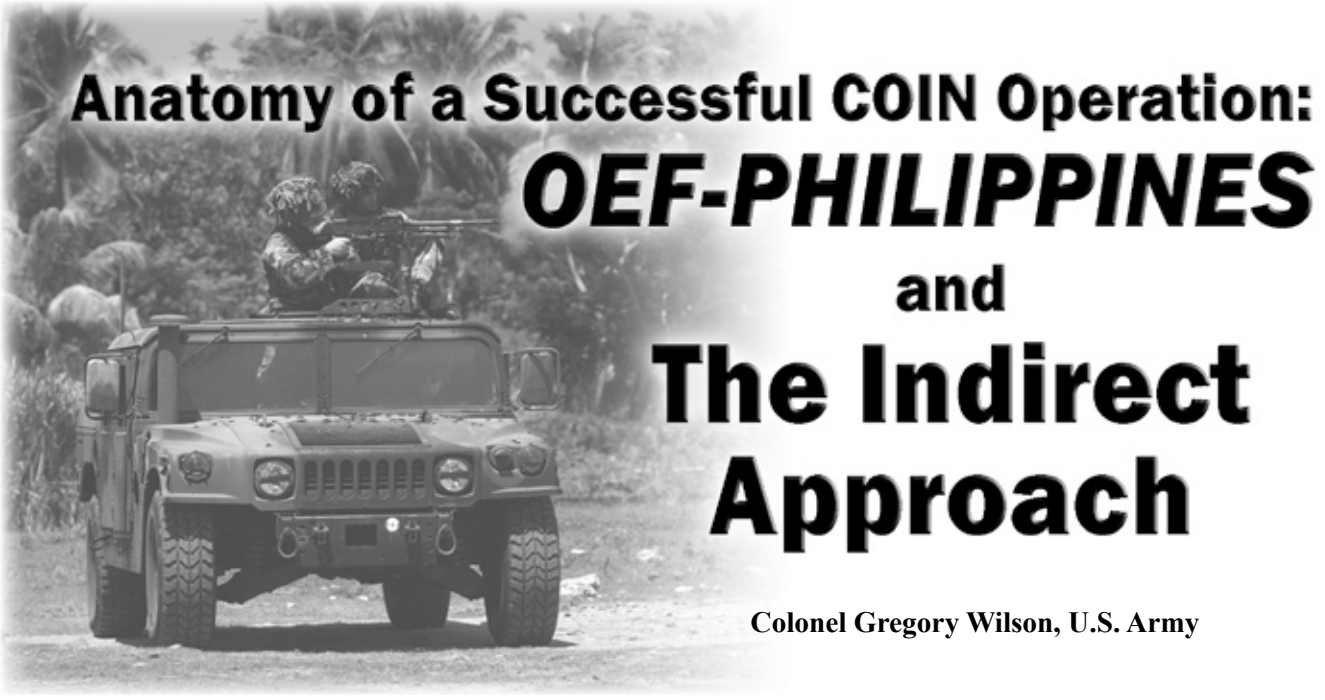

Anatomy of a Successful COIN Operation: OEF-PHILIPPINES and The Indirect Approach

Colonel Gregory Wilson, U.S. Army

Freedom, by its nature, must be chosen and defended by its citizens.

—President George W. Bush

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PHOTO: Marines deployed to the Southern Philippines as part of JSOTF-P live fire during force protection training, 2004. (DOD)

THE TERRORIST ATTACKS of 9/11 have ushered in a new era of counterinsurgency to deal with Al-Qaeda-linked insurgent and terrorist organizations. The U.S. military's initial success in Afghanistan, as impressive as it was, forced the enemy to adapt. To survive, Al-Qaeda has transformed itself into a flatter, more cellular organization that seeks to outsource much of its work.[1] Thus, insurgency has become an Al-Qaeda priority in terms of rhetoric, recruitment, and spending.[2] The connection between terrorism and insurgency is now well established, and in fact there is tremendous overlap between the two.[3]

The U.S. military, though, is struggling to adapt to protracted, insurgent-type warfare. America's affinity for high-tech conventional conflict and quick, kinetic, unilateral solutions that avoid contact with the local populace has slowed its response to this complex form of conflict.[4] How, then, can the U.S. military tailor a more efficient, more effective approach to future military efforts against Al-Qaeda-linked groups around the globe? Specifically, how can the U.S. military implement a sustainable, low-visibility approach that is politically acceptable to our current and future partners, and that can help change the moderate Muslim community's perception of U.S. operations in the War on Terrorism (WOT)?

