BALIK-TERRORISM:
THE RETURN OF THE ABU SAYYAF

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FOREWORD

Since early 2002, U.S. forces have provided training and intelligence support to members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) as a component of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. The AFP have been engaged in combat with the Abu Sayyaf, a group previously known for its brutal, though hardly political, kidnappings. Though "Abu Sayyaf" is usually proceeded with the words the "al Qaeda-linked," there was little tangible evidence of such a link from the mid-1990s to 2002. From its founding in 1991 by Afghan veteran Abdurrajak Janjalani through Ramzi Yousef's Bojinka Plot in 1995, the links were clear and convincing. However, in 2002, the leaders of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), al Qaeda's regional affiliate responsible for the bombings of the Sari Nightclub in Bali (October 2002), the J. W. Marriott Hotel (August 2003), and the Australian Embassy (September 2004), were reeling from a number of arrests and setbacks. JI's leadership ordered their Mindanao-based operatives to restore ties to the Abu Sayaaf. Since then, the group has waged a steady and consistent campaign of urban terrorism. Though they are not the greatest threat to Philippine security, they have the ability to create economic instability. Their terrorist capabilities have steadily improved.

The conflict against the Abu Sayyaf is complicated by the ongoing peace process between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), a 10,000-12,000 man strong insurgent force fighting for an independent Islamic state since 1978, and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP). The MILF had clear ties to al Qaeda beginning in the late 1980s when they dispatched troops to Afghanistan for training. Later, the MILF availed itself to al Qaeda by opening their camps to al Qaeda trainers and members of JI. Although the MILF deny these ties, they persist to this day. MILF members provide training and sanctuary to JI members, giving the terrorist organization resiliency. For the MILF, it is a show of Islamic solidarity, as well as a hedge, should the peace process fail. But the Abu Sawaf Group (ASG) has taken advantage of this. Members have moved into MILF-controlled regions and are trained in MILF

camps alongside JI members. The MILF uses the ASG when it needs plausible deniability and cover for its terrorist operations. At some point, it becomes impossible to clearly distinguish between these groups: ASG members may perpetrate the terrorist act, often with the help of MILF or JI members; they were trained in MILF camps by Indonesian JI instructors. The Philippine government downplays this triangular relationship, for fear of upsetting the peace process of the MILF, limiting U.S. policy options. Yet, the mutual relationship between the groups has given JI a new lease on life, and perpetuated the terrorist threat to the region.

This monograph provides an in-depth analysis of the ASG and the triangular relationship between them, the MILF and JI. It seeks to understand the regional impact that this group's resurgence will have on the war on terror in Southeast Asia, and the impact on America and her allies. The Strategic Studies Institute is pleased to offer this monograph as part of the ongoing debate on global and regional security.



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ZACHARY ABUZA is currently a Senior Fellow at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) and Associate Professor of Political Science at Simmons College, Boston. Dr. Abuza specializes in Southeast Asian politics and security issues. He is the author of *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia* (2003) and *Renovating Politics in Contemporary Vietnam* (2001). He has also authored two studies for the National Bureau of Asian Research, *Funding Terrorism in Southeast Asia: The Financial Network of Al Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiya*, NBR Analysis (2003); and *Muslims, Politics and Violence in Indonesia*, NBR Analysis (2004). Dr. Abuza is currently undertaking a major study of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front under support from USIP and the Smith Richardson Foundation. He is also working on two separate studies on the Abu Sayyaf Group and the insurgency in Southern Thailand. He consults widely and is a frequent commentator in the press. Dr. Abuza received his MALD and Ph.D. from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

SUMMARY

The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) has re-emerged as one of the more important terrorist groups confronting the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP), the United States, and our allies in Southeast Asia. Founded in 1991 by Abdurrajak Janjalani, a veteran of the Afghan Mujiheddin and colleague of Osama bin Laden, the group quickly rose to prominence as a lethal terrorist organization committed to the establishment of an independent Islamic state. With funds from Saudi charities administered by bin Laden's brother-in-law, Mohammad Jamal Khalifa, the ASG grew quickly. The group focused its terrorist, assassination, and kidnapping efforts on sectarian targets. Yet, following the plot led by Ramzi Yousef and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed to blow up 11 U.S. jetliners and assassinate the Pope, Khalifa's and the ASG's roles were uncovered.

Khalifa was unable to return to the Philippines, and while his charities remained open, they were unable to support the larger Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the ASG as they had in the past. The ASG was further weakened by a number of arrests and the death of their founder in December 1998. The group quickly degenerated into a number of violent, though hardly political, kidnappers. The group gained international notoriety in 2000 with high-profile raids on diving resorts in Palawan and Sipidan, Malaysia, which led to the deaths of several tourists, including Americans. The 2000 kidnapping of the Burnhams, along with the group's previous connections with al Qaeda, were the the *cassus belli* for the U.S. military to re-engage in the Philippines following the September 11, 2001, attacks by al Qaeda.

Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo pledged close support for Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, and with that came considerable military assistance and training, beginning in early 2002. U.S. forces provided training and intelligence support for the Armed Forces of the Philippines, while U.S. naval engineers engaged in popular civic action campaign in Basilan.

The ASG struck back in October 2002, detonating a bomb that killed a U.S. Special Forces Officer. Since then, it dramatically cut

back on its kidnappings, while at the same time began to engage in a systematic campaign of terrorism. In February 2004, ASG operatives blew up a SuperFerry out of Manila, killing 194 people. On Valentine's Day, 2005, they executed a triple bombing across three cities. ASG members have engaged in a number of other attacks while several others have been disrupted.

Why the shift back to terrorism? This author contends that it was the confluence of internal and external factors. Internally, there was a change in leadership within the organization. Abu Sabaya and Ghalib Andang, the leaders most responsible for the kidnappings, had been killed and captured, respectively. This allowed Khadaffy Janjalani, the younger brother of the group's founder, to consolidate his leadership and bring the organization back to its roots. The ASG was also trying to benefit from the ongoing peace process between the GRP and the MILF. The ASG began to search for hardline members of the MILF, who were sure to reject an autonomy agreement with the government.

Other factors were also at work. In 2002, the leaders of al Qaeda's regional affiliate, Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), were reeling from a number of arrests of operatives that had occurred around the region. That year they decided to forge closer ties with the ASG and invited them to begin training with JI within the MILF's camps in Mindanao. The ASG readily agreed. While the MILF publicly denies the relationship with both the ASG and JI, a number of arrests in the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia of key JI suspects confirms that the training of JI recruits in Mindanao has continued. Moreover, in a number of terrorist incidents that have transpired in the past 2 years, it has been all but impossible to differentiate between the groups: JI members provide training to MILF and ASG members in MILF camps. Members of the MILF and ASG engage in joint terrorist operations.

Despite their denials to the contrary, considerable evidence suggests that the MILF continues to coddle JI and ASG members. However, as the MILF is currently engaged in a peace process with the GRP, the Philippine government continues to give them the benefit of the doubt and has resisted pressure from the United States to follow a harsher line against them.

The ASG remains of concern for a number of reasons. The first is their willingness to engage in indiscriminant violence against civilian

targets and the increases in their technical capacity. On two occasions now, JI blueprints for larger truck bombs have been discovered. The second is their public call for greater sectarian violence. This is very much in line with JI's strategy of fomenting sectarian violence in the Malukus and Sulawesi, Indonesia, where a fragile peace is holding. This also ties in with the ASG's original strategy that they followed in 1991-95. Third, the ASG has taken advantage of the Balik Islam (Christian converts to Islam) networks. Converts have played a role in every major or attempted attack in the past year. The use of converts has extended JI's reach beyond Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago into Luzon and and the Visayas, greatly broadening the battlefield. Finally, the ASG has been built upon the original charitable and nongovernment organization (NGO) networks established by Mohammed Jamal Khalifa that have remained stubbornly resilient to counterterror operations.

The author warns that, despite the regeneration of the ASG as a bonafide terrorist organization, the primary security threat that is confronting the GRP comes from the Communist Party of the Philippines and their armed wing, the New People's Army. To that end, the GRP will focus on the ASG and MILF inasmuch as they expect it to garner U.S. materiel support and assistance. The author counsels U.S. Defense Department policymakers regarding the institutional frailties of the GRP and the institutional corruption within the Philippine armed forces. While the author suggests that training continue, he cautions about being drawn into a quagmire. Despite the MILF's ties to the ASG and JI, he also suggests that the United States should continue to support the peace process and try to wean the MILF off their relationship with terrorist organizations.

BALIK-TERRORISM:
THE RETURN OF THE ABU SAYYAF

On February 27, 2004, a bomb detonated on SuperFerry 14 after departing Manila, killing 194 people. Although the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) initially dismissed the claim of responsibility by the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), evidence emerged that confirmed the group's immediate claim of responsibility. It was the second most lethal terrorist attack in Asia after the Bali bombing, perpetrated by Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) on October 12, 2002, and the single most deadly terrorist attack in the Philippines. Since then, Philippine security officials arrested several Abu Sayyaf members in metro-Manila who were in the final stages of preparation for bombings. Between October 2004 and January 2005, there were three aborted bombings, including a planned attack on the U.S. Embassy.[1] On February 14, 2005, the ASG claimed responsibility for three near simultaneous bombings in Manila, Davao, and General Santos that left 11 people dead and 136 wounded.[2] In May 2005, Philippine officials uncovered a cache of bomb making chemicals in a Manila warehouse.[3]

In short, the ASG has reentered the arena of terrorism. Although the group is thought to have only 200-300 members, Philippine National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales named the Abu Sayyaf as the "most dangerous" of all rebel groups in the country. "Compared with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the New People's Army, the Abu Sayyaf is the most dangerous because these terrorists even volunteer to conduct attacks to win the recognition of international terrorist groups, including al-Qaida," Gonzales said.[4] This is hyperbole, directed at the U.S. Government, as the primary internal security threat remains the Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army. But the ASG and their ties to JI have the potential to cause instability and negative economic impacts.

Why has this brutal kidnap-for-ransom gang reentered the fray and abandoned its 8-9 year reign of deadly, though hardly political, kidnappings? What are the endogenous and exogenous factors in explaining the Abu Sayyaf's reinvention? What are the implications

for both Philippine and regional security? This monograph will provide a brief history of the ASG, before trying to explain the group's reorientation and their implications for Philippine and regional security.

HISTORY

The Founding Years (1988-91).

The origins of the Abu Sayyaf[5] (literally "bearer of the sword"), formally known as Al-Harakatul al-Islamiya, can be traced to Afghanistan. In the early 1980s, between 300 and 500 Moro fundamentalists arrived in Peshawar, Pakistan, to serve with the Mujiheddin fighting the Soviet Afghanistan invasion and occupation. One of them, Ustadz Abdurajak Janjalani, emerged as a leader. Janjalani was the son of a Basilan *ulama* and became a fiery Islamic orator himself. He attended an Islamic university in Saudi Arabia, graduating in 1981 before studying Islamic jurisprudence at Ummu I-Qura in Mecca for 3 years. He returned to Basilan and Zamboanga to preach in 1984. In 1987 he traveled to Libya and then continued on to join the Mujiheddin and fought the Soviets for several years in Afghanistan. In Peshawar, Janjalani befriended a wealthy Saudi supporter of the Mujiheddin, Osama bin Laden. Janjalani, and later his younger brother, Khaddafy Janjalani, received training in the late 1980s and early 1990s at a training camp near Khost, Afghanistan, that was run by a professor of Islam, Abdur Rab Rasul Sayyaf, whose belief in the strict Wahhabi interpretation of Islam found him favor with many wealthy Saudis, including Osama bin Laden. Abdur Rab Rasul Sayaf was also the mentor of an Indonesian jihadi, Riduan Isamudin, better known as Hambali. There is some evidence that the elder Janjalani was a member of the 48-person Executive Council of the Islamic International Brigade, the nucleus of what would become the al Qaeda organization.[6]

In 1989, Abdurajak Janjalani vowed to pursue "*jihad qital*" — armed struggle — to create a pure Islamic state in the southern Philippines based on *Salafi Wahhabism*. Following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, Janjalani traveled between his home in Basilan

and the Peshawar-Afghan border region to recruit supporters. Ten leading Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)[7] officials, who felt sidelined or disagreed with Nur Misuari, joined Janjalani, including Ustadz Wahab Akbar, Amilhussin Jumaani, and Abdul Ashmad. Philippine intelligence officials believe that the ASG's primary goal at the time was to sabotage the ongoing peace process between the MNLF and the GRP and to discredit the MNLF's leaders.[8] When Osama bin Laden wanted to expand his al Qaeda network, established in 1988, he turned to Janjalani to establish a cell in Southeast Asia.[9] This cell also would be an important base of support for terrorist operations. Despite ties between al Qaeda and the MILF, in the early-1990s they were nascent and, moreover, the MILF indicated little interest in conducting or assisting terrorist operations. It was not until 1999-2000, when the MILF experienced significant battlefield losses, that it founded its Special Operations Group (MILF-SOG) and began to engage in terrorism; before this it remained focused on waging conventional guerrilla warfare.

Philippine National Police (PNP) intelligence documents suggest that the mastermind of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, Ramzi Yousef, strongly encouraged the formation of the ASG to serve as his contact and support group in the Philippines. Yousef, who was teaching bomb making at the Khost camp, traveled with Janjalani to the Philippines from December 1991 to May 1992 at bin Laden's request, where he trained ASG members in bomb making in their camp on Basilan Island.[10] When Yousef was introduced to Janjalani's assistant and a leader of the Abu Sayyaf, Edwin Angeles,[11] it was as an "emissary from bin Laden," and he was referred to as "the Chemist," owing to his proficiency in bomb making. Yousef spent a short period of time on Basilan, where he trained approximately 20 Abu Sayyaf militants in the art of bomb making. Though he left the Philippines, Yousef returned in 1994 following the February 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center in New York City.

In addition to providing funding to Janjalani, bin Laden also provided expertise to the new organization. Wali Khan Amin Shah, who fought alongside bin Laden in Afghanistan and who was a close personal friend, was dispatched to recruit, organize, and assist the Abu Sayyaf. Funds from al Qaeda also began to flow, and the ASG

began to receive large deliveries of weapons—mainly Libyan models—from Victor Blout, the Tajik arms dealer who was later linked to both the Taliban regime and al Qaeda.[12]

Anti-Christian/Islamic State Terrorism (1991-95).

The ASG organization quickly made its mark, establishing a reputation and seen as a small but lethal organization. Abu Sayyaf began its terrorist attacks in the Philippines in 1991. Most of their attacks at this time were directed at Christian churches, missionaries, and non-Muslim communities.[13] These attacks include the 1991 grenade attack in Zamboanga city that killed two American evangelists; the bombing of the Christian missionary ship, *M/V Doulosin Zamboanga*, in August 1991; the killing of an Italian priest in Zamboanga on May 20, 1992; the August 10, 1992, bombing of a building in Zamboanga that killed 2 and wounded 40 staffers of a Christian missionary ship; the kidnapping of two Spanish nuns in Sulu on January 17, 1993; the kidnapping of a Spanish priest on March 18, 1993; the kidnapping of an American missionary on Sulu on November 14, 1993; and, the December 26, 1993, bombing of a cathedral in Davao that killed 6 and wounded 132. On June 10, 1994, a series of bombs in Zamboanga, attributed by the AFP to the ASG, killed over 71 people. In one of the most brutal, grisly, and publicly remembered and reviled attacks in modern Philippine terrorism, ASG operatives attacked the western Mindanao town of Ipil on April 4, 1995, killing 53, wounding 48, and then burning and looting 17 commercial buildings. In February 1997, ASG operatives assassinated a Catholic bishop. Between 1991-95, the Abu Sayyaf Group was responsible for 67 terrorist attacks, more than half of which were indiscriminant bombings. All led to the death of some 136 people and hundreds of injuries.[14]

Deepening Ties to al Qaeda (1991-95).

