influence us on matters of Islam , our beliefs or struggle.<sup>133</sup>

**Perception of New State Policies.** Separatist groups' perceptions of new state policies have had a direct bearing on the propensity for violence against the state in Thailand. Three aspects of Thailand's government policies show evidence of a connection between the violence and this indicator: the decisions of Prime Minister Thaksin, pondok reform, and Thailand's support for the U.S. global war on terrorism.

The 1990s was a period of relative peace in Southern Thailand. Upon taking office in 2001, Prime Minister Thaksin viewed this peace as an end to the separatist movement in Southern Thailand. As a result, on May 1, 2002, he closed two key organizations: the Southern Border Provincial Administration Center (SBPAC) and the Civilian Police Military Task Force 43 (CPM 43). The SBPAC was a Ministry of the Interior conflict-resolution agency with representatives from Bangkok, the local community, and the religious community. It was highly effective in resolving local complaints, identifying and transferring corrupt government officials, and covertly gathering intelligence on separatist groups. The CPM 43 was a governmental inter-agency task force that coordinated the action and information flow among government, law enforcement, and military personnel operating in Southern Thailand. It was

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<sup>133</sup> Farish A. Noor, "Interview with Wan Kadir Che Man, Head of the Patani Bersatu Movement in Thailand," *The American Muslim*, [http://theamericanmuslim.org/tam.php/features/articles/interview\\_with\\_wan\\_kadir\\_che\\_man\\_head\\_of\\_the\\_patani\\_bersatu\\_movement\\_in\\_tha/](http://theamericanmuslim.org/tam.php/features/articles/interview_with_wan_kadir_che_man_head_of_the_patani_bersatu_movement_in_tha/) (accessed on April 27, 2007).

the infrastructure for governance in the southern provinces.<sup>134</sup> Both agencies were highly respected and trusted by the Thai Muslims.

Thaksin's decision to close the agencies eliminated the Thai Muslims' main institution for grievance resolution and weakened the government's ability to curtail corruption and develop coordinated responses to internal threats. The fallout from his decisions heightened the Thai Muslims' distrust of the government. One Islamic teacher commented that Thai Muslims now "can trust no one except themselves for their own security. The state is not helping them, but is threatening them."<sup>135</sup> Author Joseph Liow claims that popular opinion in Southern Thailand attributes the ongoing situation to Thaksin's failed approach and the government's lack of internal coordination.<sup>136</sup>

In the 1960s, the Thai government viewed the pondoks as breeding grounds for young separatists; in recent years they have been viewed as breeding grounds for young jihadists. Various Thai governments, including Thaksin's, have attempted to incorporate these unregulated, village-based religious schools into the Thai Ministry of Education. Most recently, Thaksin's administration began a program to register all pondoks and their teachers and to enforce a state approved curriculum.<sup>137</sup> The pondoks are

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<sup>134</sup> International Crisis Group, "Southern Thailand," 33-35.

<sup>135</sup> Joseph Chinyong Liow, "International Jihad and Muslim Radicalism in Thailand? Toward an Alternative Interpretation," *Asia Policy*, no. 2 (July 2006), 105.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> "Southern Unrest: Sirichai admits he's in the dark," *The Nation* (Bangkok), October 8, 2004. Pondoks teach rote memorization of Islamic studies in Malay and Arabic languages to children between the ages of five to thirteen years old. Historically they do not have a centralized curriculum nor do they issue state recognized diplomas.

prized by the Thai Muslims for their teaching of Islamic values and are a symbol of resistance against government intrusion into their religion.<sup>138</sup> "Religious schools are more than educational institutes—for the Malay-Muslims of southern Thailand, they are a bastion of history and identity."<sup>139</sup> Hence, the Thaksin administration's suspicion of the pondok's role in the separatist conflict was a major policy blunder that "did little more than further incite disenchantment toward central authority and feed the flames of separatism."<sup>140</sup>

Thailand implemented several new state policies in support of the U.S. global war on terrorism, many of which are viewed with suspicion by the Thai Muslims. A series of policies and decisions in 2003 in particular evoked their concern. In March, Thailand expelled Iraqi diplomats from Bangkok. In June, Thailand signed an agreement that exempted Americans from the International Court of Justice and later arrested four members of the Jemaah Islamiya terrorist group, including Hambali, a key Al Qaeda planner in Southeast Asia. In September, Thailand sent troops to Iraq and, in October, President Bush designated Thailand a major non-NATO ally. This improved the flow of military aid and facilitated free-trade agreements.<sup>141</sup> Liow says the perception among former separatists whom he interviewed is that "The American invasion of Iraq and Thailand's support of that invasion has had negative repercussions in the south, where protests and boycotts of American products

<sup>138</sup> Gunaratna and others, *Conflict and Terrorism in Southern Thailand*, 48-49.

