

AL-HARAKATUL AL ISLAMIYYAH

Essays on the

Abu Sayyaf Group

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INTRODUCTION

Since 2001, I have written several scholarly papers on the ASG, most of which were presented to international conferences or published as journal articles. This book is an anthology of four papers I wrote about the ASG. I decided to compile them in one volume to provide readers an “easy-to-read” reference on the ASG. Original version of these papers have been revised to avoid redundancy and repetitive discussions.

In this anthology, I discussed myriad of issues about the ASG. Chapter 1 examines the roots and evolution of the ASG as an organization that has undergone transformation from banditry to terrorism. Chapter 2 describes the leadership dynamics of the ASG to demonstrate that the group is not a homogeneous organization. Chapter 3 discusses in detail the transformation of the ASG from a mere bandit group to a genuine terrorist organization. Chapter 4 examines the capability of the ASG to conduct piracy and to wage maritime terrorism. It analyzes the fine line between piracy and terrorism using the ASG as a case study.

I am indebted to a number of individuals who have unfailingly supported my scholarly endeavor on the ASG. I am very much grateful to General Rodolfo “Boogie” Mendoza for his generosity to supply my data requirements on the ASG. I consider General Mendoza the “Father of Counter-Terrorism Investigation in the Philippines” because of his important role in the discovery of *Bojinka Plot* in 1995.¹ General Mendoza also discovered the camp of Rajah Solaiman Islamic Movement (RSIM) in Anda, Pangasinan in 2002. His pioneering work on the radical Islam in the Philippines remains an authoritative investigative work on the subject.²

I am also indebted to General Ruben F. Ciron, Assistant Secretary of National Defense, for guiding me in my scholarly pursuit. General Ciron’s understanding of the worth I am doing continues to inspire me to work harder as a scholar. General Ciron is an excellent example of a practitioner with the inclination of a scholar.

I am also thankful to the Institute of Defense Analysis (IDA) for the continuing support to my research on Philippine terrorism. Specifically, I would like to convey my sincerest appreciation to Dr. Kongdan Hassig and Caroline Ziemke, of IDA.

I would like to thank the following for the continuing academic exchange on terrorism: General Alexander Aguirre and Dr. Cesar Pobre of the Strategic and Integrative Studies Center (SISC), Dr. Andrew Tan of the University of New

¹Rohan Gunaratna, author of the best selling book *Inside Al Qaeda*, first used this title to describe General Mendoza.

²Rodolfo Mendoza, *Philippine Jihad, Inc.* (Quezon City: Philippine National Police, 2002).

South Wales (Asia, Singapore Campus), Dr. Peter Lehr of the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence (Scotland) and all my friends and colleagues at the Council of Asian Terrorism Research (CATR). I also convey my sincerest gratitude to Col. Bert Ferro of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and Col. Ben Basiao of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) for supporting my scholarly endeavor on the ASG.

Most importantly, I am very grateful to Dr. Rohan Gunaratna of the International Center for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR) for the encouragement to pursue terrorism studies. Dr. Gunaratna tremendously influenced my thoughts on terrorism in Southeast Asia.

Of course, I would not have chosen the path of a scholar without the persistent mentoring of Dr. Clarita Carlos. When everyone seemed to have doubted my scholarship, it was her who strongly believed in me. My present scholarship has the “fingerprints” and indelible ink of Dr. Carlos. She is the total embodiment of a nurturing mentor worthy of emulation.

Deepest thanks are also extended to my wife, Grace. A scholar like me truly needs an understanding and patient wife. Grace is truly heaven-sent.

Finally, I thank the Lord Almighty for giving me the wisdom to travel the journey of a scholar. He is The Way, the Truth and the Life!

CHAPTER 1

Roots and Evolution*

Introduction

Despite its persistent effort, the Philippine government has been enormously struggling to defeat the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG),³ the smallest but the most terrifying armed Muslim extremist group in the Philippines. Prior to September 11, 2001 (9/11) terrorist attacks on the United States (US), the Philippine government resolutely labeled the ASG as a mere bunch of bandits.⁴ President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has even described the group as "a money-crazed gang of criminals" without any ideology.⁵ After 9/11, however, the ASG callously received the label of being a terrorist group. The US has even listed the ASG as a foreign terrorist organization. The United Nations identified the ASG as one of the major terrorist group operating in Southeast Asia.

To defeat the ASG, the US has extended financial and technical assistance to the Philippine government. But the ASG's strong commitment to embrace terrorism to advance its radical political agenda makes it a terrible menace to Philippine internal security. Its link with Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and Al-Qaeda also makes the ASG a threat to regional and global security.⁶ It is viewed that the ASG has, in fact, "reemerged as one of the more important terrorist groups

*Revised and updated version of a paper entitled "Roots and Evolution of a Terrorist Movement in the Philippines: The Abu Sayyaf Experience" originally published in Caroline Ziemke, Satu Limaye, Kondan Oh Hassig and John Hanley, Jr. (eds), *Building a CATR Research Agenda: Proceedings of the Third Bi-Annual International Symposium of the Center for Asian Terrorism Research (CATR)* (Alexandria, VA: Institute for Defense Analysis, 2006). This paper was also presented to the Second Bi-Annual International Symposium of the Council of Asian Terrorism Research held at Mount Lavinia Hotel, Colombo, Sri Lanka on 1-3 March 2006. This paper was written with the support of the Institute for Defense Analysis (IDA). The author is grateful to IDA for the kind permission to reprint this paper.

³For an account of the anti-terrorism efforts of the Philippine government, see Eusaquito P. Manalo, *Philippine Response to Terrorism: The Abu Sayyaf Group* (MA Thesis: Naval Post Graduate School, Monterey, California, December 2004).

⁴For an elaboration of this point, see Rommel C. Banlaoi, "The Abu Sayyaf Group: From Mere Banditry to Genuine Terrorism?", *Southeast Asian Affairs 2006* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2006).

⁵"Who are the Abu Sayyaf" (1 June 2001) at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/low/asia-pacific/719623.stm>.

⁶For ASG-JI-Al Qaeda link, see Maria Ressa, *Seeds of Terror: An Eyewitness Account of Al-Qaeda's Newest Center of Operations in Southeast Asia* (New York: Free Press, 2003; Zachary Abuza, *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: The Crucible of Terror* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2003); and Dirk J. Barreveld, *Terrorism in the Philippines: The Bloody Trail of Abu Sayyaf, Bin Laden's East Asian Connection* (New York: Writers Club Press, 2001). For a critical appraisal of these linkages, see Clive Williams M.G., "The Question of Links Between Al Qaeda and Southeast Asia" in *After Bali: The Threat of Terrorism in Southeast Asia*, Kumar Ramakrishna and See Seng Tan, eds., (Singapore: Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, 2003), pp. 83-96.

confronting the Philippine government, the United States and its allies in Southeast Asia.”⁷

But how does the ASG start as a terrorist movement? What are the root causes of terrorism in the Philippines? There are many views to explain the root and evolution of terrorism, in general, and the ASG, in particular. One explanation is structural.⁸ It is viewed that the ASG started as terrorist movement because of the failure of the Philippine government to address the structural causes of the on-going internal armed conflicts in the Philippines by *Moro* rebels that may be rooted to the colonial times. Defeating the ASG, therefore, needs a resolution of the structural causes of internal armed conflicts that continue to breed terrorism. Another explanation is agential. The ASG started as a terrorist movement because of people who believed that terrorism could work, particularly when they wanted immediate actions and results. Terrorism is viewed to be useful for putting the issue of political change on the public agenda.⁹

This chapter aims to examine the roots and evolution of the ASG as a terrorist movement in the Philippines through structural and agential approaches. It argues that the root causes of terrorism in the Philippines have structural and agential origins. This chapter also contends that the problem of terrorism in the Philippines can only be fully understood in its proper historical context. In describing how terrorist movement starts, this chapter also aims to demonstrate how the colonial past informs the present struggle of the ASG.

A Brief History of Terrorism in the Philippines and the Evolution of the Abu Sayyaf Struggle

A comprehensive history of terrorism in the Philippine is yet to be written. But Dr. Cesar Pobre, a Filipino military historian, states that the Philippines first experience a terrorist attack in 1949 when Huk¹⁰ leader Alexander Viernes and

⁷Zachary Abuza, *Balik-Terrorism: The Return of the Abu Sayyaf* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College, 2005), p. vii.

⁸To get an structural perspective on the origin of terrorism see Erica Chenoweth, “Terrorism and Instability: A Structural Study on the Origins of Terror” (Unpublished paper, Department of Political Science at the University of Colorado, October 2004), p. 3.

⁹For elaboration of this perspective, see Martha Crenshaw, “The Logic of Terrorism: Terrorist Behavior as a Product of Strategic Choice” in Walter Reich (ed), *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind* (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1998). Also in Russell D. Howard and Reid L. Sawyer (eds), *Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Understanding the New Security Environment* (Connecticut: McGraw-Hill/Dushkin, 2004), pp. 54-66.

¹⁰Huk refers to *Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan* (People’s Liberation Army), originally known as *Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon* (People’s Anti-Japanese Armed Forces) during the Japanese Occupation of the Philippines.

his 200-armed men ambushed former First Lady Aurora Quezon and her entourage while en route to Baler, now part of Quezon province of Luzon.¹¹

If terrorism means “the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change”,¹² then terrorism in the Philippines may be traced to the Spanish colonial period (16th to 19th centuries) when groups called *tulisanes* or outlaws would go to the town proper to plunder and ransack the rich Spanish inhabitants. In the town, for example, of Pila, Laguna of Southern Luzon, *tulisanes* would “swoop down from the mountains in the dead of night to terrorize the inhabitants, loot their houses and kill those who resisted them.”¹³

During the Spanish times, there were *tulisanes* who were undoubtedly a mere bunch of bandits and criminals. But there were also some genuine revolutionary groups arbitrarily dubbed *tulisanes* by Spanish colonial officials. The Spanish colonial authorities even demonized these rebel groups to suppress dissent and resistance.¹⁴ American colonial officials also used the label *tulisanes* to refer to Filipino resistant groups. For example, Macario Sacay, a Filipino general in the Philippine-American War, was branded as a *tulisan* or bandit by American authorities.¹⁵ But Jose Rizal, the Philippine national hero, described the *tulisanes* “the most respectable men in the country.”¹⁶ On the part of Muslim resistance groups, Spanish colonial officials not only called them *tulisanes* but also *Moros* to mean “cunning, ruthless, cruel, treacherous savage; a pirate; a raider; and slaver.”¹⁷

¹¹Cesar Pobre, “Terrorism: A Historical Perspective”, *Historical Bulletin*, Vol. 35, (2001-2003), p. 5.

¹² Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 43.

¹³Luciano P.R. Santiago, “The Roots of Pila, Laguna: A Secular and Spiritual History of the Town (900 AD to the Present)”, *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society*, No. 25 (1997), pp. 125-155. See particular section on “The Menace of Tulisanes”.

¹⁴See Renato Constantino, *The Philippines: A Past Revisited* (Quezon City: Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1975).

¹⁵See Antonio K. Abad, *General Macario L. Sakay: Was he a bandit or a patriot?* (Manila: J.B. Feliciano & Sons, 1955) and Reynaldo C. Ileto, *Pasyon and revolution: Popular movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1979).

¹⁶Floro Quibuyen “The Noli-Fili: Towards A Post-Enlightenment Concept of the Nation” (Paper read in a panel at the 1st National Conference on Literature “Localities of Nationhood: The Nation in Philippine Literature.” English Department, Ateneo de Manila University. 11 February 2000). Also at <http://www.univie.ac.at/Voelkerkunde/apsis/aufi/history/nolifili.htm> <accessed on 21 February 2006>.

¹⁷Peter Gowing, *Muslim Filipinos – Heritage and Horizon* (Quezon City: New Day, 1979), p. 41.

In its proper historical context, Bruce Hoffman stressed that terrorism was “closely associated with the ideals of virtue and democracy”, particularly during the French Revolution.¹⁸ Terrorism retained its revolutionary connotations during the First World War and during the late 1960s and 1970s.¹⁹ In the 1980s, however, terrorism became a pejorative term to refer to a calculated means to destabilize the West.²⁰ Now, terrorism is very hard to define because the meaning and usage of the word have changed in the context of changing times.²¹

Alex Schmidt enumerates at least 109 definitions of terrorism, but admits that the “search for an adequate definition of terrorism is still on.”²² Despite being a buzzword after 9/11, there has been no precise or widely accepted definition of terrorism.²³ Terrorism means many things for many users. For some, terrorism is a political strategy. For others, however, terrorism is a form of political violence that approximates insurrection, rebellion, anarchy, political protest or revolution.²⁴ Other writers simply dismiss terrorism as a psychological problem.²⁵ Robin Morgan even describes terrorists as demon lovers.²⁶ The lack of commonly acceptable definition of terrorism makes the writing of the roots and evolution of terrorism in the Philippines very difficult, unless analyzed in its proper context. The rise of international terrorism compounds the situation. Based on the records of the Department of National Defense (DND), the Philippines first felt the specter of international terrorism in 1985 when notorious leaders of Muslim secessionist movement in the Southern Philippines reportedly established linkages with “foreign terrorist groups” like the Abu Nidal Organization (ANO) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).²⁷ On 2

¹⁸ Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, p. 15.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 20-26.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 27.

²¹ Ibid., p. 28.

²² Alex P. Schmid and Albert J. Longman, *Political Terrorism: A New Guide to Actors, Authors, Concepts, Data Bases, Theories and Literature* (New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1988), p. 1.

²³ Kevin Jack Riley and Bruce Hoffman, *Domestic Terrorism: A National Assessment of State and Local Preparedness* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1995), p. 2.

²⁴ Juliet Lodge (ed), *The Threat of Terrorism* (Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books Ltd, 1988), p. 1.

²⁵ Walter Reich (ed), *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind* (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1998).

²⁶ Robin Morgan, *The Demon Lover: The Roots of Terrorism* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1989).

²⁷ Department of National Defense, *The Philippine Campaign Against Terrorism* (Quezon City: Department of National Defense, 2002), p. 3.

December 1987, Philippine national police operatives discovered ANO cell in Manila leading to the arrest of so-called five Palestinian terrorists with Jordanian passports. On 19 May 1995, combined police and military forces arrested nine LTTE members including its infamous leader *Selvarajah Balasingan*.²⁸

The Philippine government's Anti-Terrorism Task Force (ATTF) has identified various terrorist threat groups presently operating in the country. These groups include the Al-Qaeda, the JI, the ASG, the Rajah Solaiman Movement (RSM) and even the New People's Army (NPA). The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) was labeled a terrorist group. But the Philippine government refused to officially use this label because of the on-going peace-talks. The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) also received this label. But since the signing of the peace agreement in 1996, the Philippine government ceased the use of this label though some military officials continue to label the Nur Misuari Break Away Group (MBG) of the MNLF a terrorist group. Rodolfo "Boogie" Mendoza of the Philippine National Police (PNP) also identified the following groups as terrorist groups: the Pentagon Gang, the Abu Sofia and the Markazzo Shabab Al-Islamiya.²⁹ This paper, however, focuses only on the ASG.

Rohan Gunaratna, Glenda Gloria and Mark Turner have provided good historical accounts of the ASG.³⁰ But Zachary Abuza in his book, *Balik-Terrorism: The Return of the Abu Sayyaf*, provided the most comprehensive and updated analysis of the origin of the group.³¹ None of the aforementioned authors, however, narrated the ASG's own account of its birth, except Samuel K. Tan of the University of the Philippines who wrote a chapter on the ASG in his book, *Internationalization of the Bangsamoro Struggle*.³² Among its original leaders, Jovenal Bruno was believed to have written an unpublished manuscript to document the establishment of the ASG. This manuscript gave a very useful insider's insights on the origin of the ASG. Though this manuscript remains classified, it is important to note that Bruno traced the history of the ASG from the world Islamic movement. Bruno also expressed admiration to Saudi Arabia, Iran and the Taliban state of Afghanistan. Bruno was one of the most trusted associates of Abdurajak Janjalani for being a committed Muslim convert.

²⁸Ibid

²⁹Rodolfo Mendoza, Jr., *Philippine Jihad, Inc.* (Quezon City: No identified publisher, 2002).

³⁰Rohan Gunaratna, "The Evolution and Tactics of the Abu Sayyaf Group", *Janes Intelligence Review* (July 2001); Glenda Gloria, "Bearer of the Sword: The Abu Sayyaf Has Nebulous Beginnings and Incoherent Aims", *Mindanao Updates* (6 June 2000); and, Mark Turner, "Terrorism and Secession in the Southern Philippines: The Rise of the Abu Sayyaf", *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (June 1995), pp. 1-19.

³¹Abuza, *Balik-Terrorism: The Return of the Abu Sayyaf*, op. cit., , pp. 2-11.

³²Samuel K. Tan, *Internationalization of the Bangsamoro Struggle* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies, 1995), p. 94.

As part of his effort to prove his capacity to lead the ASG, Khadaffy Janjanani also wrote his own version of the history of the ASG. He calls the ASG as Al-Harakatul Islamiyyah. He said that 1993 was the year when the Al-Harakatul Islamiyyah was born.³³ It was also in the same year when the ASG conducted its second kidnapping operation. Khadaffy Janjanani wrote:

1993 was the year when al-Harakatul Islamiyyah was born. This is the time when they decided to get out of the MNLF officially and become as one new group of Mujahideen. Although, the jamaah was established, they're were not known with their new name but as the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), where the tag was taken from the *Kunya* (alias) of Ustadz Abdu-Razzaq Janjanani.

Also in 1993, the group of Ustadz Abdur-Razzaq Janjanani launched their second kidnapping operation. They held the son of one of the prominent businessman in Basilan and again was successfully ransomed.³⁴

Abu Abdu Said was the one who boldly released an official statement to describe ASG's own account of its origin. Said was the former Secretary General of the ASG. On 18 November 1994, amidst heavy speculation that the ASG was created by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Said issued a document called *Surat Kasabunnal* or "A Voice of Truth". This document vehemently denounced the view that the AFP or the CIA created the ASG. It argued that the ASG started as a movement called *Juma' Abu Sayyaf*. The establishment of this movement was greatly influenced by the arrival in August 1991 of *Motor Vessel (M/V) Doulos* carrying Christian missionaries to preach in Zamboanga City. These Christian missionaries allegedly "spoke against Islam and called Allah a false God, Prophet Muhammad a liar, and the Qu'ran a man-made book."³⁵ According to S.K. Tan, "The desire to avenge the insult against the sacred values of Islam started the motive force of the Abu Sayyaf."³⁶

According to the various intelligence briefings of the AFP, the formation of the ASG could be traced from the disgruntled members of the MNLF over the

³³See Khadaffy Janjanani, "A brief History of al-Harakatul Islamiyyah" at <http://www.geocities.com/ghurabah101/>.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵Tan, *Internationalization of the Bangsamoro Struggle*, op. cit., p. 94.

³⁶ Ibid.

dormant secessionist movement in the late 1970s.³⁷ Khadaffy Janjalani claimed that the ASG was officially founded in 1993 with the name *Al-Harakatul Islamiyyah*.³⁸ But experts and policy makers were not certain if the ASG referred to a formal organization or just an informal network of like-minded Filipino secessionist leaders and Muslim radicals. Peter Kreuzer argued that because the ASG was composed of various autonomous Muslim groups, it was a mere alliance rather than a formal organization.³⁹ What was certain was the fact that Janjalani used the non-de guerre *Abu Sayyaf* in most of his writings to honor an Afghan resistance leader and Islamic professor, Abdul Rasul Sayyaf. The Wahabi theology of Professor Sayyaf greatly influenced Janjalani's concept of an Islamic state. Janjalani formed the movement to propagate his fanatical belief of an Islamic state in the Southern Philippines.

Despite the nebulous origin of the ASG, the military establishment believed that in 1990, Janjalani formed the Mujahideed Commando Freedom Fighters (MCFE) to wage *jihad* against the Philippine government for the establishment of an independent Islamic state in the Southern Philippines. The Philippine military regarded the MCFE as the forerunner of the ASG. When the MCFE attracted some "hard core" followers in Basilan, Zulu, Tawi-Tawi and Zamboanga, it was later called as the ASG.

But according to Noor Muog, one of the key leaders of the ASG now working with an independent think tank, the MCFE was a misnomer. The forerunner of the ASG was the *Jamaa Tableegh*, a Islamic propagation group established in Basilan in the early 1980s by Abdurajak Janjalani. This group conducted seminars, symposia and small-group discussions to propagate Islam. It was also through this group where Abdurajak delivered some of his Islamic discourses. Because of charismatic lectures of Abdurajak, the *Jamaa Tableegh* received popularity not only in Basilan but also in Zamboanga and Jolo.⁴⁰ The involvement of some of its followers in anti-government rallies prompted the military to put the group under surveillance. Key followers of *Jamaa Tableegh* formed the nucleus of the ASG, which Abdurajak Janjalani initially called *Al-Harakatul Al-Islamiyah* (AHAI) or the Islamic Movement.

³⁷These intelligence briefings are classified secret. Thus, details of these reports can not be used in this paper.

³⁸Khadaffy Janjalani, "A Brief History of the Al-Harakatul Islamiyyah" at <http://www.geocities.com/ghrabah101>. Also see Rommel C. Banlaoi, *Al-Harakatul Islamiyyah: Essays on the Abu Sayyaf Group* (Quezon City: Philippine Institute for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, 2006).

³⁹Peter Kreuzer, "Political Clans and Violence in Southern Philippines", *PRIF Report*, no. 71 (2005), p. 28.

