

IMPROVING SOUTHEAST ASIAN SECURITY WITHIN THE ASEAN
FRAMEWORK – INSURGENCIES AND COUNTERINSURGENCIES

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ABSTRACT

IMPROVING SOUTHEAST ASIAN SECURITY WITHIN THE ASEAN
FRAMEWORK – INSURGENCIES AND COUNTERINSURGENCIES, by Major
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Since the end of the Cold War, changing global dynamics have brought about important political, social and economic developments to Southeast Asia. Foreign relations between the Southeast Asian states have also improved, reducing intra-regional tensions to the degree where inter-state armed conflicts are no longer likely. The domestic security situation of some Southeast Asian nations, however, remain precarious as local insurgencies resulting from political disagreements, ideological divergences and socio-economic gaps continue to plague these states. Terrorism, a second-order effect of these conflicts, has also become a security concern as regional terrorist groups, such as the Jemaah Islamiah and the Abu Sayyaf Group, have been working with global jihadist organizations to establish an ideological presence within these troubled states. If unchecked, these threats could potentially disrupt the peace in Southeast Asia and destabilize the region. This thesis will analyze Southeast Asia's ongoing insurgencies as well as its counterinsurgency efforts. It will examine whether the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), under the constraints imposed by its organizational principles, is able to play a more significant role than it has thus far in improving regional security by addressing the problem of insurgencies within its member states.

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ACRONYMS

AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
AHJAG	Ad Hoc Joint Action Group
ARMM	Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASG	Abu Sayyaf Group
AU	African Union
BRN	<i>Barisan Revolusi Nasional</i>
BRN-C	<i>Barisan Revolusi Nasional - Koordinasi</i>
CAFGU	Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Units
COC-IS	Cabinet Oversight Commission on Internal Security
COIN	Counterinsurgency
CPM 43	Civil-Police-Military Joint Headquarters
CPP	Community Party of the Philippines
CVO	Civilian Volunteer Organization
DILG	Department of Interior and Local Government
DND	Department of National Defense
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
GMIP	<i>Gerakan Majuhidin Islam Pattani</i>
GOCC	Government-Owned and Controlled Corporations
GWOT	Global War on Terror
HN	Host Nation
IO	Information Operations

KALAHI	<i>Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan</i> (Linking Arms Against Poverty)
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance
ITDS	Integrated Territorial Defense System
JI	Jemaah Islamiah
LGU	Local Government Units
LLO	Logical Line of Operations
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
MOA-AD	Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain
NAPC	National Anti-Poverty Commission
NDF	National Democratic Front
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NISP	National Internal Security Plan
NPA	New People's Army
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OEF-P	Operations Enduring Freedom – Philippines
PNP	Philippine National Police
PO	People's Organization
PULO	Pattani United Liberation Organization
PPM	Pattani's People Movement
SBPAC	Southern Border Provinces Administrative Center
SHA	Strategy of Holistic Approach
SOT	Special Operations Team
ZOPFAN	Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

ASEAN shall have, by the year 2020, established a peaceful and stable Southeast Asia where each nation is at peace with itself and where the causes for conflict have been eliminated, through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law and through the strengthening of national and regional resilience.¹

ASEAN Vision 2020

Background

Southeast Asia is a heterogeneous region that consists of eleven countries – Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, East Timor, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam – a divergent group of states differing in population, ethnicity, socio-cultural heritage, languages, religious beliefs and polities. The intermingling of local, Chinese, Indian, Malay and European influence in Southeast Asia has resulted in a region where no single tradition or society is dominant.² These diversities, to varying degrees, are reflected within each state as well. Indonesia, for example, has 300 distinct native ethnicities with over 700 languages and dialects spoken. The Philippines, as another example, has numerous ethnic groups with about 180 languages and dialects spoken.



Figure 1. Map of Southeast Asia

Source: Tourism Maps. "Map of Southeast Asia," <http://www.world-maps.co.uk/continent-map-of-south-east-asia.htm> (accessed 1 October 2008).

The diversity between the states has made the integration of Southeast Asia difficult. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that all Southeast Asian countries have

been occupied and influenced by different colonial powers, creating unique post-colonial state polities for each of the countries. Tensions created by differing ideologies and political views have resulted in conflicts between states, such as the Indonesia-Malaysia Confrontation in 1962 and the Cambodian-Vietnamese War in 1975. It was only recently, in the 1990s, with the demise of Communism at the end of the Cold War that the security situation in Southeast Asia began to stabilize.

In the post-Cold War era, a new order of international relations and changing global dynamics brought about massive political, social and economic transformation in Southeast Asia.³ Many Southeast Asian states began to modernize. Political and economic interactions within the region increased significantly, making the Southeast Asian countries more intertwined and interdependent. Foreign relations between states normalized and improved as well, reducing intra-regional tensions to the degree that inter-state armed conflicts are no longer likely.

While regional security has improved, the domestic security situation of several Southeast Asian states remains precarious. The challenges of diversity within these countries and the inability of their governments to manage them have resulted in political disagreements, ideological divergences and socio-economic gaps. These problems, in turn, have escalated into secession movements and political violence driven by insurgents and extremists striving to bring their own form of order into the state.

Besides creating internal political and security problems, the second-order effects of these conflicts, such as criminal activity, are also threatening to spill over state borders and into the region.⁴ Terrorism, in particular, is a second-order effect of concern. With the rise of global terror after the 9/11 attacks, regional terrorists groups such as the

Jemaah Islamiah (JI) are increasing their activities considerably, often using conflict territories as safe havens to establish their training camps and bases of support. In fact, the threat of terrorism in Southeast Asia has become so prominent that it has been labeled a “terrorist sanctuary” in the 9/11 Commission Report⁵ and designated by the United States as its “second front” in the Global War on Terror (GWOT).⁶

Although measures have been taken by the Southeast Asian governments to curb their respective insurgencies, unilateral actions seem inadequate in resolving these internal conflicts. Their effectiveness has been limited due to various reasons such as governmental instability, resource constraints, complex demographics and corruption. There also seems to be little coordinated action within the Southeast Asian region to help these conflict states.

A RAND monograph titled *Understanding and Reducing Terrorism Risks* classified these troubled spots as “ungoverned territories.” The monograph defines an “ungoverned territory” as “an area in which a state faces significant challenges in establishing control.”⁷ Ungoverned territories are “failed or failing states, poorly controlled land or maritime borders, or areas within otherwise viable states where the central government’s authority does not extend.”⁸ Ungoverned territories lack governability and are conducive to insurgencies or terrorism.⁹

Instead of relying on unilateral state action to resolve these conflicts, the authors of the monograph proposed promoting the use of a regional architecture to “coordinate the efforts” of nations that are affected by the threats of ungoverned territories.¹⁰ However, they have also acknowledged that current “international cooperation, attempted through formal international organizations, has a mixed record at best” as diverging

interests amongst member states “confound cooperation and timely, effective collective action.”¹¹ The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Southeast Asia’s regional organization, is no exception.

ASEAN was established in 1967 by five countries – Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand – with the purposes of forming a partnership to control “self-defeating” intra-regional conflicts so that energies could be devoted to mitigating internal and external security threats.¹² Although security was foremost on the minds of ASEAN’s founding governments, the organization has, thus far, placed more emphasis on an economic role rather than a military one.¹³ This is because the ASEAN governments believe in the relevance of economic development to regional security as they are cognizant of how grievances created by socio-economic gaps within their societies have resulted in political violence and social disorder.¹⁴ Such turmoil has also brought extra-regional players into Southeast Asia looking to take advantage of the situation in order to further their interests. For these reasons, ASEAN views economic power as vital in ensuring the security and political stability of Southeast Asia, operating on the belief that “economic growth and social progress” will develop “national resilience” in each member state, and serve to eliminate political violence through the reduction of economic deprivations.¹⁵ The collective resilience of these individual states will, in turn, contribute to a “wider regional resilience” to form the basis of Southeast Asia’s security,¹⁶ thereby strengthening the region against the threat of extra-regional subversion.

Although ASEAN has, through the years, achieved success in the area of economic development, its track record in establishing regional stability has somewhat

been mixed. Critics pointed to the persistence of intra-regional tensions and ASEAN's tendency to "sweep them under the carpet" to contain rather than try to resolve them.¹⁷

According to a prominent political scientist, Dr Amitav Acharya, one major source of Southeast Asia's unresolved intra-regional tensions is the spillover effects of domestic conflicts within its ungoverned territories. These domestic insecurities are results of ethnic, political and ideological challenges to the state, which more often than not, develop into insurgencies with cross-border security implications;¹⁸ terrorism, as explained earlier, being one such implication. According to one critic, domestic insecurities within ASEAN states are due to the inability of the respective state institutions to build socio-political cohesion and develop national resilience.¹⁹ This has, in turn, affected ASEAN's ability to achieve its ideal of regional resilience. Another critic attributed this shortcoming to the members of ASEAN being "weak states" that "are poorly placed to make any contribution to the order of the system as a whole."²⁰ He also agreed with the general observation that "their domestic insecurity frequently spills over to disrupt the security of neighbors."²¹

Many critics of ASEAN have attributed these faults to the constraints imposed by its organizational principles and its working culture known as the "ASEAN Way." ASEAN's principles of non-use of force, regional autonomy, non-interference and avoidance of military alliances have been under persistent scrutiny and often cited as part of the reason why internal state conflicts and domestic violence continue to exist in Southeast Asia today.

Purpose

In order for ASEAN and Southeast Asia to develop regional resilience, national resilience must first exist in all its member states. However, insurgencies within the region and their associated threat of terrorism continue to impede this development and remain a major concern to regional security. Despite the constraints imposed by its organizational principles, the author believes ASEAN still has the potential to play a significant role in addressing this particular security concern. This thesis will look into how ASEAN can work within its organizational principles to address the threat of ungoverned territories in Southeast Asia. The thesis will also look into the nature of ungoverned territories; study the more prominent examples of ungoverned territories in Southeast Asia; analyze the efforts of the state governments of these ungoverned territories; and determine whether ASEAN, within its constraints, is able to coordinate regional efforts to help its affected member states with their domestic security problems.

Selection of Case Studies

This thesis will take on a case study approach to analyze the more serious ongoing insurgencies within Southeast Asia. Table 1 below shows the major armed rebellions in Southeast Asia since World War II, of which the conflicts in Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Myanmar are ongoing. Both the Philippines and Thailand made headlines over recent years from terrorist activities emanating from their insurgent territories. The large Muslim population and the lack of state control in Mindanao, Philippines and Southern Thailand have attracted the interest of global jihadist groups such as the al-Qaeda and the JI. These terrorist organizations have been extending their operations throughout the region by exploiting these ungoverned territories as safe havens, training

and operational bases, and have caused great concerns to the Southeast Asian community. As such, the insurgencies in Mindanao and Southern Thailand will be used as case studies for this thesis because of the regional insecurity their insurgencies have created.

Table 1. Major Armed Rebellions in the ASEAN States since 1945

Country	Rebel Groups
Brunei	Partai Rakyat Brunei (1962)
Cambodia	Khmer Rouge (1970-75) Khmer Rouge / Khmer People's National Liberation Front / Moulinaka (1979-92)
Indonesia	Madiun communist rebellion (1948) Darul Islam (1948-62) PRRI Permesta (1958-61) Organisasi Papua Merdeka (1963-) Partai Komunis Indonesia (1965) Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (1976-2005) Fretilin (1976-99)
Malaysia	Communist Party of Malaysia (1948-89)
Philippines	Huk communist rebellion (1946-54) New People's Army (1969-) Moro National Liberation Front (1972-96) Moro Islamic Liberation Front (1982-) Abu Sayyaf (1993-)
Singapore	Communist Party of Malaya (1948-89)
Thailand	Barisan Revolusi Nasional (1960-) Communist Party of Thailand (1965-) Pattani United Liberation Organization (1968-) Barisan Nasional Pembebasan Pattani (1971-)
South Vietnam	National Liberation Front (1958-75) Le Front Unifie de Liberation des Races Opprimees (FULRO) (1964-75) Le Mouvement pour l'Autonomie des Hauts-Plateaux (1961-75)
Laos	Pathet Lao (1951-75) Le Ligue de Resistance Meo (1946-75)
Myanmar	Communist Party of Burma (1948-) Some 24 ethnically related armed rebellions (1948-)

Source: An update of the table provided in Mohammed Ayoob, ed., *Regional Security in the Third World: Case Studies from Southeast Asia and the Middle East* (London: Croom, 1986), 61.

Islamic insurgent movements have plagued Mindanao since the 1960s and have provided a secure base for radical Islamic teachings and terrorists since the 1990s. The Moro Islamic Liberation Front's (MILF) and the Abu Sayyaf Group's (ASG) ties with the JI and al-Qaeda are a cause for concern for Southeast Asia as they have allowed the influence and operations of the global jihadist movement to extend into the region. Current unrest in the Malay-Muslim provinces of southern Thailand has also captured national, regional, and international attention due to the heightened tempo and scale of rebel attacks; the jihadist undertone in its insurgent actions; and the central government's brutal handling of the situation. The domestic conflict has also been suspected of being recently hijacked by foreign extremists to promote wider transnational Islamist designs in Southeast Asia.²² Increasing terrorist presence and activities within Southeast Asia as a result of these countries' domestic insurgencies call for urgent actions to mitigate these threats.

Research Questions

This study will focus on examining whether ASEAN is able to address the problem of insurgencies within the Southeast Asia. The primary research question is, "can ASEAN, within its organizational constraints, address the problem of insurgencies within Southeast Asia's ungoverned territories to bring about greater security and stability to the region?" Six secondary research questions are identified to address this issue.

The first secondary research question is "what are the current constraints limiting ASEAN from playing a more prominent role in regional security?" This question will examine the history of ASEAN and explore conditions that have influenced the

development of its working principles. In particular, the constraints imposed by these principles and the ASEAN Way, a term used to describe the institution's informal and consensus-based approach to regional interactions, will be examined.

The second research question is “what are ungoverned territories?” An understanding of the characteristics and nature of ungoverned territories is necessary as this thesis will use the concept of ungoverned territories to analyze the insurgencies in Southeast Asia.

The third research question is “what is a viable counterinsurgency campaign framework that can be used to analyze the counterinsurgent efforts of state governments in ungoverned territories?” The US Army has recently produced a counterinsurgency manual in 2006, FM 3-24 *Counterinsurgency*, detailing how such campaigns should be planned and fought. The counterinsurgency campaign framework proposed in this manual will be used to explain the efforts of the state governments in charge of the ungoverned territories.

The fourth research question is “what issues should ASEAN address in order to neutralize the threat of the insurgencies within Southeast Asia?” Case studies of ongoing Southeast Asian insurgencies with regional security implications will be analyzed. The states with the most serious insurgencies, namely the Philippines and Thailand, will be examined using the ungoverned territories and the FM 3-24 counterinsurgency frameworks. The findings will then be analyzed to identify areas which ASEAN can potentially influence and improve.

The fifth research question is “how has another regional architecture fared in its counterinsurgency and conflict-resolution efforts?” The answer to this question will serve

as a control variable to the study of ASEAN and the effectiveness of its working principles. The thesis will take a quick look at a regional institution in another part of the world whose efforts will then be compared to those of ASEAN's to see which have been more effective in neutralizing conflicts and insurgencies in their respective regions. The answer will also lend clarity to the utility and viability of ASEAN's organizational principles.

The final research question is "taking into consideration its constraints and limitations, what future actions can ASEAN take to address the problem of insurgencies within Southeast Asia?" With an understanding of Southeast Asia's insurgencies, their related threat of terrorism and the ASEAN's organizational constraints, this thesis will propose feasible actions that ASEAN can potentially take to address the insurgencies within its ungoverned territories.

Assumptions

This study assumes that ASEAN desires security and stability within Southeast Asia and views insurgencies and the related problem of terrorism as common threats to the region. With all ASEAN member states agreeing to "cooperate in all fields for the promotion of regional resilience" under the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation,²³ it is assumed that all Southeast Asian countries will cooperate and work together under a common security arrangement to eliminate these threats.

This study also assumes that the case studies of Philippines and Thailand are representative of current Southeast Asian insurgencies and that the actions proposed will be broadly applicable to the other insurgencies present in the region.

Limitations

Case studies conducted in this research to draw out the major causes, issues and problems associated with Southeast Asian insurgencies will be limited to the countries of Philippines and Thailand. There are other insurgencies present in Southeast Asia. However, they will not be analyzed in this thesis.

The actions proposed will be constrained within the organizational principles of ASEAN and will adhere to the “ASEAN way.” To avoid over-complication, the costs required to implement these actions will not be considered.

The security situation in SEA is dynamic and constantly changing. Actions are constantly being taken by either state governments or insurgent organizations to improve their own state of affairs, leading to changes in the domestic as well as the regional scene. As it is difficult to keep research information and analysis updated through the entire study process, the literature cut-off date will be set for the end of April 2009.

Significance

The ASEAN Vision 2020, established in 1997, envisages the region to be a “concert of Southeast Asian nations, outward looking, living in peace, stability and prosperity, bonded together in partnership in dynamic development and in a community of caring societies.”²⁴ The Vision promotes ideals for greater regional cooperation in areas ranging from security to economics to the building of a common regional identity. For regional security, the Vision has expressed the desire for a “peaceful and stable Southeast Asia . . . where the causes of conflict have been eliminated” and where “territorial and other disputes are resolved by peaceful means.”²⁵

Although there has been significant improvement in regional relations, domestic disputes and conflicts are still rife within several Southeast Asian countries. Insurgencies, in particular, are of a particular concern as they breed terrorism, which in turn threatens the region's peace and stability. Contrary to the ideal stated in the Vision, these conflicts and disputes are far from being eliminated.