The history of insurgent conflict during the Philippines Insurrection (1899-1902), Malayan Emergency (1948-1960), and Hukbalahap Rebellion (1946-1954) shows that successful COIN operations are protracted efforts that rely heavily on indigenous security forces.[5] Therefore, the U.S. WOT strategy should emphasize working indirectly "through, by, and with" indigenous forces and building their capacity to conduct effective operations against common enemies.

The Unilateral Approach

As free societies gain ground around the world, the U.S. military is going to be increasingly restricted in terms of how it operates. An age of democracy means an

Southern Philippines—Joint Operations Area

age of frustratingly narrow rules of engagement. That is because fledgling democratic governments, besieged by young and aggressive local media, will find it politically difficult—if not impossible—to allow American troops on their soil to engage in direct action.

—Robert Kaplan[6]

The current COIN campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq have demonstrated that unilateral U.S. military operations can be ineffective and even counterproductive to the democratic institutions we are trying to establish. To reduce our footprint in Iraq, our top priority now is to stand up Iraqi security forces to take over the fight against insurgents. These forces must prevail if Iraq is to achieve and maintain long-term stability.

A large foreign military presence or occupation force in any country undermines the legitimacy of the host-nation government in the eyes of its citizens and the international community. As we now know, large U.S. occupation forces in Islamic regions can create problems for us. A senior British military officer who served in Iraq has remarked that the U.S. Army there has acted much like "fuel on a smoldering fire"; he suggests that this is "as much owing to their presence as their actions."[7] If he is right and our mere presence can be counterproductive, then a tailored, low-visibility approach that plays well in the moderate Muslim community and is politically acceptable to our potential WOT partners makes sound strategic sense.

Blowback

Osama bin Laden has made the presence of U.S. forces in the Middle East a rallying point for global jihad by a new generation of Muslim holy warriors.[8] Just as the war in Afghanistan against the Soviets created the leaders of today's global terrorist network, so Iraq has the potential to produce far more dangerous second- and third-order effects. Blowback from the current war in Iraq might be even more dangerous than the fallout from Afghanistan.

Fighters in Iraq are more battle-hardened than the Arabs who fought demoralized Soviet Army conscripts in Afghanistan. They are testing themselves against arguably the best army in history and acquiring skills far more useful for future terrorist operations than those their counterparts learned during the 1980s. Mastering how to make improvised explosive devices or conduct suicide operations is more relevant to urban terrorism than the conventional guerrilla tactics the *mujahideen* used against the Red Army. U.S. military commanders say that today's militants in Afghanistan have adopted techniques perfected in Iraq.[9]

The transfer of these deadly skills to Al-Qaeda-linked insurgencies presents a clear and present danger. The world has already seen bomb-making skills migrate with deadly results from the Indonesian-based Jemaah Islamiyya to the Abu Sayyaf Group in Manila and throughout the Southern Philippines.[10] Other countries with Al-Qaeda-linked insurgencies include Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan, Yemen, Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, and India.[11] Developing indigenous capacity to confront this emerging threat will become increasingly important to future WOT efforts.

The Southern Philippines

The Southern Philippines is typical of areas that are ripe for Al-Qaeda influence. It is located along ethnic, cultural, and religious fault-lines in a region that has been only loosely controlled or governed throughout its long history of occupation.[12] The area is home to a discontented Muslim population dominated by a predominately Catholic government based in Manila. Approximately 5 million Muslims live in 5 of the poorest provinces of the Philippines, in Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago. In these provinces, the majority of the population has an income well below the poverty line.