⁴⁰ Abu Hamdie, "The Abu Sayyaf Group" (undated and unpublished manuscript).

The AFP and the Philippine National Police (PNP) tagged the ASG as a terrorist organization when it claimed responsibility for the bombing of M/V Doulos in Zamboanga City in 1991. The M/V Doulos was a Christian missionary ship docked at the Zamboanga port. According to the Southern Command of the AFP, it was in 1991 when the name ASG was first publicly used by Janjalani in connection with the bombing of M/V Doulos.⁴¹ The ASG gained international notoriety on 20 May 1992 when it assassinated Fr. Salvatorre Carzedda, an Italian missionary working in Zamboanga City. These two major events prompted some observers to conclude that the ASG was founded sometime in 1991-1992.⁴²

But a recent study states that the ASG first emerged in 1989.⁴³ Based on existing records of the AFP and the PNP, Janjalani renamed the ASG as AHAI in 1994 to receive international funding and support. According to Philippine intelligence reports, the AHAI drew its support from the extremist element in Iran (Hezbollah), Pakistan (Jamaat-Islami and Hizbul-Mujahideen), Afghanistan (Hizb-Islami) Egypt (Al Gamaa-Al-Islamiya), Algeria (Islamic Liberation Front) and Libya (International Harakatul Al-Islamia). The International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO) was also known to have provided financial support to AHAI. Because of repeated media reports, the name ASG became more popular than the AHAI. Western sources, however, tend to use and even interchange both names.⁴⁴ But original members of the ASG preferred to use AHAI to describe their group.

Though Janjalani was a known *mujahideen* by its followers, his reputation of being a veteran of Afghan War is now being challenged. There is no evidence showing that he actually fought in the Afghan War. There was no doubt, however, that he was a charismatic and serious Muslim scholar who, ironically, attended high school in Claret College, a Catholic-run school in the Basilan capital of Isabela. Janjalani also received a very good Islamic education in Saudi Arabia in 1981 and was sent to *Ummu I-Qura* in Mecca where he seriously studied Islamic jurisprudence for almost three years.⁴⁵ He was later attracted

⁴¹“Special Report on the Abou Sayyaf” (Briefing of MIG9 during the Southern Command Conference, 19 January 1994).

⁴²Marites D. Vitug and Glenda M. Gloria, *Under the Crescent Moon: Rebellion in Mindanao* (Quezon City: Ateneo Center for Social Policy and Public Affairs, Institute for Popular Democracy and Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, 2000) and Mark Turner, “The Management of Violence in a Conflict Organization: The Case of the Abu Sayyaf”, *Public Organization Review*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (December 2003), p. 388.

⁴³Eusaquito P. Manalo, *Philippine Response to Terrorism: The Abu Sayyaf Group* (MA Thesis: Naval Post Graduate School, Monterey, California, December 2004). p. 31.

⁴⁴See for example, Angel Rabasa, “Southeast Asia: Moderate Tradition and Radical Challenge” in Angel Rabasa, et al. *The Muslim World After 9/11* (Santa Monica, RAND: Rand, 2004), Chapter 8. Also see “Inside Abu Sayyaf” at http://www.inq7.net/specials/inside_abusayyaf/2001/features/formative_years.htm.

⁴⁵Gloria, p. 2.

deeply to the concept of *jihad* when he conscientiously studied in Pakistan the history and politics of Islamic revolution. Heavily armed with Islamic thoughts, Janjalani went back to his homeland in Basilan in 1984 to preach in various mosques.

While formally establishing the ASG, Janjalani became an avid preacher to limited audiences in Santa Barbara *madrassah* in Zamboanga City in the early 1990s. During his preaching, Janjalani openly released different theological statements and public proclamations revealing his deep grasp of Islamic religion, particularly the Wahabi Islamic theology. Wahabism brands other Muslim sects as heretical. Janjalani delivered at least eight discourses or *Khutbah* within a radical framework based on the Quranic concept of *Jihad Fi-Sabil-lillah* (the fighting and dying for the cause of Islam).⁴⁶ To advance his fanatical belief, Janjalani convinced some Muslim leaders in Basilan, Sulu, Tawi- Tawi, Zamboanga City and General Santos City to join the *Juma'a Abu Sayyap* movement, now rendered in English as the ASG. Most of his recruits were disgruntled members of the MNLF and the MILF. When Janjalani attended a Islamic course in Tripoli, Libya in 1987, he met like-minded Muslim Filipino students who eventually helped Janjalani to form the ASG. These students had common remorse against the Philippine government based in Manila and against "heretic" leadership of the MNLF and the MILF. Many scholars and journalists mistranslated ASG to mean "bearer of the sword".⁴⁷ But ASG really means in Arabic, "Father of the Swordsman".⁴⁸

From 1991 to 2000, the ASG reportedly engaged in 378 terrorist activities, in the form of bombings, ambushes and raids resulting in the death of 288 civilians.⁴⁹ During the same period, the ASG ventured into 640 KRAs involving a total of 2,076 victims.⁵⁰

In its founding years from 1988-1991, Abuza described the ASG as primarily an anti-Christian group of Muslim radicals.⁵¹ This careless assertion fails to appreciate ASG's benign intention when it was originally organized. The ASG's own account of its genesis argues that their group respects freedom of

⁴⁶Tan, "The Juma'a Abu Sayyap: A Brief Assessment of its Origin, Objectives, Ideology and Method of Struggle", p. 3.

⁴⁷See For example, Turbiville, Jr., pp. 38-47.

⁴⁸Jose Torres, Jr., *Into the Mountain: Hostages by the Abu Sayyaf* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2001), p. 35.

⁴⁹Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, *Knowing the Terrorists: The Abu Sayyaf Study* (Quezon City: General Headquarters of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, 2002.), p. 1.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Abuza, *Balik-Terrorism: The Return of the Abu Sayyaf*, op. cit., , pp. 2-11.

religion.⁵² They even asserted that in an Islamic state “the rights of Christian will be protected for as long they abide by the laws of the Islamic state.”⁵³ Abuza, however, was correct when he said that the ASG became a more “Islamic terrorist group” after deepening its ties with Al-Qaeda from 1991-1995.⁵⁴ He was also correct when he claimed that the ASG degenerated as a bandit group from 1995-2001. After the death of Abdurajak Janjalani in 1998, the ASG went into KRAs spree. In 2000-2001 alone, the ASG was involved in 140 KRA incidents that resulted in the death of 16 victims.⁵⁵ Abuza correctly described that at the height of the global campaign against terrorism from 2001-2003, the Philippine government was in hot pursuit of the ASG.⁵⁶ While on the run, however, Khadafy Janjalani (Abdurajak’s younger brother and successor) started to revive the ASG’s radical Islamist agenda. But his confirmed death in January 2007 aborted this plan. His successor, Yasser Igasan, is believed to have the determination to reinvigorate the Islamist mission of the ASG.

Thus, from being a mere bandit group, the ASG has the intention to become an organization of “freedom fighters” with a strong Islamist agenda. Since the capture and subsequent death of Galib Andang in 2004, the ASG has not conducted KRAs.⁵⁷ Instead, the ASG waged a series of high profile attacks, the most devastating of which, so far, was the blasting of the Superferry 14 that resulted in the death of 116 persons and the wounding of 300 others. On the eve of Valentines celebration in 2005, the ASG also masterminded three simultaneous bombings in Makati City, Davao City and General Santos City killing at least 10 persons and the wounding of 136 others.

According to the ATTF, ASG strength as of the last quarter of 2005 was no more than 350 members. But the 2008 Second Quarter Assessment of the AFP states that strength of the ASG was 380. ASG strength remains very small compared to the strength of NPA of around 8,000 and the MILF of around 10,000. But this is exactly the main reason why the ASG resorts to terrorism – it is the weapon of the weak, and it is a very powerful weapon.⁵⁸ In fact, the ASG

⁵²Nathan G. Quimpo, “Dealing with the MILF and Abu Sayyaf: Who’s Afraid of an Islamic State?”, *Public Policy*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (October/December 1999), pp. 38-63.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Abuza, *Balik-Terrorism: The Return of the Abu Sayyaf*, op. cit., , pp. 2-11.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 8.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸J. Bowyer Bell, *A Time of Terror: How Democratic Societies Respond to Revolutionary Violence* (New York: Basic Books, 1978). Also cited in Schmid and Longman, *Political Terrorism: A New Guide to Actors, Authors, Concepts, Data Bases, Theories and Literature*, op. cit., p. 69.

has already developed the ability to wage maritime terrorism.⁵⁹ The Superferry 14 bombing in February 2004 was a clear demonstration of ASG's maritime terrorist capability. In July 2005, Philippine intelligence reports revealed that ASG and JI fighters took underwater training in Sandakan, Malaysia to attack maritime targets such as ports and commercial vessels.

The ASG has also planned to embark on suicide terrorism. The Superferry 14 bombing in 2004 and the 2005 Valentines Day bombings in Makati City, Davao City and General Santos City were originally suicide missions. Though there has been no recorded incident of suicide terrorism in the country, the ASG is aware of the value of suicide terrorism as a favored tactic of radical Muslims pursuing *jihad*. In fact, Abdurajak Janjalani's appeal for martyrdom in one of his lectures also means endorsement of suicide terrorism. Dulmatin and Umar Patek, key suspects in 2002 Bali bombings that killed more than 200 people, have reportedly established their base in the Philippines to prepare ASG members in future suicide missions. Philippine National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales was even quoted as saying, "What we are looking for now is suicide terrorists, not (only) suicide bombers."⁶⁰

In relation with suicide terrorism, the ASG also has plans to wage urban terrorism. The ASG is pursuing this strategy with the RSM, a group of Muslim converts based primarily in Metro Manila and some provinces in Luzon Island.⁶¹ Ahmad Santos, who is presently in jail, founded the RSM with the financial and ideological support of the ASG. The 2005 Valentines Day bombings were demonstration of ASG's pursuance of urban terrorism.⁶²

Root Causes of Terrorism in the Philippines: A Structure-Agency Analysis

This section examines the root causes of terrorism in the Philippines through structure-agency analysis. The question of structure and agency has "troubled, concerned and occupied the attentions of very many social scientists

⁵⁹For more discussions on the maritime terrorist capability of the ASG, see Rommel C. Banlaoi, "Maritime Terrorism in Southeast Asia: The Abu Sayyaf Threat", *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 58, No. 4 (Autumn 2005), pp. 63-80.

⁶⁰Michael Punongbayan, "DOJ to Expose Terrorists' Financiers, Media Handlers", *The Philippine Star*, 7 November 2005.

⁶¹For an analysis of the RSM, Rommel C. Banlaoi, "The Rise of Rajah Solaiman Movement: Suicide Terrorism in the Philippines", *IDSS Commentaries* (9 October 2006).

⁶²International Crisis Group, *Philippines Terrorism: The Role of Militant Islamic Converts*, Asia Report No. 110 (19 December 2005).

over the years.” But “it is only relatively recently that it has been taken up by political scientists and international relations scholars.”⁶³

Structural Analysis

The structural analysis privileges the political context, setting or environment to explain a certain political phenomenon. Viewed from a structural perspective, terrorism is a product of cultural, social, economic and political structures.⁶⁴ There is a problem of terrorism because there are cultural, social, economic and political structures that breed it. In short, there are structural conditions that encourage terrorism. Among the commonly cited structural conditions that provide fertile grounds for the growth of terrorism are poverty, injustices, political oppression, cultural marginalization, economic deprivation and social exclusion.⁶⁵ These structural conditions exacerbate grievances that fuel further terrorism.⁶⁶ Addressing the root of terrorism, therefore, is to alter the structure that produces terrorism. A structural analysis of the roots of terrorism in the Philippines highlights the structural roots of conflict in the country, which includes the ethnic make-up of society, distribution of wealth and political representation, to name a few.⁶⁷ In one of his public proclamation, Abdurajak Janjalani argued that the ASG was born because of “oppression, injustice, capricious ambitions and arbitrary claims imposed on the Muslims.”⁶⁸ He stressed that the “clutches of oppression, tyranny and injustice” would continue to justify the existence of the ASG. From this public proclamation, Abdurajak Janjalani was telling his audience that the ASG was a product of a phenomenon

⁶³Colin Hay, *Political Analysis: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), p. 93..

⁶⁴For an excellent literature, see Martha Crenshaw, *Terrorism in Context* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University Press, 1995).

⁶⁵See for example Fathali M. Moghaddam, “Cultural Preconditions for Potential Terrorist Groups: Terrorism and Societal Change” in Fathali M. Moghaddam and Anthony J. Marsella (eds), *Understanding Terrorism: Psychosocial Roots, Consequences, and Interventions* (Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 2004), pp. 103-117. Also see Paul Shirivastava, “The Blind War on Terrorism” at http://www.bucknell.edu/About_Bucknell/Offices_Resources/Communications/OpEd/shrivastava-10-12-04.html <accessed on 8 February 2006>.

⁶⁶Kristopher K. Robison, *Challenges of Political Conflict: A Cross-National Analysis of the Downward Spiral of International Terrorist Violence and Socio-Political Crisis* (Dissertation Abstract: The Ohio State University, nd) at <http://www.sociology.ohio-state.edu/people/kkr/jobmarket/disabstract.pdf> <accessed on 8 February 2006>.

⁶⁷See International Alert, “Towards a Better Practice Framework in Security Sector Reform: Broadening the Debate”, *Occasional SSR Paper*, No. 1 (August 2002), p. 2.

⁶⁸Abdurajak Janjalani, “In the Name of Allah the Rahman the Raheem” (A public proclamation distributed in the Basilan Island and Zamboanga City, undated). It is believed that the proclamation was written between 1993 and 1994. See Tan, *Internationalization of the Bangsamoro Struggle*, op. cit., p. 94.

with the ultimate goal of establishing “a purely Islamic government whose nature, meaning, emblem and objective are basic to peace.”⁶⁹ The late MILF founder Hashim Salamat even commented that the creation of the ASG was not a product of Janjalani’s “evil plan” but was “caused by the oppression and the continuous usurpation of the powers within our homeland.”⁷⁰ When Abdurajak Janjalani died in a police encounter in Basilan in 1998, Salamat described the ASG founder a “martyr”. Salamat also argued that “As long as the region and the *Bangsamoro* people are still under the control of the Philippine government, and oppression continues, we should expect more Abu Sayyaf style of groups to come to existence.”⁷¹ From a structural perspective, the root causes of terrorism in the Philippines can only be fully understood in the context of the *Bangsamoro* problem. Soliman M. Santos provides an excellent summary of the *Bangsamoro* problem in which the ASG finds itself, to wit:

This problem is the historical and systematic marginalization and minoritization of the Islamized ethno-linguistic groups, collectively called *Moros*, in their own homeland in the Mindanao islands, first by colonial powers Spain from the 16th to the 19th Century, then the U.S. during the first half of the 20th Century, and more recently by successor Philippine governments dominated by an elite with a Christian-Western orientation since formal independence in 1946. This marked full-fledged Filipino nation-statehood but ironically Philippine independence also sealed the loss of Moro independence because *Moroland* was incorporated (*Moro* nationalists would say annexed) into Philippine territory.⁷²

Macapado A. Muslim, a Filipino scholar, identifies ten foundational causes of the *Bangsamoro* problem. These are:

1. Forcible/illegal annexation of *Moroland* to the Philippines under the Treaty of Paris in 1898;
2. Military pacification;
3. Imposition of confiscatory land laws;

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Salamat Hashim, *The Bangsamoro People’s Struggle Against Oppression and Colonialism* (Camp Abubakre: Agency for Youth Affairs – MILF, 2001), p. 36.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Soliman M. Santos, Jr., “Evolution of the Armed Conflict on the Moro Front” (A Background paper submitted to the Human Development Network Foundation, Inc. for the Philippine Human Development Report, 2005), p. 1.

4. Indioization (or Filipinization) of public administration in *Moroland* and the destruction of traditional political institutions;
5. Government-financed/induced land settlement and migration to *Moroland*;
6. Land grabbing/conflicts;
7. Cultural inroads against the *Moros*;
8. Jabidah Massacre in 1968 (during the first Marcos administration);
9. Ilaga (Christian vigilante) and military atrocities in 1970-72 (during the second Marcos administration); and,
10. Government neglect and inaction to *Moro* protests and grievances.⁷³

From these ten foundational issues, he enumerates six key elements of the Moro problem, which are:

1. Economic marginalization and destitution;
2. Political domination and inferiorization;
3. Physical insecurity;
4. Threatened *Moro* and Islamic identity;
5. Perception that government is the principal party to blame; and,
6. Perception of hopelessness under the present set-up.⁷⁴

All Muslim radical groups in the Philippines, regardless of political persuasion and theological inclination, believe in the *Bangsamoro* struggle. The term *Bangsa* comes from the Malay word, which means nation. Spanish colonizers introduced the term *Moro* when they confused the Muslim people of Mindanao with the “moors” of North of Africa.⁷⁵ Though the use of the term *Bangsamoro* to describe the “national identity” of *Muslims* in the Philippines is being contested, Muslim leaders regard the *Bangsamoro* struggle as the longest “national liberation movement” in the country covering almost 400 years of violent resistance against Spanish, American, Japanese and even Filipino rule.⁷⁶ This 400-year history of Moro resistance deeply informs ASG’s current struggle

⁷³Macapado Abaton Muslim, *The Moro Armed Struggle in the Philippines: The Nonviolent Autonomy Alternative* (Marawi City, Philippines: Office of the President and College of Public Affairs, Mindanao State University, 1994) 52-133. Also cited in *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*

⁷⁵See Peter Gowing, *Mosque and Moro: A Study of Muslims in the Philippines* (Manila: Federation of Christian Churches, 1964). Also see Rommel C. Banlaoi, “Globalization and Nation-Building in the Philippines: State Predicaments in Managing Society in the Midst of Diversity”, in Yoichiro Sato (ed), *Growth and Governance in Asia* (Honolulu: Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies, 2004) p. 208.

⁷⁶Samuel K. Tan, “History of the Mindanao Problem” in Amina Rasul, (ed), *The Road to Peace and Reconciliation: Muslim Perspective on the Mindanao Conflict* (Makati City: Asian Institute of Management, 2003) p. 4.

for a separate Islamic state.⁷⁷ This historical context of confrontation and inequity is deeply embedded in the ASG's present advocacy.⁷⁸ This historical context also explains why the Abu Sayyaf has survived despite the death of many of its original leaders.⁷⁹

From a structural perspective, the ASG is one expression of a broader movement of the *Bangsamoro* people "spanning several centuries which refuses to acknowledge the authority of the Philippine state, whether independent or colonial."⁸⁰ In fact, there is a view that the *Bangsamoro* people will never succumb to Filipino rule.⁸¹ Thus, when the MNLF entered into peace agreement with the Philippine government in 1996, the ASG considered it a betrayal of the four centuries of struggle of the *Bangsamoro* people.⁸² It is already known that original ASG members were disgruntled MNLF members who expressed frustration in the *Moro* revolutionary cause. A study of a Philippine military official once assigned to operate against the ASG underscores:

Abdurajak Janjalani organized the ASG in the early 1990s with the main thrust to establish an Islamic state in Southern Philippines, breaking away from the traditional struggle fought by the Moro National Liberation Front under Nur Misuari. The inadequacy of Muslim socio-economic reforms under Misuari increased the social grievances of Muslims, which became a source of violence and strife.⁸³

⁷⁷For elaborate discussion, see Rommel C. Banlaoi, "The Past in Understanding Contemporary Armed Conflicts in the Philippines: The Abu Sayyaf Story" (Paper to be presented to the 19th Conference of International Association of Historians of Asia which will be held in Manila, Philippines, on 22-25 November 2006).

⁷⁸Charles Donnelly, "Terrorism in the Southern Philippines: Contextualizing the Abu Sayyaf Group as an Islamist Secessionist Organization" (Paper presented to the 15th Biennial Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia in Canberra on 29 June to 2 July 2004).

⁷⁹Mark Turner, "The Management of Violence in a Conflict Organization: The Case of the Abu Sayyaf", *Public Organization Review*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (December 2003), p. 390.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*

⁸¹Vic Hurley, *Swish of the Kriss: The Story of the Moros* (Mandaluyong: Catcho Hermanos, 1985), p. 273. Also cited in *Ibid.*, p. 399.

⁸²For a detailed discussion of the author's view on this topic, see Rommel C. Banlaoi, "Radical Muslim Terrorism in the Philippines" in Andrew Tan (ed), *Handbook on Terrorism and Insurgency in Southeast Asia*. London: Edward Elgar Publishing, Limited, 2006).

⁸³Lt. Colonel Benhur C. Paderes, *Perceptions on the Abu Sayyaf: Their Implications for National Security* (Master in National Security Administration Thesis: National Defense College of the Philippines, 2003), p. 61.

The ASG also criticizes the on-going peace talks between the Philippine government and the MILF. The ASG argues that “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 Ladens in our midst.”⁸⁴

Structural analysis of the roots of terrorism in the Philippines also points to the socio-economic and political conditions that give rise to the ASG. An interview with B.General Orlando Buenaventura, who also wrote a study on the ASG,⁸⁵ states that “the ASG problem was initially an offshoot of political, economic, socio-cultural and psychosocial conflicts prevailing in Mindanao.”⁸⁶ Members of ASG are viewed as unwitting products of the historical, socio-economic and political contexts in which they find themselves. They are helpless individuals with minimal control over their destiny, floundering around in a maelstrom of turbulent currents of the four centuries of *Bangsamoro* struggle.⁸⁷ The situation that gives rise to the ASG is marred by poverty, lack of services, inadequate infrastructure and lack of opportunity.⁸⁸ This situation is aggravated by the fact that the Philippine state has a poor record in the ASG heartland of Mindanao.⁸⁹ The *Moro*, which account for only 5% of the total Philippine population, suffers the lowest poverty and highest mortality rates, the least developed economy and minimal institutional government support.⁹⁰ According to Samira Ali Gutoc, a Muslim journalist, “Poverty may not generate militant Islam but it may provide the conditions of environment that cause disgruntlement and grievance against a government, that further polarizes due to a war policy in the South.”⁹¹

⁸⁴ Simon Elegant, “The Return of the Abu Sayyaf,” *Time Asia* (30 August 2004).