Parallel to their development as a terrorist organization, engaged in fomenting sectarian conflict, the ASG deepened their relationship with transnational terrorist organizations. Early on, the Abu Sayyaf was funded through a financial network established by Mohammed

Key Dates in Evolution of the ASG	
April 4, 1991	Grenade attack in Zamboanga City kills two American evangelists
August 1991	Bombing of Christian missionary ship *M/V Doulos*
May 20, 1992	Killing of Italian priest Fr. Salvatorre Carzedda in Zamboanga
August 10, 1992	Bombing of building in Zamboanga resulting in 2 deaths and 40 other casualties (from Christian missionary ship)
January 17, 1993	Kidnapping of two Spanish nuns in Sulu
March 18, 1993	Kidnapping of a Spanish priest
November 14, 1993	Kidnapping of an American missionary
December 26, 1993	Bombing of a cathedral in Davao
June 10, 1994	Bombings in Zamboanga kill 71 people
April 4, 1995	Attack on Ipil resulting in 53 deaths, 48 wounded, and the destruction of 17 commercial buildings

Table 1. ASG Terrorist Targets, 1991-95.

Jamal Khalifa, Osama bin Laden's brother-in-law, who was dispatched to the Philippines in 1991 and established a network of Islamic charities.[15] Khalifa was officially the regional director for the Saudi-based charity, the Islamic International Relief Organization (IIRO), responsible not just for projects in the Philippines but also in Indonesia, Thailand, and Taiwan.[16] As with most of the Islamic charities that have been implicated in terrorist financing, Khalifa's charities did do some good work, albeit for politically motivated purposes. According to Philippine National Security Advisor Roilo Golez, Khalifa "built up the good will of the community through charity and then turned segments of the population into agents."[17] The IIRO's charitable activities included the construction of an orphanage and dispensary in Cotabato City and dispensaries and pharmacies in Zamboanga. The IIRO funded a floating clinic to serve Muslims in remote villages in western Mindanao. It provided food and clothing to internally displaced people who fled war zones. In addition, IIRO funding went to schools and scholarships. Khalifa established Al Maktum University in Zamboanga using funds from the IIRO. The IIRO asserted that, while it did not always cooperate with the government on these projects, it at least had official approval.[18]

Khalifa does not deny contacts to the Abu Sayyaf or its founder, Abdurrajak Janjalani. As director of the Muslim World League (MWL), "Abu Sayyaf [the nom de guerre of Abdurrajak Janjalani] was one of the people whose acquaintance I made. He was a student at the Islamic university, and I met him several times. But that does not mean that I am with him."[19] He took pride in that, during a period of fighting in the Basilan, the IIRO provided 3 million Pesos, three times the assistance that the government provided.[20]

The IIRO was also a key funder of the Markazzo Shabab Al-Islamiyah (MSI), one of the MILF's most important front organizations that was engaged in *da'wah* and recruitment activities. Based in Lanao del, many ASG members passed through the Islamic academy.

Yet, the IIRO quickly caught the interest of the Philippine police and military intelligence: "The IIRO which claims to be a relief institution is being utilized by foreign extremists as a pipeline through which funding for the local extremists are being coursed through (sic)," a Philippine intelligence report noted.[21] An Abu Sayyaf defector acknowledged that "The IIRO was behind the construction of mosques, school buildings, and other livelihood projects," but only "in areas penetrated, highly influenced, and controlled by the rebel group, Abu Sayyaf."[22] For example, in Tawi Tawi, the director of the IIRO branch office was Abdul Asmad, thought to be the Abu Sayyaf's intelligence chief before he was killed on June 10, 1994. Many IIRO projects were located in Campo Muslim, a poor Muslim community in Cotabato city. This was seen as part of the attempt to help the MILF and ASG broaden their base of support from the countryside into urban areas. Scholarships, likewise, were given to students to become Islamic scholars. One Abu Sayyaf defector said the IIRO was used by bin Laden and Khalifa to distribute funds for the purchase of arms and other logistical requirements of the Abu Sayyaf and MILF: "Only 10 to 30 percent of the foreign funding goes to the legitimate relief and livelihood projects and the rest goes to terrorist operations."[23]

While the ASG had limited capabilities to perpetrate terrorism, it played a supporting role in Ramzi Yousef's Bojinka plan, a plot to blow up 11 U.S. jetliners simultaneously over the Pacific, and to kill the Pope.[24] Although Yousef conducted a trial of his bomb plot

on December 10, 2004, by detonating one of his small nitroglycerine bombs aboard a Philippines Airlines flight en route from Cebu to Tokyo, he publicly claimed responsibility on behalf of the Al-Harakat Al-Islamiyya (AHAI). This was an aggrandizement. Abu Sayyaf members played important supporting, though not leadership, roles in the cell. Yousef and his assistant, Wali Khan Amin Shah, were willing to train them but did not trust them or think them capable enough to carry out serious terrorist acts, but instead used his own men, all flown in from the Middle East. Members of the ASG provided logistical services and assisted Yousef and Wali Khan in exfiltrating the country. Philippine National Police (PNP) investigations found that Abdul Hakim Murad, the third member of the Bojinka cell, was in regular contact with a top ASG commander, Abu Abdullah Aziz.[25]

The Group Degenerates (1995-2001).

With the breakup of the Ramzi Yousef cell, the ASG began a steady decline. The Yousef-bin Laden connection was the major source of their funding, and without a steady supply of al Qaeda money, the group atrophied. Although the U.S. Government designated the ASG a foreign terrorist organization in October 1997, the group had all but abandoned terrorism. The ASG declined further following the death of Abdurrajak Janjalani in a shootout with police on December 18, 1998, which effectively split the group into factions which then degenerated into criminal kidnap-for-ransom gangs. Their commitment to establishing an Islamic state was reduced, and became secondary at best. Hector Janjalani, Abdurajak's brother, was captured by the Philippine government and arrested for masterminding a string of bombings in Manila in December 2000.[26] Despite this public appearance of adherence to the jihad way, the group was engaged almost completely in perpetrating very high-profile kidnappings:

- In March 2000, the ASG kidnapped 55 people, mainly school children, teachers, and a priest in Basilan;
- In April 2000, it kidnapped 20 foreigners and a Filipino from a dive resort on the Malaysian island of Sipidan; and,

- In May 2001, the ASG kidnapped 30 tourists, including two Americans, from the Dos Palmas resort on Palawan.

In 2000-01 they were responsible for 16 deaths and 140 hostage-takings, but no acts of political-religious terrorism.[27] They were a well-armed criminal gang, but not an ideologically motivated political-religious organization. The label "terrorism" was applied to them by both the U.S. and Philippine governments, but that had more to do with their brutality than their political agenda.

The demands for US$1 million in ransom per hostage led many to consider the Abu Sayyaf as nothing more than a criminal menace, rather than a secessionist insurgency with legitimate grievances.[28] As Philippine National Security Advisor Roilo Golez said, "We have no evidence that Abu Sayyaf has gotten financing from bin Laden recently. Otherwise, they would not have to resort to kidnapping."[29] One Abu Sayyaf defector said that he quit the movement because "... the group lost its original reason for being. The activities were not for Islam but for personal gratification. We abducted people not any more for the cause of Islam, but for money."[30] As a Filipino Muslim journalist who had spent a week with the ASG told me, the links had been cut: "Before they were tied to bin Laden, but now no. They [ASG] are independent. They get money from kidnappings. They are an independent cell."[31] He continued, "How they are linked to Osama bin Laden now is a spiritual link [because of a] shared interpretation of *jihad*." Though the ASG continually has demanded the freedom of Ramzi Yousef and the blind Egyptian sheikh, Abdulrahman Omar, links to al Qaeda and international terrorism were at that time dormant, if not severed.

Estimates of the ASG's size varied. From the mid 1990s to 2000, they were estimated to have 600 members. Philippine intelligence officials estimated that the ASG was able to use the ransom payments from 2000 to expand to roughly 1,000 men, as well as to acquire new equipment, radios, boats, and guns. The U.S. military estimated at the time of their intervention that the ASG had 1,200 men,[32] though there was not a lot of evidence to support this number.

Post-9/11 and the Global War on Terror (2001-03).

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) were engaged heavily in combat operations against the ASG in 2000-01, but these were hampered by mountainous and jungle terrain, poorly equipped troops, lack of clear national command and operational level guidance, and rampant corruption. In one well-reported incident, ASG members were encircled in a church compound in Lamitan town on Basilan Island in June 2001. Yet, inexplicably the AFP troops pulled out of position, allowing the ASG to slip out of the cordon. A senate investigation implicated not just local commanders, but senior members of the Department of National Defense.[33]

Past links to al Qaeda and the kidnapping of Americans, including two American missionaries held at the time, led the U.S. Government, on September 24, 2001, to put the Abu Sayyaf Group on the first list of 27 individuals and organizations whose assets were frozen by the United States because of links to the al Qaeda network. President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's enthusiastic support of the Bush administration's global war on terror led to a heightened degree of military cooperation. The approach to the ASG was cited as a prime model of how the Bush administration's *National Strategy to Combat Terrorism* would be applied.[34] The U.S. military used the ASG as the impetus to restore ties damaged by the Philippine government's closure of the U.S. naval base in Subic Bay in 1991. In FYs 2002-04, the U.S. Government provided the Philippine military with US$284.86 million in aid.[35]

From January to July 2002, some 1,300 U.S. troops, including 160 Special Operations personnel, were in the Philippines engaged in a joint training operation, Exercise Balikatan.[36] On October 2, 2002, the ASG conducted a bombing in Zamboanga, which killed three people, including a U.S. special forces soldier; this was a joint operation with two Indonesian members of the Jemaah Islamiyah, and was supported by a Jordanian resident of the Philippines who was linked to the Palestinian terrorist group, Hamas. It was overseen by Khadaffy Janjalani. This attack explicitly targeted U.S. forces and signaled a shift in the group's tactics. This was the group's first bombing since 1994.

The 2002 Balikatan exercise was, by all counts, successful and led to the degrading of the ASG. By September 2002, the ASG was estimated to have had only 200-400 fighters. Since then, the AFP have continued operations against the Abu Sayyaf, although not at the feverish pitch as in the first half of 2002.

In many ways, the successful operations against the ASG hardened the group's resolve to return to their roots as a separatist organization. Counterterror operations resulted in the capture and death of key leaders, who had directed the organization away from a Salafist-based notion of global jihad towards the purely criminal activity of kidnapping, while concerted combat operations against them since 2000 gave them considerable combat experience.[37]

AFP-U.S. bilateral training and joint military operations have continued in the Philippines. A small number of U.S. advisors continue to train and provide field intelligence to their Philippine counterparts, as well as provide roughly US$86 million annually in military assistance, but the AFP's operations against the ASG have been hampered by the terrain, dilapidated equipment,[38] and endemic corruption.[39] For example, Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi, a top JI operative who was arrested in January 2002, walked out of his jail cell in Camp Crame along with a senior ASG operative in July 2003. Then in April 2004, ASG inmates led an escape of 53 prisoners from a Basilan jail; 10 remain at large.[40]

THE REGENERATION OF THE ASG (2003-PRESENT)

In March and April 2003, members of the ASG were implicated, along with JI and MILF members, in the bombing of the Davao airport and Sasa Wharf, both in Mindanao, which together killed 48 and wounded 204.[41] Since then, the ASG has emerged as the most potent terrorist force in the Philippines, executing or attempting a number of terrorist attacks, including the SuperFerry bombing, which killed more than 100 people.[42] On March 4, 2003, two ASG members were arrested in Manila with a large cache of explosives that they hoped to put in backpack bombs to be detonated in malls.[43] In June 2004, six more ASG members were arrested for possessing explosives. Philippine intelligence officials believe that this cell was plotting another round of attacks on SuperFerries in July.[44]

Philippine intelligence reports stated that the ASG had formed an urban assassination squad, known as Fisabillilah, in Zamboanga in March under the direction of Khaddafy Janjalani and two other Abu Sayyaf and JI members.[45] In October 2004, three ASG members were arrested for plotting to bomb the U.S. Embassy.[46] In December 2004, they bombed a market in General Santos, killing 14 and wounding 70. December 2004 to January 2005 saw three aborted bombings. Then on February 14, 2005, they executed three near simultaneous bombings in three separate cities, killing 11 and wounding roughly 136. Following a prison uprising on March 14, 2005, in which 24 ASG members including three detained leaders were killed, the ASG spokesman vowed to take the war "right to your doorsteps" in Manila.[47] An arrest on March 23 led to the recovery of 18 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and 10 sacks of chemical precursors in a safe-house in Manila.[48] The suspect admitted that the ASG leadership was planning a wave of bombings in Manila during Holy Week.[49]

At the same time, almost all kidnapping incidents by the ASG have ceased. Since October 2004, there were five separate kidnapping incidents by ASG operatives, but all of those ended in executions, not demands for ransom.[50] The trend now seems to be to kill all suspected intelligence operatives or informers. (See Table 2.)

This change in strategy to bombings, and attacks in Manila in particular, caught intelligence officials by surprise. As one Western police official based in Manila explained: "ASG never had a presence or interest in Manila before. So why now?" His hypothesis is that JI funding to the group resumed, but only on the condition that the group conducts operations with a larger, geo-political regional impact.

The government still labels the ASG as "bandits," which galls the ASG. As Abu Sulaiman stated, "The irony about the Philippine government is that . . . they are belittling us, but they are exaggerating the problem of terrorism in the country and using, as an example, the likes of the Jemaah Islamiyah, which is based in Indonesia. But what is in front of them, they do not see."[51]

These incidents beg two questions: Why is the ASG getting back into the terrorism business? And why is it giving up its lucrative kidnap-for-ransom business? There are two important endogenous explanations: changes within the ASG and their leadership, as well

Date	Action	Description	Victim(s)	Location
November 12, 2004	Kidnapping, followed by execution	Photojournalist Gene Boyd Lumawag of MindaNews executed	1	Jolo, Sulu
November 13, 2004	Kidnapping, followed by execution	Philippine journalist Herson Hinolan, manager and commentator of Bombo Radiyo radio station executed. Authorities suspect ASG connection to assassination	1	Aklan
November 19, 2004	Abduction	Dr. Alberio Canda abducted from municipal health office, purportedly to be used to treat wounded ASG members	1	Parang, Sulu
December 11, 2004	Execution	Provincial director of Philippine Coconut Authority shot in head on way to market. Authorities believe he was mistaken for intelligence agent	1	Zamboanga
January 8, 2005	Kidnapping, followed by execution	ASG elements abduct, try, execute 3 salesmen. Authorities believe they were mistaken for military intelligence agents	3	Siasi, Sulu

Sources: "Reward Offered for Hinolan's Attacker" *MT*, November 16, 2004; "Suspected Abu Sayyaf Gunmen Abduct Doctor in Sulu," *PDI*, November 22, 2004; "Philippine Government Official Dies in Suspected Abu Sayyaf Attack," *Deutsche Presse-Agenteur*, December 12, 2004; Julie Alipala, "Sayaff Men Abduct, Execute 3 Salesmen from Pampanga," *PDI*, January 11, 2005.

Table 2. ASG Kidnapping Incidents, October 2004-February 2005.

as a shift in their relationship to the MILF. There is also an exogenous explanation: the JI has reached out to the ASG and made them their partner in jihad.

The Emergence of Khadaffy Janjalani.