There are eleven years remaining for ASEAN to achieve this security ideal. Judging from the current situation, however, this seems to be a tall order for the regional institution. In the meanwhile, the reputation and credibility of ASEAN as a regional security mechanism continue to suffer because of its perceived ineffectiveness in responding to intra-regional security threats. Can insurgencies and their associated threat of terrorism be ever resolved within the constraints of ASEAN's organizational principles? The thesis will address this issue.

Conclusion

This chapter has given a brief introduction to the uniqueness of Southeast Asia and the problems its diversity brings to the region. Although the Southeast Asian countries and ASEAN has been successful in improving intra-regional relations over the past few decades, domestic conflicts, particularly insurgent activities, are still prevalent in the region. In recent years, these conflict states have also become a safe haven and breeding ground for terror. Termed “ungoverned territories” for their lack of governability and for their conduciveness in promoting insurgent or terrorist activities, they remain as an outstanding regional problem with an urgent need for a solution.

ASEAN, as the region's security architecture, has not been significantly involved thus far in resolving its member states' insurgencies because of various constraints

imposed on the organization. These security threats, however, have to be reduced one way or the other if ASEAN is to achieve the desired security end state expressed in the ASEAN Vision 2020. As such, this thesis will examine whether it is possible for ASEAN to address the problems of insurgencies within the ungoverned territories of Southeast Asia.

The next chapter will provide the context for this thesis by examining the role and limitations of ASEAN as Southeast Asia's regional security mechanism. Following which, it will explain the nature of ungoverned territories and its related security issues, and the counterinsurgency campaign framework found in FM 3-24. Both the ungoverned territories and counterinsurgency concepts will then be used to analyze the case studies presented in chapter 4.

¹ Association of Southeast Asian Nations, "ASEAN Vision 2020," (15 December 1997), <http://www.aseansec.org/1814.htm> (accessed 1 December 2008).

² Lawrence E. Grinter, *Realities of Revolutionary Violence in Southeast Asia* (Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: Air University Press, 1990), 1.

³ Clark D. Neher, *Southeast Asia in the New International Era* (San Francisco, CA: Westview Press, 1994), 5.

⁴ Angel Rabasa et al., *Ungoverned Territories: Understanding and Reducing Risks* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2007), 35.

⁵ Ibid., xv.

⁶ Ibid., 140.

⁷ Ibid., xv.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 35.

- ¹¹ Ibid., 34.
- ¹² Michael Leifer, *ASEAN and the Security of Southeast Asia* (London: Routledge, 1989), 1.
- ¹³ Neher, 6.
- ¹⁴ Leifer, 2.
- ¹⁵ Tim Huxley, *Insecurity in the ASEAN Region* (Dorset: Sherrens Printers, 1993), 4.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., 5.
- ¹⁷ Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia* (London: Routledge, 2001), 5-6.
- ¹⁸ Acharya, 129.
- ¹⁹ Huxley, 12.
- ²⁰ Barry Buzan, "The Concept of National Security for Developing Countries," in *Leadership Perceptions and National Security. The Southeast Asian Experience*, ed. Mohammed Ayoob and Chai-Anan Samudavanji (Singapore: ISEAS, 1989), 22-23.
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Peter Chalk, *The Malay-Muslim Insurgency in Southern Thailand: Understanding the Conflict's Evolving Dynamic* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Cooperation, 2008), 1.
- ²³ Alison Broinowski, ed., *Understanding ASEAN* (London: Macmillan, 1982), 273-277.
- ²⁴ Association of Southeast Asian Nations.
- ²⁵ Ibid.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Before analyzing the extent and limitations of ASEAN's ability to address the problem of insurgencies in the ungoverned territories of Southeast Asia, some context and background is necessary in order to provide a better understanding of the problem. In this chapter, information on ASEAN and its working norms; the concept of ungoverned territories; and the counterinsurgency (COIN) campaign framework proposed in FM 3-24 *Counterinsurgency* will be presented.

An understanding of ASEAN's characteristics, its inner workings and political intricacies is essential for this thesis. The main reference used for this area of research will be *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia* by Amitav Acharya. In this literature, Acharya provides detailed insight on the development of ASEAN as well as the principles and norms that have become a part of its working culture. He also succinctly explains the ASEAN way, a unique approach that ASEAN has taken towards intra-regional interactions, and the limitations it imposes on ASEAN as a regional security mechanism. A variety of other sources from leading authorities in Southeast Asian studies will also be used to supplement this portion of the research.

A RAND monograph *Ungoverned Territories – Understanding and Reducing Terrorism Risks* will be used as the primary reference to define and describe the nature of ungoverned territories. Its explanation of the conditions of “ungovernability” and “conduciveness to insurgent or terrorist presence” will give a better appreciation of the environment and conditions necessary for insurgencies and terrorism to develop.

Finally, the COIN campaign framework in FM 3-24 *Counterinsurgency* will be reviewed. The focus of the review will be on the components of a COIN campaign and their application.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations and Regional Security

ASEAN was founded on 8 August 1967 when five countries – Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand –signed the Bangkok Declaration. Although the “ostensible purpose” of establishing ASEAN was to promote “economic growth, social progress and cultural development,” it was regional security that was foremost in the minds of ASEAN’s founding fathers.¹ During that period, the five member states were vulnerable to a wide range of security challenges which included domestic insurgencies, bilateral disputes, communism in Indochina and the interference of extra-regional powers in state and regional affairs. Individually, the original ASEAN countries were weak states that did not have the political, economic and military ability to bring about stability to the region. Therefore, a regional partnership, in the form of ASEAN, was needed to collectively manage conflict and mitigate their vulnerability.²

Regional security within ASEAN was based on the concept of “national resilience.” First articulated by General Suharto, who later became the President of Indonesia, the development of national resilience was widely accepted by member states as ASEAN’s strategy to strengthen itself against internal and external security threats through the establishment of a stable economic, political and social environment.³ It aimed to eliminate the socio-economic gap which drove “communist revolution, and to a lesser extent ethnically-based separatism.”⁴ There was also a consensus that if all ASEAN

member states achieved national resilience, “regional resilience” would emerge and deter any extra-regional powers from undermining and destabilizing the region through subversive action, thereby bringing about greater stability to the region.⁵ This consensus was articulated in the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation signed during the Bali Summit of 1976. It emphasized the will of ASEAN to strengthen national resilience in “political, economic, socio-cultural as well as security fields” and to “cooperate in all fields for the promotion of regional resilience.”⁶

In order to achieve regional resilience, Southeast Asian regionalism was required. Regionalism, defined by Webster Dictionary, is a consciousness of and loyalty to a distinct region with a homogenous population. However, ASEAN, with the diversity of its member states and their respective differences in strategic interests and political perspectives, was far from being homogenous. The growth of regionalism, without a base of “cultural and political homogeneity” to work from, was therefore limited.⁷ As such, a base for regionalism would have to be established on a common set of regional ideals and interests instead, a form of homogeneity that could only be achieved through interactions between the ASEAN states.⁸

ASEAN recognized the need for rules to regulate these interactions in order to ensure consistency and “peaceful conduct among the member states.”⁹ Such a requirement, therefore, would lead ASEAN to formulate a set of working norms to govern intra-regional interactions and relations as well as to promote regionalism. The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation articulated a set of norms and principles by which ASEAN states would abide by in working with other members. This set of norms can be categorized into four core categories: (1) Non-use of force; (2) regional autonomy; (3)

non-interference; and (4) rejection of military pacts and preference for bilateral defense cooperation.¹⁰

Principles of ASEAN

Non-Use of Force

The principle of non-use of force is, in large part, inspired by the *Konfrontasi*, the war between Indonesia and British-backed Malaysia over the island of Borneo from 1962 to 1966. *Konfrontasi* demonstrated the high costs and dangers from the use of force to resolve an intra-regional conflict and highlighted the need for preventive measures to avoid such a situation from returning to the region. Hence, the principle of non-use of force was adopted by ASEAN to dampen the prospect of force being used amongst its member states. In addition to the non-use of force, ASEAN's founders also advocated the pacific settlement of disputes. They held this principle to such importance that they were even willing to establish formal mechanisms to support it, despite ASEAN's aversion to "institutional legalism."¹¹ An official dispute-settlement mechanism was therefore included in the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation.¹²

Regional Autonomy

The principle of regional autonomy reflects ASEAN's aspirations of achieving greater self-reliance by producing "regional solutions to regional problems."¹³ The dependence on extra-regional powers by regional states to provide protection against internal and external threats has been a cause for concern for ASEAN members. They share two common beliefs on the dangers of such reliance. The first is the extent of security coverage provided. Although extra-regional powers are able to provide

guarantees for conventional threats, they will probably not be able to do the same for the more likely scenarios of revolutionary conflicts within the ASEAN states. Adam Malik, Foreign Minister for Indonesia, explained that “[m]ilitary alliances or foreign military presence does not enhance a nation’s capacity to cope with the problem of insurgency. The price for such commitment is too high, whereas the negative ramifications for the nation are too great.”¹⁴ The “negative ramifications” highlighted by Malik underpin the second belief, that the involvement of extra-regional powers in domestic conflicts will “undermine the legitimacy of the threatened regime.” Reliance on external support isolates a threatened regime from its “political and social realities”; realities that it must come to terms with if it is to survive in the long term.¹⁵

These beliefs, coupled with the general fear that greater extra-regional powers might forcefully impose their ideologies and undermine the sovereignty of the regional states, led some ASEAN states to propose measures by which the region could limit the influence of extra-regional powers. Malaysia, for example, troubled by the possible influence of China on its internal Malay-Chinese ethnic conflicts, suggested a “neutralization framework” where SEA states would refrain from forming military alliances with extra-regional powers and allowing foreign military bases to be established on their land. Extra-regional powers would also be asked to “refrain from forging alliances with the neutralized states, stationing armed forces on their territory, and using their presence to subvert or interfere in any other way with other countries.”¹⁶ While ASEAN aspired towards the ideal of regional autonomy, it also recognized that complete self-reliance was not feasible under its circumstances. For example, member states, such as the Philippines, Thailand and Singapore saw their security relationships with Western

powers as a “vital ingredient of national security and regional order.”¹⁷ Nevertheless, a declaration of a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) emerged from a meeting of ASEAN foreign ministers in 1971 to affirm ASEAN’s aspiration towards regional security autonomy. The ZOPFAN, however, was ambiguous and loosely worded in broad terms without firm determination on the exclusion of extra-regional powers from the region. Its articulation reflected the tensions between member states’ desire for regional autonomy and their continual dependence on extra-regional security guarantees.¹⁸

Non-Interference

The principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of ASEAN member states is perhaps the most important principle underpinning ASEAN regionalism. It is applicable to not only interference by extra-regional powers but also to member states in each other’s affairs. The principle aspires to the objectives of the United Nations, which gives the “right of every state, large or small, to lead its existence free from outside interference in its internal affairs as this interference will adversely affect its freedom, independence, and integrity.”¹⁹ S. Jayakumar, Singapore’s Foreign Minister from 1994 to 2004, also highlighted the significance of the principle, “[n]on-interference in the affairs of another country was . . . the key factor as to why no military conflict had broken out between any two member states since 1967.”²⁰ His remark can be better understood in the context of the domestic security concerns of the ASEAN member states.

When ASEAN was first established in 1967, its member states were still newly independent entities struggling to cope with the challenges of internal diversity and self-governance. Domestic conflicts as a result of “weak state structures” and the “lack of

strong regime legitimacy” often plague these states.²¹ Racial and religious intolerance, ideological differences and territorial disputes between ethnic, political or tribal groups were commonplace and often the cause of insurgencies or secessionist struggles. Compounding these problems was the destabilizing effect of foreign interests and foreign interference in state conflicts, which often gave belligerents more cause to intensify their struggles. Non-interference was therefore advocated to allow each member state to resolve their internal conflicts domestically without foreign factors exacerbating the problem. In ASEAN, it was widely accepted that non-interference would facilitate the attainment of domestic stability, which in turn was a key prerequisite for regional security and stability.

According to Acharya, member states are obligated by the doctrine of non-interference to:

- (1) refrain from criticizing the actions of a member government towards its own people, including violation of human rights, and from making the domestic political system of states and the political styles of governments a basis for deciding their membership in ASEAN;
- (2) criticize the actions of states which were deemed to have breached the non-interference principle;
- (3) deny recognition, sanctuary, or other forms of support to any rebel group seeking to destabilize or overthrow the government of a neighboring state; and
- (4) provide political support and material assistance to member states in their campaign against subversive and destabilizing activities.²²

It is important to note from the fourth point that non-interference does not mean indifference of member states to each other’s domestic conflicts.

Rejection of Military Pacts and the Preference for Bilateral Defense Cooperation

The fourth and final principle is the rejection of military pacts and the preference for bilateral defense cooperation. Hussein Onn, the Prime Minister of Malaysia, described the aversion of ASEAN to military pacts and alliances,

[i]t is obvious that the ASEAN members do not wish to change the character of ASEAN from a socio-economic organization into a security alliance as this would only create misunderstanding in the region and undermine the positive achievement of ASEAN in promoting peace and stability through co-cooperation in the socio-economic and related fields.²³

ASEAN's preference for bilateral security arrangements over a multilateral alliance is also explained by Mohamad Ghazali Shafie, Foreign Minister of Malaysia,

projects under ASEAN (and other regional bodies) are generally limited in scope and necessarily restricted to the lowest common denominator which is acceptable to all member countries. . . . The limitation of regional cooperation within a formal framework should not prevent countries of the region from trying to forge the closest possible links on a bilateral basis with one another. It may be, for example, that country X would be willing to establish such links on specific subjects and would be prepared to engage in consultations including exchange of information, etc, with country Y which she might not consider either appropriate or necessary to have with some other third country on a multilateral basis. Such bilateral contacts at whatever level which may be mutually acceptable should be pursued as far as possible. In this way, an important criss-crossing network of bilateral links will be established between and among the countries of Southeast Asia.²⁴

This matrix of bilateral relations will therefore form the foundation for ASEAN multilateralism.

The ASEAN Way

The ASEAN way is a term used to describe ASEAN's unique interaction and decision-making processes, which "stresses informality, organization minimalism, inclusiveness, intensive consultations leading to consensus and peaceful resolution of

disputes.”²⁵ It is often contrasted with Western multilateral settings characterized by “adversarial posturing, majority vote and other legalistic decision-making procedures.”²⁶ The ZOPFAN declaration, for example, was a product of the ASEAN way. The manner in which the declaration was fashioned and worded to reconcile the differences between member states on the issue of regional autonomy, highlighted the ASEAN way of consultation and consensus, compromise, ambiguity and the avoidance of institutional legalism.

There are two features of the ASEAN way that are of particular importance. The first is the “preference for informality” and its “related aversion to institutionalization of cooperation.”²⁷ The second is the process of consensus building.²⁸

Preference for Informality

The virtues of informality within ASEAN have been useful in getting member states to put aside national differences and raising their level of comfort to facilitate interaction. Agerico Lacanlale, a Filipino scholar, explains,

The less the member states feel bound by certain rules, the more willing they are to consult with one another and adopt a common position on common concerns. The fact that the coercive element in their collective conduct is minimized means that joint decisions are arrived at out of free choice and in the spirit of consensus and cooperation.²⁹

Informality has also created a flexible working environment for ASEAN characterized by the absence of formal agendas and decision-making formats; issues that arise are usually dealt with on an ad-hoc basis. In addition, dialogues within ASEAN are not limited to formal forums. Private conversations amongst senior government officials are often another channel for discussion. As Carlos Romulo, the Foreign Secretary of the Philippines puts it, “I can pick up the telephone now and talk directly to Adam Malik

[Indonesia's Foreign Minister] or Rajaratnam [Singapore's Foreign Minister]. We often find that private talks over breakfast prove more important than formal meetings.”³⁰ Informality, as such, serves to strengthen the interpersonal relationships between ASEAN leaders as well.

Consensus Building

The second important feature of the ASEAN way is that of consensus building. The idea of consensus building in the ASEAN context can be traced back to a style of decision making within a Javanese village society that is based on *musyawarah* (consultations) and *mufakat* (consensus). *Musyawarah* and *mufakat* prescribe that “a leader should not act arbitrarily or impose his will, but rather make gentle suggestions of the path a community should follow, being careful always to consult all other participants fully and to take their views and feelings into consideration before delivering his synthesis conclusions.”³¹ Consensus building is therefore a community-based approach for ASEAN to advance regional cooperation where the views of every member state are considered equally and where every member state has uniform influence over the decisions made. Consensus building, however, should not be mistaken for unanimity, but rather a “commitment to finding a way of moving forward by establishing what seems to have broad support.”³²

As much as the ASEAN way has benefited ASEAN, it has also imposed limitations. Critics have pointed out that the ASEAN way leans towards conflict avoidance rather than conflict resolution with the tendency of having contentious issues “swept under the carpet.”³³ Discussion on sensitive domestic and bilateral issues have been avoided at the ASEAN level as there were concerns that it would lead to the

escalation and regionalization of tensions.³⁴ They have also criticized the ASEAN way as being used by ASEAN officials to distract attention from the shortcomings of the member states for purposes of promoting regional cooperation.³⁵

ASEAN, however, is cognizant of the limitations and criticism of the ASEAN way. As such, ASEAN as well as government officials are constantly discussing and proposing means and measures to improve the process. The ASEAN Way is not a static concept. Instead, it has been evolving since its formative years in response to changing national, regional and global developments; its maturity a matter of “incremental socialization, a long term process of interaction and adjustment.”³⁶

Ungoverned Territories

An ungoverned territory is defined as an “area in which a state faces significant challenges in establishing control. Ungoverned territories can be failed or failing states, poorly controlled land or maritime borders, or areas within otherwise viable states where the central government’s authority does not extend. Ungoverned territories also can extend to airspace.”³⁷

Insurgency is a type of armed challenge to state control. It is defined by the Department of Defense as “an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict.”³⁸ Insurgents can often employ guerilla warfare, conventional military methods, and terror tactics to gain control of territory in order to create “liberated zones” and establish a “counter-state.”³⁹ Insurgents, unlike terrorists, generally enjoy popular support and have achievable goals.⁴⁰ Ungoverned territories are usually their home area, the sovereignty of which is their cause for rebellion.