⁸⁵Orlando G. Buenaventura, *The Abu Sayyaf Problem in Mindanao: A Policy Option Paper* (Master in National Security Administration Policy Option Paper: National Defense College of the Philippines, 1995).

⁸⁶ Paderes, *Perceptions on the Abu Sayyaf: Their Implications for National Security*, op. cit., p. 67.

⁸⁷This is a paraphrase of Colin Hay, “Structure and Agency” in David Marsh and Gerry Stoker (eds), *Theory and Methods in Political Science* (Hamshire and London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1995), p. 189.

⁸⁸ Turner, “The Management of Violence in a Conflict Organization: The Case of the Abu Sayyaf”, op. cit., p. 399.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Maelin Shipman, “Abu Sayyaf: Analysis of Open Source Information” (Paper presented to College of Health Sciences, Touro University Internationa, 2003). Also available at <http://www.terrorismcentral.com/Library/terroristgroups/AbuSayyafGroup/ABUSAYYAFAnalysis.html> <accessed on 22 February 2006>.

⁹¹Samira Ali Gutoc, *Causes of Terrorism: The Philippines Amid Southeast Asia* (London: Oxford University Center for Islamic Studies, May 2003), p. 17.

In Basilan Province alone, which is the ASG's bailiwick, Muslims own only 25% of the land and the rest are owned by Christian population. This creates the feeling of immense animosity between Muslim and Christians in the area.⁹² *Moros* also feel the pain of silent discrimination because of their Islamic beliefs and "different" ways of life. For centuries, *Moros* also developed the feeling of dispossession by taking away their ancestral domains. Thus, they fight for self-determination to regain their homeland through *Moro* separatism.⁹³ The confluence of silent discrimination, dispossession of *Moro* homeland, and four centuries of struggle for *Moro* sovereignty have inflamed the ASG's militant activities in pursuit of an independent Islamic state.⁹⁴

The ASG is cognizant of the structural inequity, injustices and economic deprivation of the *Bangsamoro* people. In its public statement issued in November 1994, the ASG declared that its struggle was to seek *kaadilan* or justice for the *Bangsamoro* people. In one of his ideological discourses or *Khutbahs*, Abdurajak Janjalani stressed that "the initial objectives for redress of grievances or attainment of justice ultimately ends in the demand for a purely Islamic state as a surest guarantee of justice and prosperity for Muslims."⁹⁵ The ASG even urged other Muslims in the Philippines "to unite and lay aside their differences and feuds."⁹⁶ In his undated public proclamation entitled "In the Name of Allah the Rahman the Raheem", Abdurajak Janjalani even claimed that the ASG was founded "not to create another faction in the Muslim struggle which is against the teaching of Islam, especially the Qu'ran, but to serve as a bridge and balance between the MILF and the MNLF whose revolutionary roles and leadership cannot be ignored or usurped."⁹⁷

Agential Analysis

Another approach that can explain the root of terrorism in the Philippine is the agential analysis. The agential analysis argues that terrorism is a product of a willful determination of individuals and not the structural environment in which they find themselves. Arguably, there is a problem of terrorism because there are persons who opt to become terrorists because of their strong

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³For an excellent reader, see Kristina Gaerlan and Mara Stankovitch (eds), *Rebels, Warlords and Ulama: A Reader on Muslim Separatism and the War in Southern Philippines* (Quezon City: Institute for Popular Democracy, 2000).

⁹⁴Shipman, "Abu Sayyaf: Analysis of Open Source Information", op. cit., p. 4.

⁹⁵Tan, *Internationalization of the Bangsamoro Struggle*, op. cit., p. 99

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 95.

⁹⁷Abdurajak Janjalani, "In the Name of Allah the Rahman the Raheem", op. cit.

commitments to a certain political or religious ideology.⁹⁸ Thus, to understand terrorism is to examine the psychosocial profile of terrorists and the ideology, tactics and weaponry of terrorist organizations.⁹⁹

The agential approach pays attention to terrorist behavior, motives and intentions to grapple with the issue of terrorism. It regards terrorism as a product of a person's or a group's free will, choice and conduct. In other words, terrorism is a result of the actor's conscious deliberation.

Viewed from an agential perspective, terrorism in the Philippine may be rooted to Abdurajak Janjalani's personal profile and ideology. A son of a fisherman, Abdurajak Janjalani had a very humble beginning. Born on 8 November 1953, he grew and was socialized in an environment "where the laws set by men are flouted daily."¹⁰⁰ Though he ironically went to the Catholic-run Claret College for high school in Basilan, he failed, however to finish it. Glenda Gloria, a journalist observing the ASG, wrote that despite Abdurajak Janjalani's failure to finish secondary school in Basilan, he "wrangled a scholarship from the Saudi Arabian government in 1981. Abdurajak was sent to Ummu I-Qura in Mecca where he studied Islamic jurisprudence for three years."¹⁰¹ There, Janjalani was attracted deeply to the concept of *jihad*, which would eventually inform the ideology of the ASG.

In 1984, he returned to Basilan to preach in mosques. In 1988, Janjalani went to Peshawar, Pakistan where he conscientiously studied Iranian Islamic revolution. It was also in Peshawar where Janjalani reportedly met and befriended Osama bin Laden who eventually helped Abdurajak to finance the formation of the ASG.

When Janjalani formed the ASG, his original intention was to create a group of Muslim *Mujahidden* committed to *Jihad Fi-Sabil-lillah*, a "struggle in the cause of Allah" or "fighting and dying for the cause of Islam".¹⁰² Before Janjalani died in December 1998, he delivered eight radical ideological discourses called *Khutbahs*, which may be considered as primary sources of Janjalani' radical Islamic thoughts. These discourses explained Janjalani's

⁹⁸For an earlier work on this view, see Christopher Dobson and Ronald Payne, *The Terrorists: Their Weapons, Leaders and Tactics* (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1982).

⁹⁹For an excellent collection of recent studies, see Fathali M. Moghaddam and Anthony J. Marsella (eds), *Understanding Terrorism: Psychosocial Roots, Consequences, and Interventions* (Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 2004).

¹⁰⁰Glenda Gloria, "Bearer of the Sword: The Abu Sayyaf Has Nebulous Beginnings and Incoherent Aims", *Mindanao Updates* (6 June 2000).

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²This particular paragraph is based on Banlaoi, "The Abu Sayyaf Group: From Mere Banditry to Genuine Terrorism?", op. cit.

Quranic perspective of *Jihad Fi-Sabil-lillah*, which he lamented was misinterpreted by many Muslims. He even denounced the *ulama* (Muslim scholars) for their little knowledge of the Quran and lamented that most Muslims in the Philippines calling themselves as *Moros* were not really practicing the true meaning of Islam compared with their counterparts in West Asia. These eight discourses also revealed Janjalani's deep grasp of Wahabi Islam, which considered other Muslims heretical. The Islamic theology of Wahabism also influenced Janjalani's radical ideology for the ASG.

From the agential analysis, the ASG would not have been organized were it not for the persistent efforts of Abdurajak Janjalani. The ASG would not have also been formed had it not for the support extended by Bin Laden through his brother-in-law, Mohammad Jamal Khalifa who married a Filipina. Bin Laden instructed his Khalifa to go to the Philippines in 1988 to recruit fighters in the Afghan war. But Khalifa's direct contact in the Philippines was the MILF. So, it was Ramzi Yousef who really deepened the ASG's ties with Al Qaeda.

Yousef received international notoriety for masterminding the bombing of World Trade Center in 1993. He was also known for planning in the Philippines the *Bojinka* plots, believed to be the worst terrorist plots in the country. The *Bojinka* plots aimed to bomb eleven U.S. jetliners and assassinate Pope John Paul II, who visited Manila in 1995. During his travel to the Philippines via Malaysia, Yousef reportedly stayed in Basilan and trained around 20 ASG fighters under the supervision of Abdurajak Janjalani to mount terrorist attacks in the Philippines.

As early as 1994, in fact, then police Colonel Rodolfo "Boogie" Mendoza revealed a 175-page report on the infiltration of the Philippines by international terrorists linked to Al-Qaeda. Mendoza pioneered the research on Al-Qaeda's network in Southeast Asia and its funding of the ASG.¹⁰³ Mendoza stressed that these personalities were responsible for perpetuating terrorism in the Philippines. Terrorism can, therefore, be rooted to the conscious determination of knowledgeable and intentional individuals like Janjalani, Bin Laden, Khalifa and Yousef, among others. To address the root of terrorism is to run after these people.

But it begs the question why the ASG persists after the death of Abdurajak Janjalani? Why terrorism continues to wreak havoc in the Philippines despite the reduction of the strength of the ASG?

The answer lies on the resilience of remaining ASG members who continue to embrace the group's Islamist ideology.

¹⁰³ Ressa, *Seeds of Terror: An Eyewitness Account of Al-Qaeda's Newest Center of Operations in Southeast Asia*, op. cit., p. 131.

After the death of Abdurajak, his younger brother, Khadafy, took his position. But Khadafy did not have the charismatic and assertive leadership of his older brother. So, the ASG was heavily factionalized when the Khadafy took the position.¹⁰⁴ The two major factions were based in Basilan and Sulu acting independently. As of 2002, the Basilan-based faction was composed of ten armed groups while the Sulu-based faction was composed of 16-armed groups. These different armed groups also worked independently. Though Khadafy was the over-all leader, he failed to establish full control and supervision of these two major factions and several armed groups associated with the ASG. The Sulu-based faction headed by Commander Robot (Galib Andang) ventured into several KRAs. Though Khadafy was heading the Basilan-based faction, he was overpowered by Abu Sabaya (Aldam Tilao) who also resorted to banditry and kidnapping activities. With Commander Robot and Abu Sabaya running the “real” show, the ASG degenerated into a bandit organization. Commander Robot and Abu Sabaya converted the ASG from a genuine Muslim terrorist organization to what Eric Gutierrez called “entrepreneur of violence.”¹⁰⁵

Factionalization and leadership struggle rapidly weakened the ASG. This provided the AFP the golden opportunity to run after ASG members. Through intensive police and military operations, the Philippine government was able to reduce the ASG strength to almost 70%. From its peak of 1,269 fighters in 2000, the Philippine government reduced the strength of ASG to not more than 350 fighters in mid 2005. This tremendously weakened the ASG. Because of its small size, the Office of the President declared the ASG a spent force. That was before. Though admittedly smaller in number, the ASG was able to win strong local support through “Robin Hood” strategy. When “Robin Hood” appeal fails, the ASG resorts to fear to enforce support.¹⁰⁶

Though the membership of the ASG continues to be small at present, it is venturing into vigorous recruitment activities to recover from the lost of its members who were killed, neutralized and arrested after 9/11. It has various techniques to recruit members. Aside from religious propaganda and agitation, the ASG motivates recruits through financial reward. It also pays local recruits

¹⁰⁴Rommel C. Banlaoi, “Leadership Dynamics in Terrorist Organizations in Southeast Asia: The Abu Sayyaf Case” (Paper presented to the international symposium, “The Dynamics and Structures of Terrorist Threats in Southeast Asia” organized by the Institute of Defense Analyses held at Palace of Golden Horses Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on 18-20 April 2005). Also in John T. Hanley, Kongdan Oh Hassig and Caroline F. Ziemke, eds., *Proceedings of the International Symposium on the Dynamics and Structures of Terrorist Threats in Southeast Asia* (Alexandria, VA: Institute for Defense Analyses, 2005).

¹⁰⁵Eric Gutierrez, “From Ilaga to Abu Sayyaf: New Entrepreneurs in Violence and their Impact on Local Politics in Mindanao” (Unpublished Manuscript: Institute for Popular Democracy, 2001). Also see his “New Faces of Violence in Mindanao” in Gaerlan and Stankovitch (eds), *Rebels, Warlords and Ulama: A Reader on Muslim Separatism and the War in Southern Philippines*, op. cit., pp. 349-362.

¹⁰⁶Shipman, “Abu Sayyaf: Analysis of Open Source Information” , op. cit., p. 6.

to serve as second and third security layer of their makeshift camps. Some members start their recruitment process by initially befriending potential recruits through ball games or pot (marijuana) sessions. The ASG also utilizes deception to recruit members. ASG leaders allow young Muslims to bring their firearms and take pictures of them and then use the pictures to blackmail them of joining the group.¹⁰⁷ The ASG also uses marriages to expand its membership.

At present, the ASG is paying attention to younger and more idealistic MILF members who regard the on-going peace process with the Philippine government as a sham. ASG leaders think that if the MILF makes peace with the government, they will inherit firebrands in the Southern Philippines. MILF leader Al-Haj Murad Ebrahim warned that a great deal is needed quickly “before younger Muslims in the region succumb to the greater radicalism of the Abu Sayyaf.”¹⁰⁸

In short, from the agential analysis, terrorism in the Philippines persists because there are people who continue to believe that terrorism is powerful weapon to influence an audience in pursuance of an Islamist ideology.

Conclusion

This chapter analyzed the roots and evolution of terrorist movements in the Philippines focusing on the ASG. It argued that terrorism in the Philippines could only fully understood in its proper historical context. It also presented how a terrorist movement started in the Philippines from a structure-agency analysis. This chapter argued that the emergence of terrorist groups in the Philippines could be rooted to cultural, social, economic and political structures in which they found themselves. In other words, there were structural causes that breed terrorist groups like the ASG. To address the roots of terrorism in the Philippines is to pay attention to its structural origins and to correct the structural infirmities of the Philippine society in which “terrorists” find themselves.

This chapter also demonstrated that aside from structural causes, there were also agential origins of terrorism in the country. Terrorism could be rooted to the conscious determination of knowledgeable and intentional individuals like Janjalani, Bin Laden, Khalifa and Yousef, among others who embrace and ideology that venerates acts of terrorism. To address the root of terrorism is to run after these people and to kill an ideology that endorses terrorism.

Many studies on terrorism, however, tend to highlight the empirical debate and theoretical differences between structural and agential approaches (the structure-agency debate). Some scholars prefer a structural explanation

¹⁰⁷ Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, *Knowing the Terrorists: The Abu Sayyaf Study*, op. cit. p. 41.

¹⁰⁸ Elegant, “The Return of the Abu Sayyaf,” op.cit.

while others prefer an agential explanation to understand the roots, causes and emergence of terrorism. A recent approach in political analysis attempts to reconcile the structural and agential explanations and integrate the structure-agency debate to examine political phenomena. This approach is called the strategic-relational approach (SRA).

The SRA aims to marry or reconcile the structural and agential explanations of political phenomena like terrorism. Instead of viewing structure and agents as two opposite poles or two sides of the same coin, SRA seeks to demonstrate that structure and agency logically entail one another.¹⁰⁹ It purports to offer a dynamic understanding of the important relationship of structure and agency, which refuses to privilege either moment (structure or agency).¹¹⁰

Using SRA to analyze the roots of terrorism may offer us a better way to develop a more informed and more nuanced policy on terrorism.

¹⁰⁹ Hay, "Structure and Agency", op. cit., p. 189.

¹¹⁰ Hay, Political Analysis: A Critical Introduction, op. cit., p. 134.

CHAPTER 2

Leadership Dynamics*

Introduction

Many scholarly studies have already been written about the ASG.¹¹¹ But these studies describe what the ASG has done and can do rather what the ASG, as a terrorist organization, is really all about. While we know a lot about the atrocities committed by the ASG, there is a great deal we do not know about its past as well as present complex organizational structure, current leadership dynamics and recent linkages with new terrorist organizations operating in the Philippines, in particular, and Southeast Asia, in general.

This chapter attempts to describe the complex organization set-up of the ASG, particularly in the aftermath of 9/11. It aims to examine its clandestine leadership dynamics in the light of new developments in the nature of terrorist threats in Southeast Asia. This chapter also aims to revisit the discourse on the linkages of ASG with JI and to propel new discussions on the new alliances of ASG with other terrorist groups operating in the Philippines like the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), and most recently, the Rajah Solaiman Movement (RSM).

This chapter argues that new innovative linkages of ASG with local Muslim radicals and bandits and its continuing creative alliances with terrorist organizations linked to JI have unleashed new challenges requiring the adoption

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¹¹¹See for example Djanicelle J. Berrevelde, *Terrorism in the Philippines: The Bloody Trail of Abu Sayyaf, Bin Ladens East Asian Connection* (San Jose: Writers Club Press, 2001); Maria Ressa, *Seeds of Terror: An Eyewitness Account of Al-Qaeda's Newest Center of Operations in Southeast Asia* (New York: Free Press, 2003) and Zachary Abuza, *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: The Crucible of Terror* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2003). For an insightful analysis on the evolution of ASG, see Rohan Gunaratna, "The Evolution and Tactics of the Abu Sayyaf Group", *Janes Intelligence Review* (July 2001). For a very excellent historical analysis, see Graham H. Turbiville, Jr., "Bearer of the Sword", *Military Review* (March/ April 2002), pp. 38-47. For an analysis of ASG and civil society, see Alfredo Filler, "The Abu Sayyaf Group: A Growing Menace to Civil Society", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Winter 2002). Also see Larry Niksch, "Abu Sayyaf: Target of Philippine-US Anti-Terrorism Cooperation", *CRS Report for Congress* (25 January 2002) and Mark Turner, "Terrorism and Secession in the Southern Philippines: The Rise of the Abu Sayyaf", *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (June 1995), pp. 1 -19.

of a more comprehensive policies and actions to confront the said threats. This study shall be viewed as an initial attempt to describe the evolving threat posed by the ASG and to help inform further debate among scholars and policy-makers working on this subject.

The Organization of the ASG

When Janjalani formed the ASG, his original vision was to form a highly organized, systematic, and disciplined organization of fanatical secessionist Islamic fighters in the Southern Philippines.¹¹² Janjalani recruited younger and more passionate Muslim leaders who studied Islamic theology in Saudi Arabia, Libya, Pakistan and Egypt. These young Muslim leaders had common remorse against the MNLF, which entered into peace agreement with the Philippine government in 1996. These leaders also shared common anger against the Philippine government based in Manila.

To achieve his vision of a truly organized Muslim resistant group in the Philippines, Janjalani deliberately made a detailed organization of the ASG.¹¹³ He formed the Islamic Executive Council (IEC) composed of fifteen Amirs. Janjalani chaired the IEC to serve as the main planning and execution body of ASG. Under the IEC were two special committees. The first committee was the *Jamiatul Al-Islamia* Revolutionary *Tabligh* Group in charged of fund raising and Islamic education. The second committee was the *Al-Misuaratt Khutbah* Committee in charged of agitation and propaganda activities.¹¹⁴

The ASG also established a military arm called *Mujahidden Al-Sharifullah* whose members came predominantly from disgruntled members of MNLF and the MILF. This military arm had three main units to carryout all terrorist activities of the ASG: the Demolition Team, the Mobile Force Team and the Campaign Propaganda Team. The Demolition Team composed mostly of trained fighters, had the capability to manufacture its own mines and explosives used in the bombing operations of the group. The Mobile Force Team - composed mostly of affiliates of radio clubs, traders, businessmen, shippers, and professionals – was in charged of collaboration and coordination activities of the ASG. The Campaign Propaganda Team – composed of professionals, students, and businessmen – was in charged of gathering vital information necessary to carry out the mission of *Mujahidden Al-Sharifullah*.¹¹⁵

¹¹²This section is culled from Rommel Banlaoi, "Maritime Terrorism in Southeast Asia: The Abu Sayyaf Threat", *US Naval War College Review*, Vol. 58, No. 4 (Autumn 2005).

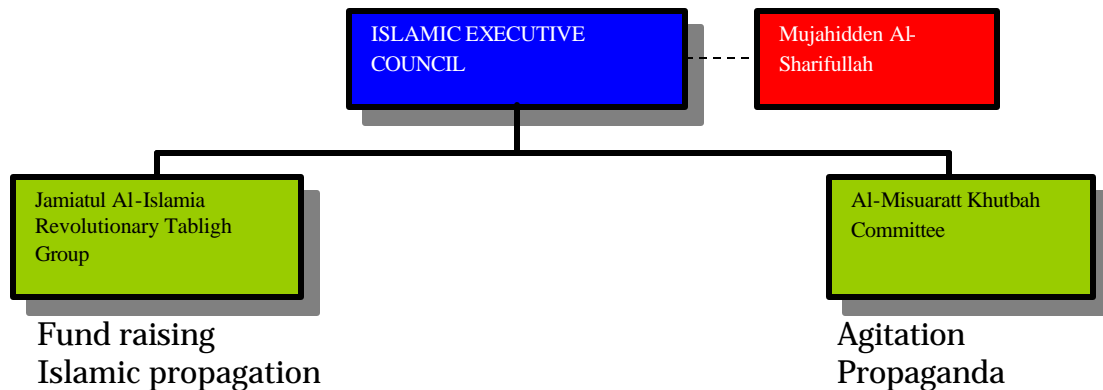
¹¹³ Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, J3, *Knowing the Terrorists: The Abu Sayyaf Study* (Quezon City: Headquarters of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, undated).