These regions are what Sean Anderson calls "grey areas"—"ungovernable areas in developing nations over which unstable, weak national governments have

nominal control but which afford criminal syndicates or terrorists and insurgent groups excellent bases of operation from which they can conduct far reaching operations against other targeted nations."[13]

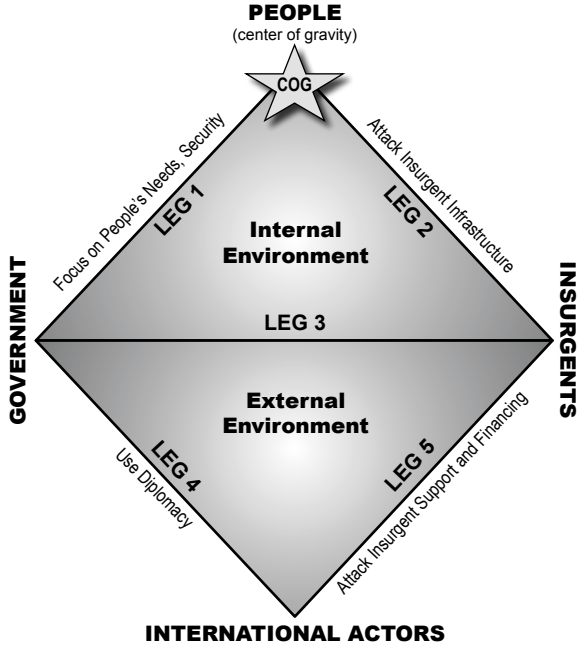
Philippine "grey areas" are notorious for civil unrest, lawlessness, terrorist activity, and Muslim separatist movements. They are home or safe haven for several Al-Qaeda-linked organizations, including the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), Abu Sayyaf, and the Indonesia-based Jemaah Islamiyya. The core leaders of many of these groups received their initial training in the camps of Afghanistan and their baptism of fire in the jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan.[14] Al-Qaeda did not originate these movements, but it has used them as vehicles to expand its global reach and spread its extremist ideology.[15]

The United States became interested in the Southern Philippines shortly before 9/11, after Abu Sayyaf kidnapped several U.S. citizens and held them hostage on their island stronghold of Basilan.[16] After 9/11, the region became a front line in the WOT when Washington and Manila set their sights on the group's destruction. Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines (OEF-P) officially began in early 2002 and is best known for Joint Task Force (JTF) 510's combined U.S.-Philippine operations on Basilan (Balikatan 02-1). Special Forces (SF) advisory efforts began in the Southern Philippines in 2002 and continue to this day.

The Diamond Model

The unconventional or indirect approach of working "by, with, and through" indigenous forces has remained consistent throughout OEF-P.[17] Led by Brigadier General Donald Wurster and Colonel David Fridovich, OEF-P planners created their guiding strategy using principles that can be found in Gordon McCormick's strategic COIN model, called the Diamond Model.[18] This model can help planners develop an effective holistic approach to cut off organizations like Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyya from their bases of popular support and to isolate, capture, or kill their members and leaders. The Philippine Government and its armed forces now call the application of principles found in the Diamond Model the "Basilan Model," after its successful use against Abu Sayyaf on Basilan in 2002.

The Diamond Model establishes a comprehensive framework for interactions between the host-nation government, the insurgents, the local populace, and international actors or sponsors (figure 1). The host-nation government's goal is to destroy the insurgents or limit their growth and influence to a manageable level. Their opponent's goal is to grow large enough to destroy the state's



Principles of the Diamond Model

- **Consider popular support the center of gravity**
- **Enhance government legitimacy and control**
- **Focus on people's needs and security**
- **Target insurgent safe havens, infrastructure, and support**
- **Share intelligence (esp. HUMINT)**
- **Develop indigenous security forces**

Figure 1. McCormick's Diamond Model

control mechanisms and then either replace the existing government or force political concessions from it that achieve the group's objectives. Jemaah Islamiyya's and Abu Sayyaf's objectives were to create Islamic caliphates or states in the Southern Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia.[19]

To develop an effective counter-strategy, the state must first understand its advantages and disadvantages relative to the insurgents. With its armed forces and police, the state has a force advantage over the insurgents. On the other hand, the insurgents have a marked information advantage. Being dispersed and embedded in the local population, they are difficult to detect and target; additionally, they have visibility of the state's security apparatus and infrastructure and can easily target them. As McCormick asserts, "The winner of this contest will be the side that can most quickly resolve its disadvantage."[20]

The state's goal, then, should be to rectify its information disadvantage so it can effectively locate the insurgents and capture or kill them. The insurgent group's goal is to grow in strength and effectiveness so it can threaten the state's security apparatus and infrastructure before the state can overcome its information disadvantage. Time is typically on the side of the insurgents because they can often achieve their goals simply by surviving and exhausting government efforts and the national political will.