Ungoverned territories, depending on the type and degree of threat, can be categorized and ranked in the following order: (1) ungoverned territories that harbor terrorists affiliated, associated or inspired by the global jihadist movement; (2) areas containing terrorists, insurgent forces, or criminal networks that are not part of the global jihadist movement; and (3) areas that may not harbor terrorists but that can produce humanitarian crises.⁴¹ The first two categories will be the focus for this thesis.

Ungoverned territories can be analyzed from two dimensions: ungovernability, and conduciveness to insurgent or terrorist presence. Ungovernability means that “the state is unable or unwilling to perform its functions.”⁴² Although structures of authority still exist in these states, they are outside the jurisdiction of the ruling government. Conduciveness measures the degree to which conditions within the ungoverned territory will allow the presence of insurgents or terrorists.⁴³ The variables used to explain these two factors are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Variables of Ungovernability and Conduciveness to Terrorist and Insurgent Presence

Ungovernability	Conduciveness to Insurgency or Terrorist Presence
Lack of state penetration - Absence of state institutions - Lack of physical infrastructure - Corruption and the prevalence of the informal economy - Social/cultural resistance Lack of monopoly of force - Illegal armed groups - Criminal networks - Population with access to arms Lack of border controls External interference	Adequacy of infrastructure and operational access - Transportation and communications - Financial Sources of income Favorable demographics - Presence of extremist groups - Supporting social norms - Preexisting state of violence - Presence of favorably disposed NGOs or social assistance programs open to exploitation - Criminal syndicates available for hire Invisibility

Source: Angel Rabasa et al., *Ungoverned Territories: Understanding and Reducing Risks* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2007), xvi-xvii.

Ungovernability

There are four measures of ungovernability: (1) state penetration into society; (2) monopoly on the use of force; (3) control over borders; and (4) external influence.⁴⁴

The depth of state penetration into society is determined by the presence of functioning state institutions (i.e. law-enforcement and healthcare), and the population's compliance with existing laws. When state institutions and compliance with existing laws are absent, the state ceases to be the source of authority and leaves a void for non-state organizations to enter and take power. Indicators that determine the lack of state penetration include: (1) the lack of physical infrastructure such as buildings, roads and communication networks that will allow the state to extend its influence throughout its

territory; (2) corruption and the prevalence of the informal economy (economic activities that operate beyond formal structures and do not generate tax revenues for the state), which undermines the legitimacy of the government; and (3) social and cultural resistance to penetration by state institutions, where popular disputes in the legitimacy of the state lead to the preference of other entities to serve as the basis for social, judicial, and political organization.⁴⁵

The extent of the state's monopoly on the use of force usually determines the control it has over the population within its borders *vis-à-vis* other competing centers of power. Three indicators on the monopoly on the use of force have been identified: (1) the presence of organized armed groups outside the state's control, whose subversive actions and illegal activities will weaken and undermine the legitimacy of the state; (2) the presence of criminal networks linked to insurgent or terrorist groups, where alliances between both groups will mutually strengthen their respective centers of power within the state and create further disorder; and (3) a population with access to weapons, which would allow competition with the state over the use of force.⁴⁶

The degree of control a state has over its borders is important. Borders are the "interface between neighboring states" where the "transnational movement of people and goods" take place.⁴⁷ Borders are defined between two states. In ungoverned territories, however, this definition does not apply as tribes, clans and families define their own boundaries, often resulting in various groups straddling both sides of the state border. Their disregard for state borders can prove to be problematic. Borders are the "gateways" through which insurgent and terrorist groups move resources and receive support. The

lack of recognition and state control of official borders will serve to facilitate the sustainment of insurgent and terrorist operations.⁴⁸

The last measure of ungovernability is external influence. Weak states are usually vulnerable to external influences because of the power vacuum that exists. The influence of an external power in a state can be blatant, where it suppresses the state government and exerts control over the state's political and economic spaces; or it can be subtle, where external powers take sub-rosa actions to back officials, political groups or non-state actors that oppose the legitimate government.⁴⁹ In either case, external influence will serve to undermine state sovereignty, weaken state control over its territories, and complicate both conflict management and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Conduciveness to Insurgent or Terrorist Presence

The second dimension of ungoverned territories is conduciveness to insurgent or terrorist presence. There are four elements used to assess conduciveness:

(1) Infrastructure and operational access; (2) sources of income; (3) state demographics; and (4) invisibility.⁵⁰

Infrastructure is required for insurgents or terrorists to perform their basic functions. Essential infrastructure elements that are required include: (1) communications facilities; (2) banking systems for the transfer of funds; and (3) a transportation network to facilitate movement and access to potential targets. Operational access, the access of terrorists to their attack venues, is enhanced by the presence of adequate infrastructure.⁵¹

Sources of income are needed to sustain insurgent and terrorist operations. Revenue can be generated through a variety of means, such as donations from diaspora communities, sympathizers or even external state powers.⁵²

State demographics are an important factor that terrorist groups consider before establishing their base of operations. Demographics and social characteristics that attract terrorist interests are: (1) the presence of extremists groups or communities that are willing or can be coerced into providing a base of support; (2) the existence of supportive social norms among the population that can be exploited to enhance terrorist operations; (3) a preexisting state of violence or ethno-religious cleavages resulting from grievances with state authorities that could be engineered to fit extremist agendas; (4) the presence social assistance programs that are open to exploitation, allowing terrorist or insurgent groups to take advantage of social service providers sympathetic to their cause; and (5) the availability of criminal syndicates for hire, which terrorist or insurgent organizations can use to support their activities such as personnel and logistical movement, funding, weapon acquisitions, recruitment, training and operations.⁵³

Invisibility is a critical requirement for the survival of insurgent and terrorist organizations. Usually weaker than the state institutions they challenge, it is therefore essential they conceal their bases and activities from local or international counterterrorist forces to avoid being compromised and destroyed. Invisibility can be a function of the human landscape where uniformity in skin color, language, and social behaviors will allow insurgent and terrorist forces to blend in, particularly in ethnically homogenous areas; or it can be “the consequence of the anonymity provided by modern, cosmopolitan mass society” where the wide diversity in skin color, language and social behavior provides terrorist groups cover in “human heterogeneity.” There are, however, tensions between the requirements of invisibility and operational effectiveness as terrorist groups

will still need to recruit, communicate, and attack targets – activities which will make them vulnerable and susceptible to detection.⁵⁴

US Counterinsurgency Doctrine and the Logical Lines of Operations

Field Manual 3-24 *Counterinsurgency* (FM 3-24) is the US Army's capstone COIN doctrinal guide. Published in 2006, FM 3-24 is intended "to fill a doctrinal gap" for COIN operations by delivering "a manual that provides principles and guidelines for counterinsurgency operations."⁵⁵ Although the development of FM 3-24 is based on "historical studies" and "contemporary experiences," it presents a general approach to COIN operations as it is recognized "that every insurgency is contextual and presents its own set of challenges."⁵⁶

In numerous COIN campaigns, state powers apply strategies based on varying degrees of hard and soft power. FM 3-24 outlines similar strategies called Logical Lines of Operation (LLOs). According to FM 3-24, an LLO is "[a] logical line that connects actions on nodes and/or decisive points related in time and purpose with an objective(s)."⁵⁷ They allow commanders to "visualize, describe and direct operations when positional reference to enemy forces has little relevance."⁵⁸ LLOs are guiding principles for COIN operations with associated tasks within each LLO to focus the operations of military forces in a complex COIN environment. Figure 2 shows the LLOs that *FM 3-24* suggests are critical for success in a COIN campaign. However, they are far from being fixed doctrinal axioms. As FM 3-24 indicates, "[t]hese lines can be customized, renamed, changed altogether, or simply not used. LLOs should be used to isolate the insurgency from the population, address and correct the root causes of the

insurgency, and create or reinforce the societal systems required to sustain the legitimacy of the HN [host nation] government.”⁵⁹ The LLOs are conceptually centered on influencing the attitude of the populace rather than the enemy. The successful end state of a COIN campaign is defined by a public attitude that predominantly supports or is neutral to the government rather than the destruction of the enemy.⁶⁰

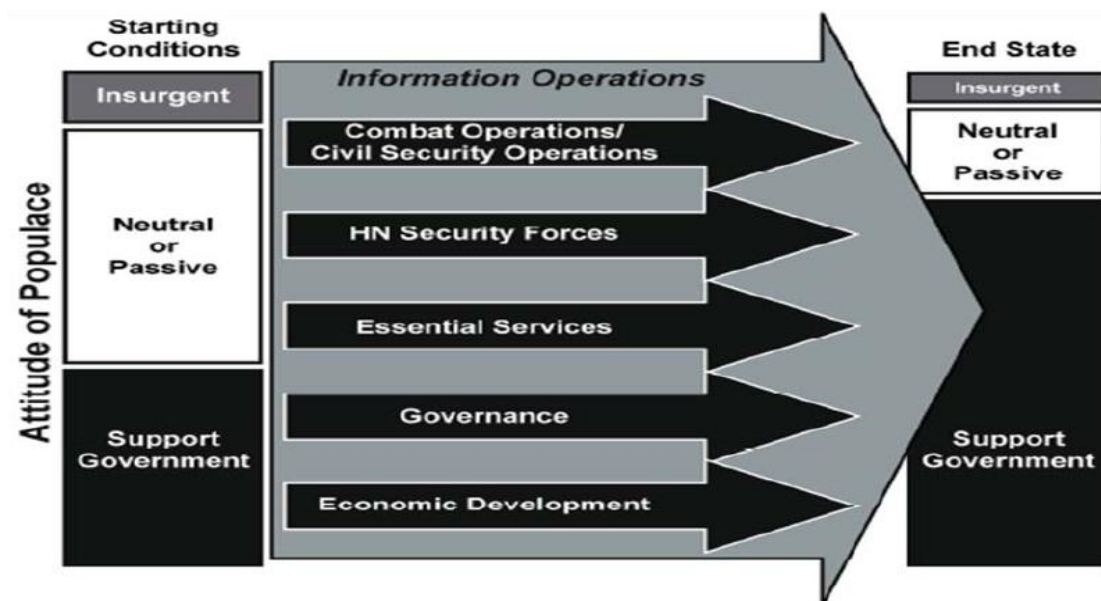


Figure 2. Logical Lines of Operation for a Counterinsurgency
Source: Department of the Army, FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, December 2006), 5-3.

The significance of each LLO is illustrated in the next few sections. Although each LLO is explained separately, it must be emphasized that all the LLOs are intertwined and has a mutually reinforcing relationship with each other.

Combat Operations/ Civil Security Operations LLO

These operations are most familiar to military forces. In full spectrum operations, offensive, defensive and stability operations are conducted simultaneously. Offensive and defensive operations are combat operations that focus on defeating enemy forces, and are needed in COIN to “address insurgents who cannot be co-opted into operating inside the rule of law.”⁶¹ Sometimes, it may require the use of overwhelming force and the killing of violent extremists. FM 3-24, however, warns that COIN is still a “war amongst the people” and urged that restraint be exercised to avoid harming innocent people and turning the populace against COIN efforts.⁶² Stability operations, on the other hand, focus on “security and control of areas, resources, and populations.”⁶³ They include civil security and civil control where military forces are tasked to protect and provide security for a population.

It must be noted that COIN actions are population-centric and public reaction must be taken into account; public security and perception, rather than the destruction of the enemy, are the centers of gravity.

Host Nation Security Forces LLO

This LLO is based on the fundamental requirement for the host nation (HN) to ultimately secure its own people. It involves providing assistance to the HN to “develop the forces required to establish and sustain stability within its borders.”⁶⁴ COIN forces are encouraged to take a comprehensive approach in “developing, equipping, training and employing HN security forces” and also to involve local civic, military and political leaders in order to “achieve legitimacy in the eyes of the populace.”⁶⁵ When appropriate,

training and security responsibilities should be transferred to HN personnel as soon as possible.

Essential Services LLO

This LLO addresses the “life support needs” and grievances of the population.⁶⁶ Although the provision of essential services is often the responsibility of HN, interagency or international organizations; military forces may initially have to take a leading role in an unstable environment where other agencies might not be present or do have the capabilities to meet HN needs. The conduct of this LLO is critical in shaping public perceptions as well. FM 3-24 encourages military forces to “appreciate local preferences” and help “the populace understand what is possible” when establishing or restoring “essential services.”⁶⁷ Efforts must be made to manage the expectations of the populace and ensure they understand the associated problems in providing these services. Setting realistic goals and fulfilling them is important; if not, both HN government and COIN forces will stand to lose their credibility with the populace. The desired long-term goal for this LLO is for the HN government to assume full responsibility for the provision of essential services.⁶⁸

Governance LLO

Governance addresses the “HN government’s ability to gather and distribute resources while providing direction and control for society.”⁶⁹ It involves activities such as taxation, law enforcement, policy development and provision of public services. Effective governance is essential in achieving legitimacy for the HN government. It will “probably affect the lives of the populace more than any other COIN activities” and

“[w]hen well executed, these actions may eliminate the root causes of insurgency.”⁷⁰ In an unstable environment, a HN government might not exist, or if it does, it might not have the capability to exercise effective governance. As such, military forces might have to establish and maintain a civil administration while developing a HN governance capability.⁷¹

Economic Development LLO

FM 3-24 states that there are both “short- and long-term aspects” to the economic development LLO. Short-term strategies developed within this LLO will address “immediate problems, such as large-scale employment and reestablishing an economy at all levels” and long-term strategies will involve “stimulating indigenous, robust, and broad economic activity.”⁷² The effects of employing this LLO go beyond that of the HN economy. A viable economy generates employment opportunities, and will not only provide the working population with the means to care for themselves and their families, it will also promote government legitimacy and undermine the “false promises offered by insurgents.”⁷³ In contrast, a stagnant or failing economy will allow insurgent groups to exploit the lack of employment opportunities to gain support and new recruits, and will serve to strengthen the population’s perception of a growing insurgent power and their likelihood of victory. The economic development LLO, therefore, plays a significant role in shaping the perceptions and attitudes of the public.

Information Operations LLO

The information operations (IO) LLO “may often be the decisive LLO” as it sets the conditions for success of all the other LLOs.⁷⁴ The key tasks of IO are managing

perceptions and expectations; legitimizing the HN government; and delegitimizing the insurgents. IO manages the public's perceptions and expectations by "reporting and explaining HN government and counterinsurgent actions" and "what counterinsurgents can achieve."⁷⁵ Care, however, must be taken to reinforce all promises and claims with action so as to avoid undermining the credibility of the HN government and COIN forces. IO can build popular support and further the legitimacy of the HN government as well by identifying and addressing the specific concerns of the populace, and publicizing HN achievements. IO can also be used against the insurgents by targeting insurgent propaganda, discrediting their claims and exposing their lies to the local populace. If effectively used, IO can "address the subject of root causes that insurgents use to gain support."⁷⁶ Where possible, IO can be conducted to influence the insurgents and their attitudes towards a peaceful resolution.

The scope of IO is extremely broad, covering tactical engagements such as face-to-face meetings with the local populace or insurgent leaders to strategic engagements such as interviews with the international media. The effects of IO are far reaching and the ramifications of weak IO efforts are detrimental to the overall COIN campaign. It is therefore imperative that commanders place sufficient emphasis on it in order to ensure success.

Conclusion

There is an initial sense that ASEAN's ability to address the problem of insurgencies and their associated threat of terrorism in ungoverned territories is constrained by its organizational principles and the ASEAN way. The non-use of force, aspirations of regional autonomy, non-interference and aversion to multilateral alliances

seem to leave ASEAN with few options to work with. As such, there is a need for a detailed analysis of the insurgencies in Southeast Asia, using the two frameworks introduced, to identify whether there are specific areas which ASEAN can influence within its organizational constraints. This study will be done in chapter 4.

The challenge of this research would be to find ways for ASEAN to address the problem of ungoverned territories. The next chapter will look into the methodology through which these solutions can be derived.

¹ Michael Leifer, *ASEAN and the Security of Southeast Asia* (London: Routledge, 1989), 1-2.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., 4.

⁴ Tim Huxley, *Insecurity in the ASEAN Region* (Great Britain: Sherrens Printers, 1993), 4.

⁵ Ibid..

⁶ Alison Broinowski, *Understanding ASEAN* (London; Macmillan, 1982), 277.

⁷ Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia* (London: Routledge, 2001), 47.

⁸ Ibid., 48.

⁹ Ibid., 47.

¹⁰ Ibid., 48.

¹¹ Ibid., 51.

¹² Ibid., 49-51.

¹³ Ibid., 51.

¹⁴ Adam Malik, "Djakarta Conference and Asia's Political Future," *Pacific Community* 2, no. 1 (October 1970): 74.