¹¹⁴To know more about the strategy of the ASG, see Office of the Assistant to the Chief of Staff for Intelligence, *Field Handout: Doctrinal Extract for the Abu Sayyaf Group* (Headquarters of the Philippine Marine Corps, 21 January 2002).

¹¹⁵Ibid. Also based on various intelligence briefings obtained by the author.

Figure 1 is the organizational structure of the ASG as originally envisioned by Janjalani.

Figure 1. ASG Organization Envisioned by the A. Janjalani



Source: Armed Forces of the Philippines, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, J3 (2002).

But the original organizational set-up of ASG was short-lived. When the combined forces of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the AFP killed Janjalani in a bloody encounter in December 1998 in Lamitan, Basilan, the ASG suffered a severe leadership vacuum. This led to the discontentment of some of its original members. The organization set-up by Janjalani crumbled rapidly with him. The IEC headed by Janjalani also suffered an untimely demise. With no overall Amir at the helm of the organization, the group became a mere network of various armed groups with their own respective Amirs commanding their own respective loyal followers operating mainly in Sulu, Basilan and Tawi-Tawi.

With the death of A. Janjalani, remaining leaders, however, reluctantly selected Khadafy Janjalani, a younger brother, as his successor in July 1999. But the ASG under K. Janjalani had lost its original organization set-up and Islamic theological zeal. Unlike the older Janjalani, the younger Janjalani did not have the theological passion of his brother. Lacking strong ideological guide, most of its members resorted to banditry, piracy, kidnap-for-ransom, and other terrorist activities. The ASG was also heavily factionalized. It was reported, however, that K. Janjalani attempted to revive the Islamist agenda of the ASG. But his confirmed death in January 2007 aborted his plan.

Leadership Dynamics in the ASG

According to various AFP reports, there were two major factions of the ASG operating independently in two major areas in the Southern Philippines: Basilan and Sulu. Khadafy Janjalani still heads the Basilan-based ASG. Galib Andang, otherwise known as Commander Robot, headed the Sulu-based ASG. But the Sulu group unexpectedly lost its leader with the capture of Commander Robot in December 2003. Commander Robot was eventually killed in a bloody jailbreak attempt on 15 March 2005. The Sulo-based ASG is now under the command of Radulan Sahiron.

Other AFP reports talked of another faction of ASG operating in Zamboanga City with Hadji Radzpal as the main leader. But Hadji Radzpal was also identified by other intelligence sources as one of the leaders of the Sulu-based faction of the ASG. Local leaders have denied the existence of ASG faction in Zamboanga City.

The Basilan-based ASG was composed of 73 members as of 2002. These members were ASG hard-liners composed of 30 personal followers of Khadafy Janjalani, 30 personal followers of Isnillon Hapilon, and 13 followers of Abu Sabaya. The group of Hapilon was the main security arm of the Basilan-based ASG. The group of Abu Sabaya, on the other hand, joined the group of Khadafy Janjalani in running the daily planning and administrative affairs of the group. The Philippine military claimed that it killed Sabaya and two others in a naval encounter in June 2002. But Sabaya's body was never found, triggering speculations that he may still be alive despite the AFP's repeated pronouncements that Sabaya was among those who died and drowned in the waters of Sibuco Bay in Zamboanga del Norte.¹¹⁶

The Sulu-based became a loose organization of Muslim bandits under the command of late Commander Robot. This faction of ASG was responsible for the kidnapping of 21 tourists spending a vacation in a resort in Sipadan Island of Malaysia on 23 April 2000. The Basilan-based and Sulu-based factions of the ASG were also divided into different groups with their own leaders. As of 2002, the Basilan-based faction was composed of ten armed groups while the Sulu-based faction was composed of 16 armed groups.

Table 1 shows the Basilan-based groups of the ASG. Table 2, on the other hand, shows the Sulu-based groups of the ASG.

¹¹⁶“Sabaya's Death not the End Abu Sayyaf, says Basilan Bishop”, *MindaNews* (29 June 2002) at <http://www.mindanews.com/2002/07/1st/nws29abu.html> <accessed on 30 August 2004>. A very close friend of mine who was a member of the Special Warfare Group (SWAG) who did the actual operation against Abu Sabaya told me that Sabaya was indeed killed in the said battle.

Table 1. Basilan-Based Faction of the ASG

| Name of Group | Known Leaders of the Group |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Ampul Group | Mauran Ampu or Abu Mauran |
| Apting Group | Abu Apting |
| Danggatil Group | Moto Danggantil or Mata Danggatil |
| Hapilon Group | Sahiron Hapilon |
| Isnilon Group | Isnilon Hapilon |
| Jainuddin Group | Nadjalin Jainuddin |
| Janjalani Group | Hector Janjalani or Abu Abral |
| Kaw Jaljalis Group | Kalaw Jaljalis or Boy Granada |
| Salagin Group | Abu Salagin |
| Masiraji Sali Group | Hamsiraji Sali |

Source: Armed Forces of the Philippines, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, J3 (2002).

Table 2. Sulu-Based Faction of the ASG

| Name of Group | Known Leaders of the Group |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Robot Group | Galib Andang or Cmdr Robot |
| Amil Group | Julius Aminulla Amil |
| Asiri Group | Basiri Asiri |
| Badja Group | Datu Panglima Badja |
| Bauddin Group | Salapuddin Bauddin |
| Hayudini Group | Nidzmi Hayudinni or Cmdr Takulong |
| Hadji Radzpal Group | Hadji Radzpal or Abu Rayhan |
| Irijani Group | Mudjahid Irijani |
| Jamal Group | Yahiya Jamal or Abu Alvarez |
| Kalim Group | Pati Kalim |
| Landi Group | Kumander Landi |
| Mali Group | Sulaiman Mali |
| Saabdula Group | Nadzmi Saabulla or Cmdr Global |
| Sahiron Group | Radullah Sahiron |
| Sali Group | Hesseim Sali |
| Shariff Group | Wahid Shariff |

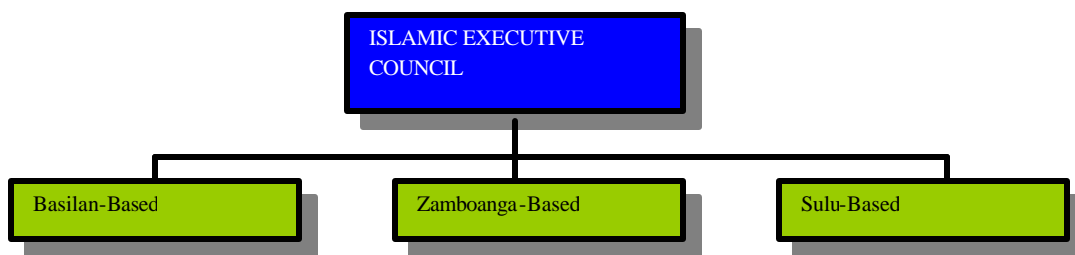
Source: Armed Forces of the Philippines, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, J3 (2002).

From these groups, it may be observed that the ASG is not a homogenous organization. Rather, the ASG is a very loose coalition of many groups of radical Muslim leaders and bandits commanding their own loyal followers in the Southern Philippines. These groups have mixed objectives from Islamic fundamentalism to mere banditry. Members of these groups pay allegiance mostly to their respective leaders rather than to ASG doctrines. Not all groups are truly committed to the idea of a separate Islamic state in the Southern Philippines, though there is no doubt that some groups are really committed to the cause. Some Muslim bandit groups in the Southern Philippines want to be associated with the ASG for prestige, political expediency and economic gains. But the dynamics of these groups shares common feature: they are highly personalistic rather than ideological groups of Muslim radicals.

Because of intensified military campaigns of the Philippine government, some groups were dismantled as a result of the capture, neutralization or death of their leaders. But to date, the exact number of surviving groups have not been openly reported by the AFP or the PNP. What is known is that as of 2004, ASG strength was placed at 440, a substantial decrease from its peak of 1,269 in 2000. Based on the official briefing of the Anti-Terrorism Task Force, (ATTF), ASG strength has been reduced to 380 as of the second quarter of 2005. According to the Department of National Defense (DND), “the ASG is presently factionalized and its remnants have splintered and are constantly on the move due to continued military pressures.”¹¹⁷

Based on the various factions, the organizational set-up of the ASG was far from those envisioned by Abdurajak Jajalani. Figure 2 was the known organizational structure of the ASG as of 2003. Recent organizational set-up of the ASG has not been publicly released.

Figure 2. ASG Organization After the Death of A. Janjalani



Source: Armed Forces of the Philippines, Various documents, 2000-2004.

¹¹⁷Department of National Defense, *Defense Planning Guide, 2006-2011* (Quezon City: Department of National Defense Office of the Undersecretary for Policy, Plans and Special Concerns, December 2004). This document is classified confidential.

ASG Linkages with other Terrorist Organizations Operating in the Philippines

The ASG has mutated into a very resilient terrorist organization. Despite heavy military operations and loss of its key leaders, it continues to wreak terrorist havoc in the Philippines. The bombing of Superferry 14 on 27 February 2004 and the three simultaneous bombings in Makati City, General Santos City and Davao City on the eve of Valentines Day celebration in 2005 were just some of the indications that the ASG can still disturb the peace. In the telephone interview pertaining to the Superferry 14 incident, ASG spokesperson Abu Soliaman even taunted the Philippine government by saying, “Still doubtful about our capabilities? Good. Just wait and see. We will bring the war that you impose on us to your lands and seas, homes and streets. We will multiply the pain and suffering that you have inflicted on our people.”¹¹⁸

Despite the declining number of ASG operatives due to sustained military crackdown in Sulu, Basilan and Zamboanga City, the group continues to wreak terrorist havoc because of its superb ability to establish strong linkages with other terrorist groups operating in the Philippines. These groups are the JI, the MNLF, the MILF and the RSM. The ASG also has a creative and sophisticated means to solicit local support, which undoubtedly contribute to its resilience as a terrorist organization.

ASG Linkages with JI

ASG linkages with JI have already been excellently discussed by various authors.¹¹⁹ Although the organizational dynamics of JI and ASG are undergoing dramatic changes in the midst of a changing national and regional security environment, latest developments indicate that JI-ASG linkage remains in tact and operational. Intelligence sources reveal that the number of JI members in the Philippines collaborating with ASG was placed at 33 as of December 2004. The Philippine National Police Intelligence Group even estimates that the

¹¹⁸Marco Garrido, “After Madrid, Manila?”, *Asia Times* (24 April 2004) at http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/FD24Ae01.html <accessed on 28 August 2004>.

¹¹⁹See Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al-Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Zachary Abuza, “Tentacles of Terror: Al-Qaeda’s Southeast Asian Network”, *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (December 2002), pp. 427-465.; Maria Ressa, *Seeds of Terror: An Eyewitness Account of Al-Qaeda’s Newest Center of Operations in Southeast Asia* (New York: Free Press, 2003) and Rommel C. Banlaoi, *War on Terrorism in Southeast Asia* (Manila: Rex Book Store International, 2004).

number of JI operatives in the Philippines may be placed at 60 as of April 2005.¹²⁰ These JI operatives continue to exploit local Muslim secessionist rebels in the Philippines by sharing their demolition skills.¹²¹

In connection with the 2005 Valentine's Day bombings, two Indonesians and a Malaysian allegedly belonging to the JI were arrested by intelligence operatives in Zamboanga City on 23 February 2005. But the arrest of Rohmat alias "Zaki" on 16 March 2005 gave a more substantial information about the recent JI-ASG linkages. Zaki, an Indonesian national, confessed to several crimes involving the ASG since 2000, including training members to make bombs in JI-run camps.¹²² Known as the "ASG the bomb trainer", Zaki admitted that he trained ASG members in bomb making, particularly the use of mobile phones as detonating devices and the use of toothpaste as bomb paraphernalia.¹²³ He also admitted to have coordinated the 2005 Valentine's Day bombings, which resulted in the brutal death of 10 people and the serious wounding of at least 150 others.

ASG Linkages with the MNLF

It is already well-known that most ASG members are disgruntled members of the MNLF. But their links go beyond that. ASG members continue to connive with MNLF members to plant bombs, kidnap people and commit murder. A police intelligence report reveals that ASG has forged alliances with some gunmen loyal to jailed MNLF leader Nur Misuari.¹²⁴ Chief Police Superintendent Rodolfo Mendoza of the PNP Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) says that alliance between ASG and the MNLF were formed two to three years ago. According to Undersecretary Ricardo Blancaflor of the Philippine Anti-Terrorism Task Force (ATTF), this alliance is on a tactical or operational level.¹²⁵

¹²⁰Interview with Police Chief Superintendent Ismael R. Rafanan, Director of the Philippine National Police Intelligence Group, held at Camp Crame, Quezon City on 1 April 2005.

¹²¹ Alcuin Papa, "Military: JI Members Still Training Locals", *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (18 January 2005).

¹²² "Alleged bombs expert for Jemaah Islamiyah regional network arrested in Philippine", *Channel News Asia* at <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/southeastasia/view/138779/1/.html> <accessed on 12 April 2005>.

¹²³Interview with General Marlu Quevedo, Chief of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, held at Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City on 29 March 2005.

¹²⁴Jim Gomez, "Filipino Terror Group's Reach Grown Nationally", *Associated Press* (8 March 2005).

¹²⁵Interview with Undersecretary Ricardo Blancaflor of the Philippines Anti-Terrorism Task Force held at Malacanang Palace, Manila on 21 March 2005.

Ruland Ullah, a former ASG member and now a state witness to the April 2000 Sipadan hostage crisis, confirms these observations when he says that ASG has hired MNLF fighters to mount terrorist attacks. MNLF members have even acted as mercenaries of the ASG for an amount of at least \$1,000. MNLF members also provide sanctuaries for ASG members when the need arises.¹²⁶ They also share fighters to mount terrorist attacks not only in the Southern Philippines but also in Metro Manila.

ASG Linkages with the MILF

Former President Joseph Estrada tried to link the ASG with the MILF. But there was no clear evidence of the link during his time. Thomas McKenna, associate professor of anthropology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and author of *Muslim Rulers and Rebels: Everyday Politics and Armed Separatism in the Southern Philippines*,¹²⁷ even said that "It is certainly possible that some disaffected MILF fighters have gone over to the ASG," but "the ASG may be best viewed as a direct challenge to both the MILF and MNLF, not as an adjunct."¹²⁸

But recent evidences indicate that the ASG has strongly established tactical alliance with the MILF. Although former Secretary of National Defense Eduardo Ermita once argued that MILF members have not shown any proof that they have helped the ASG,¹²⁹ new intelligence sources have revealed that ASG and MILF members have shared fighters in their operations. According to Ullah, "Sometimes the MILF would plant a roadside bomb against soldiers and the Abu Sayyaf would shoot the soldiers wounded in the blast."¹³⁰ MILF and ASG members also receive joint training with JI operatives, particularly in the area of bomb making. In a paper obtained from the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, "During explosives training, JI teaches the MILF or ASG skills in the making of bombs with cell phones, in the identification of the different types of explosives and paraphernalia like TNT, black powder, PETN, Ammonium Nitrate, C4, Detonating Cords, and Detonators."¹³¹

¹²⁶ Jomar Canlas, "State Witness Bares MNLF, MILF Links with Abu Sayyaf", *The Manila Times* (28 March 2005).

¹²⁷ Thomas M. McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels: Everyday Politics and Armed Separatism in the Southern Philippines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

¹²⁸ "Gunning for Glory", *Al-Ahram Weekly Online* Issue No.548 (23 - 29 August 2001).

¹²⁹"They [MILF] have not shown any proof that they have helped", *Newsbreak* (10 May 2004).

¹³⁰"Gunning for Glory", op. cit.

¹³¹A paper obtained from the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines on 29 March 2005.

At present, the Philippine government is getting a peace deal with the MILF.¹³² ASG leaders think that if the MILF makes peace with the government, they will inherit firebrands in the Southern Philippines. Thus, MILF leader Al-Haj Murad Ebrahim contends that a great deal is needed quickly “before younger Muslims in the region succumb to the greater radicalism of the Abu Sayyaf.”¹³³ But a top ASG leader exclaims that “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 Ladens in our midst.”¹³⁴

ASG Linkages with the RSM

One of the ASG’s newest links is with the Rajah Solaiman Movement or RSM (otherwise known as Rajah Solaiman Islamic Movement or RSIM). Intelligence documents describe the RSM as part of the *Balik Islam* Movement (Return to Islam Movement) or *Fi Sabilillah*.¹³⁵ The RSM is a clandestine Muslim organization in Manila collaborating with the ASG in waging urban terrorism. The group is named after Rajah Solaiman, the last king of Manila before the Spanish conquest in the 1500s. Most of its members are Muslim converts. Like the ASG, the converts claim that they want to remake the country into an Islamic state.¹³⁶ It was estimated that the RSM had at least 70 members in Luzon as of April 2005. The Office of Muslim Affairs (OMA), on the other hand, reports that more than 110,000 Filipinos have converted to Islam as of the first quarter of 2005. Hilarion del Rosario, Jr. (also known as Ahmed Santos) was the identified leader and founder of the RSM. Santos ran a *madrassa* or Islamic school in Pangasinan, which was raided by Philippine law enforcement operatives in May 2003. An intelligence report states that the RSM was founded in 2002 to “Islamize” the whole Philippines based on the belief that before the Spaniards came with Christianity, there were first Muslims in the archipelago.¹³⁷

¹³²See Benedicto R. Bacani, “The Mindanao Peace Talks: Another Opportunity to Resolve the Moro Conflict in the Philippines”, *United States Institute of Peace Special Report*, No. 131 (January 2005).

¹³³Simon Elegant, “The Return of the Abu Sayyaf,” *Time Asia* (30 August 2004).

¹³⁴*Ibid.*

¹³⁵According to Undersecretary Ricardo Blancaflor of the Philippine Anti-Terrorist Task Force, the difference between the RSM, the Balik Islam Movement and the Fi Sabilillah is hard to distinguish.

¹³⁶Joe Cochrane, “Filipino Authorities Say The Newest Threat To The Country Is A Shadowy Terror Group Made Up Of Radical Muslim Converts”, *Newsweek International Edition* (17 May 2004) at <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/4933472/> <accessed on 28 August 2004>.

¹³⁷“Summary of Report on Rajah Solaiman Movement” (12 April 2004) at <http://www.westerndefense.org/articles/PhilippineRepublic/may04.htm> <accessed 31 August 2004>.

Reportedly, the RSM has a special operations group and a special action force financed by Saudi Arabian money channeled through various charities in the Philippines. ASG leader Khadafy Janjalani reportedly gave the RSM the equivalent of about \$200,000 for its initial operational activities in Manila, which included the recruitment and conversion of Christians to Islam, then sending them for terrorist training.¹³⁸ The PNP regards the International Information Center (IIC), a Muslim center based in Quiapo, Manila, as front of the RSM. The Philippine Association of Muslimah Darul Eeman, Inc. (PAMDAE, Inc.) is also reported to be a front of ASG to recruit Metro Manila based Islam converts in its fold.¹³⁹ The following *Balik Islam* groups have also aroused official curiosity:

- ❑ Al Maarif Education Center (Baguio City)
- ❑ Da'ul Hijra Foundation, Inc. (Makati City)
- ❑ Islamic Learning Center (Pangasinan)

The blasting of the Superferry 14 on 26 February 2004 has been described as the handiwork of ASG-RSM conspiracy. Redento Cain Delloso, an RSM member, confessed that he deliberately planted a bomb on Superferry 14. The Marine Board Inquiry in charge of investigating the Superferry 14 incident confirmed that the ASG masterminded the explosion with the assistance of RSM.

Interestingly, ASG links with RSM also run in the family. Amina Lim Dungon, one of the wives of ASG spokesman Abu Sulaiman, is the sister of Lorraine Lim Dungon, who is a wife of RSM leader Ahmed Santos. ASG leader Khadafy Janjallani's wife, Zainad Lim Dungon, is a sister of Amina and Lorraine. These make Sulaiman, Santos and Janjallani not only "brothers-in-arms" but also brothers-in-law. Some ICC officers are also kin to Fi-Sabillilah and RSM leaders.¹⁴⁰ According to Chief Police Superintendent Mendoza of the PNP, "If you make an extended family tree of top Islamic radicals, you will come out with something like a tightly woven spider's web."¹⁴¹

This view is shared with another top police officer who argues that that ties between ASG and RSM and even MILF and MNLF "are more personal than ideological" because "there are blood ties, and they have an experience of strife with government."¹⁴² General Florencio D. Fianza, the President's Special Envoy on Transnational Crime, says that ASG, RSM and even MILF and MNLF help

¹³⁸Ibid.

¹³⁹A paper obtained from the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency, 1 March 2005.

¹⁴⁰ Inday Espina-Varona, "Brothers in Arms", *Philippine Graphics*, Vol. 15, No. 38 (28 February 2005), p. 24.

¹⁴¹Ibid.

¹⁴²Ibid., p. 25.

each other to carry out terrorist activities.¹⁴³ But Fianza contends that though they help each other, they also have their own share of infightings and turf wars.