Following the death of the ASG's founder, Abdurajak Janjalani, in 1998, the ASG split up into three distinct factions which became nothing more than extraordinarily violent bandits and kidnappers. Much of this, according to Philippine intelligence officials, was

driven by Aldam Tilao (Abu Subaya) and Ghalib Andang, who had a "domineering personality" and was driven solely by greed.[52]

Often the only way that organizations can change policy is by changing their leaders. In the case of the ASG, leadership transition was involuntary. Abu Subaya was killed in a joint U.S.-Filipino ambush in June 2002, while Ghalib Andang (aka Commander Robot) was captured in December 2003. Authority in the loosely knit group appears to have been consolidated by Khadaffy Janjalani,[53] the younger brother of the founder, who seems more intent on bringing the group back to its religious origins. His brother, Hector Janjalani, was arrested previously for plotting terrorist acts in Manila. Khadaffy Janjalani, himself, was trained in Afghanistan. He had been a computer science student first in Marawi and later in Zamboanga when he was recruited by his brother and sent to Afghanistan. He was trained at an al Qaeda camp near Mazar e-Sharif in the early 1990s, where he led a group of 20 Moros.

To be sure, Khadaffy Janjalani is no innocent when it comes to kidnapping. He was implicated in the kidnapping incident on Palawan Island on May 27, 2000, that led to the capture of 20 people, and the subsequent beheading of an American hostage. But PNP debriefs of six ASG members who were captured in October 2002 present a very clear picture that Khadaffy Janjalani was focused primarily on waging jihad through an urban bombing campaign. He directed his underlings to reconnoiter targets and acquire bomb making skills and ingredients, organized training by Middle Eastern operatives, and ordered bombings in Zamboanga, General Santos, and elsewhere.[54] He organized the December 2002 bombing in Zamboanga that killed a member of the U.S. Special Forces.

Janjalani is "working very hard to get the ASG back to its roots," one Philippine intelligence official said to me. But this was more for personal reasons: he was "trying to assert his legitimacy based on the religious authority of his brother."[55] Janjalani seems truly interested in reasserting the ASG as a legitimate national liberation front organization, and stated so in a July 2004 radio interview.[56] And the ASG has not been implicated in any kidnapping-for-ransom since the capture of Ghalib Andang. In this apparent shift in doctrine and tactics, Khadaffy Janjalani has sought to improve ties with the largest independence movement in the southern Philippines, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

MILF Links to the Abu Sayyaf Group.

Competition (1991-99). The MILF has a mixed relationship with the Abu Sayyaf Group. In 2002, the MILF spokesman condemned the ASG's attacks and kidnapping as being completely un-Islamic. "Most of their activities are against Islam. We do not sanction most of their activities."[57] There were "unity talks" between the two organizations in the 1990s, though MILF officials say that nothing materialized due to "differences over ideology and tactics."[58] Interrogations of captured ASG members reveal a lot of anger that the MILF did not share much of the resources and funding from the Saudi charity network established by Mohammed Jamal Khalifa.[59] Omar al-Faruq, a key al Qaeda operative who was dispatched to the region in 1994-95 by Abu Zubaidah and who was a trainer at the MILF camps, was responsible for forming a union between the then-small ASG and the MILF to create "a stronger *jihad* force," but was spurned by the ASG, who did not consider the MILF a "reliable *jihad* partner."[60] Some joint training occurred at MILF camps in the early to mid-1990s, but this seems to have been enforced or facilitated by the presence of al Qaeda trainers, who also included Al-Mughirah al-Gaza'iri and Abu al-Abbas al-Khatami.[61]

For 3 to 4 years in the early 1990s, despite some rivalry and competition over resources, Muhammad Jamal Khalifa was also able to forge working ties between the two groups. Khalifa established the Daw'l Imam Shafi'ie Center (DISC) in 1988-89, funded by the Saudi IIRO charity which Khalifa also controlled. DISC has a mosque/madrasa in Marawi where the MILF and ASG sent operatives for religious training before going on to military training in MILF camps. The school is believed to have graduated three classes of militants between 1990 and 1993. The classes, of roughly 50 cadets each, were divided between MILF and ASG.[62] Abdurajak Janjalani was a graduate of the class of 1992.

The Special Operations Group and Deepening Ties (1999-2005). Debriefs of captured ASG members reveal a working-level relationship between the MILF's Special Operations Group (founded in 1999) and the ASG.[63] In addition to joint training, the two groups increasingly were involved in joint operations. This was often facilitated, not by organizational ties, but by personal ties. For

example, Patta Edris, a MILF-SOG member, was the cousin of Abdul Mukmin Edris, who was a top ASG operative and trainer, and one of Khadaffy Janjalani's closest lieutenants.[64] In another case, two of the ASG members who were arrested on October 6, 2004, for the 2003 Davao bombings, Abdul Manap Mentang and Mursid Mubpon, were former MILF members.[65] Eid Kabalu, the MILF spokesman, said that the MILF expelled the two and that they then joined the ASG.[66] Mentang, however, claimed he was still a member of the MILF.[67] Mentang also asserted that he was a member of a 15-man MILF class trained by senior JI operative Zulkifli at Camp Hudaibiyah in 1995.[68] How many MILF operatives went through JI's advance class in demolition is unknown, but estimates are around 60.[69] As the bombing appears to have been a joint operation between the MILF-SOG, JI, and the Abu Sayyaf, it is very difficult to know where to draw the line. Based on the available evidence, the two groups have maintained a long-standing, yet ad hoc relationship that has depended on mission, time, personal/family connections, training experience, available personnel, and funds.

In another case, two of the bombers responsible for the 2005 Valentine's Day attack in Makati, Abu Khalil Trinidad and Gamal Baharan, admitted that Khadaffy Janjalani recruited them into the ASG. In the summer of 2004, they were dispatched to Butig, the seat of the MILF's 103rd Base Command,[70] where they met with Khadaffy Janjalani and Abu Solaiman, and were trained in bomb making by Rohmat (aka Zaki), an Indonesian JI liaison officer.[71] Baharan stated that there were two other ASG members who were being trained there at the same time.[72]

It also belies evidence provided by U.S. and Philippine military commanders who believe that there is a working relationship between the two organizations. During the 2002 Balikitan exercises, a trilateral agreement was reached, assuring the MILF that joint U.S.-Philippine patrols in Basilan would not enter MILF-held zones. U.S. commanders complained that the MILF gave the ASG passive support, allowing them to use their territory for safe haven. As Admiral William Fallon, Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Pacific Command, recently stated:

> The Government of the Philippines, bolstered by U.S. training and support, achieved success in 2004 against the terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group;

> however, the Jemaah Islamiyah appears to pose a greater threat to U.S. and allied interests in the region. JI became more active in the Philippines in 2004 and continued to train with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and supported ASG and MILF attack operations. While the GOP efforts likely disrupted attacks, the JI and associated groups have shown resilience and continue training future Southeast Asian terrorists.[73]

Why Does the MILF Stand to Gain? While there have been differences between the two groups, the MILF clearly enjoys having the Abu Sayyaf around. For one thing, it keeps AFP forces spread thin. The AFP is spread so thin that recent operations in Jolo precluded operations against the MILF in the Liguasan Marsh area.[74]

For another thing, it gives the MILF a degree of plausible deniability when it engages in terrorism. The MILF uses the ASG as a direct-action proxy. The MILF has pledged peace, is engaged with the GRP and Malaysians, and has a public image to uphold; using the ASG as a proxy allows this.[75]

The two groups have not held formal unity talks, but ample evidence suggests that cooperation is stepped-up between them. There is some indication that the MILF sold or transferred some weapons to the ASG since the Basilan exercise, as ASG ranks have increased. Philippine intelligence officials have told me that they have seen ASG members using MILF boats in Tawi-Tawi.[76]

The MILF sees any campaign against the ASG as a convenient way for the government to target them (MILF). In photos of the Malaysian International Monitoring Team's Advance Survey Mission to the 108th Base Command in Silocon, Zamboanga del Norte, in May 2004, MILF soldiers are seen showing fresh wounds to the Malaysian observers. Despite the cease-fire that has held remarkably well in the rest of Mindanao, stepped-up operations against the ASG in Zamboanga del Norte either have given the military the cover to violate the cease-fire and to go after the MILF on the sly, or indicate the close working relations between the two groups on the ground. It should be noted that increased AFP operations in the region have resulted in much of the 108th base command relocating to the Lanao del Sur coastal region. The commander of the MILF's 26th unit command, Abu Ashraf Balindong, confirmed the presence of units of the 108th command under Kummander Aloy al-Ashre, who is known to have close ties with the ASG, and who, himself, is involved in kidnapping.[77]

The relationship between the MILF and the ASG has deepened in the past year. First, the MILF is really trying to take advantage of a fractious and weakened MNLF, dominated by Tausogs, to strengthen its position in the Sulu archipelago. The MILF has pockets of support (such as with the Yaccans on Basilan), but have tried to broaden their base of support beyond Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sarangani, and Sultan Kudarat. It should be noted that the replacement for Aleem Abdulaziz Mimbintas as the Vice Chairman for Internal Affairs is a Tausog from the Zamboanga region.[78] This was clearly done to maintain an ethnic and geographical balance in the leadership. The MILF would benefit significantly from the ASG's social networks throughout the archipelago, as they seek to supplant the MNLF as the dominant political voice and action arm of the Bangsamoro.

To that end, the MILF has reached out to Khadaffy Janjalani. Reportedly, U.S. signals intercepts have tracked Janjalani from Basilan to Palimbang in Sultan Kudarat, to the Carmen region of North Cotabato, and then to Camp Jabal Quba, a subcamp of Camp Bushra in Butig, which is the headquarters of the 103rd Base Command. He could not be there without explicit MILF approval, knowledge, or support. As one senior AFP commander in Maguindanao said to me, "Of course, he [Khadaffy Janjalani] is close to the MILF. When he arrived from Jolo, he relied on the MILF. He was adopted by them. Even the shipment of his group's weapons was organized by MILF leaders."[79]

The MILF clearly hopes to use the ASG to keep government forces spread thin and to help build up its network in the Sulu archipelago. This factor, coupled with Janjalani's rejection of kidnapping in favor of national liberation struggle, has led to much closer ties between the two organizations.[80] At the same time, hard-line elements of the MILF are predisposed ideologically to the ASG and JI, and are forging active alliance with these groups.

The ASG's Motivation. The ASG have their own reasons for forging ties with the MILF. At the most basic level, the MILF offers what the ASG does not have on its own: money, shelter, training, infrastructure, control over large areas of land, logistics assistance, and help with operations. The ASG "owes" the MILF for allowing them (ASG) to exist, operate, train, recruit, and raise funds in MILF areas, and the MILF exploits that.[81]

As they did in the early-1990s, the MILF want to serve as spoilers to the peace process. In a recent statement, the ASG's spokesman, Abu Solaiman, warned, "To our brothers in the MILF, don't waive our nation's honor, dignity, and right, even in exchange for the whole world. No amount of development can pay for our homeland's illegal and immoral occupation or annexation."[82] Whereas the ASG has forged relationships with the MILF, it is not clear that they are institutional. Stronger evidence suggests that the ASG's relationship is to individual commanders of the MILF, and in particular to the 106th and 109th Base Commands, under Salamat Samir, Ustadz Abdulwahid Khalil Tondok, and Ustadz Umberil Kato, respectively,[83] that stretch from the Liguasan Marsh through to Datu Saudi Ampatuan and Datu Piang (see Figures 1 and 2 for details). As mentioned above, there is also some relationship to the commanders of the MILF's 108th Base Command.

The ASG appears to be forging closer ties with commands that are less inclined to support the MILF's senior leadership in the peace process. It is highly unlikely that all of the MILF will support a peace agreement that falls significantly short of the MILF's avowed goal of an independent state. The ASG is looking for potential allies. As one senior AFP commander said to me, "Khadaffy Janjalani is consolidating the radicals. He has the money to support the religious hardliners who will challenge [Ebrahim el Haj] Murad."[84]

Tondok, in particular, seems to have cultivated the deepest ties to JI and ASG. Senior AFP leaders contend that he has given sanctuary to roughly 30 JI and ASG militants.[85] The presence of Isnilon Hapilon in the region under Tondok's control, accompanied by Dulmatin, a senior JI operative who is linked to the Bali bombing, led to the November air assault by the AFP on Barangay Linantangan, in Talitay in the Butulan marsh area.[86]

The JI operative who was in charge of liaison work and training of the ASG, Rohmat (aka Zaki), was arrested at a military checkpoint as he was leaving MILF-controlled territory (109th Base Command) outside of Datu Saudi Ampatuan.[87] He asserted that not only was JI-ASG training being conducted in MILF territory at Camp Jabal Quba (MILF's 103rd Base Command) and Mamasaparo town (MILF's 109th Base Command), but that the ASG leadership had given members of the MILF P100,000 ($1,850) to launch terrorist attacks during Easter week.[88] The MILF, unsurprisingly, denied the allegation.[89]



Figure 1. MILF Base Commands.



Note: The various base commands do not have a demarcated territory. While they are all headquartered in various towns, the claims often overlap. For example, the 106th (Pikit, North Cotabato), 109th (Talayan, Maguindanao) and 105th (Columbio, Sultan Kudarat) Base Commands regional jurisdiction all converge on the southern edge of the Liguasan Marsh. The 104th Base Command (Maitum, Sarangani) also extends across the mountains into the marsh region.

Figure 2. MILF Base Commands Detail of the Liguasan Marsh Region.

EXPLAINING THE TRANSFORMATION: EXOGENOUS FACTORS

While the reorientation of the ASG has Khadaffy Janjalani imprimatur, it raises questions of whether exogenous factors are at work. Has the ASG been "activated" by the JI or al Qaeda? Who is paying for the materials? Has the JI stepped up training of ASG members? Have there been financial inducements for the ASG to engage in terrorist acts? Some evidence suggests that these connections have been rekindled and that JI sees the ASG for the first time as a reliable partner.

Did the Breakup Really Occur?

Some evidence also suggests that ties were never completely severed. In October 2000, hostages who escaped from their Abu Sayyaf captors asserted that two Yemenis were in the camp advising the Abu Sayyaf in September and October.[90] One ASG defector stated that four foreign instructors (three Afghans and a Syrian) were in the ASG camp in Tugas, on Sulu Island.[91] A PNP intelligence report stated that "In 2001, Asraf Kunting, member of the ASG shurah, was sent to Malaysia to fetch four al Qaeda operatives who trained the Abu Sayyaf on explosives."[92] This was partially corroborated by several ASG suspects detained in October 2002 who revealed that Khadaffy Janjalani hosted two Middle Eastern operatives in September 2001. These operatives conducted training for a month before traveling to Malaysia.[93] Abdul Mukmin Edris revealed that two al Qaeda members, a Yemeni (aka Azzam) and an Arab (aka Sunawa), were in Basilan in September 2002.

An Indonesian crew member of a tug boat hijacked by Abu Sayyaf members off Jolo in June 2002 identified several Yemenis who attended a meeting with ASG leaders in Patikul, Sulu, on May 3, 2003. They were accompanied, according to his testimony, by Abu Sophia, the *nom de guerre* of Ahmad al-Ghozi, the brother of the late Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi, a senior Indonesian JI operative who was the group's emissary in the southern Philippines and liaison to the MILF.

MILF Resistance to the Emerging JI-ASG Relationship.

Abu Sophia, like his brother, was dispatched to central Mindanao where he was a JI bomb instructor in MILF camps. He also was charged with brokering talks between the ASG and MILF. Most of the resistance at this time came from the MILF leadership, which saw the ASG as a loose band of nonreligious and nonideological kidnappers.