<sup>139</sup> Liow, *Muslim Resistance in Southern Thailand and Southern Philippines*, 33.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 33-34.

<sup>141</sup> Gilquin, *The Muslims of Thailand*, 133-34.

were launched in response.... [Some Muslims] felt the Thaksin government was complicit in Washington's "attack" on Islam."<sup>142</sup>

**State Use of Violence.** The Thai government has long used violence indiscriminately against random Thai Muslims as well as targeting specific Thai Muslim individuals. Separatist groups have reciprocated in the use of violence as a result of these government actions. The most significant event occurred on April 28, 1948 in Dusun Nyiur when frustrations peaked and police and Thai Muslims clashed, resulting in the deaths of 1,100 Muslims and 30 police officers.<sup>143</sup> On the anniversary of that date in 2004, over 100 insurgents simultaneously attacked eleven police locations in Southern Thailand, an attack that ended in a bloody shoot-out at the Krue Se mosque.

The Thai government is suspected of being responsible for the disappearance and deaths of thousands of Thais, both Muslims and Buddhists. In 2003, Thailand's war on drugs gave police and local officials extraordinary latitude to deal with drug dealers and drug smugglers. Nationwide, over the course of seven months, between two to three thousand people were killed and 70,000 arrested.<sup>144</sup> Thailand's porous southern border has long been a hotbed for drug smuggling activity. Since many of these extrajudicial killings occurred in Southern Thailand, some Thai Muslims suspect that local authorities used the war on

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<sup>142</sup> Liow, *Muslim Resistance in Southern Thailand and Southern Philippines*, 45.

<sup>143</sup> Maisonti, "A Proposal to Address the Emerging Muslim Separatist Problem in Thailand," 19.

<sup>144</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Not Enough Graves: The War on Drugs, HIV/AIDS, and Violations of Human Rights," *Human Rights Watch* 16, no. 8 (June 2004), 9.

drugs as an opportunity to attack and kill Thai Muslims.<sup>145</sup> These suspicions were confirmed in April 2006 when the Chief of the Thai Army admitted the existence of "blacklists" used to target suspected insurgents and Islamic religious teachers. One such list contained the names of over three hundred people who had since been killed, many of whose deaths occurred under questionable circumstances.<sup>146</sup>

### **C. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

Based on this case study of Southern Thailand, Table 3 summarizes the values determined for each indicator of potential violence, its predicted relationship to the propensity for violence, and its actual relevance to the propensity for violence. Of the eleven indicators of violence, or independent variables, a total of eight indicators occurred and led to the dependent variable, that is, the likelihood that an Islamist group would resort to separatist violence against the state. Three of the indicators of violence did not occur and are, therefore, inconclusive for this case study. The eight indicators that occurred are Political Representation, Societal Alienation, Past Use of Violence, Religious Revival, Radical Group Ideology, Group Justification for Violence, Perception of New State Policies, and State Use of Violence. The three indicators that did not occur are Exclusionary State Regime, Group Purification, and Link to Violent Islamists.

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<sup>145</sup> International Crisis Group, "Southern Thailand," 35-36.

<sup>146</sup> "Army chief admits agencies are using 'blacklists' in South," *The Nation* (Bangkok), April 26, 2006.

| <b>Indicator</b>                     | <b>Situation in Southern Thailand from 2001 to 2004</b> | <b>Predicted Propensity for Violence</b> | <b>Relevant (+) or Irrelevant (-)</b> |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Political Representation          | -Under-represented                                      | -High                                    | +                                     |
| 2. Societal Alienation               | -High on all factors                                    | -Highest                                 | +                                     |
| 3. Past Use of Violence              | -Yes                                                    | -High                                    | +                                     |
| 4. State Regime Type                 | -Inclusionary                                           | -Low                                     | -                                     |
| 5. Religious Revival                 | -Yes                                                    | -High                                    | +                                     |
| 6. Group Ideology                    | -Radical                                                | -High                                    | +                                     |
| 7. Group Justification of Violence   | -Violence and hatred justified                          | -Highest                                 | +                                     |
| 8. Group Purification                | -No                                                     | -Low                                     | -                                     |
| 9. Link to Violent Islamists         | -None                                                   | -Low                                     | -                                     |
| 10. Perception of New State Policies | -Discriminatory and unfair                              | -High                                    | +                                     |
| 11. State Use of Violence            | -Indiscriminate                                         | -Highest                                 | +                                     |

Table 3. Indicators of Violence: Thailand Case Study

## IV. CONCLUSION

This chapter combines the findings of the two case studies and refines the framework of indicators of potential violence. The first section compares the findings of the case studies and discusses a new indicator that was revealed by both case studies. It also presents a new framework of indicators that may signal the likelihood that an Islamist group will resort to separatist violence against the state. The second section describes two policy implications revealed by the data in the framework.