ASG Mass Base

One important strength of the ASG, despite its small number, is its superb ability to solicit local support. The ASG resorted to kidnapping activities not merely for purposes of committing criminal acts but to use part of its huge ransom money to build-up its manpower and to lure local communities to provide mass support to the organization. When kidnapping activities of the ASG became a lucrative venture, it succeeded in offering monetary compensation to local population to become core members of its mass base support system.¹⁴⁴ Some local government leaders even coddle some ASG members in exchange for monetary payment.¹⁴⁵ It has been reported that local police and military even provide support to the ASG in return for a cut of its loot and ransom money the group gets.¹⁴⁶

Confronting the ASG Threat: Philippine Anti-Terrorism Strategy and Its Limits

To address the threats of terrorism in the Philippines, the Philippine government formed the Inter-Agency Task Force Against International Terrorism on 24 September 2001 under the direct supervision of the Office of the President.¹⁴⁷ This Inter-Agency Task Force aimed to coordinate intelligence operations and to facilitate the identification and neutralization of suspected terrorist cells in the Philippines. To freeze the financial assets of international terrorists, the Philippine Congress decisively passed the Anti-Money Laundering Act on 29 September 2001.

¹⁴³Interview with General Florencio D. Fianza of the Office of the Special Envoy on Transnational Crime on 1 April 2005.

¹⁴⁴Department of National Defense, "Info Kit on the Abu Sayyaf Group" (Submitted to the Committee on National Defense and Security of the Philippine Senate on 24 August 2001).

¹⁴⁵See International Peace Mission, *Basilan: The Next Afghanistan?* (Report of the International Peace Mission to Basilan, Philippines 23-27 March 2002), p. 11. Also at <http://www.bwf.org/pamayanan/peacemission.html> <accessed on 30 August 2004>.

¹⁴⁶Madge Kho, "Fighting the Abu Sayyaf: A Pretext for U.S. Intervention In the Philippines" at <http://www.philippineupdate.com/madge.htm> <accessed on 12 May 2005>.

¹⁴⁷ Rommel C. Banlaoi, *War on Terrorism in Southeast Asia* (Manila: Rex Book Store International, 2004).

President Arroyo also announced on 12 October 2001 its 14-pillar approach to combat terrorism. (See Box 1)

Box 1. 14 Pillars to Combat Terrorism in the Philippines

- Designates Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security as the lead anti-terrorism body;
- Seeks to undertake consolidate intelligence projects;
- Calls on the Armed Forces and the Philippine National Police to address terrorist violence;
- Holds accountable all public and private organizations abetting terrorism;
- Seeks regional consensus. and cooperation especially with Indonesia and Malaysia in the war against terrorism;
- Anticipates legal issues and concerns;
- Pursues Christian-Muslim dialog and seeks to promote ecumenism;
- Calls for greater vigilance and concrete measures against all possible terrorist supplies, materials and finances;
- Mobilizes disaster coordination efforts in the event of catastrophic attack;
- Secures critical infrastructure;
- Protects overseas workers and seeks their immediate transfer if needed;
- Seeks the integration of the global terrorist threat in the AFP/PNP modernization program;
- Asks for media responsibility; and,
- Seeks to address the socioeconomic and political roots of “perceived fanaticism and irrational violence.

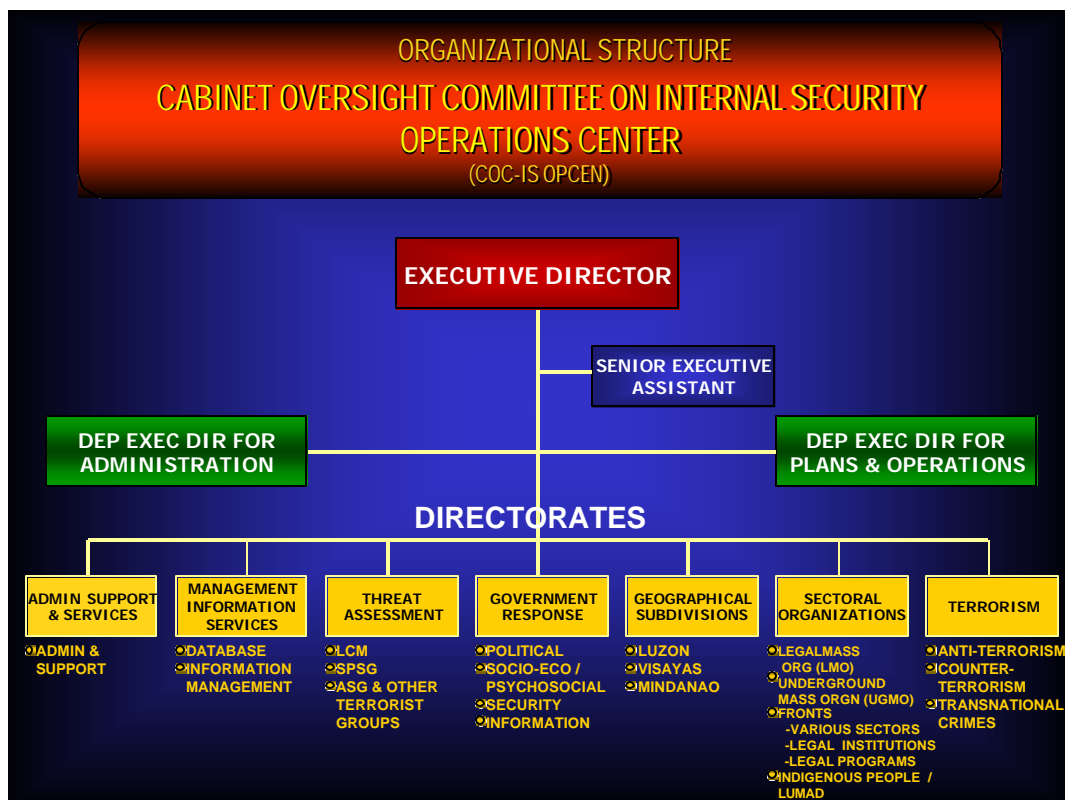
Through the Operation Center of the Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security (COCIS)¹⁴⁸ the Philippine government formulated the National Plan to Address Terrorism and its Consequences as Annex K to the National Internal Security Plan (NISP). The Philippine government approved the NISP on 26 November 2001 through Memorandum Order 44. The COCIS was tasked to implement the national anti-terrorism plan by involving all national government agencies, local government units (LGUs), and the private sectors in the campaign.¹⁴⁹ (See Figure 3)

¹⁴⁸The Philippine government formed the Cabinet Oversight Committee on International Security on 19 June 2001 through Executive Order No. 21. It is chaired by the Executive Security with the Secretary of National Defense as Vice-Chair.

¹⁴⁹This section is largely based on Rommel C. Banlaoi, “Local Government Response Against Terrorist Threat in the Philippines: Issues and Prospects” (Paper prepared for presentation at the 12th International Conference of the East and Southeast Asia Network for Highly Performing Local Governments organized by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Local Government Development Foundation, Rendezvous Hotel, Singapore on 2-3 December 2004).

But the Philippine government abolished the COCIS in October 2004. The task of managing and implementing the anti-terrorism plan was then transferred to the ATTF, which was originally formed on 24 March 2004 under the COCIS. The ATTF is now operating under the Office of the President with the Executive Secretary as the Chair. The ATTF is now based in Malacanang Palace in Manila. The ATTF aims to establish an extensive anti-terrorism information system and accelerate intelligence fusion among all intelligence units in the Philippines in the identification of terrorism personalities, cells, groups, and organizations in various LGUs. (See Figure 4) It also aims to conduct an extensive information drive at both national and local levels “to prepare the public and all stakeholders to get involved in the national anti-terrorism campaign.”¹⁵⁰

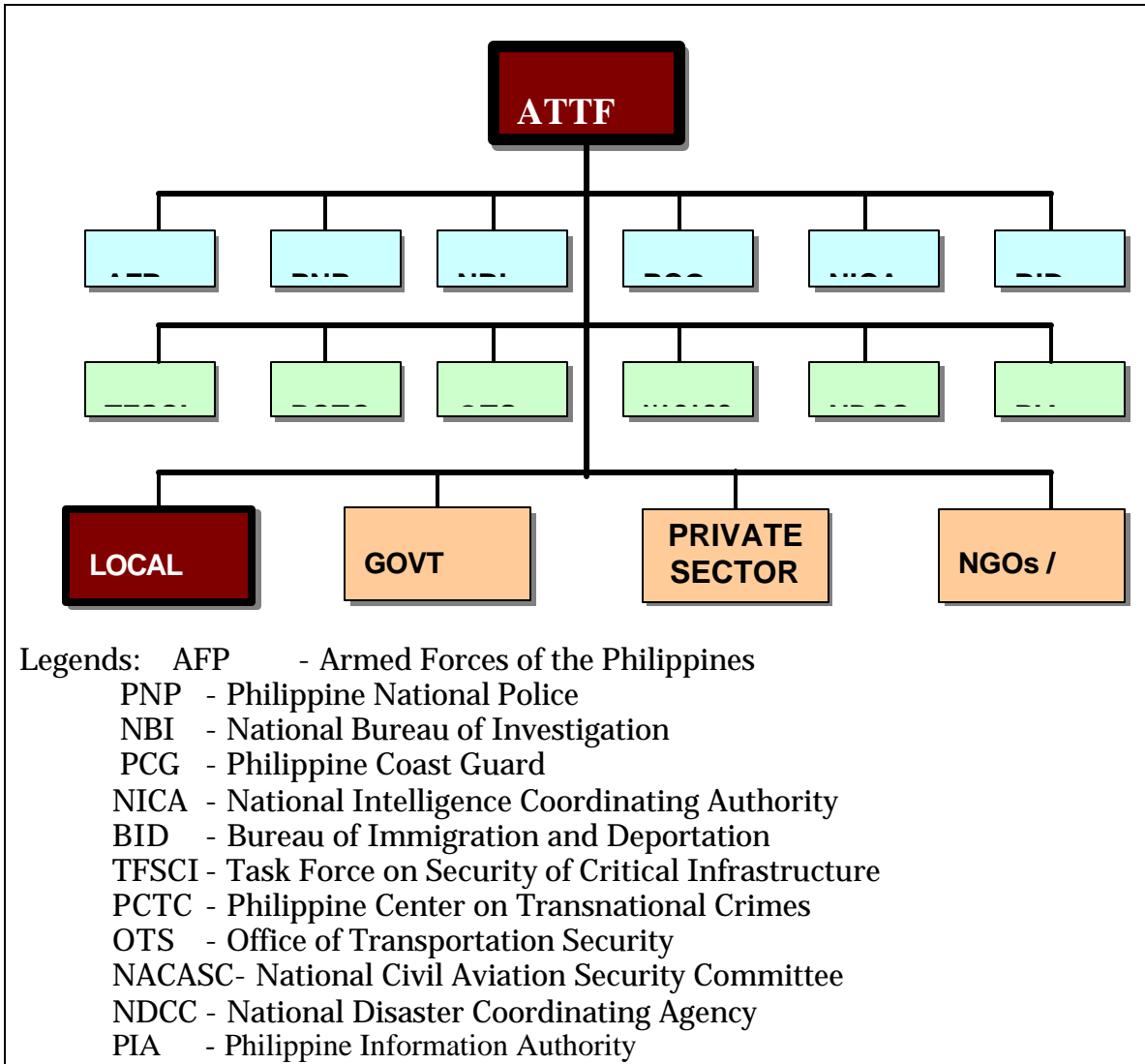
Figure 3. Organizational Structure of the now Defunct Cabinet Oversight Committee On Internal Security



Source: Operation Center, Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security, July 2004

¹⁵⁰Inter-Agency Anti-Terrorism Task Force, “Government Response to Terrorism” (undated).

Figure 4. Organizational Structure of the Anti-Terrorism Task Force



Source: Anti-Terrorism Task Force Accomplishment Report, June 2004

With the creation of ATTF, the Philippine government adopts the 16-point counter-terrorism program to operationalize the 14-point anti-terrorism policy of the national government. (See Box 2)

Box 2. 16-Point Counter-Terrorism Program

- Supervision and implementation of policies and actions of the government against terrorism
- Intelligence coordination
- Internal focus against terrorism
- Accountability and private corporations and personalities
- Synchronizing internal efforts with global outlook
- Legal measures
- Promotion of Christian and Muslim solidarity
- Vigilance against the movement of terrorist and their supporters, equipment, weapons, and funds
- Contingency plans
- Comprehensive security plans for critical infrastructures
- Support for overseas Filipino workers
- Modernization of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police
- Media Support
- Political, social, and economic measures
- Ensuring the accountability of local and national government in cleaning the government of terrorist and criminal coddlers
- Strengthening the peace process

Source: Anti-Terrorism Task Force Accomplishment Report, June 2004.

Through its unrelenting efforts to combat terrorism in the Philippines, the Philippine government has reduced the strength of the ASG. As stated earlier, ASG strength has been reduced to not more than 380 combatants, which can be regarded as a great achievement of the Philippine government in the global fight against terrorism.

But the real success of anti-terrorism campaign in the Philippines depends heavily on strength of its intelligence system. Sadly, Philippine government still has a weak intelligence system being a relatively young republic. Although the Philippine government issued Administrative Order No. 68 on 8 April 2003 to strengthen the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (NICA), the government's intelligence capability remains weak. Former Armed Forces Chief-of-Staff Gen. Narciso Abaya candidly acknowledged that the non-sharing of intelligence information by military spy units in the Philippines is hampering the

government's antiterrorism campaign.¹⁵¹ Abaya said that a culture exists among intelligence units in the Philippines to withhold vital intelligence information from other groups and stressed that "I think we have to improve on our intelligence. The trend now is not the need to know but the need to share. That is the emerging trend among intelligence units all over the world."¹⁵² He further lamented that "Sometimes, our intelligence units zealously keep to themselves intelligence information which, if fused with the information of other intelligence units, would give a more comprehensive picture of the enemy."¹⁵³ This problem in Philippine intelligence system still persists but measures have been undertaken to surmount the problem.

Another nagging concern in the Philippines' anti-terrorism campaign is the serious allegation that the military and provincial government are coddling some ASG members. Based on the report of the International Peace Mission that went to Basilan on 23-27 March 2002, "there are consistent credible reports that the military and the provincial government are coddling the Abu Sayyaf."¹⁵⁴ Thus, the Peace Mission finds that a military solution to the ASG threat "will not work to solve the problem."¹⁵⁵ As early as 1994, in fact, there were allegations that some police and fake police officers were involved in the ASG attempt to smuggle firearms in Zamboanga City from Manila and Iloilo on board the vessel M/V Princess of the Pacific. But the police and the military authorities have stressed that connivance with ASG is not being tolerated and contend that those found guilty of this misdemeanor will be punished accordingly.

The Philippine military has, in fact, recognized that military solution alone cannot defeat the ASG. In the After Action Report of the ASG Combat Research and Study Group of the Training and Doctrine Command of the Philippine Army submitted on 19 September 2001 to the Commanding General of the Philippine Army, it states that:

The ASG problem cannot be solved through military solution alone. It should be approached by complementary and mutually reinforcing efforts by the civil agencies and the military. The government must concretely pursue social, economic and political

¹⁵¹Karl B. Kaufman, "Weak' Intel Blamed On Overzealous Spy Units", *The Manila Times* (26 March 2004) at http://www.manilatimes.net/national/2004/mar/26/yehey/top_stories/20040326top6.html <accessed on 30 August 2004>.

¹⁵²Ibid.

¹⁵³Ibid.

¹⁵⁴For a complete copy of the report, see *Basilan: The Next Afghanistan?* (Report of the International Peace Mission to Basilan, Philippines 23-27 March 2002) at <http://www.bwf.org/pamayanan/peacemission.html> <accessed on 30 August 2004>.

¹⁵⁵Ibid.

reforms aimed at addressing the root causes of the problem. Effective measures must also be undertaken to ensure the welfare and protection of civilians and reducing the impact of the armed conflict on them. These should necessarily include intensified delivery of basic services to conflict areas.¹⁵⁶

To surmount the threats posed by ASG and other threats to Philippine internal security, the Philippine government established, as stated earlier, the COCIS. The COCIS adopts the “Strategy of Holistic Approach” (SHA) as the grand strategy to overcome insurgency problems in the Philippines, including the ASG. The SHA consists of four major components:

- Political/Legal/Diplomatic
- Socio-Economic/Psychosocial
- Peace and order/Security, and
- Information.¹⁵⁷

The political/legal/diplomatic component of the SHA pushes for “political reforms and institutional development to strengthen democratic institutions and empower the citizenry to pursue personal and community growth.” This component aims to develop and propagate Philippine democracy to “confront the communist ideology” and the Islamic fundamentalist ideology. The cornerstone of this particular component is the peace process based on the “Six Paths to Peace” formula:

- Pursuit of social, economic and political reforms;
- Consensus-building and empowerment for peace;
- Peaceful, negotiated settlement with the different rebel groups;
- Programs for reconciliation, reintegration, and rehabilitation;
- Conflict management and protection of civilians caught in armed conflict; and,
- Building and nurturing a climate conducive to peace.

The socio-economic/psychosocial component of the SHA, on the other hand, aims to alleviate poverty in the country through the acceleration of development programs of the Philippine government. This component also aims to develop

¹⁵⁶ASG Combat Research and Study Group, “After Action Report” (Submitted to the Commanding General of the Philippine Army on 19 September 2001 by the Training and Doctrine Command of the Philippine Army).

¹⁵⁷Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security, *National Internal Security Plan (NISP)*, Version 3. RESTRICTED document. Quotations in this particular section come from this document, unless otherwise stated.

and strengthen “a spirit of nationhood among the people, which include developing national character/identity without losing cultural integrity.”

The peace and order/security component aims “to protect the people from the insurgents and provide a secure environment for national development.” More importantly, this component has the specific goal of denying the insurgents “access to their most important resource – popular support.”

Finally, the information component is the integrating component in the SHA. It “refers to the overall effort to advocate peace, promote public confidence in government and support government efforts to overcome insurgency through tri-media and interpersonal approaches.”

The operational aspect of the SHA is the “Left Hand” and “Right Hand” approaches. In an interview, President Arroyo explains these approaches in the following words:

How do we address this problem (of) insurgency? Through the right-hand and left-hand approach. (The) right hand is the full force of the law and the left hand is the hand of reconciliation and the hand of giving support to our poorest brothers so that they won't be encouraged to join the rebels.¹⁵⁸

While the SHA is meant to primarily combat communist insurgency, it is also being applied to address terrorist threats.¹⁵⁹ But as stated earlier, the Philippine government abolished COCIS in October 2004. To replace the COCIS in the implementation of SHA in counter-terrorism, the Philippine government transferred the responsibilities to the ATTF. The ATTF is presently the main government body tasked to formulate strategies, policies, plans and measures necessary to prevent and suppress acts of terrorism in the Philippines, particularly those perpetuated by the ASG. But the ATTF, to date, is still undergoing organizational restructuring.

With the abolition of the COCIS, the Philippine government also replaced the SHA with the strategy of “whole-of-government” (WOG) approach against terrorism and insurgency. Like the SHA, the WOG aims to address the root causes of security challenges facing the Philippine state. But the WOG pays greater attention to non-military means to defeat terrorism, which includes job creation in the rural areas, provisions of social services and infrastructure to

¹⁵⁸Marichu Villanueva, “Palace Announces RP-CPP Peace Talks Resume in Oslo February 10-13”, *The Philippine Star* (6 February 2004) at <http://www.newsflash.org/2003/05/hl/hl019815.htm> <accessed on 17 August 2004>.

¹⁵⁹Department of National Defense “Talking Points on Abu Sayyaf Group” (17 November 2003). This document explains the use of SHA in countering the ASG.

communities, strengthening good governance at the national and local levels and establishment of an effective local judiciary system.¹⁶⁰

To date, there has been no study assessing the practical effectiveness of WOG. But based on documents, the WOG contains a lot of flamboyant sound bytes that extol the value of non-military approaches to address the problem of terrorism posed by the ASG and other similar groups.

Conclusion

Despite its small number, the ASG remains as a threat to Philippine national security. Though the ASG has lost some of its important leaders, it has managed to wage terrorist attacks because of its ability to forge alliances with other terrorist organizations operating in the Philippines and to solicit mass support. Its new tactics of using front organizations also make the ASG a very resilient terrorist organization in the Philippines.

The Philippine government has waged serious campaigns to address the problem of terrorism in the country. It has made remarkable achievements in neutralizing ASG members and leaders.

But the root of Muslim rebellion, which encourages some Muslim Filipinos to resort to terrorism, has not been satisfactorily addressed by the Philippine government. Though the Philippine government has implemented the strategy of holistic approach to address the problem of Muslim rebellion, the strategy has not been implemented as planned due to budgetary constraints, allegations of corruption in the government, and persistence of violence in the countryside. Even the strategy of “whole-of-government” approach also needs to be implemented on the ground to really attack the root causes of terrorism and insurgency in the Philippines.

¹⁶⁰Department of National Defense, *Defense Planning Guidance*, 2008-2013 (Quezon City: Department of National Defense, November 2006), p. 1.

CHAPTER 3

Bandit or Terrorist*

Introduction

Since the Philippine government joined the global war on terrorism, it has been in hot pursuit of the ASG. Though government and media sources continue to describe the ASG as a mere bandit group because of many kidnap-for-ransom activities (KRAs) it perpetrated in the past, the series of bombings that ASG carried out in 2004 and 2005 were hallmarks of terrorism rather than banditry. Is the ASG mutating from a mere bandit group to a genuine terrorist organization? Does the ASG have an ideology? How strong and capable the ASG is an organization?

Ideological Inclination

The ASG's original ideology was strongly anchored on Janjalani's religious and political thoughts. ASG followers did not only recognize Janjalani as their leader but also their ideological beacon.¹⁶¹ As an ideologue, Janjalani was well-informed by the historical, religious, economic, political and social conditions in which Muslims in the Philippines find themselves.