Other JI members also were instructed to open channels to the ASG leadership. Nassir bin Abbas, the captured leader of JI's Mantiqi 3 region, which includes Mindanao, has admitted that in February 2004, the JI's acting *amir*, Abu Rusdan, ordered him to establish ties with the ASG.[94] He in turn ordered his subordinate, Zulkifli, to establish ties with Khadaffy Janjalani. Zulkifli, an Indonesian JI member, was a longtime JI trainer in MILF camps in Mindanao (since 1995), who, starting in early 2001, began to offer training to the ASG at Camp Jabal Quba. At the time, however, the ASG had lost much of their national liberation fervor and few operatives were trained.[95]

The International Crisis Group (ICG) reported that, "Khadaffy Janjalani had long wanted to send men for training at Camp Hudaibiyah but the MILF rejected the idea."[96] In part, this reflects that Khadaffy had little control over anything but his own faction of the ASG. In 2001, Khadaffy Janjalani approached Zulkifli, then the head of the JI cell Wakalah Hudaibiyah, and asked him again to restore joint training. Zulkifli agreed, but also arranged training for JI operatives in ASG camps in Tawi Tawi and Basilan in return.[97] Zulkifli ordered his lieutenant, Rohmat (aka Zaki), an Indonesian JI member who came to the Philippines in 2000, to be the official go-between.[98]

A Triangular Relationship Develops.

As a result of this training, the ASG began to work with JI operatives and members of the MILF-SOG in the execution of several terrorist attacks. On April 22, 2002, a joint team bombed the FitMart Department Store in General Santos City; 15 persons died and 60 were injured.[99] On October 2, 2002, ASG operatives working for Khadaffy Janjalani conducted a bombing in Zamboanga with two Indonesian members of the Jemaah Islamiyah that killed 3 people, including a U.S. Special Forces soldier.

Joint operations increased after that. A string of bombings and arsons were done in large part with MILF logistical assistance and ASG operatives. For example, Nassir bin Abbas asserts that Khadaffy Janjalani provided RP100,000 (roughly US$2,000) to Zulkifli to fund the February 2003 bombing of the Cotabato airport. A MILF-SOG operative, Abdul Jabidi (aka Bedz), provided explosives for both the bombing of the Cotabato airport and the March 4, 2003 bombing of the FitMart in Tucarong.[100]

Interdependence.

Institutionally, relations between JI and the ASG deepened. Following the Zamboanga bombing in October 2002, Zulkifli went to Zamboanga to liaise with the ASG leadership. The second batch of JI terrorists graduated from Camp Jabal Quba in Lanao del Sur, in November 2002. In January 2003, JI appointed a liaison officer, Mustaqim, the head of "Wakalah Hudaibiyah," to work with the ASG. The JI operative, Rohmat (aka Zaki), had been a JI trainer at Camp Hudaibiyah in Camp Abu Bakar in 2000, and then in Camp Jabal Quba from 2000 through 2002. At the start of 2003, he was dispatched to the Zamboanga-Basilan region with the ASG. He served as an instructor for the ASG in Sulu, and held a high-level meeting with the ASG leadership in July 2003.[101] "I'm JI," Rohmat (Zaki) told ABS-CBN News. "But I was told to work with Abu Sayyaf, and we were all together, so my life is now Abu Sayyaf."[102]

According to Taufiq Riefqi, Zulkifli appointed "Zammy," a 30-year-old Indonesian JI operative and graduate of the second class at Camp Jabal Quba, to be the "Wakalah contact of the Abu Sayyaf Group in Zamboanga City, as well as the liaison contact with the MILF."[103] Taufiq Refqi, himself, "was arrested while in the process of arranging with a senior Abu Sayyaf cadre the scheduled training for the ASG at JI's training camp, Muaskar Jabal Quba."[104] Rohmat (aka Zaki) returned to Camp Jabal Quba where he continued to instruct ASG and JI members. He admitted that, at the time of his arrest, there were 23 JI members at Camp Jabal Quba (MILF's 103rd Base Command) undergoing bomb training and an additional 10-member cell in Mamasaparo town (MILF's 109th Base Command). "There were 23 men who have just finished the course. I heard they

would be sent back home and others would stay behind to train a new batch."[105]

Close operational ties between the ASG and JI were disclosed, following a number of arrests in late 2004 to early 2005. Abdul Manap Mentang and Mursid Mubpon have confessed that when they received their training in an MILF camp in Butig in mid-2004, Rohmat (aka Zaki) was there with Khadaffy Janjalani and Abu Solaiman.[106] On December 14, 2004, Philippine police arrested three Indonesian JI members, along with a local ASG contact.[107] Dulmatin ordered a JI operative in Indonesia, Abdullah Sonata, who was arrested in conjunction with the September 4 Australian Embassy bombing, to dispatch additional JI members to Mindanao for training. Three members, Faiz Saifuddin, and Nasir and Dedy Rusdiana, were arrested by Philippine authorities. Sonata later dispatched two additional members, Maulana Musa and Salman, who were arrested in Tawau Malaysia on June 9, 2005. Two others, Abu Nida and Ahmad managed to get into the Philippines.[108] Leaked but unconfirmed Philippine intelligence documents contend that in 2004 JI gave US$18,500 to the ASG leadership to fund training.[109] It is a reasonable figure.

More alarming is that significant evidence suggests there is currently a cadre of first-generation, al Qaeda-trained JI leaders in Mindanao.[110] (See Table 3.) While the ASG does not control territory and they are most certainly under the protection of the MILF, the concurrent presence of ASG leaders reinforces the notion of an interdependent relationship between the three organizations, in which money and training are exchanged for protection and base camps. Clearly the training is continuing apace.[111]

The ASG is no longer devoid of ideology, and their newly rediscovered (or imposed) radical interpretation of Islam meshes with al Qaeda's. The JI's need for a regional base area to regroup and train, alone, has fundamentally altered the ASG's direction. The ASG's more radical position has allayed JI's suspicion that it is an unreliable partner.

Dulmatin	Indonesian national; senior JI operative and top bomb maker; educated at Al Mukmin; protégé of Dr. Azahari
Umar Patek aka "Daud"	Indonesian national; senior JI operative; played a leading role in the October 2002 Bali bombings. According to Nassir bin Abbas, he trained in Afghanistan. Came to Mindanao first in 1995. Took over from Nassir, who was a trainer in MILF camps from 1995-96. He reportedly was killed by AFP forces in August 2005.
	Indonesian national. Believed to be JI's top trainer in Mindanao at present. He replaced Mustaqim who was arrested on June 30, 2004, in Indonesia.
Usman (sometimes Osman) aka Rizal	Indonesian national. Trainer in the Mt. Cararao region.
Ahmad al-Ghozi (sometimes goes by Abdulsamad al-Ghozi)	Indonesian national. The brother of Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi. Senior trainer in the Camp Bushrai, Butig, lanao del Sur to Mt. Cararao region.
Samudra al Ormatan aka Marwan	Indonesian national. Was intended target during the bombing of the JI-ASG safe house on January 27, 2005.
Abdul Rati Talang Hat aka Bigok	
Abdul Rahim Ayob	From Central Java. Senior JI leader. Dual Indonesian-Australian national. With his brother, former leaders of Mantiqi 4. Were in Java for a leaders' meeting on October 15, 2002. Based in Butig, Lanao del Sur.
Ahmad	
Abu Nida	
Mawia	A Singaporean member
Zulkifli bin Hir	
Asep (Darwin)	
Mhmd bin al Faiz	Trainer for the MILF in the Kabacan, North Cotabato region.
Mhmd bin Alzaad	Trainer for the MILF in the Kabacan, North Cotabato region.
Mhmd Yusop	Trainer in Cararao (Mt. Makaturing region)
Mhmd Adzari	Trainer in Cararao (Mt. Makaturing region)
Abu Huzayme	Trainer in Cararao (Mt. Makaturing region)
Abu Nomar	Trainer in Cararao (Mt. Makaturing region)
Mhmd al-Saad	Trainer in Cararao (Mt. Makaturing region)
Abu Hamdi	Trainer in Cararao (Mt. Makaturing region)
Abu Mashood	Trainer in Cararao (Mt. Makaturing region)
Abu Guiati	Trainer in Cararao (Mt. Makaturing region)

Sources: Karl B. Kaufman and Johnathan Vicente, "3 Held in Plot to Bomb U.S. Embassy," *The Manila Times*, October 22, 2004; Jaime Laude, "Terror Threat Remains Despite Capture of Bombers," *PS*, March 1, 2005; various interviews.

Table 3. Suspected Indonesian Members of JI at Large in Mindanao.

Financial Interconnectivity.

Further evidence of renewed ties between the ASG, JI, and al Qaeda emerged in April to May 2004, with the arrest of two financiers, Khair Malzam Mundus and Jordan Mamso Abdullah. Abdullah was a currency trader in Cotabato City, believed by Philippine intelligence officials to have transferred US$25,000 from the JI to the ASG and local JI operatives, which were deposited in several bank accounts he had established. They also believe that the US$28,000 provided by senior JI and AQ operative Hambali in 2003 went through him.[112] Abdullah was very close to Zulkifli, the senior JI operative.

Mundus was a more important financier for the group, described by Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita as a "direct intermediary of al-Qaida funds" channeled to Abu Sayyaf leader Khadaffy Janjalani to be used in "bombing and terroristic activities."[113] PNP chief Hermogenes Ebdane said Mundus was a much bigger catch than Jordan "because he became a direct source of funds for the ASG."[114] Mundus, who was a student in Saudi Arabia from 1996 to 2003, was able to direct al Qaeda funding for Abu Sayyaf through the Al Haramain Foundation. "He also negotiated and solicited money in Saudi Arabia for the Janjalanis," according to Chief Superintendent Ismael Rafanan, head of the PNP intelligence group.[115] Mundus first worked with Abdurajak Janjalani, and later worked directly with Khadaffy Janjalani, who succeeded his slain brother as Abu Sayyaf leader. Mundus is purported to have raised US$89,000, or about RP5 million, which he deposited in accounts in the Arraji Bank in Saudi Arabia and the Arab National Bank, and transferred to bank accounts in branches of Philippine banks in Zamboanga City and Cotabato City. About RP2.76 million of the funds went to the purchase of supplies and equipment for the Abu Sayyaf, including rifles, uniforms, and a speedboat which was used in the kidnappings at the Dos Palmas resort in May 2001. The remainder was used for bombings.[116]

Other financial links between the ASG and both JI and al Qaeda are still being investigated. Baharan, the Valentine's Day 2005 Makati bomber, asserted in his interrogation that the money for the three Valentine's Day bombings came from an Indonesian courier who gave the ASG leaders RP1 million.[117] Philippine intelligence officials

expressed disgust when Mohammad al-Sughayir, a Saudi Arabian national suspected of funding JI and the ASG, was released from custody and deported to Saudi Arabia the following day.[118] While Philippine intelligence officials lacked strong evidence against the Saudi as they were unable to question him, the speed and forcefulness of the Saudi response raised eyebrows.

THE ABU SAYYAF ORGANIZATION

This monograph is premised on the notion that the loose band of kidnap-for-ransom gangs has been somewhat consolidated by Khadaffy Janjalani. It is important not to overestimate either the degree of his control or the organizational unity of the ASG. It is a geographically divided organization which operates throughout the Sulu archipelago (especially in Basilan, Jolo, and Tawi Tawi) and now across Mindanao (from Sirawai in Zamboanga del Norte to Sarangani, Sultan Kudarat, North Cotabato, and Lanao del Sur). There is little command and control, and communications are simplistic; for the most part based on mobile phones. There is little discipline or internal unity.

Strength.

The current size of the ASG is roughly 250-300 hard-core militants. This is a very amorphous group which relies primarily on small compartmentalized cells for specific operations.[119] They tend to recruit young operatives who are given the minimal amount of training for an operation. They are treated as one-offs, or amateurs, who most likely will be caught. With increased JI training, their technical capacity has improved. But JI's real legacy will be if they can impose greater discipline on the organization.

Organization.

Philippine analysts and government officials usually over-emphasized the formal structure of the ASG. Citing Philippine military documents, Rommel Banlaoi contends that "When Janjalani formed the ASG, his original vision was to form a highly, organized

systemic, and disciplined organization of fanatical secessionist Islamic fighters."[120] To that end, he established the Islamic Executive Council comprised of 15 religious leaders. "Under the IEC were two special committees. The first committee was the Jamaitul Al-Islamia Revolutionary Tabligh Group in charge of fund raising and Islamic education. The second committee was the Al-Misuaratt Khutabah Committee in charge of agitation and propaganda activities."[121] Finally, there was the armed wing, formally known as the Mujahidden al-Sharifullah. Likewise, a Philippine Marine Colonel wrote that in 2000-01, the ASG was believed to be comprised of 16 armed units:

> Each group, more often than not; operates as separate entities, particularly centered on its leader. They support and reinforce each other when in the face of a common enemy during combat, mainly because they share the same culture, religion, historical roots, status in the society, and former organization (MNLF). However, when questions or doubts in the division of the loot or sharing of ransom arise, they come into conflict and revert to their basic motivation of money. Various interests of their leaders and individual members include personal interests in money, vendetta against another group, family or individuals, and connections or relations with politicians.[122]

Yet these analyses at best reflect the goals of the leaders, and not the actual organization on the ground. Banalaoi is more accurate when he describes the the organization based on known "groups," closer to gangs, in each geographical location. Though using 3-year-old AFP data, on Basilan he identifies 10 groups, while in Sulu, he identifies 16 groups.[123]

There is no formal process of ASG recruitment, training, or indoctrination. Several first-generation members were former MNLF combatants or trained in Afghanistan. Young men, either wanted criminals or ideologically predisposed youths are recruited, usually for a single specific task for which they are given ad hoc training.

The ASG is a protean organization. There is little understanding about the leadership structure.[124] While Banalaoi argues that the Islamic Executive Council is still intact, little evidence supports this. Khadaffy Janjalani sits at the top of the organization as much as anyone does.[125] Beneath him are several lieutenants who are with him in Mindanao. Then there are a handful of other commanders based on Jolo, Basilan, and Tawi Tawi. Little is known about their personal

or command relationships. The archipelagic commanders appear to have little knowledge or role in ASG's terrorist operations. While they are not completely breakaway factions, and there is evidence of limited coordination, Khadaffy Janjalani does not have effective control over them. The ASG changes shape every day, depending on arrests. During 2002-03, police arrested 100 suspected ASG members. It is a very fluid organization.

Khadaffy and Isnilon have roughly 30-40 armed combatants with them, though they travel in smaller groups. Abu Solaiman is not known to have armed combatants. The forces in the Sulu archipelago are larger.

CAUSES FOR CONCERN

While the ASG remains a very small organization, its willingness to employ terror and develop close working ties to other terrorist organizations which allow it to leverage its strength are troubling. In particular, analysts and policymakers should take the threat of the ASG seriously for three reasons: 1) Improvements in ASG technical capacity to conduct terrorist attacks; 2) Stated ASG interest in fomenting sectarian violence, and; 3) Adept ASG penetration of Balik Islam networks and recruitment of Christian converts to engage in terrorist acts.

Ratcheting It Up a Notch Or Two.

The technical capacity of the ASG, in terms of bomb making, has increased dramatically in the past year. As a top Philippine intelligence official told me, "the ASG's bomb technology is getting much more sophisticated."[126] Until recently, the ASG's bombs were small, often little more than pipe bombs, or bombs strapped onto the back of motorcycles.

While they have not put together large truck bombs as JI has used three times in Indonesia, evidence suggests that the technology transfer has occurred. Abdul Mukmin Edris had diagrams of car bombs on him when he was arrested. One ASG member who was captured in October 2002 revealed that lessons in putting together

Isnilon Hapilon aka Abu Musb, aka Abu Tuan, aka Tuan Isnilon, aka the Deputy, ala Salajudin	Known as Janjalani's deputy. He has most recently been based in the Saranganí-Sultan Kudarat region, and occasionally in the Butalan Marsh area in Talitay, Maguindanao.
Jainal Antel Sali Jr. aka Abu Solaiman	The self-described spokesman. Recently, he has been based in MILF camps and seems to be in charge of liaison activities. He has no fighters directly under his command, though he has organized terror cells.
Hajijul aka Alex	Took over from Abdul Mukmin Edris, when he was killed. Top urban terrorist trainer/ operative.
Borhan Mundus	Liaison officer on Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia.
Mohammad Hatta Haipe	Liaison officer on Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia
Abu Khalid aka Ashraf Kunting	ASG finance operative in Manila
Esmin Radullan (sometimes listed as **Ismin Sahiron**)	Son of Radullan Sahiron. Reportedly moved to Mindanao to liaise/join with MILF.