### A. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Table 4 combines the findings of the two case studies. Both cases revealed four relevant indicators of potential violence: Political Representation, Societal Alienation, Religious Revival, and Perception of New State Policies. They are included in the refined framework of indicators.

| Indicator                            | Southern Philippines<br>Case Study: Relevant<br>(+) or Irrelevant (-) | Southern Thailand<br>Case Study: Relevant<br>(+) or Irrelevant (-) | New<br>Framework<br>Indicators |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Political Representation          | +                                                                     | +                                                                  | Relevant                       |
| 2. Societal Alienation               | +                                                                     | +                                                                  | Relevant                       |
| 3. Past Use of Violence              | -                                                                     | +                                                                  | Inconclusive                   |
| 4. State Regime Type                 | -                                                                     | -                                                                  | Irrelevant                     |
| 5. Religious Revival                 | +                                                                     | +                                                                  | Relevant                       |
| 6. Group Ideology                    | -                                                                     | +                                                                  | Inconclusive                   |
| 7. Group Justification of Violence   | -                                                                     | +                                                                  | Inconclusive                   |
| 8. Group Purification                | +                                                                     | -                                                                  | Inconclusive                   |
| 9. Link to Violent Islamists         | +                                                                     | -                                                                  | Inconclusive                   |
| 10. Perception of New State Policies | +                                                                     | +                                                                  | Relevant                       |
| 11. State Use of Violence            | -                                                                     | +                                                                  | Inconclusive                   |

Table 4. Summary of Findings

## **1. Relevant Indicators**

A common picture emerges from the two case studies. Historically, both Filipino Muslims and Thai Muslims were members of independent polities that are now a regionally concentrated minority groups in a predominantly non-Muslim country. Both groups view the state government as illegitimate. For over a hundred years, both groups have suffered social injustice and repression at the hands of the government. Although token political representation was possible through the electoral system, the Muslim masses viewed the elected officials as elites co-opted by the government. More important, both groups were excluded from any employment opportunities in the local bureaucracy through which they might have effected change. Thus, the cultural, political, and socio-economic deprivations in both the Philippines and Thailand became preconditions ripe for the emergence of separatist movements. And the states' failure to address those concerns furthered the separatist cause.<sup>147</sup>

One of the indicators of potential or coming violence that was common to both case studies was the occurrence of a fundamentalist religious revivalism. This revivalism resulted, in both the Philippines and Thailand, in the groups self-identifying in ways that set them apart from the majority group. It also provided both Filipino Muslims and Thai Muslims with a new perspective on their place and role in society and a new interpretation of the deprivations they suffered. "It is in this respect that religion is employed to reinforce apprehension toward the

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<sup>147</sup> Islam, "The Islamic Independence Movements in Patani of Thailand and Mindanao of the Philippines," 455.

state.”<sup>148</sup> Indeed, as both case studies show, it was the Muslim groups’ perception of state policies as discriminatory and unfair that precipitated their separatist violence. The states’ policies were insensitive to the groups’ needs, denying them the “recognition as representing a separate religion and culture”<sup>149</sup> that is essential to the mutual coexistence of diverse societal communities. Instead, the state policies heightened the alienated groups’ already high sense of deprivation and religious disparity.

## **2. Inconclusive Indicators**

A comparison of the two case studies revealed a total of six indicators that were relevant in either one case study or the other, but not in both: Past Use of Violence, Group Ideology, Group Justification of Violence, Group Purification, Link to Violent Islamists, and State Use of Violence. This absence of mutuality between the two studies means that their indicators’ relevance as portents of potential violence could not be conclusively determined. Thus, they were eliminated from the refined framework. In addition, one indicator, State Regime Type, proved to be irrelevant in both case studies and thus was also eliminated from the refined framework.