- ¹⁵ Acharya, 51-52.
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⁴⁴ Ibid., 3.

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⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 14.

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⁵⁵ US Army, FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2006), Foreword.

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⁶⁵ Ibid., 5-13 to 5-14.

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CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter will describe the methodology used to analyze whether ASEAN, given its organizational constraints, will or will not be able to facilitate and coordinate regional efforts in addressing the problems of domestic insurgencies within Southeast Asia. An overview of the methodology will first be presented followed by a detailed explanation of its component parts to give a better understanding of the rationale behind the research process.

Research Methodology

The research methodology consists of three sequential steps, namely “frame the problem,” “analyze the problem” and “recommend solutions.” In “frame the problem,” the background information required to form the context for the research will first be presented. Following which, the conceptual frameworks that will be used to study the problem will be introduced. In “analyze the problem,” a case study approach using these frameworks will be applied to analyze two selected case studies of ongoing insurgencies in Southeast Asia. A control variable will also be used as a comparison to evaluate the effectiveness of ASEAN in addressing its security concerns. Subsequently, the findings from the analyses will be used to identify potential areas which ASEAN can influence to improve Southeast Asia’s security environment with respect to the threat of insurgencies. In the last step, “recommend solutions,” it will be determined if ASEAN, within its organizational constraints, is able to address the problem of insurgencies; and if so, the

actions that should be taken. A diagrammatic representation of the research methodology is as shown in Figure 3.

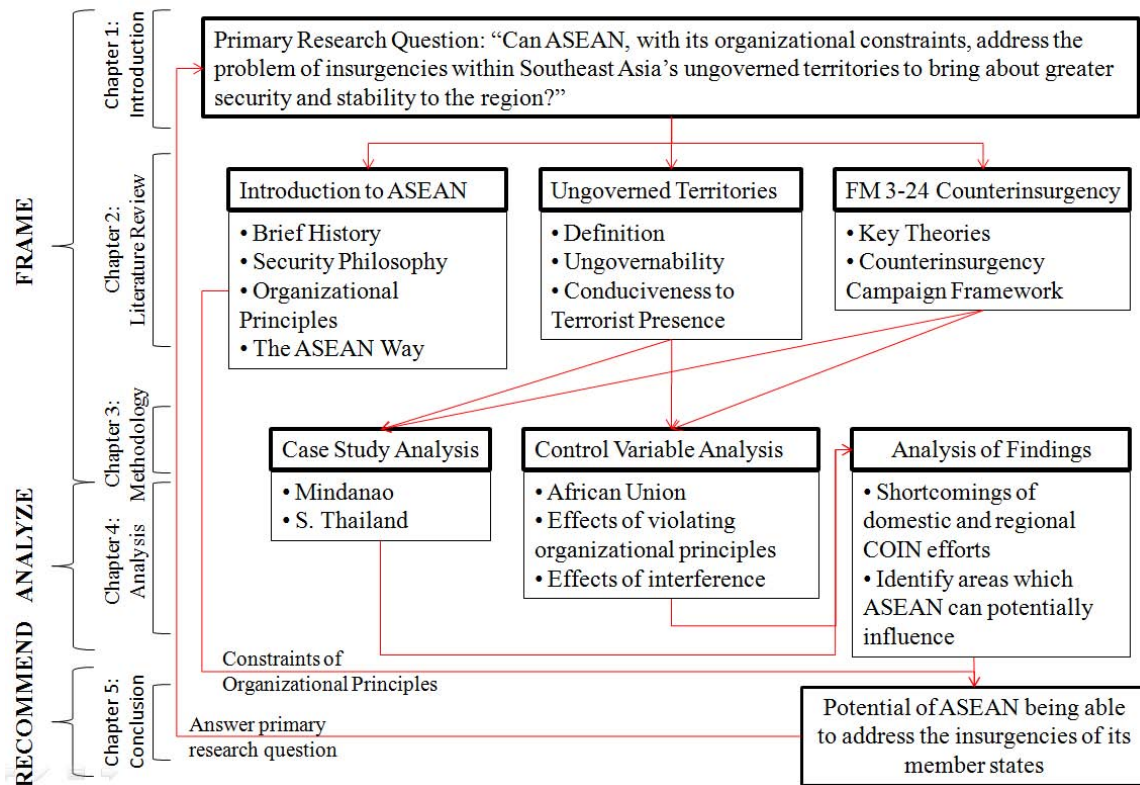


Figure 3. Methodology Diagram

Frame the Problem

The background information needed to introduce the problem and build the context for the research will be obtained from various literature sources. This information will cover the current security environment from the perspective of insurgencies within Southeast Asia; the regional threat presented by these insurgencies; the evolution of ASEAN and its philosophy on regional security; the organizational principles and

working culture of ASEAN; and the constraints these principles have imposed on the organization.

Case studies of insurgencies within Southeast Asia will be selected to examine the problems underlying these conflicts and the actions taken by the respective state governments to resolve its problems. The case studies will be: (1) be ongoing crises; and (2) have a serious regional security implication that warrants the attention of the ASEAN and its member states. Two conceptual frameworks will be used to conduct this examination. The first is the ungoverned territories framework presented by the RAND study *Ungoverned Territories – Understanding and Reducing Risks*. The second is the counterinsurgency campaign framework presented in the US Army Field Manual, FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*.

The case studies will be analyzed from two dimensions within the ungoverned territories framework, namely ungovernability and conduciveness to insurgent or terrorist presence. Both these dimensions will be evaluated by a number of variables; some of which are broken down into measurable indicators for greater precision. The variables and indicators of ungovernability and conduciveness to insurgent or terrorist presence are as explained in chapter 2.

The counterinsurgency campaign framework introduced in chapter 2 depicts the logical lines of operations (LLOs) required to synchronize operations and unify efforts of various organizations and agencies to achieve the desired campaign end state. Each LLO represents a conceptual strategy that state governments or COIN forces can employ. This framework will be used to evaluate the COIN efforts taken so far by the state governments of the countries in the selected case studies.

Analyze the Problem

Using the above-mentioned frameworks, the two selected case studies will be broken down and analyzed so as to provide an understanding of the root causes of the insurgencies as well as the adequacy of actions taken by the respective state governments to counter the insurgencies. In addition, the African Union (AU) will be examined as a control variable to evaluate the effectiveness of ASEAN and compare the effects of different geo-political spaces and organizational approaches on regional COIN and conflict-resolution efforts.

A comparison and analysis of the two case studies will be done to evaluate the COIN efforts of the respective state governments. The study of the control variable will highlight the effectiveness of ASEAN vis-à-vis the AU in addressing the threat of insurgencies. From the findings, areas for improvement can then be ascertained.

Recommend Solutions

In this step, it will be determined if ASEAN is able to address the insurgencies; and if so, measures will be proposed to address the shortcomings identified in the analyses of the case studies and the control variable. The working principles of ASEAN will be taken into consideration as well to ensure that the recommended solutions are within ASEAN's organizational constraints.

Conclusion

The methodology described will be applied in the next chapter to analyze the insurgencies of Mindanao, Philippines and Southern Thailand using the ungoverned territories and FM 3-24 counterinsurgency campaign framework; study the African Union

as a control variable to evaluate ASEAN; and from the findings, identify key areas in domestic and regional COIN efforts which ASEAN can potentially influence. The analysis will then form a basis for recommendations in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Introduction

As part of this study's objective to determine if ASEAN is able to address the threat of insurgencies within Southeast Asia, the insurgencies themselves must first be examined. This chapter will analyze the case studies of two major ongoing insurgencies in Southeast Asia namely the insurgency in Mindanao, Philippines and the insurgency in Southern Thailand. These insurgencies are chosen because of the regional security implications they have due to their links with international terrorist organizations such as the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and al-Qaeda. For each of these case studies, the background of the insurgency will first be introduced, followed by an assessment of the insurgent area as an ungoverned territory. Thereafter, the counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy of the state government will be analyzed using the FM 3-24 COIN campaign framework to assess their effectiveness in overcoming the insurgency. In addition to these case studies, the role of the African Union (AU) in African COIN efforts and conflict resolution will be briefly examined to serve as a control variable for evaluating the effectiveness of ASEAN's principles and policies in maintaining security within Southeast Asia. The findings from the analyses of the two case studies and the African Union as a control variable will then be used to address the potential of ASEAN's role in resolving the insurgencies within Southeast Asia.

Insurgency in Mindanao, Philippines

Background

The Islamic separatist insurgency in Mindanao as well as the communist insurgency waged by the Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army/National Democratic Front (CPP/NPA/NDF) in Luzon and Visayas are considered to be two of the world's longest existing insurgencies.¹ This case study, however, will focus only on the insurgency in Mindanao.

Mindanao is the second largest and southernmost island of the Philippines. It is one of the three main island groups of Philippines along with Luzon and Visayas. The island is broken up into six regions and many provinces. It comprises of many ethnic groups such as the Maranao, the Tausug, the Banguingui, the Lumad, and is also home to most of the country's Muslim or Moro population. The location of Mindanao with respect to the rest of the Philippines is as shown in the map depicted in Figure 4.1.

The Philippines was formerly a Spanish colony. During the era of Spanish colonization, the Spaniards came to the Philippines and took control over most of Luzon and Visayas. In Mindanao, however, their success was limited. The Spaniards only managed to establish footholds in northern and eastern Mindanao and the Zamboango peninsula due to strong local resistance. After the Spanish-American War, Mindanao was transferred by Spain to the United States together with the rest of the Philippines. The Moros protested this transfer as they viewed the island as sovereign territory; Muslim Mindanao was never under direct Spanish rule and as such, the Spaniards had no right to transfer the territory over to the Americans. The Americans, however, did not see it from that perspective and proceeded to suppress Moro resistance in order to establish direct

rule over the south. Slavery and polygamy was abolished and western societal reforms were introduced to reshape the region as well as to encourage the Moros to adopt “prevailing concepts of modernity.”²



Figure 4. Map of the Philippines

Source: CIA Fact Book, “Philippines,” <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rp.html> (accessed 20 January 2009).

In order to pacify Muslim Mindanao, American authorities established a Moro province, separate from the rest of the Philippines. However, they also started a large-

scale campaign to attract people from Luzon and Visayas to resettle in Mindanao, presumably to assimilate the indigenous population and mitigate the threat of separatism.³ The migration policy came into effect during the Commonwealth period, when the Americans were transitioning authority to the Filipinos, and then accelerated after Philippines declared independence in 1946. As Mindanao was being populated by an increasing population of Christian settlers, the indigenous population began to feel that they were being robbed of their lands as well as economic opportunities. The shift in the demographic balance and its effects on land ownership gradually caused the natives to develop a deep distrust and resentment of the Manila government; feelings that would eventually fuel the current insurgency.⁴

In 1968, Mindanao became a flashpoint of conflict when Muslim troops were murdered by the Philippine government under President Ferdinand Marcos in efforts to quell an army mutiny (the “Correidor Incident”). The outrage of the Muslim population coupled with the accumulated resentment from the perceived marginalization of Muslim natives in Mindanao drove a group of Filipino Muslims into action. They decided that the only alternative to prevent Muslims in Mindanao from being victimized further was to seek independence from Manila and create a *Bangsmoro* or an independent “Moro Nation.” Led by Nur Misuari, a University of the Philippines professor, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) was formed. The MNLF declared itself a Filipino Muslim liberation movement and started the Islamic Insurgency in the Philippines with the objective of achieving independence, carrying out terrorist attacks and assassinations in promotion of their cause.

In 1975, the Philippine government began peace talks with the MNLF in efforts to end hostilities. However, disagreements within the MNLF on various issues arose during the protracted negotiations with Manila. The group suffered internal factionalism and in 1981, a splinter group broke off from the MNLF to form the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). In 1996, a peace agreement was finally signed between the MNLF and the Philippine Government, and semi-autonomy was given to the areas with Muslim majorities. The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) was established and MNLF was put in charge to govern the territory.⁵

Peace talks with the MILF followed soon after in July 1997. The peace process, however, was frequently interrupted by fighting in areas controlled by renegade commanders who acted independently of the MILF command. During such interruptions, negotiations would come to a halt until one side offers to resume the peace process and talks would then pick up where they left off. Until 2008, there has been steady progress and it seemed like a peace agreement could soon be brokered.⁶

However, on 14 October 2008 the Supreme Court of the Philippines declared the draft Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD), the “culmination of eleven years’ negotiation” to grant Muslim Mindanao greater autonomy, unconstitutional and ended the hope of a peaceful resolution to the insurgency.⁷ The move by the Supreme Court was a last minute response to petitions from outraged local politicians whose lands would be affected by the terms of territorial realignment in the MOD-AD. They said that they had not been consulted during the negotiation process and demanded an injunction. The MILF, however, would not stand for any renegotiation, stating that it was already a “done deal.”⁸ The Supreme Court nevertheless granted the injunction. Shortly thereafter

renewed fighting broke out. Several renegade commanders acted outside the MILF chain of command and declared war on the Philippine government and the non-Muslim inhabitants in Mindanao, burning several Christian villages and killing innocents. An estimated 200 civilians were killed with another few hundred thousand displaced.⁹ Unlike the past when talks could be picked up from the point where they broke down, the controversies and political conditions surrounding the collapse of the MOD-AD has made it extremely difficult to reverse.¹⁰

The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) is another breakaway group from the MNLF. Established in 1991 by a core of renegade MNLF fighters who fought as *Mujahideen* in the Afghan-Soviet war,¹¹ the ASG seeks to establish an independent Islamic and Theocratic State of Mindanao. Unlike the MILF, the ASG carries out indiscriminate terror attacks with no regard to the lives of civilians. The ASG are linked to and receives assistance from Al-Qaeda and the Jemaah Islamiah (JI). The ASG not only poses a security threat to the country but to the region as well.

US forces have been active in providing assistance to the Philippines in their fight against the ASG because of the ASG's status as an international terrorist organization¹² and its murder of American citizens. The Philippine administration allowed US involvement in what essentially was a domestic conflict because it was in their national interest to eliminate the threat of terrorism within the Philippines.¹³ US activities, however, were only limited to the islands of Basilan and Jolo where the ASG resided. In January 2002, the US launched Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines (OEF-P) and deployed 650 troops for training and advisory missions to assist the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) against the ASG. With US assistance, the AFP has been successful in

combating the ASG, bringing down its numbers from more than 1,200 in 2002 to less than 500 today.¹⁴

Mindanao as an Ungoverned Territory

Mindanao exhibits a high degree of ungovernability from the lack of state penetration, monopoly of force, and border control. The lack of state penetration in Mindanao is characterized by the weakness of state institutions, the prevalence of corruption, and social/cultural resistance; the lack of monopoly of force by the state government is attributed to the presence of other centers of power holding substantial influence over the local population, namely the MILF, the ASG and the JI; and the lack of border control is due to the inability of its naval forces and coast guard to patrol its maritime borders. Each of these variables will be explained in further detail.

The lack of state penetration has made Mindanao a difficult region to govern. The weaknesses of the ARMM institutions and the ineffectiveness of the law enforcement system have brought great hardship to the population and undermined the legitimacy of the local government. Since the AARM was established, poverty in the region has risen because of corruption amongst the governing MNLF leaders. Although billions of dollars in aid have been given to the region, there is little to show for it. The privatization of justice is also common as the faulty justice system leaves the populace hardly any option but to resolve serious grievances themselves. The populace distrusted the central government as well, and often questioned its sincerity in addressing their concerns as “extreme changes in policy by successive governments [have] disrupted the implementation of peace and development initiatives.”¹⁵

Social and cultural resistance leading to disputes on the state government's legitimacy has also contributed to the lack of state penetration. This resistance originated from the migration policy where settlers from Luzon and Visayas moved to Mindanao, which the Moros saw as an encroachment on their homeland. The transmigration not only altered the ethnic and religious balance, it also shifted the political and social balance as the influence of the settlers increased with their numbers. In addition, the demands for land created conflicts between the Moros, the settlers and the state government due to clashing interpretations of land ownership. The polarization of ethnic and religious groups together with the disenfranchisement of the Moros from their land and resources fueled separatist sentiments, motivated the self-identification of *Bangsmoro* and the subsequent outbreak of armed hostilities as the Moros sought to preserve their way of life.¹⁶

The state government lacks a monopoly of force in Mindanao due to the presence of competing centers of power. The MILF is the most powerful competing center of power in Mindanao as it has “established a para-state with a standing army in the areas that it controls.”¹⁷ The MILF is deployed in nine base commands throughout western Mindanao with its armed strength estimated from 8,000 to 15,000 and higher. The MILF employs guerilla warfare tactics but generally does not advocate indiscriminate attacks against non-combatants. Only certain renegade elements of the MILF are involved in terror attacks. These renegade elements come from factions in the MILF that do not entirely support the leadership, a rift that extremist groups such as the JI and ASG have been known to exploit through the establishment of “symbiotic relationship[s]” with these renegade factions.¹⁸ The MILF as an organization, however, “is sensitive to the

issue of linkages with outside extremists” and have, in 2003, “renounced terrorism” and the use of terror tactics as part of the peace process with Manila.¹⁹ It has even cooperated with the AFP in the search and capture of terrorists.²⁰

Other centers of power include the prominent clans and families within Mindanao. A major source of conflict in the ARMM is from the feuds between the clans and families. Known as *ridos*, these feuds have been a major contributing factor to the instability of the region. Local police do not interfere in the *ridos* for fear of being killed.²¹

The lack of effective border control is another major contributing factor to the ungovernability of the ARMM. The maritime borders of the island of Mindanao are difficult to control because of the lack of patrolling capabilities in its territorial waters.²² As such, the island is vulnerable to infiltration by foreign extremists as well as transnational criminals such as smugglers and drug traffickers.