The Diamond Model can help establish the optimal strategy the state should pursue to rectify its information disadvantage and win the COIN fight. Legs 1 through 5 of the model depict the actions the counterinsurgent should take. In the case of legs 1 through 3, these actions should be sequential.[21] The upper half of the model addresses the state's internal environment. Because it suffers from an information disadvantage, the state must first pursue leg 1 to strengthen its influence and control over the local populace. McCormick defines control as "the ability to see everything in one's area of operation that might pose a threat to security and the ability to influence what is seen."[22] This level of visibility requires an extensive human intelligence network; it cannot be achieved by technological means. What military strategist John Paul Vann pointed out about U.S. counterinsurgency efforts in Vietnam is true today: "We need intelligence from the local civilians and soldiers from the area who understand the language, customs, and the dynamics of the local situation, who can easily point out strangers in the area even though they speak the same language."[23]

Gaining popular support is a zero-sum game. One side's loss is the other's gain, and vice versa. Strengthening ties with the local populace by focusing on their needs and security also denies or degrades insurgent influence over the people and leads to information that exposes the insurgent infrastructure. This allows the state to attack leg 2 with operations that disrupt the insurgent's control mechanisms over the people. These moves often lead to actionable intelligence, which the state can use to target the insurgency's infrastructure. Actionable intelligence gained by patiently pursuing efforts along legs 1 and 2 enables the state to identify and strike the insurgents along leg 3.

Military forces conducting COIN operations typically ignore legs 1 and 2 of the model and attempt to directly target their opponents. As the Vietnam war showed, this usually entails large-scale search-and-destroy operations that the insurgents easily avoid and that often produce collateral damage that alienates the people.[24] The state can defeat most insurgencies by operating effectively along legs 1 through 3, in that order.[25] The overall strategy (internal to the state) identifies the local populace as the center of gravity in the COIN fight and winning popular support as the key to the state's ability to remedy its information disadvantage and win the conflict. The indirect approach of working through the local populace and indigenous security forces to target the insurgents thus becomes the most direct path to victory.

The lower half of the Diamond Model depicts the external environment. If an external sponsor is involved, the state attacks leg 5 by directly targeting the supplies and financing flowing from the outside to the insurgents. At the same time, the state implements diplomatic operations along leg 4 to gain support and resources for its COIN efforts from partner nations and other international actors. It simultaneously employs diplomatic pressure and punitive measures to influence the behavior of insurgent sponsors.

OEF-P Lines of Operation

One of the more critical elements of COIN planning is synchronizing the overall effort with the

country team or embassy staff. The Diamond Model prompts planners to consider all elements of national power when planning WOT COIN operations.[26] In countries with well-established governments, WOT military operations play a supporting role to efforts managed by the U.S. State Department. Planning that integrates the military and country-team staff members produces optimal results. Because of the protracted nature of these operations, military and country-team staff must maintain close relationships and conduct interagency coordination on a regular basis. In the Philippines, OEF-P planners coordinate closely with the country team to facilitate interagency planning and synchronization.[27]

Applying the principles found in the Diamond Model within the political constraints of the Philippines led to the pursuit of three interconnected lines of operation:[28]

- *Building Philippine Armed Forces (AFP) capacity*. U.S. ground, maritime, and air components trained, advised, and assisted Philippine security forces to help create a secure and stable environment.
- *Focused civil-military operations*. Philippine-led, U.S.-facilitated humanitarian and civic-action projects demonstrated the government's concern for regional citizens and improved their quality of life.
- *Information operations (IO)*. Aiming to enhance government legitimacy in the region, the joint U.S.-Philippine effort used IO to emphasize the success of the first two lines of operation.

The lines of operation complemented country-team efforts to help government security forces operate more effectively along legs 1 through 3 of the model, thereby enhancing the host nation's legitimacy and control of the region; this in turn reduced the insurgents' local support, denied them sanctuaries, and disrupted their operations. Diplomatic efforts executed along leg 4 were also critical.

Balikatan 02-1

Principles found in the Diamond Model were successfully applied against Abu Sayyaf during OEF-P on Basilan Island in exercise Balikatan 02-1.[29] Located 1,000 kilometers south of Manila at the northern tip of the Sulu Archipelago in the war-torn Southern Philippines, Basilan is 1,372 square kilometers in size and home to a population of just over 300,000 people. As the northernmost island in the Sulu Archipelago, Basilan is strategically located. It has traditionally served as the jumping-off point or fallback position for terrorists operating in Central Mindanao, and its Christian population has long been prey to Muslim kidnapping gangs.[30] In the 1990s, Abu Sayyaf established a base of operations there and began a reign of terror that left government forces struggling to maintain security as they pursued an elusive enemy.