The thesis concludes, therefore, that further research that might prove more fruitful is required to evaluate the relevance of the six indicators determined here as inconclusive. Case studies of similar group situations that resulted in either separatist violence against the

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<sup>148</sup> Liow, *Muslim Resistance in Southern Thailand and Southern Philippines*, 53.

<sup>149</sup> Yegar, *Between Integration and Secession*, 380.

state or nonviolent political solutions might better determine the relevance of these indicators. For example, two potential case studies of similar group situations that resulted in separatist violence are the Kashmiri Muslims in India and the Chechen rebels in Russia. Two potential case studies of similar situations that resulted in nonviolent political solutions are the Sri Lankan Muslims in the mid 1980s in Sri Lanka and the Sandzak Muslims in Yugoslavia in the early 1990s.<sup>150</sup>

However, one of the indicators discussed herein that proved inconclusive—state use of violence—is of particular concern. The state government in both the Philippines and Thailand used violence against the Muslim community. And in both countries, the use of state violence played a critical role in the actions and reactions of the Islamist groups. But what is most interesting is that the state violence was not a “catalyst” for a violent response in either country. Thus, further research may determine whether this indicator is a “signal” of a group’s propensity for violence.

### **3. Discovery of a New Indicator of Potential Violence**

In the course of the thesis evaluation of the two case studies, a new, unanticipated indicator of potential separatist violence emerged in both studies, in the form of a “precondition”—the geographic concentration of the Muslim population. Both the Filipino Muslims and the Thai Muslims expressed an overwhelming desire to establish an

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<sup>150</sup> These conflicts are mentioned in the report by Ted Robert Gurr et al, *Peace and Conflict, 2005: A Global Survey of Armed Conflicts, Self-Determination Movements, and Democracy* (College Park, Md.: Center for International Development and Conflict Management, 2005).

independent Islamic state. And both groups' geographic concentration made secession not only an attractive but also a somewhat feasible option. Had either or both of the two groups been dispersed throughout their respective countries, however, separatism would not have been an option.

In regard to groups' geographic concentration as a precondition for separatist movements, the Israeli scholar and diplomat Moshe Yegar offers a somewhat pessimistic and primordialist view: "by their very nature, Muslim populations in Southeast Asia are unable to be absorbed into the majority culture because they will not adapt to non-Muslim rule."<sup>151</sup> "[G]enerally," Yegar continues, "the members of a Muslim minority community living in a non-Muslim state will be outsiders in many respects and will cultivate separatist notions, either more moderate or more radical, depending on the historic circumstances."<sup>152</sup> These ideas support the thesis argument that geographic concentration as a precondition is another possible indicator of a Muslim separatist groups' propensity for violence.

Geographic concentration is an objective measurement derived from census data and similar records. A Muslim group is considered geographically concentrated if the majority of its population resides in the same region. They do not need to be the majority population, however. For instance, the vast majority of Filipino Muslims live on Mindanao, but overall, they comprise only 17 percent of the population on Mindanao. Therefore, Filipino Muslims are a

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<sup>151</sup> Yegar, *Between Integration and Secession*, 382.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 365.

geographically concentrated group even though they are not the majority group in the region. In contrast, Sri Lankan Muslims, which as a group are dispersed throughout the nation, are a majority in some regions. Hence, in Sri Lanka, Muslims are considered a geographically dispersed group.<sup>153</sup>

#### **4. Refinement of the Basic Framework**

The thesis summary of the case study findings, with the addition of the newly detected indicator of potential violence, yielded a new, refined framework of possible indicators of Muslim groups' propensity for violence. The revised framework, in Table 5, now shows a total of five indicators: Political Representation, Societal Alienation, Geographic Concentration, Religious Revival, and Perception of New State Policies.

#### **B. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The policy implications from the framework of indicators are especially pertinent for use by U.S. Military Regional Affairs Officers (RAO), the targeted reader of this thesis. One of an RAO's primary responsibilities is to assess the potential threats in a given country or region and then brief policy makers such as senior military officers or Department of Defense officials. Such information is vital for formulating U.S. foreign policy, because a potential for separatist violence

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<sup>153</sup> Muslims comprise only 7 percent of Sri Lanka's population; 35 percent live in the northeast; the other 65 percent is dispersed throughout the country (Library of Congress Web site, "Regional Map of Ethnic Groups and Religion," [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/sri\\_lanka/lk02\\_02b.pdf](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/sri_lanka/lk02_02b.pdf))(accessed on May 12, 2007).

would have serious security and humanitarian implications that could affect the entire region. The framework presented here illustrates patterns that could help the RAO determine if an Islamist group is likely to resort to separatist violence against the state. Two policy implications arise from the outcome of this framework.