Table 4. Janjalani's Lieutenants.

Radullan Sahiron aka Commander Putol	Based on Sulu. The one armed commander has been described as a very charismatic, but fiery, preacher. He held the Indonesian tug-boat crew. His troops are some of the ASG's fiercest combatants and in October 2002, they handed the Philippine marines their heaviest combat losses since the 1970s. At the time he was believed to command around 100 fighters. He has a P1 million bounty. His son, Esmin Radullan (sometimes listed as Ismin Sahiron), and other subleaders, Jundam Jamalul aka Black Killer and Kiri Hamid reportedly went to Mindanao to merge with the MILF. His two nephews, Muin Maulod Sahiron and Adbumon Sahiron are his top lieutenants.
Gumbahali Abu Jumdail aka Dr. Abu	Commander on Jolo. At one time he was thought to have roughly 300 fighters. He was involved in the April 23, 2000, Sipidan raid.
Mubin Ibba	Commander on Basilan. Was Isnilon Hapilon's deputy. Led a mass-breakout from a jail on Basilan in April 2004. 25 ASG members escaped.
Albader Parad	Commander on Jolo
Borhan Mundus	
Hadon Adak	Deputy commander on Jolo
Hadji Radi Upao	Commander in Tawi Tawi

Table 5. ASG Commanders in the Sulu Archipelago.

Tanakalun Lianson	Top commander on Basilan. Killed in January 2005.
Hamsiraji Sali aka Jose Ramirez	Killed in Basilan in April 2004.
Mujib Susukan	Killed in February 2003.
Redendo Cain Dellosa aka Hakid Akmal	Arrested in 2004. Admitted to planting the bomb on the SuperFerry in February 2004. Balik Islam convert.
Galib Damon	Arrested on October 21, 2004
Alhamser Manatad Limbong	Arrested on February 27, 2004.

Table 6. Senior ASG Lieutenants/Commanders Neutralized in 2003-05.

a truck bomb were conducted, and that JI had the capacity to do so if it wanted.[127] Indeed one of the leading bomb makers for JI, Dulmatin, is reported to be in the southern Philippines. In December 2004, Philippine security agents arrested an Abu Sayyaf member accompanying three JI members to MILF camps in Mindanao, where they were to conduct training on car bombings. As the head of PNP Intelligence, Chief Superintendent Ismael Rafnan, ominously warned, "They were planning to go into car bombs. They have reached that level of sophistication. They are ready to do it."[128]

The ASG demonstrated with the SuperFerry incident that they have graduated to a more lethal scope of attacks. The Valentine's Day bomb in General Santos City was made from a 105mm howitzer shell, significantly larger than the mortar shell bombs they have traditionally used. The fact that they were able to execute three bombings across the country nearly simultaneously displays a degree of technical sophistication. I would argue that, in this specific case, there is no difference between an artillery shell and mortar shell, except for the size of the bang. Same priming, wiring, and detonation are used, and were used. Also, simultaneous bombings translate into an improved degree of *operational* sophistication, not technical. It shows they are better at coordinating what they are doing.

In the ASG's safehouse on 141 Aglipay Street, used as the Valentine's Day bomber's base of operations, police discovered not just a huge inventory of bomb making equipment and explosives, but ominously 12 small bombs made of C4 mixed with kerosene

and reinjected into personal care products (toothpaste tubes and shampoo bottles). Intelligence officials believe that the only purpose for such small bombs is to blow up airplanes.[129]

As the ASG is reverting to its terrorist past, they also are harkening back to the period of tutelage under Ramzi Yousef and taking a page out of his playbook which is: the potential for more lethal attacks is clearly evident, and the ASG leaders seem bent on escalating the level of violence.

The Potential for Sectarian Violence.

The MILF has never turned their war into a sectarian conflict. Indeed, the MILF has worked with Christian communities and members of the Catholic clergy effectively. Leading ideologues have contended, "Jihad is not meant to wage indiscriminant fighting against non-Muslims, mush less Christians."[130] The ASG, in contrast, was founded on the notion of sectarian violence. For the first 5 years of the organization's life, its attacks were directed almost exclusively at Christian targets: bombings and grenade attacks of churches, and assassinations and kidnappings of clergy and missionaries. There is growing concern that the ASG will return to these tactics to provoke the desired conflict. Planned and thwarted attacks in metropolitan areas during Holy Week point to the conscious desire to target non-Muslim religious elements.

The impetus also has come from JI, which always has used sectarian conflict to further their cause and bolster their ranks. This is what JI and its leaders were consumed with in 1998-2000 when they established two separate paramilitaries, the Laskar Mujiheddin and the Laskar Jundullah in the Malukus and Sulawesi, respectively. This was an important tool for JI in indoctrinating their members, giving them a sense of defending their religion and reinforcing their Manichean view of the world. In 2004-05, the number of bombings, attacks, and assassinations must be seen as a deliberate attempt to break the uneasy truce that has held since the negotiation of the Malino Accords in 2002.

- In October 2004, 123 IEDs were discovered in a cache hidden in a Muslim cemetery outside of Poso.

- On March 28, 2005, Indonesian police raided safe houses used by Islamic militants in Ambon, seizing a cache of some 95 IEDs and ammunition.
- On April 24, another sectarian conflict flared in Mamasa Regency in Central Sulawesi. A gang of Muslim "Kommandos" torched houses in a Christian community, killing six. The first suspect arrested in conjunction with the attacks admitted his "plans to carry out terror attacks and bombings across the country." His arrests were followed by two bombings in April in Poso.
- On May 2, Indonesian police arrested three suspects wanted in conjunction with the August 2003 bombing of the J. W. Marriott Hotel in Jakarta. All three, as well as a fourth who escaped, were involved in not only the sectarian bloodletting in Ambon in 1999-2000, but also the April 24 attacks in Mamasa.
- On May 28, twin bomb blasts at a market in Tentana, Central Sulawesi, killed 22 people.

At the same time the Laskar Mujiheddin reconstituted themselves and appeared in Aceh in the wake of the December 26 tsunami.[131] Their revival, following the release from jail of their leader and founder, Mohammad Iqbal Abdurrahman (aka Abu Jibril), should come as no surprise. Unlike other JI leaders, such as Wan Min Wan Mat or Nassir bin Abbas, who have been released after renouncing JI and its violent means,[132] Abu Jibril has not.

One Philippine Intelligence official confirmed to me that several members of the Laskar Jundullah were currently in Mindanao. He went out of his way to differentiate them from common JI members.[133] Other JI members, such as Zulkifli, encouraged their MILF and ASG contacts to escalate attacks on Christians.

Why would the ASG engage in sectarian conflict? What would they stand to gain? The answer is two-fold. First, they seek to prove to JI that they are a reliable jihad partner. By following JI's line on the issue of sectarian violence, they will deepen the bond. Second, while the MILF assiduously has not reverted to sectarian violence, they have also failed in their struggle. Not only has the MILF not won

an independent homeland, but also the number of Christian settlers continues to increase. Muslims now comprise a majority in only five provinces and two cities in Mindanao, with the ratios declining rapidly (by Manila design). The ASG might see sectarian conflict as a means to win over disaffected and frustrated members of the MILF.

To that end, the MILF, in a very interesting recent posting on their website, warned of the ASG's move towards fomenting "lateral violence."[134] It is worth recounting the March 22, 2005, statement:

> In the same vein, Ameen also hit the Abu Sayyaf, especially its self-styled spokesman, a certain Abu Sulaiman, for equally promoting Muslim-Christian animosity in this country.
>
> "Only the 'enemy' will benefit when Muslims and Christians start cutting each other throat [sic] in this country," he warned.
>
> He reiterated earlier call [sic] to the Abu Sayyaf to abandon their "terrorist ways" and return to the correct teachings of Islam that even during war "non-combatants" are spared from harm, adding that such activities will only alienate them from the people being one of the most important factors in a truly revolutionary warfare.
>
> "When you offended (sic) the people," he warned, "you lose their support and you're in great trouble."[135]

Unlike other MILF postings on *www.luwaran.com*, which tend to respond to events in the news, there was no real news event to prompt this statement. Clearly the MILF is attuned to the ASG's avowed intention, and it is causing some concern among the leadership. The saving grace is that the ASG's numbers remain quite small, and it is not evident to me that they actually have the capability to engage in such acts. That said, they clearly have demonstrated the will.

While the vast majority of Muslims in the South would not support a broader sectarian conflict as it would eventually bring a heavy-handed and in certain areas more or less indiscriminate PNP and AFP response, the ASG is not a mass movement, nor does it strive to be. It is an elite organization which is trying to follow what it believes to be the correct path, regardless of current popular support.

Balik Islam and Christian Converts.

The third concern for Philippine security officials is the degree to which ASG members have recruited from Balik Islam organizations.[136] This has given the ASG and JI a reach into the Luzon-Manila regions, beyond the Muslim-dominated south. While the MILF has availed itself of Balik Islam groups to a small degree, the Abu Sayyaf adroitly has exploited the zeal of new adult converts to Islam. According to statistics gathered by Luis Q. Lacar in his study of the Balik Islam phenomenon, by 1995 there were 98,500 converts.[137]

Abu Sayyaf worked closely with one group of converts, called the Rajah Solaiman Movement (RSM) in the late 1990s. The RSM was a cell of militant students and teachers at the Madrasah of Fi Sabilila Daw'ah and Media Foundation in Luzon Island, which was broken up in early 2002. Although it was amateurish, it gained the attention of Philippine police and intelligence officials for three reasons.

First, the RSM had clear ties to both the MILF and the ASG. The group's leader, Ahmed Islam del Rosario Santos, and his two brothers traveled to Camp Abu Bakar in August 1999 to meet with MILF leaders; and in December 2001, Santos underwent military and explosives training at Camp Bushra at Lanao del Sur. The RSM received funding from the Darul Hijrah Foundation, which was founded by several MILF members including Abbas Kansi, Abdul Nasser Nooh (former MILF liaison officer in Manila), Khairoden Macarya, Abdulla Akmad, and Bashir Hasan, and is under the unofficial leadership of Yusop Alongan, the former MILF Financial Committee Chairman. Sheikh Omar Lavilla, another RSM leader and a former classmate of Janjalani at Mindanao State University, was promised support from the ASG leader in late-2000.[138] A suspected ASG front in Manila, the Philippine Association of Muslimah Daul Eemanm Inc., was connected to the RSM and Balik Islam activities.[139] But the connections are also based on kinship. Three sisters, all Balik Islam converts, are the wives of Khadaffy Janjalani (Zainad Lim Dungon), Abu Solaiman, the ASG "spokesman" (Amina Lim Dungon) and RSM's founder Ahmed Santos (Lorraine Lim Dungon).[140]

Second, it was based in Luzon, the primary Philippine Christian stronghold and the seat of national political, cultural, and financial power. This indicated that at the very least, there was a large

disaffected population, so cut off from mainstream Philippine life that they actually would convert from Chrisianity to Islam, and at worst, that the southern Muslim rebels wanted to expand the battlefield physically to relieve some of the pressure the government was putting on them. For instance, of the 1,890 madrassas in the Philippines, only 1,000 or so are in Mindanao; the remainder are spread across the rest of the country.

The third and more urgent cause for alarm was that the RSM was built upon Mohammed Jamal Khalifa's NGO network, left unscathed by the Philippine authorities after 1995. These include the Islamic Studies Call and Guidance (ISCAG),[141] the Islamic Information Center led by Nedal al-Dhalain,[142] and Islamic Wisdom Worldwide Mission (IWWM). The IWWM is led by Mohammad Amin Soloman Al Ghafari, a long-time associate of Khalifa, and absorbed the IRIC staff after it was closed in 1995. The IWWM also has a long history of providing money for MILF.

More recently, Philippine National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales said Abu Sayyaf chieftain Khadaffy Janjalani has deployed 80 Muslim converts mainly to Manila and other key cities to bomb civilian and government targets.[143] To date, there is no known organizational presence in Manila.

What is most alarming is not just that these charities remain operating, but the militancy of their converts. Since the regeneration of the ASG as a bona fide terrorist organization in the start of 2004, Muslim converts have played key roles in every attack, attempted attack or operation:

- Redendo Cain Dellosa, aka Hakid Akmal, arrested in 2004, admitted to planting the bomb on the SuperFerry in February 2004;
- Angelo Abu Khalil Trinidad, aka Abu Khalil, one of the two Valentine's Day (Makati) bombers, was arrested on February 22, 2005;
- Allan Burlognatan, shot after escaping from Camp Crame, was arrested for attempting a bus bombing in Manila in February 2005;[144]
- Ibrahim Mutu Kessel, a cell member under the leadership of Abdul Manap Mentang, arrested in November 2004; was

thought to be the ring-leader of a group of 40 Balik Islam recruits to the ASG;[145]

- Jaybe Ofrasio, a Balik Islam convert in Ireland, was arrested by authorities there for wiring money to ASG and JI suspects; he provided a safehouse for Taufiq Riefqi, an Indonesian JI operative in Cotabato; Zulkifli, a top JI operative in the Philippines, was arrested in 2003 as he tried to enter Malaysia using a passport in the name of Dani Ofrasio;[146]
- Tyrone Dave Santos, aka Daud Santos or Dawud Muslim del Rosario Santos, was arrested on March 23, 2005, in Manila for possession of explosives that were intended for a string of attacks during Holy Week; he is the brother of the RSM's founder Ahmed Islam del Rosario Santos.[147]

As one senior security official complained to me, they knew that the ASG was actively using the Balik Islam network to recruit and indoctrinate new members, but they did not have smoking gun evidence that the Saudi and Gulf-funded charities that supported Balik Islam were actively complicit in supporting the militants, which limited their response.[148]

IMPLICATIONS FOR SECURITY

The regeneration of the ASG has implications for both Philippine security, especially in terms of its impact on the ongoing GRP-MILF peace process, as well as on regional security.

Implications for the MILF, the Peace Process, and Philippine Security.

The MILF currently is engaged in peace talks with the Philippine government.[149] The 12,000-man rebel army has been fighting since 1978 for the establishment of its own homeland, governed by Islamic law. Chairman Ebrahim El Haj Murad has indicated that he is truly committed to finding a durable political solution to the civil war. While the cease-fire is holding well, little has been agreed to in the talks between the two sides.

While the GRP asserts that the MILF is a loose coalition and highly factionalized, I come to a different conclusion. Based on dozens of interviews with MILF officials, their negotiators and advisors, I contend that the MILF is a more unitary organization than it is given credit for (though it is hardly monolithic), with effective (though it can be slow) command and control.[150] There are clearly differences of opinion over certain policies (Jemaah Islamiyah and the ASG, for example), but there is no overt factionalism that hampers decisionmaking or threatens the organization as a whole. Chairman Ebrahim el-Haj Murad is in effective control, for now. Even before Salamat died, "Murad presided over executive functions"[151] so that there was no question as to who would take over the organization. Members have told me that the Central Committee decision to appoint Murad as chairman was unanimous.[152]

Yet the potential for factionalism is there, especially over a peace agreement with the government, which, if it is reached, likely would fall short of full independence or a referendum. An MNLF-like autonomy agreement, such as that signed between the GRP and MNLF, which in the MILF's eyes has been a dismal failure and did not address the root causes of the insurgency, will lead to the factionalization of the organization. We know where the factionalization will come from: the base commands/units loyal to Samir Hashim, Ustadz Abdulwahid Khalil Tondok, and Ustadz Ameril Umbra Kato; and a handful of subcommanders, including Abdul Kitogi Icow. A few other base commanders are "on the border line." Alloy al-Ashre of the 108th has been close to ASG members in the past. These individuals have shown that they are welcoming to foreign *jihadis*, willing to use indiscriminant violence, and willing to escalate the conflict. For now, the Central Committee is in control, and the MILF's leadership appears to be trying to contain these hardcore elements, but they will not be able to hold on for much longer.