To succeed in COIN, the counterinsurgent must first understand the root causes of the insurgency: What are the underlying conditions that make the environment ripe for insurgent activity? To answer this question, U.S. Pacific Command deployed an SF assessment team in October 2001 to the Southern Philippines.[31] The team conducted detailed area assessments down to the village level and updated them throughout the operation. They gathered vital information about the enemy situation, army training requirements, local demographics, infrastructure, and socioeconomic conditions.[32] Measurements ranging from infant mortality rates and per capita income to the number of squatters, government services, and local education levels enabled planners to "build a map of disenfranchisement to ascertain where active and passive support would likely blossom."[33] These assessments provided critical information concerning the root causes of civil unrest at the village level. They also laid the foundation for the operational plan, for as military analyst Kalev Sepp notes, "The security of the people must be assured as a basic need, along with food, water, shelter, health care and a means of living. The failure of COIN and the root cause of insurgencies themselves can often be traced to government disregard of these basic rights."[34]

In February 2002, the United States dispatched JTF-510, comprised of 1,300 U.S. troops, to the Southern Philippines. Its mission was to conduct unconventional warfare operations "by, with, and through" the AFP to help the government separate the population from, and then destroy, Abu Sayyaf.[35] The bulk of the force consisted of an air component in Mactan, Cebu, and staff and support personnel located at the JTF headquarters in Zamboanga. The tip of the U.S. spear consisted of 160 SF personnel and, later, 300 members of a Naval Construction Task Group. All U.S. forces operated under restrictive

rules of engagement.[36] Once on Basilan, SF advisers deployed down to the battalion level and moved in with their Philippine counterparts in remote areas near insurgent strongholds. The SF teams found the Philippine units in disarray and lacking in basic infantry skills and initiative. One SF adviser said, "The situation had degraded to the point that the AFP no longer aggressively pursued the insurgents. The combination of neglect and lack of military initiative had created circumstances that contributed not only to the continuing presence and even growth of insurgent groups, but to the genesis of new terrorist and criminal organizations."[37]

Using their language and cultural skills, the SF teams quickly formed a bond with their military counterparts and local villagers. Their first goal was to establish a secure environment and protect the local populace. SF advisory teams went to work immediately, honing AFP military skills through focused training activities that increased unit proficiency and instilled confidence.[38] According to one SF adviser, "SF detachments converted AFP base camps on Basilan into tactically defensible areas, and they trained Philippine soldiers and marines in the combat lifesaving skills needed for providing emergency medical treatment with confidence. Those lifesaving skills were a significant morale booster for the AFP."[39]

Increased patrolling accompanied training, which allowed the AFP and local security forces to reestablish security at the village level and seize the initiative from the insurgents. SF advisers credited an aggressive increase in AFP patrolling with denying Abu Sayyaf its habitual sanctuary and curtailing the group's movement.[40] The SF teams played a key role in building AFP capacity by accompanying units (as advisers only) on combat operations.[41] Reestablishing security and protecting the Basilan people were the foundation for all other activities along leg 1 of the Diamond Model.

Once security was established, both civil affairs and SF Soldiers worked with their counterparts to execute high-impact projects that produced immediate and positive benefits for the local population.[42] Humanitarian assistance and civic-action projects were initially targeted to meet the basic needs of the local populace, then refined and tailored for particular regions and provinces based on assessment results.[43] As the security situation improved, the U.S. Naval Construction Task Group deployed to the island to execute larger scale projects such as well digging, general construction, and improvements to roads, bridges, and piers. In addition to enhancing military capabilities, these infrastructure projects benefited local residents. When possible, locally procured materials and workers were used in order to put money directly into the local economy. Humanitarian and civic-action projects on Basilan improved the image of the AFP and the Manila government and helped return law and order to the island.[44] A key component in leg 1 of the model, the projects earned local respect, improved force protection, and reduced Muslim village support for the insurgents. Consequently, the AFP was

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Navy medic Aaron Vandall provides Combat Life Saver training to members of the Philippine Armed Forces as part of Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines in March 2003.