| Indicator                                                                                                                                                       | Description                                                                                                                                                   | Values                                                                                                                             | Propensity for Violence              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Preconditions:                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                    |                                      |
| 1. Political Representation                                                                                                                                     | The degree of representation in politics and the local bureaucracy.                                                                                           | -Underrepresented<br>-Proportionate or overrepresented                                                                             | -High<br>-Low                        |
| 2. Societal Alienation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• language</li> <li>• race</li> <li>• culture</li> <li>• religion</li> <li>• education</li> </ul> | The degree of societal alienation of the group from the dominant group of the state caused by differences in language, race, culture, religion, or education. | -Alienation on all factors<br>-Alienation on several factors<br>-Minor alienation on a few factors<br>-No alienation on any factor | -Highest<br>-High<br>-Low<br>-Lowest |
| 3. Geographic Concentration                                                                                                                                     | The geographic concentration of the Muslim population within the state.                                                                                       | -Geographically Concentrated<br>-Geographically Dispersed                                                                          | -High<br>-Low                        |
| Signals:                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                    |                                      |
| 4. Religious Revival                                                                                                                                            | Presence or absence of a religious revival.                                                                                                                   | -Yes<br>-No                                                                                                                        | -High<br>-Low                        |
| Catalytic events:                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                    |                                      |
| 5. Perception of New State Policies                                                                                                                             | The group's perception of new state policies.                                                                                                                 | -Discriminatory<br>-Fair                                                                                                           | -High<br>-Low                        |

Table 5. Revised Framework for the Indicators of Potential Violence

### 1. Response to an Islamist Group's Religious Revival

When an Islamist group experiences a religious revival, it creates a new cleavage between the group and the society as a whole and thus heightens the likelihood of future violence. In response, therefore, the RAO for that country or area should take two specific actions. First, the RAO should advise higher, adjacent, and subordinate commands and agencies of the heightened potential for violence so they can take appropriate action, given their

responsibilities. Second, the RAO should research the group's ongoing reactions to any political events, pending legislation, or recently enacted state policies. If neither the leaders nor members of the group have spoken publicly about such events, the RAO should consult with intelligence sources in an effort to assess the group's perception of those events.

## **2. Response to an Islamist Group's State Criticism**

If an Islamist group publicly criticizes a state policy or action as being discriminatory toward the group, or if the RAO determines that such a perception exists among members of the group, the RAO should immediately advise higher, adjacent, and subordinate commands and agencies of the likelihood of near-future or immediate violence by the group. When such situations develop, RAOs should also be especially watchful for possible rallies, protests, or demonstrations that might provide a convenient environment for an eruption of violence. Likewise, RAOs should use available sources to track any paramilitary branch or militia affiliated with the group. Movements involving such units may indicate a possible attack.

## **C. APPLYING THE FRAMEWORK**

Appendix A is a guide that RAOs can use to assess the propensity for separatist violence against the state by an Islamist group in the RAO's regional area of responsibility. The guide includes a three-step process for applying the framework, the revised framework of indicators, and a narrative for measuring each indicator.

## **APPENDIX A. A GUIDE TO THE INDICATORS OF VIOLENCE**

Appendix A is a stand-alone guide designed to assist Military Regional Affairs Officers (RAO) in the assessment of Islamist groups in their area of responsibility in regards to the groups' propensity for separatist violence against the state. The guide includes a three-step process for applying the framework of indicators of violence and a narrative for measuring each indicator.

### **A. THREE-STEP PROCESS**

The three-step process consists of conducting background research upon assuming a RAO billet and continuing actions throughout the tour of duty. Use a separate framework worksheet (see Table 6) for each Islamist group assessment. RAOs should attach detailed notes to the each worksheet because this assessment is a long-term approach and these notes will facilitate an accurate turnover and continuation of the assessment as personnel rotations occur.

The three steps in this process are: 1) conduct an initial assessment of all Islamist groups in the region or country of responsibility, 2) determine which groups have undergone a religious revival, and 3) assess the reactions of those groups to any new state policies. Table 6 shows the five indicators of potential violence for this three-step process. The following sections explain this process in detail. Included in the narrative are six corollary indicators that are not necessary conditions required for violence to occur, but whose presence amplifies the five indicators of potential violence.