Rather than factionalism, the real rifts in the organization seem to be generational. "The younger set thinks different. They are radicals in a different way," Attorney Michael Mastura told me.[153] This phenomenon can be explained in two ways. First, a critical mass has returned from the Middle East that has been socialized in a more

militant and austere interpretation of Islam. Second, some frustration exists within the ranks that after 20 years the older generation was not able to free the Bangsamoro people. The MILF was shocked in May 2004 when four of its members had admitted that they had been recruited by JI. Some leaders now describe JI as a "virus" that is targeting their youth.[154] Talking about the MILF revolution, one leader said to me, "It is not religious fundamentalism. It is nationalism. We have to stop it now. It could become an issue of fundamentalism."[155]

And this seems to be what is driving the MILF leadership's thinking. One MILF negotiator told me that if they signed a peace agreement that was detrimental to the MILF, then there would be large scale defections: "The Abu Sayyaf will welcome them with open arms," one member told me.[156] Chairman Murad warned *Time Magazine* about the radicalism of Moro youth and how they will be drawn toward JI and the ASG if the peace agreement is not reached soon: "Once they see some hope, then they will think twice before joining groups that advocate suicide bombing, and so on. But when they believe there is no future, then they will go to these groups."[157]

And perhaps that is part of the Abu Sayyaf's calculation: if the MILF makes peace with the government and accepts autonomy rather than full independence, then more radical leaders of the MILF will join with the ASG. As one ASG leader stated recently, "If this sell-out succeeds, more blood will flow because the young are more determined jihadis. We will soon find out there are more Osama bin Laden's in our midst."[158]

On February 1, 2005, the AFP launched a major attack on Jolo. The provocation is still disputed: AFP troops say that ASG, with some local MNLF cadres, ambushed and killed 14 AFP soldiers. Local Muslims do not deny that an ambush took place, but assert that it was a local MNLF commander, Ustadz Sadir Malik, and his troops only, who were responding to an unprovoked attack that led to the death of a local religious leader, his wife, and child.[159] The AFP insisted the individuals in the targeted house were members of the ASG. In the ensuing conflict, the AFP has now renewed the war with members of the one group that they had made peace with. The ASG claims that they are fighting side by side with the MNLF, something that the MNLF vehemently denies.[160] Yet even this small

and concentrated offensive has depleted the AFP of the resources it needs to fight elsewhere. As mentioned above, the primary security threat to the Philippine government remains the CPP/NPA, which is increasing in both numbers and strength.

In short, the ASG will capitalize if there is a peace agreement (whether it is meaningful or unimplementable) between the GRP and the MILF as radical members will defect to their ranks. At the same time, the ASG also stands to gain if there is no peace agreement, or if the GRP-MNLF agreement begins to unravel. Should the cease fire breakdown, as one side seeks to improve its strategic position at the negotiating table, the MILF will depend more on the ASG to keep government forces spread thin.[161]

At present there is so much overlap between the ASG, MILF and JI that Philippine security officials are often truly at a loss as to which group is responsible for an attack. Delineations are becoming particularly difficult as the groups increasingly work together.

IMPLICATIONS FOR REGIONAL SECURITY

While JI continues to train its members in MILF camps in the Lanao del Sur-Maguindanao region, some evidence suggests that JI members are availing themselves of ASG bases in Tawi-Tawi. These reports are unconfirmed, but if true, they would further indicate that there are ties between the two groups.

Clearly JI leaders worry that the MILF sees them as expendable. While some in the MILF see JI as fellow travelers and allies, many in the MILF leadership see the JI as a liability. At best, they see JI as their strongest card to be played in the peace talks. To that end, JI has to hedge its bets and strengthen ties to the ASG.

A true core of hardened JI operatives is now in Mindanao working with the ASG and some members of the MILF. They offer unimpeachable terrorist credentials and cachet, a wealth of terrorist expertise, ideological tutelage, and bomb making skills. Most significantly, they have a neo-Darul Islam orientation, the stated endstate goal of a pan-Southeast Asian Islamic caliphate necessitating provoking radical sectarian conflict. To that end, I have been told that Laskar Jundullah operatives are now encamped in the region.

The ASG has a vast reservoir of recruits and they control pockets of territory, while JI has the technical expertise that the ASG needs to escalate the war against Manila and become an effective fighting force. The implications of this are clear.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The ASG has reemerged as a terrorist element in Southeast Asia. Though a small group, they are of concern to the United States for three primary reasons. First, they will continue to target Americans and U.S. interests. Second, they have shown a propensity for establishing working ties with transnational terrorist groups like JI and al Qaeda.[162] Third, they seek to spoil the MILF-GRP peace process, which is of great importance to U.S. and regional security, since without access to MILF sanctuaries, JI will have trouble reconstituting its depleted ranks. For those reasons, the United States should take the ASG threat seriously.

Nonetheless, U.S. officials must recognize that neither the ASG nor the MILF pose the largest security threat to the GRP. Indeed, the ASG is a nuisance, though were it to be able to attack Manila on a regular and sustained basis, serious economic repercussions would result. All evidence suggests that these groups will continue to do this.[163] The single greatest threat to the Philippine state continues to come from the CPP/NPA. This has two important implications: First, the GRP should be expected to play up the ASG threat when speaking to a U.S. audience in order to elicit more aid and military assistance; at the same time they may deny the MILF relationship with and training of JI.[164] Second, the GRP will often engage in quick half-measures to deal with the ASG and MILF. For example, though the GRP and the MILF are currently engaged in peace talks, expectations are slight that the GRP has the capacity or will to actually implement any final agreement, thereby sowing the seeds of the next insurgency. Disaffected members of the MILF and ASG will lead this insurgency.

The MILF-GRP peace talks are important and the U.S. Government should support them. With the conclusion of a peace agreement, the MILF will have certain rights, but it will also have obligations, in particular, policing its autonomous region. Both the

ASG and JI rely on the MILF as neither control territory or have ready access to guns, materiel, and money. The majority of the MILF can be weaned off of their relationship with terrorist groups.

There has been talk of placing the MILF on the U.S. Foreign Terrorist Organization list as punishment for its continued support for the ASG and JI.[165] While most bureaucratic entities understand that the MILF is a legitimate entity (certainly their grievances are), patience is wearing thin. Only the State Department continues to resist the designation, and even it is divided on the issue.[166] The MILF believe that links between them and JI are at a low enough level that they have a degree of plausible deniability. What is of significant concern to American and regional intelligence officials is not simply that the training is continuing, but that a cadre of first-generation, Afghan-trained JI members is now based in Mindanao, including Dulmatin and Umar Patek, two of the Bali bombers. Increasingly, Mindanao is seen not just as a rear base of operations, but as a potential center of operations. As Deputy Chief of Mission Joseph Mussomelli said, "The threat remains, and, frankly, on some ways it is growing. The number of JI that are there, the links between JI and MILF factions and ASG may even be increasing."[167]

In a trip to Manila in early April, the newly appointed Commander of U.S. Forces in the Pacific, Admiral William Fallon, raised the issue of designation,[168] causing an outcry from the Philippine government, including President Arroyo.[169] Admiral Fallon's statement reflects U.S. frustration with both the MILF and the Philippine Government. Regarding the former, the intelligence is making it hard for anyone to believe the MILF's denials. Regarding the latter, the Philippine government has shown little seriousness or vision regarding the peace process. President Arroyo has shown little leadership that is needed if she is to succeed in reaching a deal with the MILF that will stabilize Mindanao. The Philippine government does not want the United States to do it, because it will stall the peace process and potentially lead to a resumption of war;[170] something the Philippine government can ill-afford.

While the MILF publicly scoffs at designation, they should not. Designation would delegitimize their movement and hurt their dream of an East-Timor styled United Nations (UN)-sponsored referendum. Moreover, the UN Security Council will likely follow

suit, and the MILF has no friends on the Security Council. Moreover, it will set back the peace process and give hardliners in the Philippine military the incentive to continue the war.

The recalcitrant wings of the MILF and the ASG must be dealt with militarily. There is nothing to negotiate with these groups. They are too willing to use indiscriminate violence in pursuit of their radical agenda, and they are too willing to form tactical alliances with transnational terrorist organizations, linking themselves with the pan-Islamic Salafi Jihadist agenda.

But to deal with the ASG and radical elements of the MILF militarily is not going to be easy. The AFP does not have the capability or resources to accomplish this mission. And at some level, they do not have the integrity: the AFP is so fraught with corruption that at certain points they have made a mockery out of fighting the war on terror. While individual Filipino soldiers have demonstrated remarkable valor in the field, too many of their leaders have enriched themselves at their subordinates' expense. The AFP has taken well to U.S. training. Units in the field that I have interviewed take great pride in their U.S. training. It is certainly good for morale. U.S. training, especially small unit, special operations training, should continue.

But U.S. policymakers and Pentagon officials have to be concerned about falling into a trap: With roughly $80 million in annual military assistance to Manila and little to show for it, the United States should both reevaluate the aid program as well as establish better auditing mechanisms for the equipment provided. Aid in the current fiscal year is purported to have been cut to $31.76 million.[171] While the training programs have accorded some results, one gets the impression that when U.S. advisors are not with their Philippine trainees, combat operations grind to a halt, and ASG members mysteriously break through cordons.

Since the debacle in early 2003, when the Pentagon announced the plans for Balikitan-03, in which U.S. forces would "conduct or support combat patrols" for an open-ended period,[172] and then had to delay the deployment owing to the political uproar, U.S. officials have been more sensitive to the domestic response in the Philippines. There is considerable public and congressional concern in the Philippines that the United States is simply out to reestablish

permanent bases. These concerns seem misguided at a time when the Pentagon is actually consolidating bases, but they still exist.[173]

If U.S. forces continue to be engaged in Mindanao, they should increase their civil action programs. They are exceptionally well-received by the local communities, whose information and intelligence is essential to effective counterinsurgency operations. Road construction, well building, and medical treatment are a low-cost, high-yield investment.

Finally, we need to further assist the Philippine government in its ability to monitor and disrupt terrorist financing. To that end, the U.S. Government must also push the Saudi Arabian government to fulfill its pledge to monitor the activities of their charities. Much of the ASG's funding and support comes through the charities established by Mohammad Jamal Khalifa in the early-1990s that have either remained open to this date, or simply proliferated into a number of smaller charities.

CONCLUSION

The ASG remains a very loose coalition of groups. I question the degree of control that Khadaffy Janjalani has over the ASG groups in Jolo, Basilan, and Tawi Tawi. They have neither the discipline nor the command and control that the MILF has over their troops. It remains to be seen whether Khadaffy Janjalani can consolidate his power. It is also not clear how durable either organization would be with the capture or neutralization of Janjalani.

But the ASG has emerged as a serious security threat to Philippine and arguably regional security. They have forged closer relations with hard-line MILF elements, and have proven themselves to be a reliable partner for JI. There is a critical mass now of senior JI operatives, not just young recruits. Many now see Mindanao as a base of operations, rather than a rear training area.

Any surge in terrorist activities will have a devastating impact on the Philippine economy, already beset by an ongoing, serious fiscal crisis. The government, which is calling on its line ministries to accept a 40 percent budget cut this fiscal year, can ill afford either increased security costs or a loss of foreign investment. Already, there is little foreign direct investment (FDI) because the huge public

sector debt, which has more than doubled to RP3.36 trillion (US$60.32 billion) since the Asian Economic Crisis in 1997, is not leaving the government money to invest in infrastructure. The national debt rose by 13.6 percent to RP3.8 trillion between 2003-04 (78.7 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), one of the highest ratios in the developing world). FDI is 19 percent of GDP, and must be increased to 28 percent, to deal with the country's surging unemployment that has increased from 12.2 percent in first quarter of 2003 to 13.7 to the same period in 2004. Of the country's 36.5 million-man labor force, more than five million are unemployed, and countless more are underemployed.

And yet little meaningful government counterterrorism movement or action is in the offing, as it is a very low priority of the public, and hence a poll-driven president. In March 2005 public opinion surveys by both the Social Weather Station and Pulse Asia, the president's performance approval ratings plummeted. Approval of her performance fell to 36 percent, while disapproval was up to 48 percent.[174] The Pulse Asia study found that her public support fell from 55 percent in June 2004 to 38 percent in March 2005.[175] Public perception of the country's direction is plummeting, mainly due to economic issues: 59 percent of Filipinos believe that the country will be worse off in 12 months' time. When asked to list their three most pressing issues, counterterrorism only garnered support from 6 percent of the respondents, while economic issues dominated their concerns: controlling prices (45 percent), poverty reduction (32 percent), national economic recovery (31 percent), low pay (30 percent), and the national deficit (10 percent).[176] While peace rated highly (35 percent), disapproval of the government's peace initiatives rose from 28 to 35 percent.[177] These numbers do not bode well for either counterterror efforts or peace initiatives in the Philippines. For a president concerned with her political standing, most efforts will be focused on core economic issues, and not the threat of terrorism.

ENDNOTES

1. Karl B. Kaufman and Johnathan Vicente, "3 Held in Plot to Bomb U.S. Embassy," *The Manila Times*, October 22, 2004; Jaime Laude, "AFP: JI Plot to Bomb U.S. Embassy Foiled," *The Philippine Star*, October 22, 2004.

2. In a radio statement claiming responsibility, Abu Solaiman, the group's spokesman, said, "Our latest operation in GenSan, Davao, and Manila, planned and executed with precision by the gallant warriors of Islam, is our continuing response to the government's atrocities committed against Muslims everywhere." Joel Francis Guinto, "Bomb Blasts Rock Davao, General Santos, Makati," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, February 14, 2005.

3. "Cache of Bomb Chemicals Seized in Manila Warehouse," Agence France Presse, May 3, 2005.

4. See *http://www.manilatimes.net/national/2004/aug/13/yehey/top_stories/20040813top3.html*.-

5. Marites D. Vitug and Glenda M. Gloria, *Under the Crescent Moon: Rebellion in Mindanao*, Quezon City: Ataneo Center for Social Policy and Public Affairs and the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, 2000, p. 2.

6. For more on the Islamic International Brigade, see Peter Bergen, *Holy War Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden*, New York: The Free Press, 2002.

7. The Moro National Liberation Front was founded in 1972 by Nur Misuari. It was the largest of the Muslim secessionist movements and in its heyday had considerable state sponsorship from the Libyan and Malaysian governments, in particular from the governor of Sabah, Tun Mustapha. In 1976 the Libyan government brokered a peace accord between the GRP and MNLF, but it was poorly implemented, and fighting quickly resumed. In 1978, a faction led by Salamat Hashim broke away from Misuari, whom they accused of being too secular. The offshoot was formally founded as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in 1984.

8. National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (NICA), "Briefing on Al Harakat al Islamiya (AHAI)," No date given, p. 6.

9. *9/11 Commission Report*, New York: WW Norton, 2004, p. 58.

10. Ramzi Yousef and his uncle, the 9/11 mastermind, were not members of al Qaeda at the time. The *9/11 Commission Report* describes them as ". . . rootless but experienced operatives who--though not necessarily formal members of someone else's organization--were traveling around the world and joining in projects that were supported by or linked to bin Ladin, the Blind Sheikh, or their associates." *The 9/11 Commission Report*, p. 59. For more on Ramzi Yousef and the Bojinka plot, see Philippines National Police, "After Operations Report," 1995.

11. Edwin Angeles (aka Yusuf Ibrahim) fought the Soviets in Afghanistan. Following his return to the Philippines in 1991, he was captured by PNP/AFP elements, and recruited to serve as a double agent for the government. He was released and rejoined the ASG, but was killed soon after, most likely by the ASG.