DOD

Five Philippine Army soldiers try on U.S. protective vests turned over to the Philippine military as part of the RP-U.S. Military Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA), 24 January 2003.

able to cultivate closer relations with the people in insurgent-influenced areas. [45] As Colonel Darwin Guerra, battalion commander of the 32d Infantry, AFP, reported, "Where once the people supported rebels and extremists because they felt neglected or oppressed by the government, the delivery of their basic needs like health and nutrition services, construction of infrastructure and impact projects, and strengthening security in the community that the Balikatan program brought [sic] changed their attitudes and loyalty. As residents began to experience better living conditions, they withdrew support from the militants."[46]

The AFP consistently took the lead on all activities and projects throughout Balikatan 02-1, with the U.S. military playing a supporting role. Putting the AFP in the lead enhanced AFP and government legitimacy at the grassroots level and helped end passive support for the insurgents. Targeted humanitarian assistance and civic-action projects also drove a wedge between Abu Sayyaf and the local populace. At the same time, these activities provided opportunities to interact with the locals and tap into the "bamboo telegraph," the indigenous information network.[47] As villagers became more comfortable, they openly shared information on the local situation with AFP and U.S. forces.

Intelligence collection and sharing was also critical to the operation. SF advisers conducted extensive information collection activities to gain situational awareness and contribute to a safe and secure environment. They shared intelligence with the AFP and helped them fuse all sources of information to develop a clearer picture of the insurgents' organizational structure. Improved relations with local residents generated increased reporting on Abu Sayyaf activity. SF advisers also leveraged U.S. military intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance platforms, integrating these assets into intelligence collection plans to support AFP combat operations. Actionable intelligence stimulated progress on leg 3, direct AFP combat operations against Abu Sayyaf.

By August 2002, just six months later, the synergistic effects of security, improved AFP military capability, and focused civil-military operations had isolated the insurgents from their local support networks. As the security situation on Basilan continued to improve, doctors, teachers, and other professional workers who had fled the island began to return, and the Philippine Government, the U.S. Agency for International Development's Growth with Equity in Mindanao Program, the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, and various nongovernmental organizations brought in additional resources to further address the root causes of the civil unrest.[48]

Results of Balikatan 02-1

My visit to Basilan Island in 2005 revealed a vastly different environment from the terrorist safe haven once dominated by Abu Sayyaf. The island's physical landscape remained largely unchanged. The rugged mountains, jungle terrain, and remote villages that rebel groups and extremists had once found so inviting and conducive to their deadly activities were all still there. What had changed were the attitude and loyalties of the Basilan people, making the environment far less favorable for insurgent activity.

The U.S. military and the Philippine Government know that Balikatan 02-1 was a success, and the operation is now commonly referred to as the "Basilan Model." While it didn't destroy Abu Sayyaf altogether, the model proved effective in—

- Denying the insurgents and terrorists sanctuary in targeted geographic areas (Basilan Island).[49]