## **1. Conduct an Initial Regional Assessment**

Depending on service branch and billet assignment, a RAO may be responsible for a country or for an entire region. Upon assuming the assignment, a RAO's first responsibility, the first step, is to become familiar with all the known Islamist groups in the area. To achieve this, research the historical background of both the group and, more important, the Muslim population from which the group draws its members. Understanding how Islam was introduced to and spread in the area will help a RAO to also understand the current situation. Once you understand the historical background of the Muslim community as a whole, focus more specifically on the period of time that led up to the formation of the Islamist group. To determine whether a group manifests an increased propensity for violence, look for evidence of three specific "precondition" indicators: a lack of political representation, a high degree of societal alienation, and a geographically concentrated Muslim population.

The following sections describe how to measure the three indicators. After completing the background research, circle the appropriate value and corresponding propensity for violence in Table 6 on the framework worksheet. If the group ranks high for all three indicators, continue to step two, determining whether a religious revival has occurred. If the group ranks low or mid-value for all three indicators, check periodically for increases in the values.

**a. Political Representation**

The determination of the presence and extent of political representation as an indicator of potential violence is a purely objective process. It is based on a given group's percentage of the population either in a specific region or in the entire country, or both, depending on the political system. In this process, both elected and government-appointed political positions—for example, cabinet members and provincial governors—are considered, because both are forms of political representation. To measure this indicator, compare the population demographics of the country and individual regions to the demographics of the elected and government-appointed national and regional officials.

| Indicator                                                                                                                                                       | Description                                                                                                                                                   | Values                                                                                                                             | Propensity for Violence              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Preconditions:                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                    |                                      |
| 1. Political Representation                                                                                                                                     | The degree of representation in politics and the local bureaucracy.                                                                                           | -Underrepresented<br>-Proportionate or overrepresented                                                                             | -High<br>-Low                        |
| 2. Societal Alienation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• language</li> <li>• race</li> <li>• culture</li> <li>• religion</li> <li>• education</li> </ul> | The degree of societal alienation of the group from the dominant group of the state caused by differences in language, race, culture, religion, or education. | -Alienation on all factors<br>-Alienation on several factors<br>-Minor alienation on a few factors<br>-No alienation on any factor | -Highest<br>-High<br>-Low<br>-Lowest |
| 3. Geographic Concentration                                                                                                                                     | The geographic concentration of the Muslim population within the state.                                                                                       | -Geographically Concentrated<br>-Geographically Dispersed                                                                          | -High<br>-Low                        |
| Signals:                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                    |                                      |
| 4. Religious Revival                                                                                                                                            | Presence or absence of a religious revival.                                                                                                                   | -Yes<br>-No                                                                                                                        | -High<br>-Low                        |
| Catalytic events:                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                    |                                      |
| 5. Perception of New State Policies                                                                                                                             | The group's perception of new state policies.                                                                                                                 | -Discriminatory<br>-Fair                                                                                                           | -High<br>-Low                        |

Table 6. Indicators of Potential Violence

### ***b. Societal Alienation***

The determination of societal alienation as an indicator of potential violence begins with the assumption that it is not caused by differences in language, race, culture, religion, or education, in and of themselves. Rather, societal alienation is assumed caused by the negative affects of those differences on the interaction between the dominant group and a given subject group in the society under discussion. Specifically, it is the subject group's *perceptions* of the interactions that provide a true measure of this violence indicator.

For example, if a group perceives the linguistic differences between it and the dominant group in the society as a barrier between them, societal alienation will result, whether the language differences are actually a barrier or not. To measure this indicator, determine what differences exist in the language, race, culture, religion, and education between the dominant group and the Muslim group; and how these differences preclude Muslims from the rights or privileges of the dominant group. Determine if laws prohibit expression of the Muslims' identity. For example, are headscarves illegal to wear or is the Muslims' native language prohibited in public? Determine if Muslims are excluded from higher education because of requirements not readily obtainable, for example, fluency of the dominant group's language. Lastly, to confirm racial discrimination, determine if non-Muslims of the same race as the Muslim group face discrimination based on their shared physical appearance. When available, public opinion poll data provides evidence of the actual perceptions of alienation.