Several conditions make Mindanao conducive to insurgent or terrorist presence – the adequacy of infrastructure and operational access; the availability of multiple sources of income; favorable demographics and social characteristics; and invisibility.

The adequacy of infrastructure and operational access within the region provides insurgents and terrorists with a viable base of operations. Roads linking small towns to cities provide insurgents and terrorists with ease of movement from their bases to their target areas. The availability of flights out of the region also allows terrorists to export terror to other parts of the country and the world. In addition, the growing presence of communications infrastructure such as cell phone networks and internet connectivity allows these extremists to interact and coordinate with their foreign counterparts.

Facilities and services to allow the transfer of monetary funds from overseas sources aid in insurgent and terror operations as well. From January to September 2005, Filipino workers overseas remitted US\$5.6 billion to the Philippines;²³ and it can be assumed that the insurgent and terrorist organizations based in Mindanao have been receiving their funding through similar channels.

Insurgent and terrorist groups in Mindanao are able to derive their income from both noncriminal and criminal means. Noncriminal means include direct fund-raising activities as well as written appeals to corporate companies or charities sympathetic to their needs; criminal means include extortion, robbery, piracy and kidnapping for ransom. The MILF engage in both extortion and kidnap-for-ransom to generate income.²⁴ Its main source of income, however, is donations from sympathizers and international Islamic organizations through *zakat*, charity donations collected for the welfare of the poor but diverted instead to fund the insurgency.²⁵

The demographics and social characteristics in Mindanao are favorable to both insurgent and terrorist presence. Poverty is widespread throughout the region. The GDP per capita is less than \$700 as compared to the country's \$1600 and more than 55 percent of the population lives under the poverty line. The living conditions in Mindanao are mediocre as well and the population is often without basic essential services such as electricity. Many of the Muslim inhabitants support the insurgency because they blame the under-development of the region on the discrimination of the Catholic-majority government in Manila.²⁶

Terrorists groups in Mindanao generally rely on the acceptance of the insurgents. Although there is no "genuine affinity" between the terrorist groups and the Moro

separatists, they are nevertheless accepted into the local community for their ability to provide training and resources. The Moro insurgents, however, do not identify with or see their efforts as being part of the global terror network as their interests do not extend beyond the boundaries of Mindanao.²⁷

Invisibility in Mindanao is easily achieved as the region has a highly diverse geography that consists of complex mountains, volcanic peaks, triple-canopy jungles and swamps. Most of the terrain is inhospitable and not easily accessible, and is therefore ideal for insurgents and terrorists to stay hidden from counter-terrorist forces and law enforcement authorities. Foreign terrorists such as the JI, however, have difficulty blending in with the population. Although similar in appearance to the Moros, they can be easily picked out as they do not speak fluent Tagalog or any Moro language. Their invisibility, therefore, largely depends on the level of support of the insurgents and the local populace and their willingness to shield them from state authorities and security forces.²⁸

A summary of the variables and indicators that define the dimensions of ungovernability and conduciveness to insurgent or terrorist presence for Mindanao is shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Variables and Indicators of Mindanao as an Ungoverned Territory

Variables and Indicators	Mindanao
Ungovernability	
<u>Lack of state penetration</u> - Absence of state institutions - Social/cultural resistance - Corruption	Weak ARRM institutions; Weak justice system. Indigenous populace seeking to protect their way of life against settlers from the rest of the Philippines. Rife amongst MNLF leaders.
<u>Lack of monopoly of force</u>	MILF as main competing center of power; Other centers of power include prominent clans and families in Mindanao.
<u>Lack of border control</u>	Maritime borders are difficult to guard against infiltration by foreign extremists and criminals.
Conduciveness to Terrorist and Insurgent Presence	
<u>Adequacy of infrastructure and op access</u> - Transportation and communications - Financial	Availability of roads from small towns to big cities; Availability of flights; Growing communications infrastructure. Availability of money remittance services and facilities.
<u>Sources of income</u>	From both criminal and non-criminal means; MILF main source is from donations from sympathizers and Islamic organizations.
<u>Favorable demographics</u> - Presence of extremist groups - Supporting social norms	MILF, ASG ARMM is poorest region in country; Population resents state government.
<u>Invisibility</u>	Diverse geography allows extremists to hide; Language creates a problem for foreign extremists.

The Insurgency in Mindanao as a Regional Security Threat

The ungoverned territory of Mindanao poses a security threat to the region because it harbors the JI and the ASG terrorist organizations.

The JI represents the global jihadist movement in the Southeast Asian region and is closely linked to the al-Qaeda. It is based in Indonesia, but uses Mindanao as its rear area for its operations.²⁹ Indonesian sources have reported small groups of terrorists from JI and other terrorist organizations being sent to Mindanao for training.³⁰ The JI cadre in Mindanao seems to be training the MILF as well, probably in reciprocation for their hospitality. JI trainers have been reported to be working with some local MILF commanders despite the latest efforts of the central MILF leadership to distance themselves from the global jihadist movement. It is possible that the leadership does not know about the full extent of arrangements their individual commanders have with the JI. The demands for training and personal ties are some of the reasons for these ongoing relationships.³¹

The ASG is a homegrown Filipino jihadist group established in the early 1990s with the goal of creating “an independent theocratic state based on Wahhabi principles in the southern Philippines.” The core members are former MNLF members,³² who fought as Mujahideens in the Afghan-Soviet war.³³ Over the years, however, the ASG has lost most of its ideology and have “degenerated into a criminal enterprise disguised in Islamic ideology.” The ASG is now an organization that uses terror to commit crime for profit and is a major threat to the security of Mindanao. The MILF and a majority of the local populace do not support the ASG because of their indiscriminate attacks against civilians and “their involvement in . . . un-Islamic activities.” This has contributed to the wane of

ASG's capabilities and its influence in Mindanao over the past few years. According to the Philippine military, the ASG has an estimated remaining strength of about 300 fighters. Their activities include kidnappings, bombings, assassinations, and extortions.³⁴ The ASG's terror tactics and its links to al-Qaeda, JI and the global jihadist movement, makes the group a serious security threat to the region. The ASG has been declared as an international terrorist organization by the US and the E.U.³⁵

The COIN Campaign in Mindanao

The insurgencies in the Philippines pose a serious security threat to the country and hinder the development of peace and stability. Recognizing that these are multi-faceted challenges with economic, social and political implications, the state government formulated the National Internal Security Plan (NISP) in 2001 to address the problem. The NISP articulates the Strategy of Holistic Approach (SHA), which consists of the following components: (1) political/legal/diplomatic response; (2) peace and order/security; (3) socioeconomic/ psychosocial development; and (4) information dissemination.³⁶ This plan involves the mobilization of all government agencies from the national level down to the regional and local levels to address the different aspects and root causes of the insurgencies – poverty, ignorance, disease and injustice.³⁷

In this section, the application of the SHA strategy to the insurgency in Mindanao will be examined in further detail using the FM 3-24 COIN campaign framework. The SHA strategy corresponds to the COIN framework as each of its strategy component relates to one or more LLOs. The relationship between the FM 3-24 COIN campaign framework and the SHA; and a summary of the COIN measures taken by the government

along each LLO is as shown in Figure 4. Some of these measures involving US assistance address efforts against the ASG and the insurgency in Basilan and Jolo only.

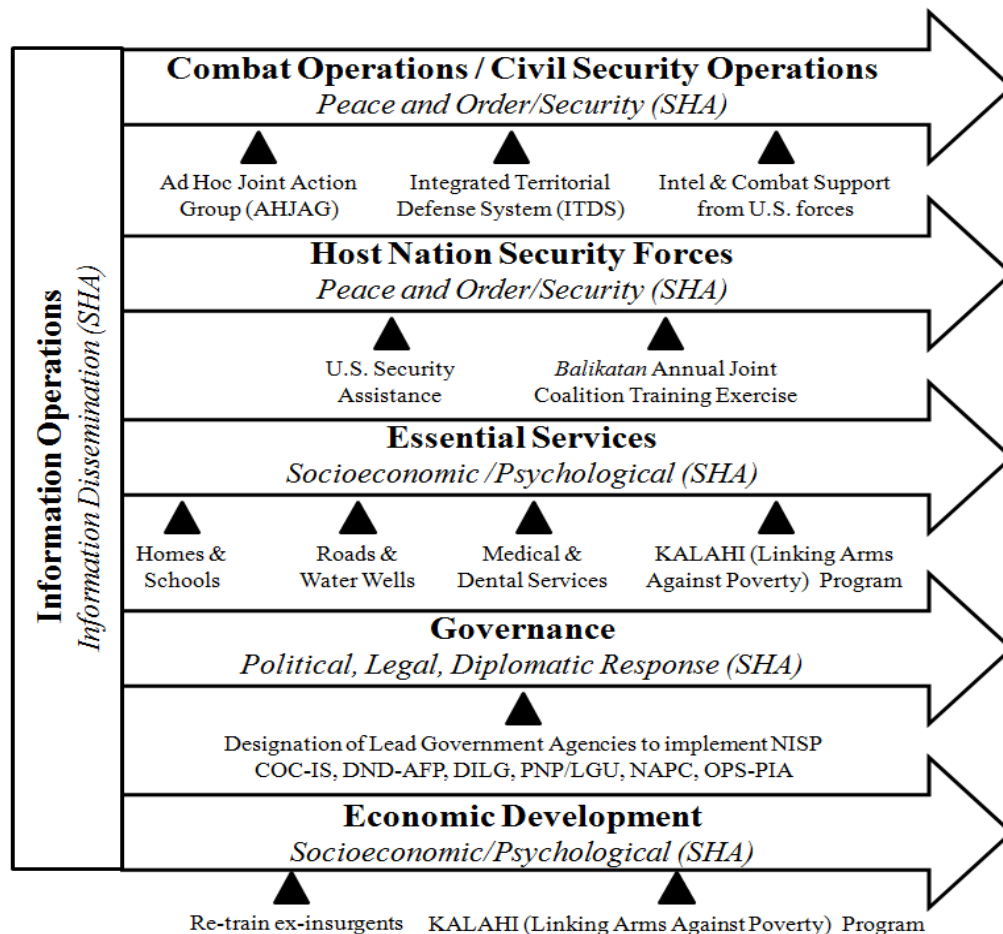


Figure 5. COIN Campaign in Mindanao, Philippines

The Combat Operations/Civil Security LLO enables the Peace and Order/Security component of the SHA. The Ad Hoc Joint Action Group (AHJAG) is one of the initiatives along this LLO. The AHJAG aims to coordinate actions between the Philippine government and the MILF as well as to facilitate intelligence sharing on

terrorists.³⁸ By increased cooperation with the MILF, the AHJAG has also prevented the escalation of conflicts between the two parties. It has contributed to the combat operations of the AFP as well by allowing them to weed out terrorist groups in Mindanao more effectively. Fulfilling the civil security requirement is the establishment of the Integrated Territorial Defense System (ITDS) to protect the population and secure vital installations and national assets from extremist attacks. The ITDS involves three main components: (1) National Police territorial forces; (2) Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Units (CAFGU); and (3) Local Government Units (LGU) with Civilian Volunteer Organizations (CVO).³⁹ In Basilan and Jolo, US forces have enhanced the combat capabilities of the AFP with the use of their Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) assets to provide real-time intelligence for the AFP to track down the elusive insurgents. US personnel accompany Philippine troops on patrols as well, but only in a supporting capacity as they are forbidden to take part in combat operations.

The Host Nation Security Forces LLO, similar to the combat operations/civil security LLO, also enables the SHA Peace and Order/Security component. The US has played a significant role in improving the capabilities of the Philippine security forces in Basilan and Jolo. US security assistance includes monetary support as well as the re-equipping, re-education and re-training of both military and police forces. US experts are also involved in the Philippine Defense Reform Program to improve internal security capabilities such as counterterrorism and disaster response. In addition, an annual joint coalition training exercise known as *Balikatan* (Shoulder to Shoulder) is conducted with US Special Forces personnel where training and advice are provided to the AFP.⁴⁰

The Essential Services and Economic Development LLOs both enable the socioeconomic/psychological component of the SHA. In Mindanao, US civil affairs teams have been providing aid for the building of new schools, homes, water wells and roads. Free medical and dental services, when possible, are being provided to the populace as well. The US Agency for International Development have also aided in these LLOs with \$130 million worth of projects planned over the next five years. Some of their completed projects include the re-training of ex-MNLF fighters to acquire useful skills such as farming or computer installation to improve their employment opportunities.⁴¹ A major domestic effort along these two LLOs is the development of the national strategy, *Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan* (KALAHARI or Linking Arms Against Poverty), by the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) to reduce poverty in the country.⁴² The KALAHARI employs a strategy of convergence by bringing together the resources from organizations in both public and private sectors to alleviate the conditions of the country's poorest local communities.⁴³ However, the effects of the KALAHARI have been limited as a majority of the Filipino communities have yet to receive the benefits of the anti-poverty program.

The Governance LLO provides the political, legal and diplomatic response required in the SHA to develop a unity of effort within the government bureaucracy in implementing the NISP. The bureaucracy was reformed with various government agencies being reassigned and tasked with the responsibilities of being the lead convenors in implementing and integrating the measures and services required. The Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security (COC-IS) is the agency with the overall responsibility of directing, coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the NISP

and integrating the efforts of government agencies, government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs), LGUs, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and people's organizations (POs).⁴⁴ Other lead agencies working with the COC-IS are the Department of National Defense (DND)/AFP, the lead for the NISP's Security Component;⁴⁵ the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), the lead of the NISP's political component; the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the LGUs, responsible for local security; the NAPC, in charge of monitoring the government's socio-economic and psychosocial strategies and programs; and the Office of the Press Secretary/ Philippine Information Agency, the lead for the Information Component.

The Information Operations (IO) LLO corresponds with the information component of the SHA. IO is inherent in all the other LLOs as the actions and initiatives taken by government agencies, security forces and other organizations contribute towards shaping the attitudes and perceptions of the population. For example, according to a US Army Captain working in the Philippines, the provision of essential services to the local populace in Basilan and Jolo have allowed the Philippine government and US forces to persistently engage the population in order to build the trust and confidence needed for their cooperation in providing intelligence on the insurgents.⁴⁶

US forces assisting the AFP are also careful to credit the work done to their Filipino counterparts, as a positive image is needed to build the legitimacy and support for the AFP and the Philippine government. This is part of the reason why the US forces do not participate in combat operations with the AFP.⁴⁷ By enabling them instead of fighting for them, US forces are able to bolster the reputation of the AFP through

successes against the insurgent armies, thereby creating a sense of security amongst the population that the AFP are able to protect them against coercion from the insurgents.

More direct forms of IO are also conducted as part of the campaign, such as text messaging campaigns, distribution of pamphlets as well as comics to target various population groups. One important instrument was the “Special Operations Team” (SOT) concept which focuses on dialogue with villagers in order to dismantle the politico-military structure of the insurgents within the community.⁴⁸

Assessment of the COIN Campaign in Mindanao

The results of the COIN campaign in Mindanao have been mixed. While the MILF continues to present a problem to the Philippine government, particularly after the peace talks collapsed in 2008, COIN actions against the ASG have largely been successful. The ASG has not managed to carry out a major terrorist attack since 2005 and has degenerated into a common criminal group conducting kidnap-for-ransoms and drug trafficking to sustain itself financially. Its estimated strength has fallen from more than 1200 in 2002 to fewer than 500 in 2008. The JI working with the ASG also has fewer than 100 members left in the Philippines. Many key leaders of the ASG and JI have been eliminated and their links with al-Qaeda mostly severed.⁴⁹

It has been widely acknowledged that the success against the ASG is largely due to US assistance.⁵⁰ The capabilities and expertise of the US forces have enhanced the capabilities of the AFP and the Philippine government, and contributed to the success of the COIN campaign. More importantly, US oversight brought international pressure on the Philippine government to ensure that its military and civilian organizations coordinated and collaborated with each other to perform and accomplish their tasks.

As US efforts were focused mainly on the elimination of the ASG on the islands of Basilan and Jolo, the effects of the COIN campaign were felt only in these areas rather than throughout Mindanao, where local COIN efforts continue to face multiple obstacles. The shortcomings of COIN efforts in Mindanao are due to (1) the lack of coordination within the government bureaucracy; (2) corruption; and (3) lack of political unity.

According to Lieutenant Colonel Roy Devesa from the Philippine Army, the main obstacle to the success of the campaign is “the failure to mobilize and orchestrate the efforts of the whole government bureaucracy, particularly the civilian agencies, to institute socioeconomic programs that would address the roots of discontent.”⁵¹ There is a lack of an effective system to coordinate such efforts as well as a comprehensive plan to implement the SHA in support of the NISP.⁵² Corruption throughout the bureaucracy compounds the problem, particularly in the AARM where money meant for public work is often diverted into private pockets.^{53 54}

The lack of political unity contributes to the problem as well, and is one of the main reasons why the peace talks with the MILF fell apart. Political infighting to satisfy ambitions and personal gain have stepped into the way of the greater good and prevented the unity of effort required to push through the legislation that would have otherwise brought peace to the ARMM. Major Leonardo I. Pena from the Philippine Army puts it aptly:

[T]he crucial missing link to make the strategy work effectively is the “correct attitude” of both administrators and implementors. The “correct attitude” implies sincerity and dedication to performance without hesitation or personal interest in undue advancement. An attitude of carrying out continuous public services despite taking risks, and often sacrificing one’s own self for the good of the people is necessary . . . If government administrators and implementors possess

the “correct attitude,” they can achieve a more consistent and effective counterinsurgency program.⁵⁵

It would seem that the US has not only provided the intelligence capabilities and weaponry needed to successfully fight a successful COIN campaign against the ASG in Basilan and Jolo, it has also provided an important oversight to the governing authorities that has led to a respite of the problems mentioned above. Lieutenant General Nelson Allaga, head of the Western Mindanao Command, sums up the situation, “For now, we really need the Americans’ support.”