At the early stage of world Islamic resurgence in the late 1970s and early 1980s,¹⁶² Janjalani traveled to different Muslim countries where received training and education in radical Islamic thoughts. He received a very good Islamic education in Saudi Arabia in 1981 and went to Ummu I-Qura in Mecca where he studied Islamic jurisprudence for almost three years. There, Janjalani was attracted deeply to the concept of *jihad*. Armed with radical Islamic ideology, Janjalani returned to his homeland in Basilan in 1984 to preach initially in various mosques before formally organizing the ASG. In 1988 Janjalani went to Peshawar, Pakistan, where he conscientiously studied the Islamic revolution in Iran. It was also in Peshawar that he reportedly met and befriended Osama bin Laden, who helped him organize the ASG.

*Revised version of a paper entitled "The Abu Sayyaf Group: From Mere Banditry to Genuine Terrorism" originally published in Dalijit Singh and Lorraine Salazar (eds), *Southeast Asian Affairs 2006* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2006), pp. 247-262. The original version of this paper was written with the generous support of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS).

¹⁶¹ Nathan G. Quimpo, "Dealing with the MILF and Abu Sayyaf: Who's Afraid of an Islamic State?", *Public Policy*, Vol. III, No. 4 (October/December 1999), p. 50.

¹⁶²For a detailed discussion on the rise of Muslim radicalism in the Philippines, see Rommel C. Banlaoi, "Radical Muslim Terrorism in the Philippines" in Andrew Tan, ed., *Handbook on Terrorism and Insurgency in Southeast Asia* (London: Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc., 2006).

When Janjalani formed the ASG, his original intention was to create a group of Muslim Mujahideen committed to *Jihad Fi-Sabil-lillah*, a “struggle in the cause of Allah” or “fighting and dying for the cause of Islam”. Before Janjalani died in December 1998, he delivered eight radical ideological discourses called *Khutbahs*, which may be considered as primary sources of Janjalani’s radical Islamic thoughts. These discourses explained Janjalani’s Quranic perspective of *Jihad Fi-Sabil-lillah*, which he lamented was misinterpreted by many Muslims. He even denounced the *ulama* (Muslim scholars) for their little knowledge of the Quran and lamented that most Muslims in the Philippines calling themselves as *Moros* were not really practicing the true meaning of Islam compared with their counterparts in West Asia. These eight discourses also revealed Janjalani’s deep grasp of Wahabi Islam, which considered other Muslims heretical. The Islamic theology of Wahabism greatly informed Janjalani’s radical ideology.

In his analysis of Philippine society, it is clear that Janjalani was aware of the injustices committed against Muslim communities. Thus, he purportedly founded the ASG to vigorously seek *kaadilan* or justice for Muslims through *jihad*. For Janjalani, *jihad* is the highest form of struggle for justice or cause. He classified *jihad* into two: *jihad al-akbar* (greater Jihad) and *jihad al-asgar* (lesser jihad), but did not elaborate. He only argued that they “are the same in Divine assessment but are merely differentiated in human terms and conditions.”¹⁶³ He contended that the “surest guarantee of justice and prosperity for Muslims” is the establishment of a purely Islamic state that can only be achieved through *jihad*. Janjalani even urged Muslims in the Philippines to pursue their *jihad* to the highest level in order to fulfill their paramount duty of martyrdom for the cause of Allah.

Janjalani’s appeal for martyrdom also means endorsement of suicide terrorism. Though there has been no recorded incident of suicide terrorism in the country at the time, Janjalani was aware of the value of suicide terrorism as a favored tactic of radical Muslims pursuing *jihad*. Some years later, the bombing of Superferry 14 on 28 February 2004 was originally planned by the ASG as a suicide mission.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³Tan, *Internationalization of the Bangsamoro Struggle*., p. 98.

¹⁶⁴Because of continuing radicalization of Muslim communities in the Philippines, the ASG may employ suicide terrorism in the near future. Dulmatin and Umar Patek, key suspects in 2002 Bali bombings that killed more than 200 people, have reportedly established their base in the Philippines to prepare ASG members in future suicide missions. In his speech to the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines in Manila on 11 August 2005, National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales warned that up to ten Indonesian militants, including Dulmatin and Umar Patek, were on the loose in the Philippines and plotting suicide attacks. Se Joel Francisco Guinto, “10 Indonesian suicide bombers hunted in RP”, *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (11 August 2005).

One of Janjalani's *Khutbahs* revealed his deep resentment against Christian missionaries in Mindanao, particularly those severely maligning Islam. Janjalani said that the aggressive preaching of Christian missionaries in Mindanao gravely insulted Islam and severely provoked Muslims to respond violently. The bombing of *M/V Doulos* in August 1991 was ASG's retaliation against Christian missionaries who used derogatory words against Islam and called Allah a false God.

ASG Strength and Capabilities

The ASG started with no more than 1,000 members in 1991 and rose to almost 1,300 in 1998. According to the Philippines' Anti-Terrorism Task Force (ATTF), ASG strength as of the last quarter of 2005 was no more than 350 members, very close to its figure of 380 during the second quarter of 2005 but far from its August 2005 figure of 250. An undersecretary of the DND estimated the current strength of the ASG to be around 500, close to the military intelligence figure of 409. The Armed Forces of the Philippines reported that the ASG had a strength of 380 as of the Second Quarter of 2008.

Strictly speaking, there is no certainty on the current strength of ASG because its members overlap with some members of the MILF and the Misuari Break Away Group (MBG) of the MNLF. Other ASG members are even associated with the Rajah Solaiman Movement (RSM), a group of Muslim converts in the Philippines believed to be funded by the ASG.

While its exact strength is unclear, what is certain is that the ASG remains a very small but very lethal armed group of Muslims in the Philippine. Despite its small number, the ASG draws its strength from huge local support. Most ASG members are relatives, friends, classmates and neighbors of local folks. ASG members even buy their foodstuffs from local stores and get "early warning signals" from local communities during military offensives. The Philippine military said that religious and political propaganda, financial compensation and even coercion are the ASG's primary means of gaining local support in the form of manpower, intelligence and sometime logistics.¹⁶⁵

Local support enhances the capability of the ASG. The AFP reported that the ASG had the capability to stage "high impact terrorist attacks against civilian targets not only in Basilan and Sulu but also in other parts of the country." When ASG members fight, they "can pin-down up to a company size unit" and during military engagements, they are capable of "reinforcing beleaguered members in a short period of time" particularly in areas "near a Muslim village of an MNLF and MILF camps". There are even some "enterprising Muslims who join the fight purposely to acquire firearms and ammunitions left by government casualties."

¹⁶⁵ Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, *Knowing the Terrorists: The Abu Sayyaf Study*, p. 13.

As of the last quarter of 2005, military intelligence estimated around 480 weapons believed to be in ASG's possession. In previous military encounters, the military seized night vision devices, thermal imager, sniper's scope, various types of commercial radios, satellite and cellular phones and high speed sea crafts from the ASG.

Military intelligence assessment also indicates that some ASG members have enhanced their bomb making capabilities as a result of joint training with JI members operating or hiding in the Philippines. Before his death in October 2003, Roman Al-Ghozi, known to be the JI's "the bomb maker", admitted during interrogation report that he shared his bomb-making expertise with ASG members. Rohmat Abdurrohman, (a.k.a. Zaki), known as the ASG's "the bomb trainer", confessed that he trained ASG members in bomb making, particularly the use of mobile phone as detonating device and the use of toothpaste tube as bomb paraphernalia.

Dulmatin and Umar Patek, wanted for the 2002 Bali bombing, reportedly trained some ASG members in bomb attacks. As stated earlier, Dulmatin and Umar Patek also prepared ASG members for future suicide missions. National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales was quoted as saying, "What we are looking for now is suicide terrorists, not (only) suicide bombers."¹⁶⁶

The ASG has also developed capability to use car bombs. Khadaffy Janjalani boasted that he allowed training in 2004 of a long line of bombers who could hit targets in major cities in the Philippines. The ASG reportedly formed an Urban Squad in 2005 to stage bombing operations in the cities. The ASG has also developed the ability to wage maritime terrorist attacks. Almost all ASG members have deep familiarity of the maritime domain having belonged to a family of fisher folks with a long seafaring tradition.¹⁶⁷

The Superferry 14 bombing in February 2004 was a clear demonstration of ASG's maritime terrorist capability. The group also conducted some maritime training activities in Sulu and Tawi-Tawi in June 2005. In July 2005, ASG and JI fighters took underwater training in Sandakan, Malaysia to attack maritime targets such as ports and commercial vessels. In August 2005, military intelligence disclosed that ASG leaders and some foreign terrorists met in Patikul, Sulu to plan an attack of some beaches in Palawan. This prompted the Philippine government to intensify the security of major ports and beaches in the country preventing any planned maritime terrorist attacks to happen.

¹⁶⁶Michael Punongbayan, "DOJ to Expose Terrorists' Financiers, Media Handlers", *The Philippine Star*, 7 November 2005.

¹⁶⁷For more discussions on the maritime terrorist capability of the ASG, see Rommel C. Banlaoi, "Maritime Terrorism in Southeast Asia: The Abu Sayyaf Threat", *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 58, No. 4 (Autumn 2005), pp. 63-80. Also see Rommel C. Banlaoi, "The Abu Sayyaf Group: Threat of Maritime Piracy and Terrorism" in Peter Lehr (ed), *Violence at Sea: Piracy at the Age of Terrorism* (London: Routledge, forthcoming 2006).

Because of its small size, the executive department of the Philippine government has belittled the capability of the ASG by describing the group as a spent force. This strongly resents the ASG leadership. In his official statement, ASG spokesperson Jainal Sali, (a.k.a. Abu Sulaiman) argued that government officials are “belittling us, but they are exaggerating the problem of terrorism in the country.”¹⁶⁸ In a telephone interview pertaining to the Superferry 14 bombing, Abu Sulaiman also taunted the Philippine government by saying, “Still doubtful about our capabilities? Good. Just wait and see. We will bring the war that you impose on us to your lands and seas, homes and streets. We will multiply the pain and suffering that you have inflicted on our people.”¹⁶⁹

Though the membership of the ASG continues to be small at present, it is venturing into vigorous recruitment activities to recover from the lost of its members who were killed, neutralized and arrested after 9/11. It has various techniques to recruit members. Aside from religious propaganda and agitation, the ASG motivates recruits through financial reward. It also pays local recruits to serve as second and third security layer of their makeshift camps. Some members start their recruitment process by initially befriending potential recruits through ball games or pot (marijuana) sessions.

The ASG also utilizes deception to recruit members. ASG leaders allow young Muslims to bring their firearms and take pictures of them and then use the pictures to blackmail them of joining the group.¹⁷⁰ The ASG also uses marriages to expand its membership. At present, the ASG is paying attention to younger and more idealistic MILF members who regard the on-going peace process with the Philippine government as a sham. ASG leaders think that if the MILF makes peace with the government, they will inherit firebrands in the Southern Philippines. MILF leader Al-Haj Murad Ebrahim warned that a great deal is needed quickly “before younger Muslims in the region succumb to the greater radicalism of the Abu Sayyaf.”¹⁷¹

Reviving Radical Islamism , Returning to Terrorism

From mere banditry, Khadaffy Janjalani attempted to reinvigorate the ASG to be a “genuine” Islamic Movement, the *Al-Harakatul Islamiya*, that

¹⁶⁸Cited in Abuza, *Balik-Terrorism: The Return of the Abu Sayyaf*, p. 11.

¹⁶⁹Marco Garrido, “After Madrid, Manila?”, *Asia Times*, 24 April 2004, at <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/FD24Ae01.html> (accessed on 28 August 2004).

¹⁷⁰ Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, *Knowing the Terrorists: The Abu Sayyaf Study*, p. 41.

¹⁷¹Simon Elegant, “The Return of the Abu Sayyaf,” *Time Asia* (30 August 2004).

resorts to terrorism as a political weapon. Abuza is correct when he says that since the capture and subsequent death of Galib Andang in 2004, the ASG has not conducted KRAs. Instead, the ASG waged a series of high profile terrorist attacks, the most lethal of which, so far, was the blasting of the Superferry 14. The explosion of Superferry 14, which carried more than 899 passengers, resulted in the death of 116 persons and the wounding of 300 others.

On the eve of Valentines celebration in 2005, the ASG also masterminded three simultaneous bombings in Makati City, Davao City and General Santos City. The 2005 Valentines Day bombing resulted in the death of at least 10 persons and the wounding of 136 others. Abu Sulaiman said that the three bombings were ASG's Valentine's gift to President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and warned that "we will not stop until we get justice for the countless Muslim lives and properties that you people have destroyed." Shortly after the 2005 Valentine's Day terrorist attacks, detained ASG members at Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig City conducted a foiled jail break attempt in March 2005. The foiled breakout caused the death of 5 ASG members, including Galib Andang. In August 2005, the ASG waged another terror attack when it bomb the Dona Ramona ferry in Lamitan, Basilan. At least 30 people, including several children, were wounded during the ferry bombing. Two weeks before the bombing, the ASG staged small bombing attacks in Zamboanga City, Koronadal City and Cotabato City in Mindanao. All these bombing incidents in 2005 were hallmarks of terrorism rather than mere banditry. These bombings have indicated that the ASG has already transformed itself from a mere bandit group to a genuine terrorist organization. Khadaffy Janjalani is reported to have been reactivating the Islamic Executive Council (IEC) of the ASG to pursue its goal of establishing a Islamic state in Mindanao. Though Abuza doubts the existence of the IEC, there are indications that Khadaffy is reactivating the council to advance the original Islamist agenda of *Al-Harakatul Al-Islamiya*.¹⁷²

Conclusion

From mere banditry, the ASG has rapidly mutated into a post-modern terrorist group that can operate militarily, politically, and ideologically.¹⁷³ It is reorganizing itself to pursue its radical Islamist agenda. It has enhanced its capability to wage traditional bombing activities, and developed new capabilities to conduct maritime terrorist attacks and suicide terrorist missions. Only time will tell when the ASG will use these new capabilities.

¹⁷²Angel M. Rabasa, "Southeast Asia: Moderate Tradition and Radical Challenge" in Angel Rabasa, et. al, *The Muslim World After 9/11* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2004), p. 402.

¹⁷³The case of ASG is not an isolated case. Terrorist groups elsewhere are also undergoing profound changes. See Rohan Gunaratna, ed., *The Changing Face of Terrorism* (Singapore: Eastern University Press, 2004).

Because of the virulence of the threat posed by the ASG, the AFP is intensifying its military operations against the group while being fully aware that the problem of terrorism cannot be soled by military means alone. There is no doubt that the problem of terrorism needs to be tackled through a comprehensive long-term approach that takes cognizant of the social, religious, ideological, political and economic contexts in which ASG members operate.

Unless the government recognizes the contexts that give rise to terrorism, the threat will continue to menace not only Philippine national security but also regional security.

CHAPTER 4

Threat of Maritime Piracy and Terrorism*

Introduction

This chapter aims to describe the capability of the ASG to conduct piracy and to wage maritime terrorism. It endeavors to analyze the fine line between piracy and terrorism, using the ASG as an example. Specifically, this chapter attempts to address the dual role that ASG members play as both pirates and terrorists in Philippine waters, the use of maritime piracy to fund terrorist operations, and the potential for ASG to transform the knowledge it has gained through piracy into a tool of terrorism.

Nexus Between Piracy and Terrorism

In reaction to the growing number of attacks on ships and tankers passing through the sea lanes of Southeast Asia, particularly in the congested Straits of Malacca, Singaporean Minister for Home Affairs Wong Kan Seng once opined that pirates roaming the waters of the region should be declared terrorists.¹⁷⁴ Minister Wong argued, “we do not know whether it’s pirates or terrorists who occupy the ship so we have to treat them all alike”.¹⁷⁵ But describing the nexus of piracy and terrorism is conceptually problematic because many experts and policy makers are unsure at which point piracy becomes terrorism.

The distinction between piracy and terrorism¹⁷⁶ is blurred because “pirates collude with terrorists, terrorists adopt pirate tactics and policymakers eager for public support start labeling every crime as maritime terrorism.”¹⁷⁷ Terrorists can also use piracy as a cover for maritime terrorist attacks.

*Revised and updated version of a paper entitled “The Abu Sayyaf Group: Threat of Maritime Piracy and Terrorism” originally published in Peter Lehr (ed), *Violence at Sea. Piracy in the Age of Global Terrorism* (New York: Routledge 2007), pp. 121-138. This paper was also presented to the international conference, “Terrorism in Southeast Asia: The Threat and Response” sponsored by the US Department of State Counterterrorism Office and the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS) held at Traders Hotel, Singapore on 12-13 April 2006.

¹⁷⁴Graham Gerald Ong, “Southeast Asian Pirates Bear the Marks of Terrorists”, *Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Viewpoints* (1 January 2004), p. 1 at <http://www.iseas.edu.sg/viewpoint/ggojan04.pdf>. Also see Agence France Presse “Piracy and Equals Terrorism in Troubled Waters: Minister” (21 December 2003) at <http://www.singapore-window.org/sw03/031221af.htm> <accessed on 26 April 2005>.

¹⁷⁵Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁷⁶This section is largely based in Rommel C. Banlaoi, “Maritime Security Outlook for Southeast Asia” in Joshua Ho and Catherine Zara Raymond (eds), *The Best of Times, The Worst of Times: Maritime Security in the Asia-Pacific* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2005).

¹⁷⁷Rubert Herbert-Burns and Lauren Zucker, “Malevolent Tide: Fusion and Overlaps in Piracy and Maritime Terrorism” (Washington DC: Maritime Intelligence Group, 30 July 2004), p. 1.

Motives of pirate and terrorist are arguably different from a conventional perspective. Pirates pursue economic gains while terrorists advance political objectives.¹⁷⁸ But it is said that terrorists have developed some capabilities to either adopt pirates' tactics or "piggyback" on pirates' raid.¹⁷⁹ It is also viewed that maritime terrorists, rather than simply stealing, could either blow up the ship or use it to ram into another vessel or a port facility.¹⁸⁰ Terrorist groups even regard seaports and international cruise liners as very attractive terrorist targets because they reside in the nexus of terrorist intent, capability and opportunity.¹⁸¹ Thus, non-traditional security studies see the fine line between piracy and terrorism.

There is no doubt that maritime piracy is becoming a preferred method of funding for some terrorist groups with strong maritime traditions. This makes the threat of maritime piracy and terrorism overlapping, particularly in the tactics of ship seizures and hijackings. The ASG is among the terrorist groups in Southeast Asia that has demonstrated its capability to use piracy both as a camouflage to wage maritime terrorist attacks and as a means to fund terrorist ventures.

The ASG and the Threat of Piracy and Maritime Terrorism

Piracy and maritime terrorism are inherent in the capability of ASG. Most ASG members and followers belong to Muslim families and communities of fishermen with a century-old seafaring tradition. Because ASG members live close to the waters of Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, they have gained tremendous familiarity of the maritime environment. In fact, most Muslim Filipinos living in coastal communities are experienced divers. ASG members' deep knowledge of the maritime domain also gives them ample capability to conduct piracy and wage maritime terrorist attacks.¹⁸²

Because of its embedded seaborne abilities, ASG's first terrorist attack was, in fact, maritime in nature. As mentioned previously, on 24 August 1991 the

¹⁷⁸Tamara Renee Shie, "Ports in a Storm? The Nexus Between Counterterrorism, Counterproliferation, and Maritime Security in Southeast Asia", *Issues and Insights*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (Pacific Forum CSIS, July 2004), p. 13.

¹⁷⁹Patrick Goodenough, "Maritime Security Takes Center Stage in SE Asia", *CNSNews.COM* (29 June 2004) at <http://www.cnsnews.com/> <Accessed 27 July 2004>.

¹⁸⁰Ibid.

¹⁸¹Tanner Campbell and Rohan Gunaratna, "Maritime Terrorism, Piracy and Crime" in Rohan Gunaratna, ed., *Terrorism in the Asia Pacific: Threat and Response* (Singapore: Eastern University Press, 2003), p. 72.

¹⁸²Rommel C. Banlaoi, "Maritime Terrorism in Southeast Asia: The Abu Sayyaf Threat", *US Naval War College Review*, Vol. 58, No. 4 (Autumn 2005), pp. 63-80.

ASG bombed the *M/V Doulous*, a Christian missionary ship and a European floating library docked at the Zamboanga port. At that time, the missionaries were holding their farewell program after conducting their evangelization project. Two foreign missionaries were killed and eight others were wounded in the blast.

The ASG waged this particular attack purely for political reasons. According to Abdurajak Janjalani, the bombing of *M/V Doulous* was a reaction of the group to the continuing military offensive against Muslims in the Southern Philippines. Janjalani even warned of more future violence to match if not surpass the violence inflicted by the Philippine military on the Muslim people. But the Philippine government was clueless of the maritime terrorist capability of the ASG during this time. Initially, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), the Philippine Navy and the PNP Maritime Group did not even regard this incident as an act of maritime terrorism. It was only recently when Philippine authorities realized that the ASG has developed capability to wage maritime terrorism.