12. Donald G. McNeil, Jr., "Belgium Seeks Arms Deals With Suspected Qaeda Ties," *New York Times*, February 2002, p. 27.

13. NICA, "Briefing on Al Harakat al Islamiya," no date given, p. 3.

14. *Ibid*.

15. For more on Khalifa's financial network, see Zachary Abuza, *Funding Terrorism in Southeast Asia: The Financial Network of al Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah, NBR Analysis*, Vol. 14, No. 5, Seattle: The National Bureau of Asian Research, December 2003, pp. 26-28.

16. The IIRO actually was established in 1978, but co-opted in 1979 by Saudi Arabian intelligence in order to serve as a financial conduit for Saudi, U.S., and Gulf-state funding to the Mujiheddin in Afghanistan. Through the 1980s, the IIRO legitimized itself and grew. It now has more than 30 offices, and its activities cover more than 75 countries. In the early 1990s, the IIRO decided to have separate directors for each of the countries, and Khalifa became the IIRO director for the Philippines. The IIRO claims to have begun charitable work in the Philippines in 1988, but according to documents registered at the Philippine Securities Exchange Commission (PSEC), the IIRO was legally incorporated in the Philippines on September 20, 1991, with offices in Makati and in several cities in Mindanao, including Cotabato and Zamboanga. Khalifa was listed as the IIRO's president and chairman of the board of trustees. Based on IIRO documents at the PSEC, Khalifa was one of five incorporators who signed the documents of registration; another was Khalifa's wife, Alice "Jameelah" Yabo. Dr. Adnan Khalil Basha, "Largest Islamic Relief Organization Maligned," Letter to the Editor, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, August 2000, p. 18; Christine Herrera, "Gemma Linked to Bin Laden Group Funding Sayyaf, MILF," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, August 10, 2000.

17. Mark Lander, "US Advisors May Aid Philippine Anti-Terror Effort," *New York Times*, October 11, 2001, p. B4.

18. Basha, "Largest Islamic Relief Organization Maligned."

19. "Bin Ladin's In-Law Responds to New York Times Report on Terrorist Links," *Al Sharq al-Awsat*, London, May 2002, p. 4, in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service* (FBIS)-NES, May 5, 2002, p. 6.

20. *Ibid*., p. 7.

21. Christine Herrera, "Bin Laden Funds Abu Sayyaf Through Muslim Relief Group," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, August 9, 2000.

22. *Ibid*.

23. *Ibid*.

24. For more on Ramzi Yousef and the Bojinka plot, see *The 9/11 Commission Report*, p. 147; Philippines National Police, "After Operations Report," 1995.

25. Philippine National Intelligence Coordinating Agency, NICA, "Briefing on Al Harakat al Islamiya," p. 5.

26. "Government Junks Abu Demand to Free Bandit Leader For Americans," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, October 2001.

27. See U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM) Fact Sheet, "Abu Sayyaf History," March 5, 2002, at *http://www.pacom.mil/piupdates/abusayyafhist.shtml*.

28. For more on the Libyan payment of ransoms, see Seth Maydans, "Libyan Aid Helps to Free Hostages Held in the Philippines," *The New York Times*, October 21, 2001; and Deidre Sheehan, "Buying Trouble," *Far Eastern Economic Review* (*FEER*), September 2000, p. 7.

29. Carlos Conde, "Muslim Cleric Confirms bin Laden Visit to Mindanao," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*.

30. Cited in Jose Torres Jr., *Into the Mountain: Hostaged by the Abu Sayyaf,* Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2001, p. 41.

31. Interview with Philippine Information Agency journalist, Cotabato, January 9, 2002.

32. USPACOM Fact Sheet, "Abu Sayyaf History," March 5, 2002, at *http://www.pacom.mil/piupdates/abusayyafhist.shtml*.

33. Rajiv Chandrasekaran, "Rebel's Escape Draws Scrutiny," *Washington Post*, September 1, 2001.

34. See *www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/counter_terrorism/counter_terrorism_strategy.pdf*.

35. See *http://www.pacom.mil/news/news2004/040727ctphil.shtml*.

36. For more on U.S. military operations in the Philippines, see Andrew Feickert, "U.S. Military Operations in the Global War on Terrorism: Afghanistan, Africa, the Philippines, and Colombia," CRS report for Congress, February 4, 2005, pp. 9-12.

37. The author would like to thank John Dacey for making this point.

38. In 2004, the AFP had 10 functioning helicopters, down from 80 in the 1980s. Of its three C-13 cargo planes, only one was operational, the other two were cannibalized for spare parts. Andrew Spaeth, "Under the Gun," *Time-Asian Edition*, May 9, 2005.

39. In 2003, an independent commission examining the Oakwood Mutiny drafted the Feliciano Report on the state of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and found that approximately 30 percent of the procurement budget was embezzled. Currently Major General Carlos Garcia, the former logistics comptroller, is on trial for corruption. He allegedly amassed more than $1 million.

40. Marco Garrido, "After Madrid, Manila?" *Asia Times*, April 24,2004.

41. The special panel created by the government, the Maniwang Commission, cleared senior MILF leaders of the bombings at the Davao International Airport and Sasa Wharf. The Maniwang Commission issued its findings on March 25, 2004. Government officials have linked several JI members, who were trainers at MILF camps and are now held in custody in Malaysia, to the bombings. "Prosecutor to MILF on Davao Bombings: Face Trial," MindaNews, June 1, 2004.

42. Jainal Antel Sali (aka Abu Sulaiman) first claimed responsibility for the SuperFerry 14 bombing, though it was perpetrated by Redondo Cain Dellosa (aka Arnulfo Alvarado).

43. Four other cell members were arrested that month. The four-man cell claimed it was responsible for the February SuperFerry bombing. They were captured with 36kg of explosives. One of the four was identified as al-Hamsed Manatad Limbong (aka Kosovo), a second cousin of Khadaffy Janajalani, who was implicated in the 2002 Zamboanga bombing that killed a U.S. servicemen and in the beheading of an American tourist, Guillermo Sobero, in 2001. The other three suspects were Redendo Cain Delosa, Abdusaid Lim (aka Abu Khalifa), and Radsamar Sangkula. Juiet Labog-Javellana, *et al*., "Metro Bomb Plot Foiled; 4 Abu Men Nabbed," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, March 30, 2004.

44. Interview with a Philippine NICA officer, Quezon City, September 15, 2004. Further evidence that the ASG was planning more attacks on ferries came on June 1, when Philippine naval intelligence officers arrested Alzhezar Salappudin Jila in Jolo, Sulu, with a cache of various explosives. "The raid [on Jila] was conducted based on a report from an informant saying the [Abu Sayyaf Group] will bomb the fast craft Water Jet of Alleson Shipping Lines, which plies the Zamboanga-Jolo route," said a Navy spokesman. Among the items seized from Jila were an 81-mm rifle, 42 pieces of dynamite, a half-gallon of high explosive powder, and assorted components of improvised explosive devices, along with documents in Arabic writing and electronic equipment. Jila admitted in his interrogation that his group was behind four bombings in Sulu Island since December which left four people dead, and authorities believe that he was also responsible for the 2002 bombing in Zamboanga in which an American soldier was killed.

45. Simon Elegant, "The Return of the Abu Sayyaf," *Time-Asian Edition*, August 30, 2003.

46. Karl B. Kaufman and Johnathan Vicente, "3 Held in Plot to Bomb U.S. Embassy," *Manila Times*, October 2004, p. 22; Jaime Laude, "AFP: JI Plot to Bomb U.S. Embassy Foiled," *The Philippine Star*, *Philippine Star*, October 2004, p. 22.

47. The three leaders were Nadzmie Sadual (aka Commander Global), Alhamser Manatad Limbong (aka Commander Kosovo), and Ghalib Andang (aka Commander Robot). The standoff took place at Camp Bagong Diwa Prison after the ASG members had weapons smuggled in. Three guards were killed. "Abu Sayyaf, Very Much Alive, Threaten Retaliation for Bloody Prison Assault," Associated Press, AP, March 2005, p. 15.

48. Donna Pazzibugan, "10 Sacks of Explosives Seized," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, March 24, 2005.

49. Manny Mogato, "Philippine Army Says Finds Bombs for Easter Attacks," *Reuters*, March 23, 2005.

50. "Reward Offered for Hinolan's Attacker," *The Manila Times* Internet Edition, November 16, 2004; "Suspected Abu Sayyaf Gunmen Abduct Doctor in Sulu," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, November 22, 2004; "Philippine Government Official Dies in Suspected Abu Sayyaf Attack," *Deutsche Presse-Agenteur*, December 12, 2004; Julie Alipala, "Sayaff Men Abduct, Execute 3 Salesmen from Pampanga," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, January 11, 2005.

51. Cited in Garrido.

52. Interview with a senior Philippine NICA official, Quezon City, June 28, 2004.

53. Khadaffy is roughly 30 years old, the youngest of five children. Khadaffy conducted Islamic studies in Marawi City, Mindanao, before traveling to Pakistan and later an al Qaeda camp in Afghanistan. He is married to Sherma, his first cousin and the daughter of Ustadz Hussein Manatad, one of the religious directors of the Tabuk Mosque in Isabela, Basilan.

54. "An Update of the Recent Bombing in Mindanao and Metro Manila," November 25, 2002, p. 12.

55. Interview with a Philippines NICA officer, San Juan, Manila, July 1, 2004.

56. Elegant.

57. Interview with Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesman, Cotabato, January 9, 2002.

58. *Ibid*.

59. "An Update of the Recent Bombing in Mindanao and Metro Manila," November 25, 2002.

60. Philippine NICA, "Summary of Information: Umar Faruq," no date provided.

61. Romesh Ratnesar, "Confessions of an Al Qaida Terrorist," *Time*, September 16, 2002; BIN Interrogation Report of Omar al-Faruq, June 2002.

62. Edris was the individual who escaped from Camp Crame, Manila with JI member Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi, who was killed in Pigkawayan, North Cotabato. International Crisis Group, p. 22.

63. Important founding members of the MILF-SOG include Muchlas Syafullah Yunos and Basit Usman.

64. "An Update of the Recent Bombing in Mindanao and Metro Manila," November 25, 2002.

65. Abdul Manap Mentang said that the MILF members Rahman Camili (aka Barok) and Rio Manamba (aka Bobot) planted the bombs at the Davao airport and Sasa wharf respectively. The two were arrested in November 2004.

66. The two, along with Mentang's girlfriend, Monawara Usop, were the plotters of the attack on the U.S. Embassy. Marichu Villanueva and Jaime Laude, "Palace Updates 'Order of Battle' Versus Terrorists," *Philippine Star*, October 24, 2004; AFP, "Australians Warned of Terrorist Threats in the Philippines," October 23, 2004.

67. Ben Tesiorna, "2 More Davao Bombers Nabbed in Davao Norte," *Sun-Star*, November 19, 2004.

68. Camp Hudaibiyah was the portion of the MILF base, Camp Abu Bakar es Siddique, that was given to al Qaeda trainers and their JI students. Some MILF members were also trained in these classes. This class also included Sammy

Abdulghani. Jaime Laude, "AFP: JI Plot to Bomb U.S. Embassy Foiled," *Philippine Star*, October 2004, p. 22.

69. Interview with a senior NICA official, Quezon City, March 3, 2005.

70. The 103rd Base Command is under the leadership of Abdulaziz Mimbintas, the Vice Chairman for Military Affairs of the MILF.

71. Jaime Laude and Christina Mendez, "2 Abu Suspects Tagged in V-Day Blasts Arrested," *Philippine Star*, February 23, 2005; Alcuin Papa and Christian Esguerra, "2 Bombing Suspects Fall," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, February 23, 2005.

72. He did not know their names, but their aliases were aka Ian and aka Khatan.

73. Statement of Admiral William J. Fallon, Commander, U.S. Pacific Command, Before the Senate Armed Services Committee, March 8, 2005, at *www.senate.gov/~armed_services/statemnt/2005/March/Fallon%2003-08-05.pdf*.

74. Interview with Major General Raul Reylano, Commander, 6th Infantry Division, Awang, Maguindanao, March 10, 2005. For more on the sorry state of the AFP, see Andrew Spaeth, "Under the Gun," *Time-Asian Edition*, May 9, 2005.

75. The author would like to thank John Dacey for making this point.

76. Interview with a Philippine NICA officer, San Juan, Manila, July 1, 2004.

77. Bantay Ceasefire, p. 23. Operation THUNDERSTORM was launched in mid-October 2002 after the AFP learned that 600-700 MILF and ASG were massing in Lanao del Norte. Some 200 were from the Zamboanga peninsula.

78. Interview with Ghazali Jafaar, Vice Chairman for Political Affairs, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao, June 17, 2004.

79. Interview with a senior AFP commander, 6th Infantry Division, Camp Siongco, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao, September 21, 2004.

80. The Malaysian government has exerted considerable pressure on the MILF to "expel ASG in their midst."

81. The author would like to thank John Dacey for making that point.

82. "Abu Sayyaf Warns MILF Against Forging Peace with Gov't," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, February 8, 2005.

83. Tondok is reportedly the new head of the 106th Base Command; though some reports suggest that he replaced Umbra Kato as the 109th Base Commander who, in turn, replaced Samir as the 106th Base Commander.

84. Interview with Major General Raul Reylano, Commander 6th Infantry Battalion, Awang, Maguindanao, March 10, 2005.

85. *Ibid*.

86. Despite AFP claims that Dulmatin was killed, there was neither evidence to prove that, nor verification of his presence. Another JI operative, Rohmat (aka

Zaki), who was wounded in the attack stated that Dulmatin was still alive. Isnilon Hapilon and his dozen or so bodyguards/combatants are believed to be based in the Mt. Dagadabi area, between the 104th and 105th Base Commands.

87. Manny Mogato, "Philippine Army Says Finds Bombs for Easter Attacks," *Reuters*, March 23, 2005.

88. *Ibid*.

89. Eid Kabalu, the MILF spokesman, asserted that, "There is a policy statement from the MILF leadership for all members to turn their backs on other groups . . . . We are categorically denying that we will stage attacks. We are focused on the peace talks." "MILF Denies Terror Plan Anew," AFP, March 24, 2005.

90. "Separatist Rebels Met Arab Pair, Say Former Captives," *South China Morning Post*, October 15, 2001.

91. Torres, *Into the Mountain*, p. 34.

92. Philippine National Police, "The Threat of Terrorism and PNP Countermeasures," undated, pp. 6-7.

93. "An Update of the Recent Bombing in Mindanao and Metro Manila," November 25, 2002.

94. Interrogation of Nassir bin Abbas. Nassir claimed to have trained 540 militants a year until early 1998 at MILF camps.

95. Zulkifli was captured in September 2003 while trying to surreptitiously enter Malaysia's Sabah state from the Sulu archipelago in the Philippines. He was captured with five other JI members. Though the Malaysian government announced this arrest, they did not disclose the fact that there were two additional Middle Eastern operatives with them. One is believed to be an al Qaeda operative while the other confessed to being a member of the Tabliqh.

96. ICG, p. 22.

97. Interrogation of Nassir bin Abbas.

98. Rohmat was a senior trainer and one of JI's top liaisons to the ASG in Mindanao. He was implicated in funding bombings in General Santos (2002), Zamboanga (2002), Cotabato (2003), Tucurong (2003), Davao (2003), and Parang (2004). Jim Gomez, "Terror Suspect Details Training, Plots," AP, March 23, 2005.

99. Three suspects, Bernard Balinao, Romy Ksaim, and Bai Hairan Paglala, were arrested in Tacurong City on May 6, 2002. The police asserted that they were "all members of the MNLF and MILF" and that they also were "linked to the . . . Abu Sayyaf." See *http://www.mindanews.com/2002/05/2nd/nws09abu.html*.