Insurgency in Southern Thailand

Background

Insurgent violence in Thailand centers on the separatist activities of its southern Malay-Muslim provinces, namely Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat. These provinces have a total population of about 1.8 million, of which approximately 79 percent are Muslims.

The roots of native discontent and perceived marginalization of Malay-Muslim interests can be traced back to the 18th century when the modern Thai state was established. Southern Thailand up until that point in history was still part of the former kingdom of Patani (Patani Darussalam). Although there was initial resistance by the local populace against a take-over by the new Siamese state, the entire kingdom was eventually brought under Siamese rule by the late 18th century. The process of assimilation followed and efforts were made by the Siamese government to extend its influence and jurisdiction into the Islamic region.⁵⁶



Figure 6. Map of Thailand

Source: CIA Fact Book, "Thailand," <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/th.html> (accessed 24 January 2009).

During the 1930s, several key changes were introduced into the region, including a modernization program to "eliminate backward Islamic customs and dialects, and to enforce uniformity in language and social behavior."⁵⁷ Western cultures and habits were emphasized and the local populace was encouraged to conform to its practices. The Malay-Muslim populace, however, refused to change and was determined to retain their identity, beliefs, and religious orientation. In 1947, the Pattani's People Movement

(PPM) was founded to represent the Malay-Muslims and their resolve to maintain their way of life. The PPM petitioned to the Thai government for autonomy, cultural and language rights as well as the implementation of Islamic law. Unfortunately, before the government could respond, it was ousted in a military coup and replaced by a new hardline administration that was resistant to any form of Southern autonomy. The subsequent arrest of the PPM leader, Haji Sulong, was a key the turning point in the Southern conflict as massive riots broke out in all three provinces.⁵⁸

From the 1950s to the 1990s, the South saw the expansion of Malay resistance with the emergence of several separatist movements. By the 1960s, over 60 armed groups were in operation.⁵⁹ While the ideologies and operational methods of these groups differed, they pursued the common goal of establishing a sovereign state independent of Thailand with Pattani as its center. Through violent actions, they aimed to create a sense of insecurity amongst the ethnic Thais that lived in the area and to pressure Bangkok into acceding to their demands of autonomy. Some of the major groups even formed a tactical alliance in 1997 to “refocus national and regional attention on the southern question” under the umbrella organization of *Bersatu* or “unity” in Malay.⁶⁰ Under the alliance, the separatist groups conducted a series of well-coordinated attacks against symbols of Thai authority such as police posts and military installations in an operation code-named Falling Leaves. Ironically, it was the success of Falling Leaves that triggered the downfall of *Bersatu*.

Most of the separatist’s successes would not have been possible without the availability of safe havens in Northern Malaysia. These safe havens were essential to the insurgent groups for the planning and preparation of operations. Although the Malaysian

government knew about the Thai Malay-Muslim insurgents and their safe havens, it was reluctant to take action against them. It was only with regional pressure resulting from the violent success of Falling Leaves that forced Malaysia to cooperate with Thailand in improving border security and denying sanctuary to the insurgents. Coordinated COIN actions between the two countries resulted in the arrest of several key insurgent leaders. Many insurgent members also fled or surrendered to the authorities under amnesty. As such, with the insurgent leadership and network crippled, the scale of unrest in southern Thailand dropped significantly.⁶¹

The respite in violence in Southern Thailand, however, was short-lived. During the peace, the Thai government failed to take advantage of the situation to win the hearts and minds of the local populace. It was also slow to improve the economic conditions of the Malay-Muslims and failed to engage them in local businesses or governance. Compounding the problem was the hardline stance taken by the new administration under Thai Prime Minister Thaksin towards the South. At the end of 2001, violence returned to the region with five coordinated attacks on police posts in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat.⁶²

In 2004, there was a surge in violence. Three major incidents also happened that year: (1) the raid of an Army Engineer depot in Narathiwat where more than 300 weapons were stolen; (2) the Siege of Krue Se Mosque where several insurgents, after conducting multiple attacks on police and military installations, were killed while seeking refuge in the Krue Se Mosque; and (3) the Tak Bai incident where protestors, after being suppressed by military forces, were stacked onto army trucks five to six layers deep, resulting in 78 protestors being suffocated to death at the end of a four-hour transport to a

detention camp.⁶³ The latter two incidents attracted the attention of several human rights groups and demands for justice by the Malay-Muslim population.

Unlike past insurgent violence carried out by organized groups, current insurgent activities and operations are conducted by a mix of militants drawn from the decimated ranks of former insurgent groups as well as emergent Islamist entities, combined with “an amorphous collection of disaffected youths; out-of-work farmers, laborers, and tradesmen; and co-opted criminal elements.”⁶⁴ The current objective of the insurgency seems to be the establishment of an independent Malay-Muslim state within five years, starting 1 January 2004. However, these groups, unlike their predecessors, lack organization structure and strategic direction. They are loosely organized into cells with no centralized command to devise strategy and provide guidance on the conduct of operations. Despite these shortcomings, the insurgents are still able to conduct operations with a higher degree of complexity and sophistication than those in the past.⁶⁵

Since 2006, Southern Thailand has been under both Martial Law and an emergency decree. Together, these legislative measures have granted unprecedented power to the security forces in the South and have, as a consequence, embolden these forces to take an increasingly hard approach in its treatment of insurgent suspects, resulting in an increase of human rights abuses. The lack of action by the Thai state to address these injustices have deepened the grievances of the population even further,⁶⁶ and have dampened the prospect of achieving a long-term solution to the insurgency in the near future.

Southern Thailand as an Ungoverned Territory

The situation in Southern Thailand presents a different kind of problem to COIN forces as compared to that in Mindanao, Philippines. The unique conditions surrounding the insurgency present a unique perspective to the factors contributing to the ungovernability of Southern Thailand. These factors are the lack of state penetration, a monopoly and over-application of force (not the lack thereof), and the lack of border control.

The lack of state penetration is characterized by the absence of state institutions, corruption, and social/cultural resistance to state authority. The absence of state institutions, in the case of Southern Thailand, does not mean the total lack of state presence. The military is heavily engaged in COIN efforts within Southern Thailand but is, however, the only state institution involved in the fight. There is minimal participation and support from the state government, partly because of the distraction caused by the political infighting and instability in Bangkok,⁶⁷ and also partly because of the state government's view of the insurgency as being a purely security matter. Therefore, it has given the military full authority over the Southern provinces.⁶⁸

The quality of the local administration in the South is also dismal as the South's unattractive living conditions and state of violence have made it a dumping ground for ineffective and incompetent government officials. Corruption, as a second-order effect of poor governance, has become a widespread practice in the administration as well.^{69 70}

The high degree of social and cultural resistance amongst the Southern population is due largely to the assimilation efforts of the Thai government. The South's historic ties with the kingdom of Pattani have created a strong Malay-Muslim identity amongst the

populace. When the Thai state wanted to assimilate and modernize the Southern provinces, the Malay-Muslims felt their identity and culture under attack, and the need to fight in order to preserve their way of life. Education reforms which mandated all children to attend state primary schools to learn the Thai language instead of the traditional *Ponoh* or religious boarding schools have also exacerbated the problem.⁷¹

In Southern Thailand, it is the Thai security forces, not the insurgents, who have a monopoly of force over the population. However, the over-application and the abuse of its power have hindered their COIN efforts. Heavy-handed methods used by security forces, such as “extrajudicial killings, prolonged arbitrary detention and widespread torture,” to weed out insurgents and suppress any unrest have deepened the grievances of the population and “harden[ed] their attitudes” towards the Thai government.⁷² The lack of state investigations into these incidents of human rights abuses have also been a major source of grievance. For example, no officials were ever prosecuted for the civilian deaths in the *Tak Bai* incident.⁷³

Illegal armed groups compete with Thai security forces for control of the Southern provinces. These groups train their members in a variety of skills such as unarmed combat, weapons handling and bomb making. An assortment of weapons is also available to these groups; most of which are either stolen from the military or procured from the stock of former separatist groups.⁷⁴

The lack of border control between Thailand and Malaysia has provided separatist groups with safe havens in Northern Malaysia to seek refuge from Thai security forces as well as bases of operations to plan and prepare for attacks.⁷⁵ Although border cooperation have improved since the Falling Leaves campaign in 1997, there has been a resurgence of

border breaches from 2005 as an increased number of Thai-Malay insurgents began crossing over to Malaysia to seek refuge. This time, the Malaysian government has refused the request of the Thai government to return the insurgents based on humanitarian grounds.⁷⁶

Southern Thailand is conducive to insurgent and terrorist presence because of readily available sources of income, favorable demographics and conditions favoring invisibility.

The insurgents in Southern Thailand have many income sources. One of the main sources is the *zakat*.⁷⁷ The insurgents are also known to send their members overseas to several Islamic countries so as to promote their cause and solicit funds for their activities.⁷⁸ There have also been reports that the insurgents are receiving funds from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Pakistan to construct local Muslim educational facilities dedicated to teaching hard-line *Wahhabist* and *Salafist* doctrine.⁷⁹

The demographics in Southern Thailand are extremely favorable for insurgent and terrorist activities. It is characterized by the presence of extremist groups, supporting social norms, presence of social assistance programs open to exploitation, and the presence of criminal syndicates.

Several extremist groups with different agendas have emerged throughout the course of the Southern insurgency. Although these groups share a common objective of gaining autonomy from Thailand, their political motivations and philosophy differ. At present, the Thai government believes there are currently three main active extremist groups. The Barisan Revolusi Nasional-Koordinasi (BRN-C), the only active faction of the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) established in the 1960s to fight for an independent

Pattani, is possibly the largest and best organized of the separatist groups. It recruits its members from Islamic schools and focuses on political agitation and urban sabotage.⁸⁰

The New Pattani United Liberation Organization (New PULO) is a dissident faction that split from the now defunct Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO) in 1995. As opposed to the PULO, which adopted a dual-track strategy of nonviolent and violent action, New PULO pursued the goal of autonomy through a “single-minded policy of militant action, focusing on attacks . . . to perpetually harass the police and disrupt the normal course of social, political, and cultural interaction.”⁸¹ It is the smallest of the active armed groups. The Gerakan Majuhidin Islam Pattani (GMIP) is a group founded in part by Afghan veterans in 1995 to establish a separate Islamic state. Until 1999, the GMIP was more of a criminal gang than a group of freedom fighters, engaging in activities such as kidnapping, extortion and contract killings. In 1999, they were approached by the JI and were suspected thereafter to be working closely with foreign jihadist groups.⁸² *Bersatu* is an alliance that unites, coordinates and strengthens the efforts of the various separatist groups in Southern Thailand. Established in 1989, *Bersatu* was considerably weakened in 1997 as coordinated government action between Thailand and Malaysia after the success of Falling Leaves wiped out most of its key leaders and membership.⁸³ Nevertheless, *Bersatu* managed to remain active with BRN-C, New PULO/PULO, and the GMIP in its current membership.

Poverty in Southern Thailand is a social norm insurgents have exploited to their advantage as it is one of the grievances that have caused widespread resentment of the government amongst the local population. The economy in Southern Thailand is driven mainly by rubber plantations and fisheries with the per capita income being the lowest in

the entire country, averaging only 60,000 Baht as compared to 320,000 Baht in Bangkok. This disparity has caused the Malay-Muslims to feel that they have been marginalized by the Thai government with the lack of government attention and monetary support for development.⁸⁴ The state of poverty in Southern Thailand is also exacerbated by the lack of education and employment opportunities. Despite efforts of the Thai government to introduce the study of the Thai language in the South, strong social resistance meant that most elementary and middle school education still do not include the study of the Thai language. Most Malay-Muslims students are mainly taught by *Imams* (leader of a mosque or Muslim community) or *Ustadzes* (religious teachers) on the subject of Islam. Therefore when these students graduate, they are unable to take up to tertiary-level studies because of their language and educational limitations. Without proper education, employment opportunities are scarce, resulting in a high rate of unemployment and the associated social problems.⁸⁵

Many separatist groups have taken advantage of the state of poverty to recruit manpower for various rudimentary operations such as arson. The New PULO, for example, targets petty thieves and young drug addicts and pays them between 300 to 500 Baht. The employment of these “hired guns” not only free up professional cadre for the planning and conduct of higher profile activities, it also denies intelligence to security forces in the event they are captured and interrogated.⁸⁶

The respect the Malay-Muslims have for their *Imams* or *Ustadzes* is another social norm that has contributed to the separatists’ recruitment efforts. Some of the *Imans* and *Ustadzes* have studied in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and have brought back with them the radical ideas of the *Mujahideen* (Islamic terrorists) to Southern Thailand.⁸⁷ Upon their

return, they are often invited into the leadership of the separatist groups.⁸⁸ These *Imams* or *Ustadzes* then go on to spread their ideology in the schools where they teach and, with their influence over the community, they are often able to recruit students for their separatist organizations. They would then go on to indoctrinate, train and organize these recruits into highly disciplined insurgent cells.⁸⁹

Tensions between Muslims and Buddhists are another social norm that separatist groups have taken advantage of. By fostering “communal hatred” and conflict between the two religious groups, the insurgents aim to destroy the societal fabric and make the “southern Malay provinces ungovernable.”⁹⁰

The presence of social assistance programs open to exploitation such as the *zakat* contributes to the conduciveness of the environment as well. Social organizations sympathetic to the insurgent’s cause are also known to make donations to various separatist groups.⁹¹ The presence of criminal syndicates help the insurgents too as many of them join criminal groups in domestic and transnational crime such as drug and human trafficking to raise funds for their operations.⁹²

The Southern Thailand insurgents, being ethnic Malay-Muslims, are able to blend seamlessly into the population. The invisibility of the insurgents, therefore, makes the task of identifying and locating the insurgents by security forces challenging. Southern Thailand’s unique ethnic makeup, language and culture, however, make it difficult for outside extremists such as the JI to establish a foothold in the region.⁹³ In particular, the population’s strong sense of Malay-Muslim identity and conviction in the form of Islam they practice act as a ‘built-in barrier against external penetration’ by foreign influence and radical Islamic ideology.⁹⁴ Although there have been growing concerns and

increasing intelligence reports pointing towards the involvement of extra-regional extremist groups in the insurgency, it would be extremely challenging for these groups to maintain an operational presence and stay hidden from Thai security forces.

A summary of the variables and indicators under the dimensions of ungovernability and conduciveness to insurgent or terrorist presence is shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Variables and Indicators of Southern Thailand as an Ungoverned Territory

Variables and Indicators	Southern Thailand
Ungovernability	
<u>Lack of state penetration</u> - Absence of state institutions - Lack of physical infrastructure - Social/cultural resistance - Corruption	Lack of government attention; administration left to the military authorities. Underdeveloped region. Indigenous populace seeking to protect their Malay-Muslim identity and way of life against Thai assimilation. Corrupt government officials and security forces.
<u>Lack of monopoly of force</u>	Thai security forces have monopoly of force but heavy-handed methods and human rights abuses have caused much grievances. Illegal armed groups compete with Thai security forces for power.
<u>Lack of border control</u>	Lack of border control between Malaysia and Thailand.

Conduciveness to Terrorist and Insurgent Presence	
<u>Sources of income</u>	<i>Zakat</i> (Muslim charity donations), overseas funding from sympathizers.
<u>Favorable demographics</u> - Presence of extremist groups - Supporting social norms - Presence of social assistance programs - Presence of criminal syndicates	BRN-C, New PULO, GIMP, <i>Bersatu</i> (alliance of various separatist groups) Poverty; respect for religious leaders and teachers; tensions between Muslims and Buddhists. Charity programs, i.e. <i>zakat</i> . Insurgents work with criminal syndicates to raise funds.
<u>Invisibility</u>	Unique ethnic makeup, language and culture ensure that only domestic insurgents can blend into the population; difficult for outside extremist groups to blend in.

The Insurgency in Southern Thailand as a Regional Security Threat

The insurgents in Southern Thailand seem to maintain the position that their struggles against the Thai government are domestic in nature as they neither want to tie their efforts to the global jihadist movement nor include outside extremist terrorists in their fight. They feel that external involvement will undermine their credibility and popular support as well as trigger international intervention to deal with the insurgency.⁹⁵ Kasturi Mahkota, the self-defined foreign-affairs spokesperson of the PULO, puts it aptly, “We do not need to be on anyone’s terror list. Once we are on that list, it is all over.”⁹⁶

Nevertheless, there are concerns of the conflict potentially being hijacked by global jihadists to further radical Islamist ideology in Southeast Asia.⁹⁷ Such concerns are

not unfounded as it is commonly known that “gaining an ideological presence in this type of opportunistic theater is a well-recognized and established practice of the JI movement.”⁹⁸

Adding to the apprehension are Thai military intelligence reports showing several separatist organizations working with global jihadist groups – the BRN, for example, has been reported to be coordinating its actions with the JI and al Qaeda.⁹⁹ There are also reports of interactions between the Thai Malay-Muslims, the Taliban, and remnants of al Qaeda in Pakistan.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, Thai military intelligence has assessed that Islamic forces have infiltrated at least 50 schools throughout the Southern Provinces to recruit students for holy war.¹⁰¹

The nature of recent insurgent violence has also been a cause of concern. It appears that the ability of the insurgents to coordinate and execute complex operations has increased. Insurgents have begun to strike outside of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat as well with the 2005 bombings of Hat Yai International Airport, the French Carrefour supermarket, and the Green Palace World Hotel in the neighboring province of Songkla.¹⁰² In 2006, a Jane’s Intelligence Review article commented that there has been a clear jihadist and religious undertone in insurgent violence that has not been seen in past years, characterized by frequent attacks on establishments that represent Western decadence such as drinking houses and gambling as well as on Buddhist civilians and monks.¹⁰³

Despite the claims of local insurgents that outside extremist groups are not involved in the separatist movement, it is apparent from reports and observations that Islamist groups have influenced and assisted the local insurgents to a certain degree.