Three years after the *M/V Doulous* attack, ASG Secretary General Abu Abdu Said issued a document in 1994 explaining in detail the objective of the group in bombing the ship. This document denies that the ASG was a creation of the military as alleged by various media reports. It explains that the ASG is an organization of radical Bangsa Moro people to seek *kaadilan* (justice) for Filipino Muslims through the establishment of separate Islamic state.¹⁸³ The document also states that the ASG had bombed the ship because foreign Christian missionaries aboard the ship “spoke against Islam” and even called Allah a “false God.” These missionaries also described Prophet Muhammad “a liar” and the Quran a “man-made book.”¹⁸⁴ According to University of the Philippines professor Samuel K. Tan, “The desire to avenge the insult against the sacred values of Islam started the motive force of the Abu Sayyaf.”¹⁸⁵

On August 1993, the ASG abducted Mr. Ricardo Tong, a prominent shipyard owner in Zamboanga City. The abduction of Mr. Tong demonstrated that during its infancy stage, the prime target of ASG was the maritime sector. The ASG was more familiar with the maritime rather than with the mountainous terrain. Mr. Tong was released only on 17 January 1995 after paying a ransom of 5 million Philippine pesos (roughly US\$ 93,000). The Philippine military considered the kidnapping of Mr. Tong a criminal act because of ransom payments. But it was also a political act because the ASG issued some political demands prior to the said abduction when it kidnapped in April 1993 Luis Biel, a five year old grandson of a bus company owner in Basilan. Among its demands was the removal of all Catholic symbols in Muslim communities and the banning of all foreign fishing vessels in the Sulu and Basilan seas. The ASG continued its

¹⁸³Tan, *Internationalization of the Bangsamoro Struggle*, p. 95.

¹⁸⁴Ibid., p. 94.

¹⁸⁵Ibid.

terrorist and criminal activities afterwards. From 1991 to 2000, the ASG engaged in a total of 378 terrorist activities resulting in the death of around 288 civilians. During the same period, the ASG also conducted a total of 640 kidnapping activities victimizing at least 2,076 individuals.¹⁸⁶

Because of the spate of kidnapping activities of the ASG, Philippine government officials and foreign analysts said that the group already degenerated into a criminal organization. But Khadafy Janjalani is presently attempting to revive the original Islamic agenda of the ASG. The ASG resorted to kidnapping activities not merely to commit crimes but to deliberately raise funds from ransom payments, which the organization used to buy arms and explosives for its terrorist activities. The Philippine law enforcement authorities recorded several arms shipments to Basilan and Sulu to supply ASG with explosives, mortar tubes, high-powered firearms and ammunition.¹⁸⁷ With huge ransom money in its possession, the ASG was able to purchase powerful weapons. ASG's stock of firearms increased at an annual average rate of 12 percent from 230 in 1994 to 390 in 2000. In 2003, the AFP reported that the ASG possessed at least 300 firearms, not to mention its illegal possession of explosives and communication equipments being used for urban terrorism.

The ASG also used part of its huge ransom money to build up its manpower and to lure local communities into providing mass support to the organization. The ASG succeeded in recruiting some MNLF and MILF leaders and followers to join the group. The most prominent of these leaders was Sakiruddin Bahjin or Commander Ullom who served as Deputy Secretary for Political Affairs of the MNLF Central Committee. MNLF Commanders Radullah Sahiron and Hadji Sulaiman Hadjirul also joined the ASG. With the huge amount of money in its possession as a result of a series of kidnap-for-ransom activities from 1991-2000, the ASG was able to offer monetary compensation to those parts of the local population who opted to become core members of its mass base support system.¹⁸⁸ As stated earlier, ASG membership rapidly expanded from less than 100 fighters in 1991 to around 1,269 fighters in December 2000. According to the Philippine Naval Intelligence Group, most of these fighters possessed a mastery of the maritime domain because they belonged to families of fishermen with a deeply rooted maritime tradition. Thus even before 11 September 2001, the ASG already developed the capability to conduct piracy and wage maritime terrorism based on this maritime tradition. In fact, "piracy" has even been embraced in the Southern Philippines as part of the local culture, a "normal" though "illegal" means of making money.

¹⁸⁶Department of National Defense, "Info Kit on the Abu Sayyaf Group" (Submitted to the Committee on National Defense and Security of the Philippine Senate on 24 August 2001).

¹⁸⁷Ibid.

¹⁸⁸Ibid.

ASG proved its maritime terrorist mettle when it waged another attack on 23 April 2000, kidnapping some 21 tourists, including ten foreigners, from a Malaysian beach resort in Sipadan. These foreigners included three Germans, two Japanese, two Finns, two South Africans and a Lebanese woman. The hostages were eventually taken to Jolo Island of Mindanao. This incident demonstrated ASG's capability to operate outside its usual maritime turf. It also displayed ASG's creativity in waging maritime terrorist attacks because some of its members disguised as diving instructor. ASG member Ruland Ullah, who is now a state witness to the Sipadan hostage crisis, successfully disguised as a diving instructor in this Malaysian resort prior to the said incident. An intelligence source revealed that Ullah trained some ASG members in scuba diving prior to the attack. In fact, the Philippine military recently confirmed that ASG members were trained in scuba diving to prepare for possible sea-borne terror attacks not only in the Philippines but also outside of the country.

Based on the interrogation of Gamal Baharan, a captured ASG member involved in the 2005 Valentines Day bombings of three major cities in the Philippines, some ASG members took scuba diving lessons in southwestern Palawan as part of a plot for an attack at sea. Baharan said that the training was in preparation for a JI bombing plot on unspecified targets outside the Philippines that require underwater operation.¹⁸⁹ Baharan also said that ASG Amir Khadafy Janjalani and ASG spokesman Abu Solaiman were on top of the maritime training.

The Sipadan hostage drama was a serious maritime terrorist attack with clear political objectives because ASG issued several demands. These demands included recognition of separate Islamic State in the Southern Philippines, an inquiry into the alleged human rights abuses against Filipino Muslims in Sabah and the protection of their ancestral fishing grounds in Mindanao. The Sipadan incident was also considered as an "act of piracy" because the ASG eventually demanded a \$2.6 million ransom for the hostages. The ASG even threatened the Philippine government to behead hostages if their demands were not met. Few months after, ASG members kidnapped another three Malaysian nationals in Pasir Beach Resort in Sabah on 30 September 2000 using a speedboat. This incident showed the fine-line between maritime piracy and terrorism.

The April 2000 Sipadan kidnapping incident was only resolved in 2001 when the ASG reportedly received a \$15 million ransom from the Philippine government. But the payment of ransom money was marred by controversies.¹⁹⁰ The September 2000 kidnapping, on the other hand, was resolved when the

¹⁸⁹See Associated Press, "Terrorist Train for Seaborne Attacks" at http://www.ldslivingonline.com/stories/30_ds_330924.php. <accessed on 27 April 2005>.

¹⁹⁰For an eyewitness account of the issue including the controversial payment of ransom, see Roberto N. Aventajado, *140 Days of Terror: In the Clutches of the Abu Sayyaf* (Pasig City: Anvil Publishing, Inc., 2004).

Philippine government troops in Talipao, Sulu successfully rescued the said three Malaysian national under the operation Trident.

But the maritime terrorist attacks of the ASG did not end there. On 22 May 2001, ASG guerrillas raided the luxurious Pearl Farm beach resort on Samal island of Mindanao. This incident resulted in the killing two resort workers and the wounding of three others. Though no hostages were taken during this attack, the Samal raid demonstrated anew the willingness of ASG to pursue maritime targets. On 28 May 2001, the ASG waged another maritime terror when it abducted three American citizens and seventeen Filipinos while spending a vacation at the Dos Palmas resort in Palawan.

Thus far, the Dos Palmas incident was the most notorious and the most sensationalized attack of the ASG. The incident received international coverage because several of the victims were murdered and beheaded, including an American citizen. The Philippine government declared a no-ransom policy and imposed a news black-out about the incident. But the Dos Palmas incident served as a wake-up call for the United States to get involved in anti-terrorism cooperation with the Philippines.¹⁹¹

Because two American hostages were involved, the US military sent US Army special forces to the Philippines to train AFP forces in counter-terrorism. The US Pacific Command even extended a US\$2 million assistance to the Philippines from its regional security assistance program as a result of the Dos Palmas incident. But when the lives of the two American hostages were put in danger, the US Army special operation forces changed the scope of their mission in the Philippines by facilitating the rescue of American citizens. During a rescue operation mounted by the AFP in 2002, two victims, including an American missionary, Martin Burnham, were killed. His wife, Gracia Burnham, the well-known survivor of the kidnapping incident, later wrote a memoir of her captivity in the hands of the ASG.¹⁹²

The Dos Palmas incident convinced the American government that the ASG was a deadly foreign terrorist organization. To increase the capability of the Philippine military to destroy the ASG, American and Filipino forces conducted the controversial joint military exercise called *Balikatan 02-1*.¹⁹³ *Balikatan*,

¹⁹¹Larry Niksch, "Abu Sayyaf: Target of Philippine-US Anti-Terrorism Cooperation", *CRS Report for Congress* (25 January 2002).

¹⁹²Gracia Burnham and Dean Merrill, *In the Presence of my Enemies* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2003).

¹⁹³Rommel C. Banlaoi, "The Role of Philippine-American Relations in the Global Campaign Against Terrorism: Implications for Regional Security, *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (August 2002), pp. 294-312 and Rommel C. Banlaoi, "Philippine-American Security Relations and the War on Terrorism in Southeast Asia" in *International Relations of the Asia Pacific After 9/11 and China's Accession to WTO*, Wang Xingsheng, ed. (Guangzhou: Zhongshan University Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003), pp. 80-95.

literally meaning “shouldering the load together”, is the largest joint and combined military exercise of Philippine and U.S. forces. The conduct of this exercise is based primarily on the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT), requiring the two countries to undergo this type of exercise to develop their capacity to resist aggression and to combat common adversaries.

The Philippines and American forces conducted the *Balikatan* 02-1 primarily in the island province of Basilan, the haven of the ASG. Other troops held their exercises in and near Zamboanga City, the headquarters of Philippine Southern Command. *Balikatan* 02-1 originally involved 3,800 Philippine military personnel and 660 US special forces and support personnel. The US augmented its force five months later with 340 US Navy and Marine construction engineers and 176 Navy and Army engineers to implement some civil engineering projects in support of the exercise.

Admiral Dennis Blair, former Commander-in-Chief of the US Pacific Command (CINCPAC), described *Balikatan* 02-1 as the “largest military operation against terrorism [outside of Afghanistan].”¹⁹⁴ However, at this occasion, the number of American troops was relatively small compared to past *Balikatan* exercises, which usually involved 1,500 to 3,000 American troops. The conduct of *Balikatan* 02-1 resulted in the neutralization of many ASG members, including the reported death of notorious ASG spokesman, Abu Sabaya and the eventual capture of Sulu-based ASG leader Galib Andang, also known as Commander Robot. Galib Andang met his untimely death on 16 March 2005 during the foiled jail break incident.

But the neutralization, capture and death of some ASG leaders and members did not prevent the group from continuing its operations. In September 2003, the ASG threatened to hijack some vessels of Sulpicio and WG&A lines passing through Sarangani Bay to generate funds while trying to recover from the severe impact of *Balikatan* 02-1. According to PCG officials, they received intelligence reports that the ASG planned to attack one of the passenger vessels of WG&A and Sulpicio lines plying the Mindanao route. Hence, the PCG intensified its patrol operations in Sarangani Bay and adjacent coastal areas to thwart any possible hijack attempt by the ASG.

The ASG, however, has a strong determination to pursue its maritime terrorist operation. An intelligence source reported that during the last quarter of 2003, the ASG kidnapped four Indonesian nationals and one Filipino in Borneo Paradise Eco-Farm Beach Resort in Lahad Datu, Sabah/Malaysia to raise funds. Reportedly, the hostages were divided into groups and separately brought to Patikul and Indanan in Sulu using speed boats. In April 2004, just two months after the Superferry 14 incident, the Philippine National Police Maritime Group reported that the ASG hijacked a boat and kidnapped two Malaysian and one

¹⁹⁴Admiral Dennis C. Blair, "The Campaign Against International Terrorism in the Asia-Pacific Region" (Remarks to Asia Society Hong Kong Center on 18 April 2002) at <<http://usinfo.state.gov/regional/ea/easec/blair1802.htm>.> [Accessed on 27 April 2002].

Indonesian in the Southern Philippines near Sabah. Their abduction came on the heels of the escape of 23 ASG members from a Basilan jail.

The foregoing cases clearly demonstrated the capability of ASG to conduct piracy and wage maritime terrorism. The ASG has resorted to piracy not merely to commit crimes but to fund itself while at the same time wage maritime terrorism to deliver political messages. The Filipino Coast Guard officials even admitted that the Philippines was seen increasingly under threat of piracy and maritime terrorism posed by the ASG.¹⁹⁵ Manila has even been identified as among 26 city ports and anchorages vulnerable to such maritime attacks.¹⁹⁶

Though it has been known that the ASG has already developed capability to wage various terrorist attacks in both the land and maritime domain, we have yet to conduct further research on its capability to use piracy as a tool of terrorism. Based on its records of various maritime attacks, beach resorts were usual targets of the ASG. Though the ASG has threatened to hijack commercial vessels after 9/11, none of these threats were carried out except the bombing of the *Superferry 14* and the seizure of small boats to kidnap Indonesian and Malaysian nationals in April 2004. Though ASG members have undergone training to mount an attack at sea, plots have been foiled by the Philippine law enforcement agencies. Sadly, details of these plots have not been publicly disclosed by law enforcement authorities for further analysis.

Towards A Maritime Security Strategy to Combat ASG's Maritime Terrorist Threats

Despite heavy military operations and amidst government pronouncements that the ASG has become a "spent force", it continues to wreak terrorist havocs in the Philippines. The bombing of Superferry 14 on 27 February 2004 and the three simultaneous bombings in Makati City, General Santos City and Davao City on eve of Valentines Day celebration in 2005 were recent indications that the ASG is alive and kicking. In the telephone interview pertaining to the Superferry 14 incident, ASG spokesperson Abu Soliaman even taunted the Philippine government by saying:

¹⁹⁵Agence France-Presse, "Philippines Seen Increasingly Under Threat from Maritime Terrorism" (8 September 2003) at http://quickstart.clari.net/qs_se/webnews/wed/ao/Qphilippines-apec-attacks.RBWM_DS8.html <accessed on 30 August 2004>.

¹⁹⁶Ibid.

“Still doubtful about our capabilities? Good. Just wait and see. We will bring the war that you impose on us to your lands and **seas**, homes and streets. We will multiply the pain and suffering that you have inflicted on our people.”¹⁹⁷ (underscoring mine)

As a result of the 2005 Valentines Day bombing, the PCG increased the security of major ports in the Philippines. Intelligence operatives in plainclothes were deployed in various ports in the country. The PNP Maritime Group also tightened its security measures in the Visayas and Mindanao following the 2005 Valentines Day bombing. At least six sea marshals were also assigned to ensure the safety of passengers in every ship sailing in Philippine waters. Philippine Marines have also been on foot patrol in various ports since the aftermath of the 2005 Valentines Day bombing.

To combat piracy and maritime terrorism in the Philippines, the Philippine Navy has pursued its Naval Modernization Program despite serious budgetary constraints. It sought the assistance of the United States for its modernization program. On 8 March 2004, for example, the United States transferred to the Philippine Navy the ownership of a Cyclone Class ship that aims to enhance the Philippines’ coastal patrol and counter-terrorism capabilities. The U.S. refurbished the patrol ship, which has been renamed BRP General Mariano Alvarez after a Philippine hero, at the cost of US\$7 million, including a two-year supply of spare parts. The transfer costs a total of US\$30 million. President George W. Bush offered this ship to President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo during her visit to the White House in November 2001.

Though the Philippine maritime authorities are serious in its efforts to curb piracy and maritime terrorism in the country, they are crippled by the absence of an anti-terrorism law. Worst, the Philippines does not have an updated national maritime security law. Although the Philippine government created the Office for Transportation Security (OTS) to make a draft of the national maritime security law that will comply with the requirements of the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code, nothing has been heard of the draft since the OTS was created on 30 January 2004 by virtue of Executive Order No. 277.

Conclusion

This paper initially described the maritime terrorist threat posed by the ASG and its ability to use piracy as a tool for terrorism. From its record of maritime terrorist attacks, this paper observed that most targets of the ASG were beach or coastal resorts. Though it has threatened to hijack commercial vessels,

¹⁹⁷Marco Garrido, “After Madrid, Manila?”, *Asia Times* (24 April 2004) at http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/FD24Ae01.html <accessed on 28 August 2004>.

Philippine law enforcement authorities have thwarted these attacks, except the bombing of the Superferry 14 and the seizure of small boats in April 2004. Despite the Philippine government's declaration of the ASG as a spent force due to intensified military operations and hot pursuits, it continues to wreak terrorist havoc because of its ability to solicit local support and to link with JI, the MILF and the MNLF.

ANNEX A

A BRIEF HISTORY OF AL-HARAKATUL ISLAMIYYAH

As narrated by

Qadhafy Abu Bakr Janjalani

Ustadz Abdur-Razzaq Abubakar Janjalani went back home on 1983 from a four (4) year Islamic Special Course at the Umm'ul Qura University in Makka, Saudi Arabia. He went back straight to his home town in Tabuk, Isabela, Basilan. And he began his da'wah mission in a madrasah in that place. His mission, call the muslims in his home town to go to Jihad Fi Sabilillah...

He used to visit Moro National Liberation Front's (MNLF) camp to share his knowledge and invite the fighters to go back to the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Last Prophet Muhammad (saw). Since most of the so called mujahideen of the MNLF that time are not aware about the Fiqh'ul Jihad. The young Abdur-Razzaq was able to organized some young mujahideen to become daee' inside the front. Their mission, is to reeducate the mujahideen about the right aqeedah of Islam about Jihad Fi Sabilillah and the purpose of it...

And because of their eagerness to practice what they preach, the young Guru and his students pushed themselves to launch their first operation. Although that during that time they're still inside the front (MNLF).

Armed with "barong" (a small bladed weapon like sword, use by Moros in Sulu region) and a flying feathered iron, they went to the city to seize firearms from a group of military men who are guarding a hospital. They prepared drinks mixed with sleeping pills for the soldiers and let one tricycle driver deliver it for the military, saying it is from an officer who is celebrating his birthday. They drank it and fell asleep. After making sure all the soldiers are "down", they immediately went to the place. But, as they approached the place, they noticed the mercury light which was located near the hospital was off. Not knowing that the said light was automatic, they thought that their mission was messed up - so they aborted and withdrew. And learned later on that those soldiers were still sleeping up to the following morning. Their first mission has failed.

But the Guru and his students didn't stop with that failure. As a matter of fact, that was just the beginning. They started collecting firearms by buying in the black market, using their own money,

from sadaqah and zakat from concerned Muslim brothers and sisters. They also started buying explosives such as hand grenades.

In 1986, Ustadz Abdur-Razzaq went to Libya by virtue of a Scholarship to pursue his studies. Actually, the young Guru wants to stay in the country to continue on his mission in giving lectures on Jihad Fi Sabilillah. But, it's a request from his father that he should grab that scholarship and become a doctorate in Islamic Studies, someday, insha-Allah... So, he did study in one of the universities in Tripoli and took up the four (4) year course in Da'wah.

He went back home in 1991 after the completion of his studies in the College of Da'wah. He then, continued his mission in calling the brothers to go to Jihad Fi Sabilillah. And this makes his father upset because what his father wanted him to do is to manage the newly built madrasah beside their home in Tabuk. But the Guru wants to share his knowledge to all the brothers. There are times that when he leads the prayer his father will not pray with him inside the masjid, because of the "cold war" between them...

Ustadz Abdur-Razzaq started to visit provinces like Zamboanga, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Gen. Santos City and other nearby places to continue his works on da'wah, calling the Muslims to join the Jihad Fi Sabilillah. As he traveled, he also solicited funds, sadaqah and zakat from the concerned Muslim brothers to buy firearms and later on distributes it to selected MNLF fighters.

But, once Ustadz Abdur-Razzaq asked his students if there are changes inside the front, his students answered no. Knowing that most of the top leaders of the MNLF that time are "communist" by doctrine, so he organized again all his students to set a group of Mukhlis (Sincere) Mujahideen in the Way of Allah (swt).

In 1992, they established the Camp Madinah in Brgy. Kapayawan, Isabela, Basilan. Some of the brothers who joined them is Raddulan Sahirun who went home from Sabah after hearing that there's a Guru who really wages Jihad against the Mushrikeen, and eleven (11) others from Sulu and the rest are the students from Basilan.

Again, they continued collecting firearms, but this time - it's for their own group. They bought some of their weapons at the black market, seized from the military and policemen, and others are obtained through credit. And in the span of one (1) year, they reached the number of sixty (60) mujahideen operating in Basilan, Gen. Santos and in Davao.

The First Kidnapping Operation

In that same year, 1992, the group of Ustadz Abdur-Razzaq launched their first kidnapping operation. This happened in Davao City, they took one known businesswoman and was successfully ransomed. The ransom money was then used to buy more firearms for the group and others were distributed among the mujahideen.

The Birth of al-Harakatul Islamiyyah

1993 was the year when al-Harakatul Islamiyyah was born. This is the time when they decided to get out of the MNLF officially and become as one new group of Mujahideen. Although, the jamaah was established, they're were not known with their new name but as the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), where the tag was taken from the Kunya (alias) of Ustadz Abdu-Razzaq Janjalani.

Also in 1993, the group of Ustadz Abdur-Razzaq Janjalani launched their second kidnapping operation. They held the son of one of the prominent businessman in Basilan and again was successfully ransomed.