**c. *Geographic Concentration***

Geographic concentration is an objective measurement derived from census data and similar records. A Muslim group is considered geographically concentrated if the majority of its population resides in the same region. They do not need to be the majority population, however. For instance, the vast majority of Filipino Muslims live on Mindanao, but overall, they comprise only 17 percent of the population on Mindanao. Therefore, Filipino Muslims are a geographically concentrated group even though they are not the majority group in the region. In contrast, Sri Lankan Muslims, which as a group are dispersed throughout the nation, are a majority in some regions. Hence, in Sri Lanka, Muslims are considered a geographically dispersed group.<sup>154</sup>

**d. *Corollary Precondition: Past Use of Violence by the Group***

A group's past use of violence against the state or other entities could heighten its future use of violence. The central question here is whether the group has taken responsibility for a violent action in the past or been reasonably suspected of violence. Look at past incidences of violence by the group, and ask: How recent is the use of violence? Was it intended? What degree of violence was used? For suspected incidences of violence, seek out unbiased sources of information whenever possible.

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<sup>154</sup> Muslims comprise only 7 percent of Sri Lanka's population; 35 percent live in the northeast; the other 65 percent is dispersed throughout the country (Library of Congress Web site, "Regional Map of Ethnic Groups and Religion," [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/sri\\_lanka/lk02\\_02b.pdf](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/sri_lanka/lk02_02b.pdf))(accessed on May 12, 2007).

## **2. Determine if a Religious Revival has Occurred**

A religious revival is a group's return to what it perceives as the fundamentals of its professed religion in order to seek changes in society and government from below. The group's ultimate purpose is to create a religion-based society. Religious revivalists seek a self-defining identity, political and social authenticity, and community. They fault the impact of colonialism, the injustice of despotic governments, the entrenched elites, and, often, the religious establishment. They seek a return to the foundation or cornerstones of faith; emphasize the primacy of divine sovereignty and the equality of all within the community; and see religion as a total way of life.<sup>155</sup>

Determining whether a religious revival has taken place is an objective process that can be difficult to measure. The ideal situation for measuring this indicator is the existence of scholarly literature on the religious revivalism of a subject group. Lacking such literature, such measurement can be based on newspaper articles, speeches by group leaders, or communiqués from the group.

An Islamic religious revival may signal the development of a further cleavage between an Islamist group and the rest of society, and thus may heighten the propensity for violence. Thus, when an Islamist group undergoes a religious revival, the RAO should take two specific actions. First, advise higher, adjacent, and subordinate commands and agencies about the heightened potential for violence, so they can take appropriate actions based on their respective responsibilities. Second, proceed to the final step of the three-step

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<sup>155</sup> Esposito, "Religion and Global Affairs," 21-24.

process: assess the group's reaction to any political events, pending legislation, or recently enacted government policies.

***a. Corollary Signal: Radical Group Ideology***

The adjective "radical" describes the ideology adopted by a group. Islamist groups with a radical ideology work outside the political system and may use inflammatory anti-state rhetoric or engage in violence in order to destabilize or overthrow the government. In contrast, Islamist groups with a "moderate" ideology work within the political system and form legitimate political parties in order to achieve their goals.

***b. Corollary Signal: Group Justification for Violence***

An Islamist group that condones either hatred or violence, or both, against other Muslims or Islamists signifies that the group will let no obstacles stand between it and its goal. This corollary signal is evidenced by speeches from group leaders or communiqués from the group. Easy access to weapons heightens the probability that a group's justification of violence is a corollary signal of potential violence.

***c. Corollary Signal: Group Purification***

Group purification is a process in which a group narrows its membership to include only those members who share the same ideology and level of commitment. It signifies that the group is becoming narrowly exclusive. An exclusive organization has strict membership

requirements, imposes a high level of discipline, requires a great deal of personal commitment, and “permeates all sections of the member’s life, including activities with non-members.”<sup>156</sup> Evidence of this corollary signal is largely dependent on published interviews with current or former group members or leaders, or scholarly literature or intelligence reports on the subject group.

**d. Corollary Signal: Link to a Violent Islamist Group**

There are a number of ways that an Islamist group can have links to a violent Islamist group. The links can be in the form of financial, moral, or training support, or assistance in the execution of violent acts. Such links are evidenced by researching news coverage, media assessments, interrogation reports, and interviews of group members. In addition, links can be gleaned by comparing the speeches, communiqués, tactics, and strategies of the subject group and external violent Islamist groups.

**3. Assess Reactions to New State Policies**

If an Islamist group perceives a new state policy as discriminatory or unfair to their group, the enactment of the policy may act as a trigger or catalytic event leading to separatist violence against the state. In addition to new state policies, the RAO should consider such things as campaign promises during elections, newly introduced legislation, unilaterally imposed laws, referendum votes, and political speeches as potential triggers of violence, because they can contribute to the already heightened sense

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<sup>156</sup> Hafez, *Why Muslims Rebel*, 109-10.

of deprivation of an oppressed and polarized group. And the ensuing sense of hopelessness and despair may lead them to believe that violence is their only option. This step assumes that the Islamist group has the physical and material capability, such as weapons, necessary to conduct violence.