100. Abdul Jabidi and another operative, Sammy Abdulghani, were believed to be very close to a local MILF commander, Abdul Kitogoi Icow.

101. Jeff Antiporda and Anthony Vargas, "Terrorist Trainer Nabbed," *Manila Times*, March 23, 2005; Philippine National Police, "The Threat of Terrorism and PNP Countermeasures," undated, p. 7.

102. ABS-CBN News, *http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/topofthehour.aspx?StoryId=128*.

103. Interrogation Report on Taufiq Riefqi (aka Zammy) stated he arrived in the Philippines sometime in April 2000 and is presently an instructor of religion at Camp Jabal Quba.

104. Philippine National Police, "The Threat of Terrorism and PNP Counter-measures," undated, p. 7.

105. Jim Gomez, "Terror Suspect Details Training, Plots," AP, March 23, 2005.

106. Rohmat has confirmed that he was present. Jaime Laude, "AFP: JI Plot to Bomb U.S. Embassy Foiled," *Philippine Star*, October 22, 2004; Jim Gomez, "Terror Suspect Details Training, Plots," AP, March 23, 2005; Joel Francis Guinto"Abu Sayyaf Planned Bombings in metro, Key Cities—JI Member," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, March 23, 2005.

107. At first, Ted Yolanda was described as a Malaysian. The other two Indonesians were Mohamed Naasir Hamid and Mohamad Yusuf Karin Faiz (aka Pais). Faiz was a student at Ngruki in Java for 4 years in the early to mid-1990s, though he did not graduate. In 2001 he attended Ibn Saud University in Saudi Arabia. The ASG member, a Balik-Islam convert, was Muhair dela Merced. The group was arrested in Zamboanga, having entered the country through Tawi Tawi. The group was caught with US$7,000, 10 terrorist manuals, al Qaeda VCDs, and other materials. The four were on their way to MILF camps in Mindanao to conduct training. According to head of PNP Intelligence Chief Superintendent Ismael Rafnan, "They were planning to go into car bombs. They have reached that level of sophistication. They are ready to do it." Cited in Joel Francis Guinto, "Car Bomb Attacks Foiled as JI, Abu Terror Suspects Fall," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, February 24, 2005.

108. Eva C. Komandjaja, "Police Search for Two JI Members in Philippines," *The Jakarta Post*, August 16, 2005.

109. Jim Gomez, "Terror Suspect Details Training, Plots," AP, March 23, 2005.

110. I.e., individuals who joined the organization in the mid-1990s, before the JI began their public campaign of bombings in August 2000.

111. On March 4, 2005, the Philippine daily, *Malaya*, published the names of 21 Indonesian JI members who had entered the country on January 21, 2005, for training in MILF camps in Lanao del Sur. The names were leaked to them by an intelligence official. According to the paper, 26 arrived in two groups, the first on January 21, the second on January 28. They included Anwar Narsid, Sahibon Gulam, Farhan Jiahod, Zia Autad, Gafor Wadood, Omar Amiril, Farnan Dawalis, Ishaq Buday, Zainal Mandaya, Hashim Mufri, Watani Azibul, Farouk Rajab, Burnhan Usungan, Nur Salih, Jazali Mauladie, Hesam Abul Guimadil Mojib, and Habib Taloot. The paper asserts that the group transited Sabah state, where they were provided safe quarters by the MILF representative, Ismael Haraiba. They traveled to Palimbang before transiting to MILF camps in Lanao del Sur. There

is no way to validate this list. It is likely drawn from immigration records in Zamboanga. "26 Indons in Lanao for Terrorist Training," *Malaya*, March 4, 2005.

112. Interview with a Senior NICA official, Quezon City, March 3, 2005.

113. "Al-Qaeda Financier for Abu Sayyaf Arrested in Philippines," *Sun-Star*, May 14, 2004.

114. *Ibid.*

115. Alcuin Papa, "Bin Laden Man in RP Captured," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, May 15, 2004. There had been a warrant for Mundus' arrest in connection with bombing operations carried out by the Abu Sayyaf, in Kidapawan City on October 10, 2002, and the other in General Santos City on July 8, 2001.

116. *Ibid*.

117. Interview with an Armed Forces of the Philippines Intelligence Service(AFP-IS) official, Awang, March 4, 2005.

118. He was arrested on January 17, 2005, in Zamboanga and deported on January 18. This reportedly was ordered by President Arroyo herself, who was under pressure from the Saudi Arabian ambassador.

119. For example, of the five people who have now been arrested in conjunction with the Valentine's Day bombing, only Khalil Trinidad was known to the police. He had been arrested previously and charged with possession of explosives, but had skipped bail.

120. Rommel Banlaoi, "Leadership Dynamics in Terrorist Organizations in Southeast Asia: The Abu Sayyaf Case," paper presented to The Leadership and Structure of Terrorist Threats in Southeast Asia, Kuala Lumpur, April 18-20, 2005, p. 3.

121. *Ibid*.

122. Rustico O. Guerrero, "Philippine Terrorism and Insurgency: What to Do about the Abu Sayyaf," Master's Thesis, U.S. Marine Corps Command and Staff College, 2002.

123. Banlaoi, "Leadership Dynamics in Terrorist Organizations in Southeast Asia: The Abu Sayyaf Case," p. 5.

124. According to Lieutenant Colonel Guerrero, the ASG's "central committee in Basilan, the highest governing body, is under the supervision of Isnilon Hapilon (aka Tuan Isnilon). It has six functional and one special staff. These are Personnel and Operations, Urban Demolitionist and Intelligence, Logistics/Supply/Budget, Finance, Liaison, and Medical. Hector Janjalani heads the special staff." This overstates the group's organization even in its heyday. See "Philippine Terrorism and Insurgency: What to Do about the Abu Sayyaf."

125. Despite Malacanang's call for the AFP and intelligence services to draw up a new "order of battle" in October 2004, nothing has been completed or publicly released. Marichu Villanueva and Jaime Laude, "Palace Updates 'Order of Battle' Versus Terrorists," *Philippine Star*, October 24, 2004.

126. Interview with a senior Philippine NICA official, Quezon City, March 3, 2005.

127. "An Update of the Recent Bombing in Mindanao and Metro Manila," November 25, 2002.

128. Cited in Joel Francis Guinto, "Car Bomb Attacks Foiled as JI, Abu Terror Suspects Fall," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, February 24, 2005.

129. Elegant, "Terror, Visible," *Time* - Asia Edition, March 28, 2005.

130. Prof. Moner M. Bajunaid, "The Concept of Jihad," posted on *www.luwaran.com* at *http://web.archive.org/web/20010206044447/www.luwaran.com/concept_of_jihad.htm.*

131. For more, see Zachary Abuza, "Out of the Woodwork: Islamist Militants in Aceh," February 8, 2005. A brief version of the paper an be found in the Jamestown Foundation's *Terrorism Monitor*, Vol. 3, No. 2, January 27, 2005, available at *http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?volume_id=411&issue_id=3213&article_id=2369164*.

132. Syed Azhar, "Ex-KMM Member to Start Anew," *The Star*, March 25, 2005.

133. Interview with a Philippine NICA officer, Cotabato, March 7, 2005. The Lakar Jundullah's founder and JI shura member, Agus Dwikarna, is currently imprisoned in the Philippines. Dwikarna was also a leader of Abu bakar Ba'asyir's Mujiheddin Council of Indonesia (MMI), as well as the South Sulawesi branch officer of both the Indonesian charity Kompak and the Saudi Arabian charity, Al Harramain. For more, see International Crisis Group, *Indonesia Backgrounder: Jihad in Central Sulawesi*, February 3, 2004; Zachary Abuza, *Funding Terrorism in Southeast Asia: The Financial Network of al Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah, NBR Analysis*, Vol. 14, No. 5, Seattle: The National Bureau of Asian Research, December 2003, p. 28-34.

134. See *https://www.luwaran.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=341.*

135. *Ibid.*

136. "*Balik*," literally "return." Islamic groups refer to the Muslim concept that all people are born Muslim; and that in their life they might stray, i.e., join another religion. Balik Islam groups are simply missionary organizations. Balik Islam organizations in the Philippines began in Mindanao, especially with hill tribes, but have since spread to Luzon and Manila. Muslim press organs claim that there have been 1 million converts. There are now nearly 10 million Muslims, about 7-8 percent of the total population, making Islam the fastest growing religion in the Philippines. Though many individuals converted while working as overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in the Middle East, Balik Islam networks have been proliferating.

137. Luis Q. Lacar, "Balik Islam: Christian Converts to Islam in the Philippines, c. 1970-98," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 12, No. 1, January 2001, pp. 39-60, esp. n4, 57.

138. Interview with a PNP-IS official, Makati, June 27, 2002.

139. Banlaoi, "Leadership Dynamics in Terrorist Organizations in Southeast Asia: The Abu Sayyaf Case," p. 9.

140. *Ibid*.

141. Since February 2, 1998, Humoud Mohammad Abdulaziz al-Lahim was also the IIRO's director. ISCAG was established in the mid-1990s in Saudi Arabia by a group of primarily Balik Islam converts who were working in the Kingdom. The movement grew considerably when the founders returned home. It established a headquarters in Dasmarinas, Cavite; a 1.6 hectare compound with an elementary school, medical clinic and apartment block. The project was funded in part by Saudi donations and from the Islamic Development Bank. ISCAG is currently headed by Nooh Caparino. It is engaged in both propagation (da'wah) for Balik Islam converts as well as Muslim "backsliders." ISCAG buys blocks of time on local radio stations for its da'wah programming, as well as making prison and house visits. ISCAG claims to have won back some 1,387 reverts between January 2000 to June 2003. The organization clearly maintains its ties to Saudi Arabia. ISCAG's annual budget is approximately P12 million ($240,000), though that does not include funding for schools, hospitals, or mosques. ISCAG has funded the construction of six mosques around the country; at a cost of roughly P4 million each ($80,000). ISCAG also pays for the education of the children of many MILF leaders. Al-Lahim was forced out of the Philippines on April 7, 2002, due to allegations of sponsoring terrorism, and is currently based in Saudi Arabia, where he continues to fundraise for ISCAG. For more see, Marites Dañguilan Vitug, "The New Believers," *Newsbreak*, May 27, 2002; Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, "Troubled Return of the Faithful," *imagazine*, on line, Vol. IX, No. 2, April-June 2003; Johnna Villaviray, "Muslims Identify With 'Terrorist' Ideals," *Manila Times*, November 19 2003; and ISCAG's website, *http://www.islamicfinder.org/surf.php?ht=http://www.angislam.org*.

142. The Islamic Information Center (IIC) was led by a Jordanian citizen Nedal Falah Awwad al-Dhalain who first came to the Philippines in July 1995. Based in Makati, the IIC is another da'wah group that purports to be a library and resource center that receives "financial and moral support" from "generous brothers." The organization, like ISCAG, divides its operations between Balik Islam efforts and activities geared toward fellow Muslims. They engage in prison visits and distribute massive amounts of literature. For example, in 2000 alone, they "printed 90,000 books and pamphlets, and distributed 4,570 pieces of Islamic literature, 307 copies of the Koran in English, and thousands of cassette tapes in lecture form." There was considerable overlap in membership with Fi Sibilillah. Al-Dhalain was forced out of the country on October 27, 2001, on suspicion of supporting terrorism. The ICC remains open; their website is *www.angislam.org*.

143. See *http://www.manilatimes.net/national/2004/aug/13/yehey/top_stories/20040813top3.html*.

144. Anthony Vargas, "SuperFerry Bomb Suspect Tipped PNP About Attacks," *Manila Times*, February 17, 2005.

145. Anthony Vargas, "PNP Hunting 40 Balik Islam with Abu Sayyaf Ties," *Manila Times*, December 24, 2004.

146. This was the name of Jaybe Ofrasio's brother. Kymina Lyall, "Filipino Held in Belfast Wanted for Helping JI," *The Australian*, February 6, 2004.

147. Donna Pazzibugan, "10 Sacks of Explosives Seized," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, March 24 2005.

148. Interview with a Philippine NICA officer, Quezon City, September 15, 2004.

149. For more on this, see Benny Bacani, "The Mindanao Peace Talks: Another Opportunity to Resolve the Moro Conflict in the Philippines," *U.S. Institute of Peace Special Report* 131, January 2005, *http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr131.html*.

150. See, Zachary Abuza, "The MILF at 20," unpublished paper, October 2004.

151. Interview with Aboud Syed Lingga, Cotabato, January 2004.

152. See excerpted minutes from the July 30-31 meeting of the Central Committee.

153. Interview with Atty. Michael Mastura, Cotabato, January 7, 2004.

154. Interview with a member of the MILF-CCCH-Secretariat, Cotabato, January 12, 2004.

155. Interview with a MILF political officer, Cotabato, January 16, 2004.

156. Interview with a member of the MILF-CCCH-Secretariat, Cotabato.

157 Elegant.

158. Cited in *Ibid*.

159. Carlos Conde, "Violence in the Philippines Tangles Terrorism Fight," *International Herald Tribune*, February 15, 2005; Anthony Spaeth, "Southern Exposure," *Time-Asian Edition*, February 21, 2005.

160. "Abu Sayyaf Is Not in Sulu Clashes, MNLF Says," Luwaran.com, February 14, 2005, at *http://www.luwaran.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=295*.

161. Already 65-75 percent of Philippine ground troops are based in Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago. Yet resources are scarce enough that major offensives in one area often preclude concurrent offensives in other regions.

162. In March 2005, for example, Philippine authorities arrested a Palestinian national for allegedly training ASG members. See Joel Francis Guinto, "Palestinian Held in RP over Links with Abu Sayyaf," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, March 31, 2005; "Suspected Palestinian Terror Trainer Arrested in Zambo," AP, March 31, 2005.

163. "Cache of Bomb Chemical Seized in Manila Warehouse," AFP, May 3, 2005.

164. Ma. Theresa Torres, "MILF Not A Terror Group, Says GMA," *Manila Times*,

April 2, 2005; "RP Rejects U.S. Warning on 'New Afghanistan' Tag on Mindanao," AFP, April 11, 2005.

165. Jim Gomez, "Philippines Asks U.S. to Keep Group Off Terror List," AP, March 30, 2005.

166. See, for example, the comments of Joseph Mussomelli in "Mindanao Could Be Next Afghanistan: U.S. Diplomat," AFP, April 11, 2005.

167. *Ibid*. The expected Philippine rejection of Mussomeli's comments can be found in "RP Rejects U.S. Warning on 'New Afghanistan' Tag on Mindanao," AFP, April 11, 2005.

168. "US: MILF Tied To 2 Al-Qaeda Outfits," AFP, April 1, 2005.

169. Ma. Theresa Torres, "MILF Not A Terror Group, Says GMA," *Manila Times*, April 2, 2005.

170. "Mindanao Could Be Next Afghanistan: U.S. Diplomat," AFP, April 11, 2005.

171. "US to Back GMA in Fight Versus MILF Renegades," *The Philippine Star*, January 25, 2005.

172. Eric Schmidt, "U.S. Combat Force of 1,700 is Headed to the Philippines," *New York Times*, February 22, 2003.

173. For example, the Mindanao People's Causus statement, in which they warned "Various U.S. officials have been harping on this point--MILF ties with foreign terrorist groups--since last month. It seems that there is ground laying, testing the waters, getting the public pulse, for greater U.S. interventions in the military sphere." See MindaNews, April 12, 2005, for the full statement, *http://www.mindanews.com/2005/04/11vcs-mpc.html*.

174. Social Weather Survey, "Ratings of High Officials Tumble: Net Satisfaction with GMA Falls to –12," March 30, 2005, at *http://www.sws.org.ph/*.

175. Pulse Asia, "Media Release on Quality of Life, Urgent Concerns and PGMA Performance," March 30, 2005, p. 2.

176. *Ibid*., p. 4.

177. *Ibid*., p. 6.