After the released of the hostage, the military launched their operation against the mujahideen. And this is the first time they used their OV-10 Bronco bomber plane. The fierce fighting lasted for one week and leave one Shahid (martyred) on the part of the group. Contrary to what the AFP-Southern Command claimed that they killed 49 freedom fighters. Allahu Akbar!!! After that long bombing week, the mujahideen still managed to withdraw, and went to Sulu.

And as the group stayed in Sulu, the "Guru" Ustadz Abdur-Razzaq Janjalani continued in his work as a daee' - calling and awakening the Muslims to join Jihad Fi Sabilillah, to raise the Deen of Allah (swt) and fight the Mushrikeen.

Also in this same year, they launched another kidnapping operation and held one American missionary and linguist. This American linguist is a translator, who translated the Bible from English to Samal dialect - made specially for the Badjao tribe, many of whom are muslims!!!

By this time, they're not asking for money. They demanded the withdrawal of all foreign fishing vessels in the Sulu Sea, others are political in nature and an educational program for Muslim Youths.

Right after the released of the American missionary, again the military launched their assault against the mujahideen. But, Alhamdulillah, they managed to withdraw going to other municipalities.

SOME IMPORTANT DATES AND OPERATIONS OF THE al-HARAKATUL ISLAMIYYAH

May 4, 1994 Basilan: Kidnapping of Fr. Cirilo Nacorda and nineteen (19) teachers and a driver. They also held sixteen (16) mushrikeen males, excuted fifteen (15), one survived and escaped.

February 28, 1995 Jolo: The day when Qaddafi Abubakar Janjalani, the brother of Ustadz Abdur-Razzaq was arrested together with some six (6) other mujahideen in Jolo, Sulu.

April 4, 1995 Ipil, Zamboanga: The group seized Ipil, Zamboanga.

December 18, 1998: The Day when Ustadz Abdur Razzaq was Martyred (Shahid).

June 1999: Establishment of Camp Ustadz Abdur-Razzaq in Puno Mahadje ("Big Mountain"), Basilan.

May 27, 2001: The group launched the Dos Palmas Operation to Palawan.

June 2, 2001: The Hospital Siege in Lamitan, Basilan.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. HOW DID YOU KNOW YOUR JIHAD IS LEGITIMATE IN THE LIGHT OF ISLAM?
2. WHY THE al-HARAKATUL ISLAMIYYAH KILLS THIER FELLOW MUSLIMS?
3. WHY THE al-HARAKATUL ISLAMIYYAH PRACTICE KIDNAPPING?
4. WHY THE al-HARAKATUL ISLAMIYYAH KILLS INNOCENT CIVILIANS AND NOT ONLY MILITARY?
5. WHY THE al-HARAKATUL ISLAMIYYAH WON'T GO TO PEACE NEGOTIATIONS?
6. WHY THE al-HARAKATUL ISLAMIYYAH RAPES THEIR (WOMEN) HOSTAGES?

7. ACCORDING TO THE NEWS, THE al-HARAKATUL ISLAMIYYAH ARE A BUNCH OF DRUG ADDICTS, IS THIS TRUE?

HOW DID YOU KNOW YOUR JIHAD IS LEGITIMATE IN THE LIGHT OF ISLAM?

- The legitimacy of our Jihad is purely based on the teachings of the Noble Qur'an and in the Sunnah of the Last Messenger Muhammad (saw) - from the Aqeedah of al-Walaa'-u-wal-Baraa' to the Aqeedah of Jihad Fi Sabilillah that was practiced by the Last Prophet Muhammad (saw) and his noble companions.
- As our **Dhalil** (Basis) - Allah (swt) said:

"And fight in the Way of Allah (swt) and know that Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower". Surah al-Baqarah 244

"Fight those who (1) believe not in Allah (swt), (2) nor in the Last Day, (3) nor forbid that which has been forbidden by Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw), (4) and those who acknowledge not the religion of truth (ie. Islam) among the people of Scriptures (Jews and Christians), until they pay the Jizyah with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued." Surah At-Tawbah 29

"And fight them until there is no more FITNAH (disbelief and ploytheism, i.e. worshipping others besides Allah), and the religion (worship) will all be for Allah Alone [in the whole of the world]...." Surah An-Anfal 39

"Then fight in the Cause of Allah (swt), you are not tasked (held responsible) except for yourself, and incite the believers (to fight along with you), it may be that Allah (swt) will restrain the evil might of the disbelievers. And Allah (swt) is Stronger in might and Stronger in punishing". Surah An-Nisaa' 84

"Fight against them so that Allah (swt) will punish them by your hands and disgrace them and give you victory over them and heal the breasts of a believing people". Surah at-Tawbah 14

"March forth, whether you are light (being healthy, young and wealthy) or heavy (being ill, old and poor), and strive hard with your wealth and your lives in the Cause of Allah (swt). This is better for you, if you but know.". Surah at-Tawbah 41

... and many more verses from the Noble Qura'an and from the ahadith of the Last Messenger Muhammad (saw)...

WHY al-HARAKATUL ISLAMIYYAH KILLS THEIR FELLOW MUSLIMS?

- We don't kill MUSLIMS but rather we kill people who claimed themselves to be Muslims. They are called MURTADIN. This kind of people - we see them praying five times a day, performing all Islamic rites, but working with the enemy and with the Shaytan Forces against the Muslims, especially fighting Mujahideen. They submitted themselves to the Shaytan Philippine Government which is not Allah's government. Allah (swt) said in His Noble Book:

"And whosoever does not judge by what Allah (swt) has revealed, such are the Kafirun... such are the Dhalimun... such are the Fasiqun..." Surah al-Maidah 44, 45, 47

"Fight those who (1) believe not in Allah (swt), (2) nor in the Last Day, (3) nor forbid that which has been forbidden by Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw)..." Surah at-Tawbah 29

- Surah at-Tawbah 29 clearly states to fight *those who forbid not that which has been forbidden by Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw)* - IT IS FORBIDDEN BY ALLAH (SWT) - THAT BELIEVERS SHOULD MAKE HIS ENEMY AS THEIR AWLIYAA' AND WHAT MORE IF SUBMITTING TO THEIR MAN-MADE LAWS.
- These verses tells us who are the enemies of Islam, and enough for us the Words of Allah (swt) as a basis for all our actions...

WHY THE al-HARAKATUL ISLAMIYYAH WON'T ACCEPT ANY PEACE NEGOTIATION?

- There are some differences among Islamic Scholars about this issue. There are some who says that we can go to peace negotiations like the Treaty of Hudhaibiyah and some scholars said never go to any peace negotiations. There are also some scholars who said that we can make peace negotiations with the Kuffar if the Muslims are really weak.

"We can have peace negotiations with the Kuffar, only if - it will be an advantage to the Muslim Ummah. But this kind of negotiation has its CONDITIONS, as follows:

1. It should not be included in the Treaty, that a part of any Muslim land can be taken by the Kuffar even a span of a hand. (Nihayatul Muhtaj Vol. 8 Page 58)
2. If JIHAD is Fardu Ayn - there should not be any kind of Peace Treaty. Like, if the Kuffar enters the Muslim territories, then JIHAD is Fardu Ayn. (Fathul Ali Vol. 1, Page 982)
3. If there's a condition in the Treaty that will result in the Laws of Allah (swt) can not be implemented - then the Treaty is VOID.
4. If there's a condition in the Treaty that will result in the Muslims to be in an inferior position, then the Treaty is VOID. (based on a hadith from the Book I'la as-Sunnan, Vol. 12 Page 8)
5. If there's a condition in the Treaty that will violate any Islamic Law, then the Treaty is VOID.
6. The Treaty should not contain any condition(s) that will allow any symbols, signs or practices of disbelief [KUFUR - i.e. churches, sending of missionaries, propagation of any religion, ETC.]

(FROM THE BOOK ad-DHIFA' AN ARADHIL MUSLIMIN ("Defence of Muslim Lands") BY SHAHID DR. ABDULLAH AZZAM).

WHY THE al-HARAKATUL ISLAMIYYAH KILLS CIVILIANS AND NOT ONLY MILITARY?

- Allah (swt) said in His Noble Qur'an:

"Fight those who (1) believe not in Allah (swt), (2) nor in the Last Day, (3) nor forbid that which has been forbidden by Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw), (4) and those who acknowledge not the religion of truth (ie. Islam) among the people of Scriptures (Jews and Christians), until they pay the Jizyah with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued." Surah At-Tawbah 29

This is just one of the many verses from the Noble Qur'an that we can use as basis for our actions. The military and the civilians that **support** them are one and the same.

WHY THE al-HARAKATUL ISLAMIYYAH PRACTICE KIDNAPPING FOR RANSOM?

- First, we would like to make it clear that our kidnapping operations are not for personal interests or just to gain money for

personal use. Let it be known to everyone that we are on war against the forces of Shaytan in the Philippines, its allies and supporters. And whatever we gain (ie. ghanaim) from this war is to be use for our future operations, and in buying more war materials and of course, in maintaining our fighters' supplies and other necessities.

*"And make ready against them all you can of POWER, including steeds of WAR (tanks, planes, missiles, artillery) to **TERRORIZE** the enemy of ALLAH and your enemy, and others besides whom, you may not know but whom ALLAH does know. And whatever you shall spend Fi Sabilillah shall be repaid unto you, and you shall not be treated unjustly". Surah al-Anfal 60*

Second, as followers of Prophet Muhammad (saw), we based our actions on the Noble Qur'an and in his (saw) Sunnah. Allah (swt) said:

*"So, when you meet (in fight - Jihad Fi Sabilillah) those who disbelieve, smite (their) necks till when you have killed and wounded many of them, then bind a bond firmly (on them, ie. take them as captives). Thereafter (is the time) either for generosity (ie. free them without ransom) or **ransom** (according to what benefits Islam), until war lays down its burden..." Surah Muhammad*

Those whom we kidnapped are clear supporters of our ENEMY (they symphatized and support the PHILIPPINE KUFFAR GOVERNMENT by paying their taxes.)

And as they say; their GOVERNMENT is of the PEOPLE, by the PEOPLE, and for the PEOPLE. Therefore, their people as a whole is the GOVERNMENT. So, we can kidnap anybody from among them.

WHY THE al-HARAKATUL ISLAMIYYAH RAPES THEIR (WOMEN) HOSTAGES?

- Again, we would like to emphasize that we are on war against the disbelievers as what Allah (swt) commanded us believers in *Surah At-Tawbah 29*. And using the word RAPE is only to discredit our Mujahideen - so as the Muslims will not support our Jihad against the Kuffar. And if we capture any women from them, it's for us - either we free them with or without ransom or make them as **Sabiya** [plural **Sabaya** (i.e. concubine)]. As basis, Allah (swt) said:

*"And if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with the orphan girls then marry (other) women of your choice, two or three, or four; but if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one or **that your right hand possess**. That is nearer to prevent you from doing injustice". Surah An-Nisaa' 3*

*"Also (forbidden are) women already married, except **those whom your right hand posses**. Thus has Allah ordained for you..." Surah An-Nisaa' 24*

ACCORDING TO THE NEWS, THE al-HARAKATUL ISLAMIYYAH ARE A BUNCH OF DRUG ADDICTS, IS THIS TRUE?

- Of course it's not true, and this accusation is only to discredit the credibility of our mujahideen. Islam does not allow this kind of practice. As a matter of fact, it's Haram for us to take anything that intoxicates our mind and body even smoking cigarettes. Allah (swt) says in His Noble Qur'an:

"O you who believe! Intoxicants (all kinds of alcoholic drinks) and gambling and Al-Ansab [animals that are sacrificed (slaughtered) on altars and for the idols] and Azlam (arrows for seeking luck or decision) are abominations of Shaytan's handiwork. So avoid (strictly all) that (abominations) in order that you may be successful." Al-Maidah 90

"And we say; Allahu A'lam (Allah Knows Best)..."

Source: <http://www.geocities.com/ghurabah101/>

ANNEX B

THE DOS PALMAS

OPERATION &

THE HOSPITAL SIEGE IN LAMITAN

As narrated by

Abu Sulayman

May 27, 2001 - The Mujahideen departed to Dos Palmas in Palawan, a private beach resort 300 nautical miles travel from the Southern Islands. They left right after Salatu'l Dhuhur and arrived in the target area before dawn. So far, this is the most well-planned operation of the Harakatul Islamiyyah.

Upon reaching the beach resort, they immediately executed their plan. They were seen by the guard posted in front of the dock. They approached him and pretended to be government military men. Then they disarmed the shocked security guard. They also made the said guard called his colleague and told that there are military men in the beach. Same thing happen, they also disarmed the responding guard.

They made their next move. Divided into many groups, they entered the cottages and took 17 hostages and one cook from the restaurant. Within 15 minutes, they accomplished their mission and took the total of 20 hostages. They got also some ghanaim in that operation.

[The day before this, some of the would-be hostages joked on the beach. They said, "What if, the Abu Syyaf arrive and kidnap us?", someone answered, "It is hard for them to reach this area because this is already very far from their area". - this was narrated by the hostages to the mujahideen during their captivity].

They rushed to the high seas after taking all the hostages. Then the Mujahideen chorus in saying Takbirat (saying Allahu Akbar) loudly many times. Only at this point that the hostages realized who their captors were.

They remained for a couple of days in the high seas and were able to capture 10 fishermen. Though they're considered as captives, the group promised them that they will not be harmed if only they will follow instructions and give them their supplies. While sailing, one

of the hostages talked to them and said that he can pay ransom for his release.

May 31, 2001, Midnight. After 4 days in the high seas, they arrived in the coastal area of Basilan. And they received a report that there are some government troops near that place. That time they're staying at one mountain of Tuburan town.

June 1, 2001. Early morning, 2 Platoons of Taghut Forces climbed the mountain and there they saw some mujahideen and some hostages taking a bath in a river. And because of this, they fired at the mujahideen and a gun battle ensued. The mujahideen forces used their 60mm mortar. And the forces of Shaytan responded with their 105 mm howitzers, but they hit their own men. The fierce fighting lasted for almost 2 hours. There were more than 10 killed on the part of the Kuffar Forces and many are wounded. Mujahideen has one wounded, Kosovo, with no casualty, (masha-Allah).

After the battle against the forces of Taghut, the Mujahideen decided to withdraw to take a rest.

Before Isha, the group took hold of a vehicle to ride going to Lamitan town. One platoon (around 30) from the mujahideen and the seventeen (17) hostages rode the vehicle, while the remaining forty (40) mujahideen will go on foot towards Lamitan town. But before they departed, they beheaded first the 2 security guards and the cook. And they moved on.

The Hospital Siege in Lamitan

As their vehicle entered the town proper close to midnight, they passed by a military checkpoint of the Kuffar. The sentry was caught by surprise, and Abu Ahmad (a.k.a. Abu Sabaya) shouted "*We're the men of the Governor, this is an emergency and we have to bring somebody to a hospital*". Before the soldiers could react, they immediately left the place and continued on their travel.

Midnight, they arrived at the Dr. Jose Maria Torres Memorial Hospital in Lamitan, Basilan.

As they arrived in the said hospital, they were seen by the security on duty and ran away. The group entered the hospital and took 4 medical staff; 2 nurses, a midwife and 1 male utility crew. Some of them went to the neighboring church and the convent. But the priest and his militiaman-bodyguard escaped away after the later fired at them. They were not also able to find the nuns in the

convent. But they took some ghanaim from the hospital and in the convent but most are from the church.

They gathered in the hospital and then stayed there. After an hour, a jeepney full of policemen responded after hearing the gun fire. But they were blocked by some of the mujahideen who are posted outside the hospital. The mujahideen force fired their M203 grenade launchers and their 90RR at the approaching policemen. They didn't able to damage the vehicle but the policemen ran away.

After half an hour, soldiers arrived with their APC's. As the forces of Taghut approach the place, they were also firing their 50 cal heavy machine gun at the same time hitting some houses near the hospital. The fierce fighting between the Mujahideen and the forces of Shaytan started.

2 AM, two vehicles full of elite special forces from the Philippine Army arrived. They stopped right in front of the church. They are not aware that there are 5 mujahideen in the church's terrace who are searching for the priest. Seeing this, the mujahideen abruptly fired at the forces of Shaytan using their two (2) M203 grenade launchers, two (2) M14 and one (1) M16 rifles. The enemy were almost wipe-out, Allahu Akbar!!!.

Before Salat ul Fajr, the remaining forty (40) mujahideen who walked towards the town reached their target - the house of a rich Chinese businessman, in the center of the town. As they were trying to find a way to get inside the compound, they were approached by a retired military colonel whose a resident of that place - thinking that they were government forces. They immediately killed him on the spot. But some militiamen returned fire at them and hit their guide, causing him to be martyred. And because of this, they don't know what to do - they decided to withdraw outside of the town. Leaving the first platoon inside the hospital all by themselves.

At the heat of the battle, some brothers are negotiating with the relatives of the hostages about their ransoms. The first one that talked to them at the high seas was being ransomed by his relatives. He was released from the hospital. They also released 2 more captives, a boy and a woman without ransom for humanitarian reasons.

The said male hostage was released midday and when he was out of the hospital he went to the government authority and told them who's inside the hospital. Hearing this information from one

of the main hostages, they doubled the intensity of their operation against the mujahideen until afternoon.

The forces of Taghut didn't want to miss their chance, they fired their guns here and there - targeting even the church's tower, bell and the statue of Virgin Mary thinking that those are snipers.

Before Asr, the group made a mishuarah (consultation), and some proposed to make a withdrawal and bring their hostages at gun point. But some of them hesitated to withdraw that time because they said the forces of Taghut can see them where they're heading. So, they moved their scheduled withdrawal just before Maghrib so that they can use the darkness of the night as cover. So they waited and busied themselves in saying Dhikr and made Sabr.

After Salatul Asr, the mujahideen heard some loud Takbirs (i.e.. Allahu Akbar!) not far from the hospital. While hearing the Takbirs, they also heard continuous rapid gun fires. Because of this, they thought that the brothers who withdrew that dawn returned to back them up. So, they shouted Takbirs also inside the hospital. Some mujahideen decided to go out to look what's going on outside. They brought their 90RR, they went out. They were surprised seeing no more forces of Taghut outside. [According to the military report which leaked later on, the Philippine forces were being attacked by thousands of 'mujahideen' who are wearing white robes and long beard, Allahu Akbar!.]

"(Remember) when you sought help of your Lord and He answered you (saying); "I will help you with a thousand angels each behind the other (following one another) in succession."
Surah al-Anfal 9

And to make sure, they even went out to the main highway and there they saw one APC steering backwards from their position. Kosovo saw an opportunity, aimed the 90RR and fired at the said APC. The APC was hit at its side and smoked then it stopped. One officer and a military crew were killed inside the APC. After this, they went back inside the hospital.

They informed their companions about the situation outside. They told the other mujahideens that there were no longer military outside and that they can now execute their plan. So they did.

They passed through a small door at the back of the hospital and walked away immediately. But, as they walked a couple of meters away from the hospital, they were rained by gunfire from the front and their sides. There are still some soldiers and militiamen

left after that what they called 'attack' by a thousand mujahideen reinforcement. Because of this, some of the hostages and mujahideen were wounded. So, they decided to left some wounded hostages and those who have relatives with them - so that they can find ransom to those who were left behind with the mujahideen.

They continued their withdrawal. And as they walked away, they used their M60 light machine gun and M203 grenade launchers to 'clear' their way.

They walked till midnight. They reached the boundary going to the next town where they rest and slept. After Salatul Fajr, they continued their withdrawal until they reached the next town. Where they considered it safe.

This hide and seek war between the al-Harakatul Islamiyyah and the Philippine Taghut forces lasted up to one (1) year. And within this year, countless fierce fighting happened in different part of the island province of Basilan. But regardless of these incidents, they managed to take ransom from the local hostages. And some of the women were made Sabaya by the mujahideen. One American hostage was also beheaded as a gift to the celebration of the Kuffar Independence Day.

This operation later on reached Zamboanga del Norte where the Philippine Taghut forces exerted their full efforts to save the remaining hostages from the mujahideen - a nurse (who became a practicing Muslim while being held as hostage) and the American couple. But this effort resulted in the death of the male American and the local nurse from the bullets of the Philippine Taghut forces. The female american received some wounds and was rescued.

After few days, the remaining Mujahideen decided to go back to Sulu to rejoin the main group. So, they contacted for a boat to pick them up. Not knowing, the boat operator was arrested a few days before. So he was sent together with a civilian agent to pick them up bringing with them a tracking device.

When the scheduled time came and picked them up. They start sailing towards Sulu, not knowing the patrol and speed boats of the Kuffar are already following them. Then a fierce sea battle ensued that resulted the Mujahideen's boat capsizing and the martyrdom of the several Mujahideen including Abu Ahmad (a.k.a. Abu Sabaya, Aldam Tilao in real life), and the wounding and capture of some them.

[During his life time, Abu Sabaya (Aldam Tilao), used to tell his comrades - to hide his body when he ever become a Shahid so that the enemy of Islam can not rejoice of his supposed death and make his body as a trophy that can be presented in the public. And up to this day, the forces of Philippine Taghut didn't able to find his body including the two (2) brothers who were missing with him. They were only able to retrieved his back-pack with his personal belonging inside (sattelite phone, sunglass, driver's license, cal.45 pistol). Allah (swt) granted his Dua', Masha-Allah]

The Hikmah (wisdom) of this operation: This was made because Palawan became the center of tourism in the Philippines that brought a lot of Fitnah for the Muslim Ummah in the region. This operation resulted in bad effects on the economy of the Philippine Taghut Government that cost them Billions of Pesos of loses in revenues. Alhamdulillah.

Source: <http://www.geocities.com/ghurabah101/>

About the Author

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