However, as yet, there is no evidence to prove that Southern Thailand has been transformed into a “new beachhead of panregional jihadism.”¹⁰⁴ The most obvious reason to believe this claim is the limitation of violence to the vicinity of the Southern Provinces and the lack of directed attacks against foreigners and overt symbols of Western culture.¹⁰⁵

There are, however, potential conditions that allow such a transformation to take place. The increase of influential religious radicals being educated abroad in Islamic countries could potentially expose them to the risk of influence by extremist Islamic ideology and motivate them to re-energize the struggle by linking the conflict to the broader Islamic goals of the Muslim world.¹⁰⁶ Any change in existing bilateral military cooperation arrangements between Thailand and the United States, such as the conduct of FID to enhance RTA operations, could prompt the separatists to actively recruit the assistance of outside Islamic extremists.¹⁰⁷

The COIN Campaign in Southern Thailand

The insurgency in Southern Thailand was initially viewed by the Thai government as a law and order issue and one that could be resolved with the efforts of the police and judiciary. However, between 2004 and 2006, the increase in frequency and intensity of insurgent violence forced the government to recognize that the problem they face is in fact an Islamic separatist insurgency and that further action was needed. Instead of seeking a political solution to the conflict the Thai administration at that time, under Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, employed a strategy of force that used the army, paramilitary police units and civil-defense militias to suppress and eliminate the insurgents.¹⁰⁸ This strategy was largely ineffective due to the lack of an effective

intelligence infrastructure; the distrust and lack of coordination between the Army and the Police; and the heavy-handed methods used, which undermined the legitimacy of their efforts. More importantly, however, it lacked a softer, more sensitive approach to address the grievances and win the hearts and minds of the local population.¹⁰⁹ Although the Surayud administration, which took power after Thaksin's ouster in the 2006 military coup, attempted to reverse the hardline policies, it still failed to produce tangible results as casualty rates surged in 2007.¹¹⁰ The Samak administration that came into power in 2008 continued to view the conflict as a purely security issue and left the task of stabilizing the South to the military.¹¹¹

In October 2007, General Anupong Paochinda, the new Thai Army Chief, announced a four-year COIN plan comprising of two phases. The first phase, from the announcement in 2007 to 2009, focused on military operations to neutralize the armed insurgents. The second phase, from 2010 to 2011, will look into the development of the region and its local community.¹¹² The current response of the Thai government and military authorities will be explained using the logical lines of operations (LLOs) within the COIN campaign framework introduced in chapter 2.

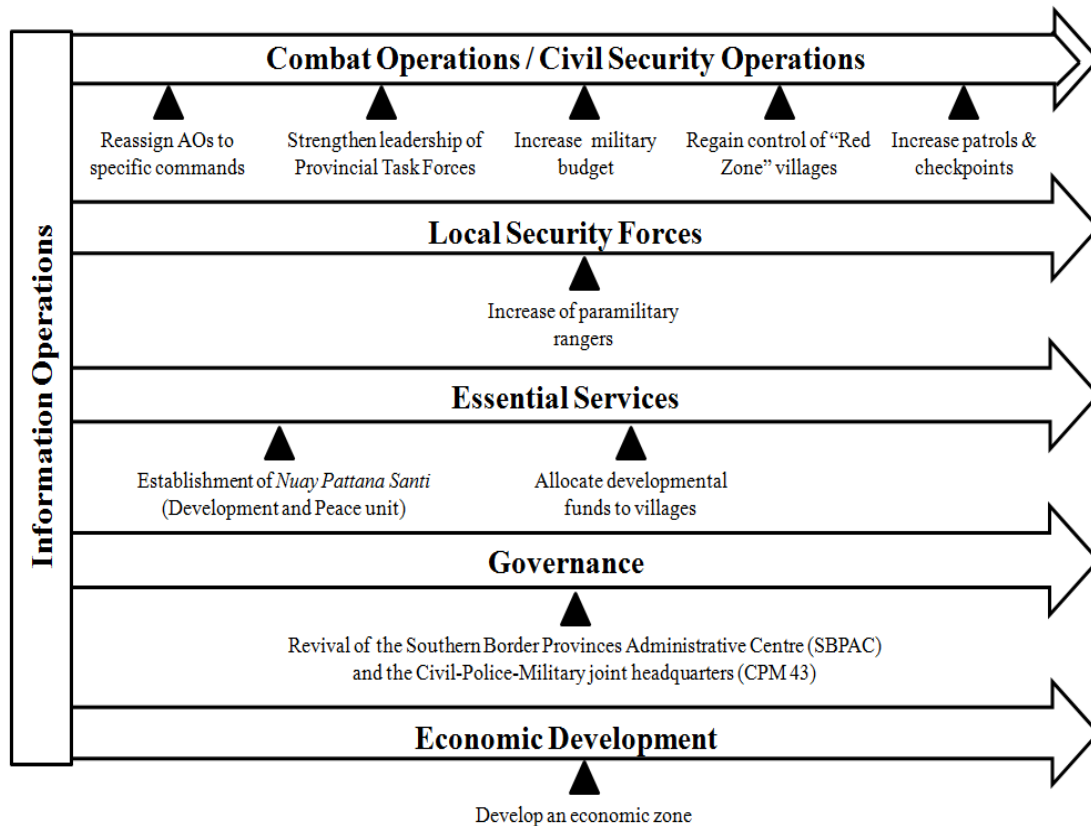


Figure 7. COIN Campaign in Southern Thailand

Combat operations and civil security are the main efforts of the Southern Thailand COIN operation. One of the key initiatives of the new plan was the move to restructure and streamline military operations. The 4th Army Region was previously in charge of the military efforts in the South prior to the restructuring. After the 2004 upsurge in violence, the 4th Army was reinforced with approximately 30,000 soldiers. These reinforcements, however, were not properly organized and resulted in a hodgepodge of units with different institutional norms and cultures within each province. This undermined both unity of command and effort. As such, areas of operations in the South were reassigned to specific units to delineate clear areas of responsibility for better command and control

– the 1st Army Region from central Thailand was given charge of Narathiwat, the 2nd Army Region from northeast Thailand was given Pattani, and the 3rd Army Region from the north was given Yala. The 4th Army region was sidelined and reassigned to the neighboring province of Songkhla, presumably because of its previous failure to curb the violence in the South.¹¹³ Other reforms include colonels being replaced by major generals as the heads of the provincial task forces so as to make it easier for army commanders to deal with police commanders and provincial governors.¹¹⁴ Military budget for the South was increased as well from 115 billion Baht in 2007 to 143 billion Baht in 2008 to reflect the increased emphasis of the government in stabilizing the South.¹¹⁵ Other initiatives include efforts to regain control of 220 “red zone” villages, considered as insurgent strongholds;¹¹⁶ the intensification of patrols and road checkpoints in the South to improve the detection of explosives, weapons and narcotics; and the reorganization of operational units from companies to platoons to meet the quantitative requirements of new security demands.¹¹⁷

The local security forces LLO looks at the local recruitment of paramilitary rangers by the Thai COIN forces for their familiarity with the terrain, culture and language of Southern Thailand. As part of the restructuring process to improve the effectiveness of local security, the Thai military intends to recruit 28 companies of paramilitary rangers in addition to the existing seven regiments.¹¹⁸ However, out of their total strength, only 15 to 30 percent are Malay-Muslims with the rest being outsiders.¹¹⁹ The lack of local representation within its ranks, together with poor training and a notoriety for human right abuses and corruption, have undermined the operational effectiveness of the paramilitary rangers and their rapport with the local populace.¹²⁰

Therefore, instead of enhancing COIN operations, the increase of paramilitary rangers is causing more problems for the Thai government.

Although the focus of the military's efforts is on combat operations to remove the insurgents, the military is also trying to win the hearts and minds of the local populace. Along the Essential Services LLO, it has set up the *Nuay Pattana Santi* (Development and Peace unit) to plan for and conduct developmental work in order to improve the quality of life in the South. Developmental funds of one million Baht have also been allocated to each village for new projects.¹²¹

The key initiative along the governance LLO is the revival of the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC) and the Civil-Police-Military Joint Headquarters (CPM 43) by the post-coup Sarayud administration. The SBPAC was established in 1981 to improve coordination among government agencies and address corruption and prejudice among officials. Similarly, the CPM 43 was established to coordinate security operations as well as to ensure extra-judicial killings and disappearances ceased.¹²² Although the SBPAC and the CPM 43 were two of the few government institutions that demonstrated effectiveness in reducing violence and stabilizing the South, they were dissolved by the Thaksin administration in 2002 because of political concerns that they were serving opposition interests.¹²³ The dismantling of the SBPAC and CPM 43 was disastrous as it destroyed an important intelligence network; severed the links between SBPAC officials and community leaders; removed the channels for the populace to express their grievances; and dissolved a mechanism that coordinated between security and intelligence agencies.¹²⁴ In 2007, the SBPAC and CPM 43 were restored by the post-coup administration and put under the control of the

military. Although the two organizations are having difficulties regaining their role and standing prior to 2002, they have nevertheless begun contributing to the COIN efforts in Southern Thailand.¹²⁵

One of the recent successes of the SPBAC was the headway it made in long-term economic development planning. A key initiative along the Economic Development LLO, the SBPAC's four-year economic plan was endorsed by the government in 2008 and involves the development of an economic zone in the Southern Provinces worth 58 billion Baht.¹²⁶

As part of the military's IO efforts, there have been initiatives to hold dialogues and negotiate with key insurgent groups in the South. The military, however, faces the challenge of identifying the real leaders of the insurgency, largely because of the highly independent nature of the insurgent cells and the apparent lack of a central leadership. The fact that no organization has claimed responsibility for any attacks since 2004 also adds to the problem.¹²⁷

The initiatives taken by the post-coup administrations as well as the restructuring of military operations since late 2007 have led to a reduction in violence. There were sharp declines in violent attacks in the first half of 2008 as compared to the same period in 2007.¹²⁸ While military control of COIN operations seems to be successful presently, it remains to be seen if this success can be sustained.

Assessment of the COIN Campaign in Southern Thailand

One of the main criticisms of the Thai government's handling of the Southern insurgency is its decision to put COIN operations under the authority of the military. This has resulted in a hard, security-focused approach where the heavy-handed methods of the

security forces and human rights abuses have created major grievances amongst the population. It is clear that the insurgency cannot be resolved with use of force because the root causes of the conflict revolve around “ethnoreligious alienation, discrimination, and marginalization.”¹²⁹ A “more nuanced and multifaceted” hearts and minds approach, addressing areas of education, development, corruption and justice, is needed instead to reconcile the Malay-Muslim South with the Thai-Buddhist state.¹³⁰ The solution must involve Malay-Muslim participation as well and allow the locals to be represented fairly in local administrative and security matters.

The Thai government should also focus more on the COIN efforts in the South and not allow the political instability in Bangkok to distract it from giving the conflict serious attention. The decision to leave matters to the military has brought some short-term gains in the form of reduced violence but risks long-term losses as human rights abuses and grievances remain unaddressed.¹³¹ Increased civilian control and involvement in the South is required to bring better coordination amongst various government ministries and other much-needed civic expertise to the COIN effort. In addition, the government should also start giving serious consideration to some form of autonomy for the Southern Provinces as a long-term political solution.

The Thai government has also insisted that the conflict is a domestic one caused by historical and political grievances and not by global Islamic aspirations;¹³² and that it is a conflict their own security forces are capable of resolving.¹³³ Separatist groups have openly expressed their intentions as well to de-link their movement from outside extremist groups for fear of being listed as terrorist groups by the international community. They maintain that their objective remains focused on protecting the Malay-

Muslim identity and way of life.¹³⁴ Both sides understand that the introduction of a major extraregional power into the equation, be it a global jihadist group or a foreign military force, can potentially upset the balance and further de-stabilize the situation.

Case Study Comparison

A comparison of the dimensions of ungovernability and conduciveness to insurgent or terrorist presence in Mindanao and Southern Thailand, summarized in Tables 3 and 4, as well as their respective COIN efforts, depicted graphically in Figures 5 and 7, show certain similarities in the vulnerabilities of each ungoverned territory and the shortcomings of each campaign.

As ungoverned territories, both Mindano and Southern Thailand lack government oversight and support. As such, the grievances of the population remain unaddressed with a majority still feeling that their identity and way of life are being threatened by the assimilation policies of the central government. Corruption remains a big problem for these ungoverned territories as officials and security forces alike seek opportunities to profit from the conflict. Security forces within the region also seem incapable of applying legitimate force to control the situation, lacking either the capability, as in the case of Mindanao, or the restraint, as in the case of Southern Thailand. Although the latter has succeeded in decreasing the acts of violence within the region, its heavy-handed methods and human rights abuses dampens the prospect of a long-term solution to the conflict. The lack of border control within these two regions has also made it difficult for the respective state authorities to contain the movement of insurgents and their logistics.

Both Mindanao and Southern Thailand also exhibit similar characteristics that are conducive to insurgent or terrorist presence. Sources of income for the insurgents in both

ungoverned territories are readily available, with support coming from both local and overseas sympathizers. The social demographics within these territories are also favorable as insurgents are able to take advantage of: (1) existing social norms such as poverty to promote and advance their cause; (2) existing social assistance programs to use as covers for fundraising; and (3) criminal syndicates to generate additional manpower and income. The physical and human landscape in Mindanao and Southern Thailand also provides the insurgents with a cloak of invisibility to hide from state security forces.

The authorities in both Philippines and Thailand have devised new COIN strategies to counter their respective domestic insurgencies – the Filipino NISP in 2001 and the Thai Army’s four-year COIN plan in 2007. Unlike former plans, both these strategies reflect a deeper appreciation by COIN forces on the importance of engaging the populace and winning their support. Although these campaigns have produced short-term successes in reducing insurgent numbers and violent acts, they have also revealed many shortcomings that hinder the development of a long-term solution such as the inability of Philippine Government to support its COIN forces, resulting in a reliance on US forces instead; and the lack of state oversight by the Thai government in regulating and coordinating COIN efforts.

Most of these shortcomings and vulnerabilities are domestic issues that can only be overcome through actions taken by the respective governments, such as the quality of governance, corruption, population grievances and the unregulated behavior of security forces. Any external intervention in these domestic issues will serve to complicate the situation and can potentially undermine the sovereignty and legitimacy of the state.

This concern is apparent in the Philippines, where US intervention has attracted the criticism of several Filipino “nationalists” and leftist groups. Although the US-Philippine partnership has helped improve the socio-economic conditions in Mindanao through US development assistance, these critics contended that US presence has violated the Philippine constitution, and accused the provision of aid as an indirect approach by the US to attain its strategic objectives, such as the establishment of permanent US bases in the Philippines.¹³⁵ This concern was highlighted by Julkipli Wadi, an associate professor of Islamic studies at the University of Philippines, “Unless the Philippine government addresses the Mindanao conflict using its own resolve, insurgency in Southern Philippines is expected to remain even as the Philippines would continue to be a magnet by foreign countries like the US to advance their own geo-political and economic interests in Southeast Asia.”¹³⁶

Comparison between the African Union and ASEAN

It can be argued that ASEAN, as a regional institution, is already playing an effective role in maintaining regional security and stability. In order to gain a better appreciation of ASEAN’s efforts and successes thus far, the AU will be used as a control variable to provide a context for evaluating ASEAN’s achievements.

The AU was established on 9 July 2002. It replaced the former Organization of African Unity (OAU) as Africa’s principal regional institution and shifted its focus from protecting the independence of its member nations and ridding the remnants of colonialism to one that emphasizes the “[acceleration] . . . of integration in the continent to enable it to play its rightful role in the global economy while addressing multifaceted social, economic and political problems.”¹³⁷ The AU’s progress in the fulfillment of its

political, economic, social and security objectives, however, has thus far been hindered by a multitude of problems. The more serious of these issues are the lack of strong state structures in its member states, the lack of funding, the interference of extraregional powers, and its inability to enforce the institutional principles stated in its Constitutive Act.

In order for regional institutions to be successful, it must have member nations with strong state structures. The strength of a state is defined by its sovereignty over the territory in which it occupies. Its political, economic, security and social apparatus are structures that help the state exercise its sovereignty; if any of these are compromised, the sovereignty of the state will inevitably be weakened.

Africa's record in building national and regional institutions has been disappointing, because most of its states are unable to exercise full sovereignty over their territories. This lack of sovereign control is mostly due to a combination of political instability; corruption; economic underdevelopment; the lack of a monopoly of force to provide security and protection for the population; and lawlessness, where different parts of societies are controlled by either warlords or criminal organizations. With their own internal problems to resolve, the governments of these weak states have neither the capacity nor the resources to contribute to the development of the AU and the greater good of the region.