Measuring this indicator requires access to the subject group's written or verbal responses to the state's adoption or declaration of state policies. Since this indicator is a matter of perception, its measurement hinges on the group leaders' speaking out on the issues. Without their publicly stated views, it may still be possible to gauge the opinions of the group members, but it will be more difficult. Mass protests will provide ample evidence of this indicator.

If an Islamist group publicly criticizes a state policy or action as being discriminatory toward the group, or if the RAO determines that such a perception exists among members of the group, the RAO should immediately advise higher, adjacent, and subordinate commands and agencies of the likelihood of near-future or immediate violence by the group. When such situations develop, RAOs should also be especially watchful for possible rallies, protests, or demonstrations that might provide a convenient environment for an eruption of violence. Likewise, RAOs should use all available sources to closely track any paramilitary branch or militia affiliated with the group. Movements involving such units may indicate a possible attack.

**a. Corollary Catalytic Event: State Use of Violence Against the Group**

The suspected or confirmed use of violence by the state against specific members of an Islamist group or against random members of the Muslim community may result in a reciprocal use of violence by an Islamist group. Only consider suspected cases of violence if the group perceives that the state was responsible. In this situation, perception can outweigh factuality.

**B. FRAMEWORK FOR THE INDICATORS OF POTENTIAL VIOLENCE**

After completing the background research on the three preconditions for potential violence, the RAO is ready for the next step in the three-step process. Circle the group's appropriate value and corresponding propensity for violence on the framework worksheet. If the group ranks low or medium for all three preconditions, periodically check for and assess changes in the preconditions. If the group ranks high on all three preconditions, determine whether a religious revival has occurred. If a religious revival has not occurred, continue to monitor for signs of such activity. If or when a religious revival does occur, begin assessing the group's reactions to political events, pending legislation, or any recently enacted government policies. A perception by the group that the state's policies are discriminatory or unfair is the final indicator of potential separatist violence against the state.

## **APPENDIX B. SERVICE REGIONAL AFFAIRS OFFICERS**

This appendix briefly describes the duties of the Regional Affairs Officers in each of the four branches of service in the U.S. Department of Defense. The billet title and duties vary slightly from service to service. For the purposes of this thesis, the term "Regional Affairs Officer" (RAO) encompasses all of the positions described in this appendix.

### **A. U.S. ARMY FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICERS**

Foreign Area Officers (FAO) combine professional military skills with regional expertise, language competency, and military-political awareness. Their role is to use their unique combination of skills to support the warfighter and to advance U.S. interests. Army FAOs interact with foreign militaries and other government and civilian agencies and groups. They establish and maintain contact with foreign militaries and are often the principal overseas representative of the U.S. Army and Department of Defense. Army FAOs are linguists, area experts, and political-military affairs specialists.<sup>157</sup>

### **B. U.S. NAVY FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICERS**

Foreign Area Officers (FAO) manage and analyze political-military activities overseas. Navy FAOs serve as regional specialists on fleet staffs, defense and naval attachés, security assistance officers, mobile training

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<sup>157</sup> <http://www.fao.army.mil> (accessed on May 7, 2007).

team officers, and foreign war college students or personnel exchange program officers.<sup>158</sup>

**C. U.S. MARINE CORPS REGIONAL AFFAIRS OFFICERS**

Regional Affairs Officers in the U.S. Marine Corps use their knowledge and understanding of the military forces, culture, history, sociology, economics, politics, and geography of selected areas of the world to perform duties in operations, planning, and intelligence billets.<sup>159</sup>

**D. U.S. AIR FORCE INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS SPECIALISTS**

The U.S. Air Force International Affairs Specialist program consists of two programs: Regional Area Specialists and Political-Military Affairs Specialists. The Regional Area Specialists typically serve as staff officers, country desk officers, arms control specialists, Foreign Liaison Officers, political advisers, security assistance officers, and attachés where their unique combination of professional military skills, regional expertise, and foreign language proficiency are required. Political-Military Affairs Specialists serve in similar positions, but they perform duties that require a broad knowledge of political-military affairs, rather than regional expertise and foreign language skills, to serve effectively in key political-military positions.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> OPNAV Instruction 1301.10B.

<sup>159</sup> Marine Corps Order 1520.11E.

<sup>160</sup> Air Force Instruction 16-109.

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