The lack of funding also poses a serious problem to the development of the AU. This is hardly surprising as its predecessor, the OAU, had always been beset by funding problems. Given that the AU is more expensive to run than the OAU¹³⁸ and with most of Africa still in the economic doldrums, contributions to the institution by member states

and other sources within Africa have been limited. This directly affects the scope and effectiveness of its initiatives.

With the inability of the AU and its member states to control their domestic conflicts and to raise adequate funds for development, it becomes necessary for the AU and its member states to seek assistance and financial aid from the international community. This reliance, however, has far-reaching political implications as its benefactors may subject AU and its member nations to conditions that could compromise their sovereignty. The presence of multiple outside actors in the region also makes the coordination of efforts difficult. In the worst situations, conflicts may be mismanaged to create further chaos and instability.

The failures of the UN in Somalia and Rwanda are examples of such situations. After the UN debacle in these two nations, African nations began to realize that reliance on the international community can be problematic.¹³⁹ The African nations have learnt that intra-state conflicts and insurgencies such as those in Rwanda and Somalia are exceptionally difficult for the international community to manage because of the multitude of domestic factors in play. As such, African nations recognized the need for indigenous organizations and efforts to play a larger role.¹⁴⁰

The AU acknowledges that it needs to take on the primary responsibility of coordinating African efforts in resolving the problems within the continent, especially those related to issues of peace, security and stability.¹⁴¹ Although the AU and the African states are attempting to become more self-sufficient by developing collective responses within the regional and sub-regional context, current reality necessitates a

continual reliance on assistance from the international community,¹⁴² as in the case of AU's dependence on EU intervention in Dafur.¹⁴³

The success of a regional institution is also dependent on how well its member states can relate to each other. As such, the institution will need to provide an organized geo-political space for its member states to develop social practices that are understood, accepted and shared by the rest of the membership.¹⁴⁴ The desired result would be a consistency in interactions between member states, thereby fostering better regional cooperation and coordination. Such an outcome can be achieved through the enforcement of institutional principles.

The AU, like every regional institution, is guided by a set of institutional principles stated in its Constitutional Act. They are

- (a) sovereign equality and interdependence among Member States of the Union;
- (b) respect of borders existing on achievement of independence;
- (c) participation of the African peoples in the activities of the Union;
- (d) establishment of a common defence policy for the African Continent;
- (e) peaceful resolution of conflicts among Member States of the Union through such appropriate means as may be decided upon by the Assembly;
- (f) prohibition of the use of force or threat to use force among Member States of the Union;
- (g) non-interference by any Member State in the internal affairs of another;
- (h) the right of the Union to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity;
- (i) peaceful co-existence of Member States and their right to live in peace and security;
- (j) the right of Member States to request intervention from the Union in order to restore peace and security;
- (k) promotion of self-reliance within the framework of the Union;
- (l) promotion of gender equality;
- (m) respect for democratic principles, human rights, the rule of law and good governance;
- (n) promotion of social justice to ensure balanced economic development;

- (o) respect for the sanctity of human life, condemnation and rejection of impunity and political assassination, acts of terrorism and subversive activities;
- (p) condemnation and rejection of unconstitutional changes of governments.¹⁴⁵

The principles espoused by the AU cover much of the same ground as its predecessor, the OAU, and are typical of a pluralist international institution. However, it has been unable to fully enforce these principles thus far, due to a multitude of reasons relating to the continent's unique circumstances and challenges. As such, it has been slow to integrate its member states into a collective whole. Although some violations of AU's institutional principles by member states are unintentional such as the reliance on outside assistance and financial aid, which go against the principle of self-reliance; most are deliberate such as the conflict within the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) where the decisions of Zimbabwe and Angola to help the DRC government fight against rebel groups supported by Uganda and Rwanda breach the principles of non-use of force amongst member states, the non-interference in other member states' internal affairs, and intervention in other member states with AU approval. The former violation is reflective of the AU's lack of capacity to unilaterally improve the dismal circumstances within the continent while the latter two violations are evident of the AU's lack of control and its inability to regulate the actions of its member states. These shortcomings of the AU are major contributing factors to Africa's instability today.

ASEAN, in contrast to the AU, exists in a generally stable regional environment. This achievement can be attributed to the strengths of its member states. Contrary to what some critics believe, many of ASEAN's member states possess relatively strong state structures when compared to other developing regions such as Africa, and are able to

contribute meaningfully to ASEAN and the development of the region. The national and regional resilience developed by the Southeast Asian nations have helped ASEAN enhance regional autonomy and retain control of its regional affairs, enlisting the help of outside powers only when beneficial. When working with the international community, the collective strength of ASEAN's member states have enabled ASEAN to negotiate and work with external powers on equal footing, and to represent its interests fairly without compromise. ASEAN has also successfully helped the Southeast Asian region develop a thriving regional economy that boasts of a combined gross domestic product of almost US\$1,100 billion amongst its member states with trade amounting to about US\$1,400 billion.¹⁴⁶ As such, ASEAN is able to self-fund all of its activities and assist its member states adequately in crises such as the 2004 Tsunami disaster relief efforts in Indonesia and the 2006 Cyclone Nargis disaster relief efforts in Myanmar. Although the UN and the international community have assisted ASEAN in these humanitarian disasters, the working relationships between ASEAN and these institutions are that of equal partners rather than that of total reliance as seen in Africa. Southeast Asia is also an organized geo-political space where interactions conducted in the ASEAN Way have enabled member states to successfully develop relationships with each other, foster a common regional identity, and increase regional coordination and cooperation, particularly in areas of economic development, social assistance and humanitarian assistance.

The state of ASEAN's security environment is extremely stable when compared to the AU's. Unlike Africa, there are no inter-state armed conflicts or full-blown civil wars in Southeast Asia. State insurgencies are also well-contained within their respective borders. ASEAN's success in promoting peace within the region is attributed not only to

ASEAN's strengths as a regional institution and the strong state capacity of its member states, but also to the ability of ASEAN and its member states to adhere to ASEAN's institutional principles.

The principle of non-use of force has made peaceful negotiations the preferred mode of dispute settlement amongst ASEAN member states. Since ASEAN's inception in 1967, it has successfully moderated intra-regional conflicts and prevented any disputes amongst its members from deteriorating into outright war (Cambodia and Vietnam were not members of ASEAN during the Cambodia-Vietnam War). For the conflicts which ASEAN is unable to resolve, as in certain cases of disputes between Singapore and Malaysia, other peaceful mechanisms such as international judicial arbitration are used instead.

The growing strength of ASEAN as a regional institution has also led to a shift in its principle of regional autonomy. The fear of threat by the involvement of extraregional powers in its regional affairs has been replaced by a sense of confidence in its ability to take the lead in engaging the major powers of the international system and enhance regional order through the process of "cooperative security," "emphasizing inclusiveness and dialogue among both like-minded and non-like-minded states."¹⁴⁷

ASEAN's adherence to the principle of non-interference and its rejection of multilateral military pacts have also limited the scope for regional disorder and prevented domestic conflicts from spilling over into neighboring states. The enforcement of the principle of non-interference is particularly important in containing domestic insurgencies such as those in Southern Thailand where external intervention could incentivize local insurgents to ally themselves with extremist Islamic groups; a move

which could potentially turn the insurgent territory into a base for panregional jihadism. Although jihadist groups such as the JI are waiting for such opportunities to establish an ideological presence in these ungoverned territories, it has been unable to do so thus far. Coordinated actions and initiatives between ASEAN nations and the international community to respond to the threat of terrorism have also thwarted many of the efforts by global jihadist groups to de-stabilize the region.¹⁴⁸

Conclusion

In this chapter, the author has analyzed two prominent ongoing insurgencies in Southeast Asia, those in Mindanao/Philippines and Southern Thailand, by using the ungoverned territories framework to break down the conflicts into component parts so as to better understand their characteristics and root causes. The threats posed by extremist groups attempting to establish an ideological presence within these ungoverned territories are also explained. An assessment of the governments' COIN efforts have shown the shortcoming of the Filipinos' approach to be the inability of the government to properly resource and coordinate its COIN efforts without US assistance; and the Thai's, to be the lack of government oversight over its COIN campaign.

A comparison of these two case studies shows that most of the problems in Mindanao and Southern Thailand are predominantly domestic in nature and, therefore, can only be solved internally. A comparison with the AU and Africa also seems to suggest that ASEAN, through the capacity of its member states, its collective strength as a regional institution, and the enforcement of its institutional principles, already has Southeast Asia and its security environment under control. Nevertheless, ASEAN should still be able to further improve the overall security and stability of Southeast Asia by

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¹³¹ International Crisis Group (ICG), “Southern Thailand: The Impact of the Coup,” *Asia Report* no. 129 (15 March 2007): 19-22. http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/south_east_asia/129_southern_thailand___the_impact_of_the_coup_web.pdf (assessed 18 April 2009).

- ¹³² International Crisis Group, “Thailand”, 5.
- ¹³³ Chalk, 2008, 20.
- ¹³⁴ Chalk, 2008, 13.
- ¹³⁵ Larry Nicksch, “Abu Sayaf: Target of Philippine-US Anti-Terrorism Cooperation,” *CRS Report for Congress* (24 January 2007): 8-9.
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- ¹⁴⁴ Ted Hopf, “The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory,” *International Security* 23, no. 1 (1998): 176.
- ¹⁴⁵ African Union, The Constitutive Act of the African Union, Article 4.
- ¹⁴⁶ Association of Southeast Asian Nations, “Overview,” <http://www.aseansec.org/64.htm> (accessed 18 April 2009).

¹⁴⁷ Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia* (London: Routledge, 2001), 200-201.

¹⁴⁸ Association of Southeast Asian Nations, “ASEAN’s Contribution to Regional Efforts in Counter-Terrorism,” <http://www.aseansec.org/17274.htm> (accessed 18 April 2009).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In this final chapter, recommendations for ASEAN to improve the Southeast Asian security environment with respect to its domestic insurgencies will be proposed.

Status Quo as an Option

It can be argued that ASEAN, through minimal intervention, has prevented the insurgencies within its ungoverned territories from spreading to the wider region of Southeast Asia. By enforcing its institutional principles, particularly the discipline of non-interference of member states in the affairs of others, and allowing the affected member states to exercise their sovereignty in resolving their domestic conflicts, ASEAN has indirectly helped its affected member states contain their insurgencies. The insurgents have no reason to bring their fight beyond their respective state borders neither do they have the incentive to recruit the assistance of outside extremist forces. Most insurgents also view their struggles to retain their identity and way of life as domestic issues and have refused to be associated with the global jihadist movement. Although, some renegade insurgent elements have been linked with foreign extremist groups, the relationship has been limited to the provision of training and resources. The insurgent groups are aware that if they choose to go the same way as the ASG, their fate will undoubtedly be similar.

There are opinions, however, that the principle of non-interference in domestic affairs weakens the organization's ability to prevent and manage conflicts. The OAU, in

particular, was criticized for this principle and its inaction in protecting the African people under threat.¹ This criticism has led the AU to include in its new constitutive act, powers for the Union to intervene in the internal affairs of a member state that faced the threat of genocide, war crimes or crimes against humanity. This thesis, however, has shown external intervention to be more of a short-term fix rather than a long-term solution. Though it is able to bring about short-term relief, it can potentially create problems such as over-reliance, the involvement of external extremist groups, political division, and the potential compromise of national interests. It is recognized that internal conflicts must be addressed using indigenous resolve in order for long-term peace and stability to be achieved.

This is not to say that external intervention is ruinous and should be excluded from the process of conflict resolution in every situation; for several African countries, external aid is a must because of the lack of strong state structures and the need for funding for an internal solution. External aid, like medication for an illness, should be given in the right doses to aid the recovery process. The success of the recovery, however, is dependent on the ability of the patient's body system to recover and the actions taken by the patient during rehabilitation. When conditions are shown to be improving, the medication can slowly be weaned off until it is no longer needed.

Both Mindanao and Southern Thailand have already shown progress since the implementation of their new COIN strategies, reflecting a relatively healthy state system that is able to contain the disease of insurgency; although it must be mentioned that the Philippines is currently receiving "medication" from the US to supplement its efforts in

combating the ASG. While there are still several shortcomings in both COIN approaches, both states have, at the very least, been able to recognize their weaknesses.

With the insurgencies in Southeast Asia being contained within the borders of their respective ungoverned territories, it is therefore acceptable to propose that ASEAN remain status quo with respect to this security issue, and leave the affected states to manage their own domestic conflicts. However, if necessary and upon request, ASEAN, assuming a consensus, can provide resources to these states as “medication” for short-term relief to address immediate socio-economic concerns. After all, as stated in chapter 2, the principle of non-interference does allow member states to “provide political support and material assistance to member states in their campaign against subversive and destabilizing activities.”²

Recommendations

Although it is recommended that ASEAN maintains its status quo and refrains from interfering with the domestic conflicts of its member states, it can still, nevertheless, play an indirect role in resolving these conflicts by assisting the respective governments in removing the major external factors contributing to the insurgencies. These external factors include the movement, presence and influence of extremist Islamic groups as well as transnational crime.

As observed in the case studies, extremist groups such as the JI have been providing training and resource assistance to the insurgency, despite the denials of the insurgent groups. Although the participation of the JI in these ungoverned territories has been limited, there is still a potential for radical Islamic ideology to take root and transform the insurgent territory into a beachhead for panregional jihadism. As such, the

movement, presence and influence of these extremists in these ungoverned territories must be neutralized.

Presently, there are several initiatives taken by ASEAN to coordinate efforts between its member states in respond to the threat of terrorism, such as the landmark agreement signed by the ministers of the ASEAN nations in 2007 calling for “increased sharing of information and intelligence, extradition of known terrorists, and more stringent policies on money transfers”, the first such agreement in the world that spells out concrete measures against terrorist organizations.³ In addition these efforts, ASEAN can also facilitate dialogues between prominent Muslim leaders and teachers of ASEAN nations to address concerns on the influence of radical Islamic ideology. Being sensitive to national sovereignty and prerogatives, the ASEAN Way of “informality, organization minimalism, inclusiveness, [and] intensive consultations”⁴ is ideal in creating the right setting and conditions for Muslim teachers and leaders to discuss religion and Muslim affairs. Increased interactions can also potentially serve to build a greater understanding between the different denominations and sects of Islam within Southeast Asia, gauge their susceptibility to radical Islamic influence, and moderate views on the roles of Islam within the region.

Dialogues will also allow Muslim leaders to proactively identify and manage communal-religious tensions and flash points within the region before they erupt into violence. They can also be used to solicit ideas of how to better incorporate Islam into non-Muslim societies so as to reduce ethno-religious tensions and build a better understanding of Muslim affairs within the region. The end state of such dialogues will be to build a better understanding between the various groups of Muslims in Southeast

Asia, develop a deeper appreciation of various Muslim affairs within ASEAN as well as form a consensus amongst ASEAN Muslim leaders to deny support to extremist Islamist groups such as the JI.

Transnational crime has also contributed to the conduct of insurgencies in ungoverned territories as a source of manpower and income. Efforts in ASEAN to eliminate the activities of transnational crime seem to be relatively lacking when compared to its political, economic and social activities. There should be increased cooperation amongst the ASEAN nations to eliminate transnational crime using initiatives similar to those it has taken up in countering the threat of terrorism. By doing so, ASEAN will not only be removing a major contributing source of income and manpower to the domestic insurgencies in ungoverned territories, it will also bring about greater stability to Southeast Asia by eliminating the disruptive effects of these criminal groups to social order.

Conclusion

ASEAN has played a significant role in containing the insurgencies of its member states by choosing not to intervene and interfere with their domestic affairs. The governments of the ungoverned territories in the Southeast Asian region are capable of managing their own internal conflicts, as seen in the case of Philippines and Thailand, both of which have shown improvements through its recent efforts in dealing with their respective insurgencies. Nevertheless, it is still possible for ASEAN to help these states improve their domestic security through the coordinated collective actions of its member states to eliminate the manpower, resource and training support insurgencies receive from outside extremist groups as well as transnational criminals. Further dialogue and

cooperation amongst ASEAN member states in Islamic and Muslim affairs can also indirectly prevent extremist groups from exploiting these domestic conflicts to establish its ideology and practices within the ungoverned territories.

The stable and secure geo-political environment of Southeast Asia and its thriving regional economy is testimony to the strength of ASEAN as a regional institution. Although its institutional principles seem to have, on the surface, constrained its management of regional security with respect to domestic insurgencies, they have in reality helped its affected members contain their respective insurgent threats and minimized the spillover effects of these conflicts to other states. ASEAN's resolve and commitment in adhering to its fundamental principles is a positive organizational trait that has helped the association achieve its objectives, thereby making it one of the most successful regional institutions in the world today.

¹ International Crisis Group (ICG), "The EU/AU Partnership in Darfur: Not yet a winning combination," *Africa report* no.99 (25 October 2005): 3. http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/africa/horn_of_africa/099_eu_au_partnership_in_dafur_not_yet_a_winning_combin.pdf (accessed 25 April 2009).

² Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia* (London: Routledge, 2001), 58.

³ Joyce Pangco Pañares and Michael Caber, "ASEAN Okays Unified List of Terrorist Groups," *Manila Standard Today* (12 January 2007), http://www.manilastandardtoday.com/?page=news1_jan12_2007 (accessed 25 April 2009).

⁴ Kim Chew Lee, "ASEAN Unity Showing Signs of Fraying," *Straits Times* (23 July 1998), 30.

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