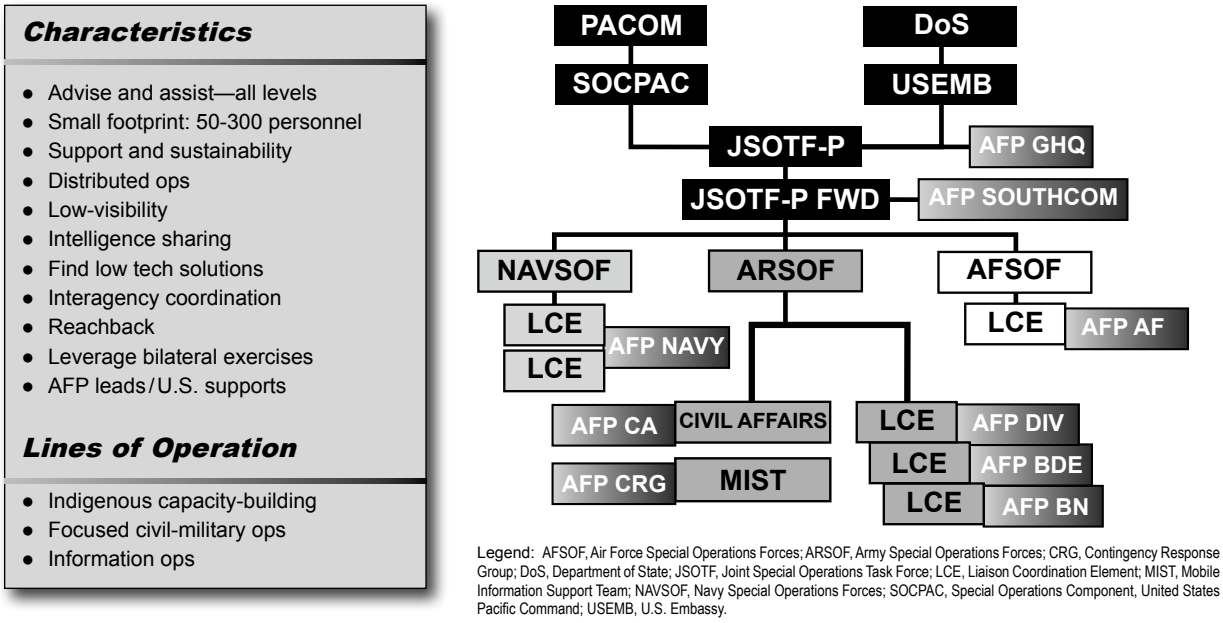

Figure 2. Joint Special Operations Task Force, Philippines Advisory Model

- Improving the capacity of indigenous forces (AFP).[50]
- Enhancing the legitimacy of the host-nation government in the region.[51]
- Establishing the conditions for peace and development (Basilan Island).
- Providing a favorable impression of U.S. military efforts in the region.[52]

The holistic approach used on Basilan enabled the AFP to gain control of the situation, to become self-sufficient, and eventually to transition to peace and development activities. Both U.S. and AFP military forces could then focus their efforts and resources on other insurgent safe havens. This approach is characteristic of the expanding inkblot, or "white zone" strategy, used during successful British COIN efforts in Malaya.

Continuing the Fight

Despite the success of U.S. and Philippine WOT efforts on Basilan, the fight against extremism in the Southern Philippines is far from over. Although Abu Sayyaf was neutralized on Basilan and significantly reduced in size, its leaders managed to flee to Central Mindanao and the island of Sulu.[53] Using the peace process between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the Philippine Government for cover, and with assistance from Jemaah Islamiyya, Abu Sayyaf has increased its urban bombing capabilities and extended its reach as a terrorist organization.[54] To gain better visibility on this emerging threat and to continue to assist the AFP, SF advisory efforts have adapted as well.

Soon after Balikatan 02-1, JTF-510 reorganized into a much leaner organization called the Joint Special Operations Task Force, Philippines (JSOTF-P), which continued advisory efforts with selected AFP units at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels (figure 2).[55] Follow-on JSOTF-P advisers have pursued the same strategy, but with greatly reduced resources along some lines of operation.[56] The reorganization reflects a shift in focus to indigenous capacity-building efforts, with the deployment of advisory teams to particular AFP units near terrorist safe havens or transit points in the Southern Philippines.

Deployed at the tactical level, SF advisory teams called Liaison Coordination Elements (LCE) are small, tailored, autonomous teams of Special Operations personnel from all services.[57] They advise and assist select AFP units in planning and fusing all sources of intelligence in support of operations directed at insurgent-terrorist organizations.[58] LCEs conduct decentralized planning and execution using a robust reachback capability to the JSOTF to leverage additional assets in support of AFP operations. These assets range from intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets such

as tactical unmanned aerial vehicles to humanitarian assistance to tailored information products.

The JSOTF has increasingly emphasized information operations that heighten public awareness of the negative effects of terrorism and provide ways to report terrorists to local security forces. Also featured are positive actions the government and military take to foster peace and development. The introduction of a Military Information Support Team in 2005 significantly enhanced the production of print and media products in support of U.S. and Philippine Government WOT information objectives.[59] Products include newspaper ads, handbills, posters, leaflets, radio broadcasts, and novelty items (example at figure 3). These IO efforts have helped to raise public awareness of the U.S. Government's rewards program.[60] Osama bin Laden's chief lieutenant, Ayman al-Zawahiri, has said, "More than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media. We are in a media battle in a race for the hearts and minds of Muslims."[61] If this is true, then shaping an environment less conducive to terrorist activity by raising public awareness is a true combat multiplier.

Figure 3. AFP/U.S. public information product

Indirect Approach Advantages

With U.S. forces stretched to the breaking point globally, SF advisory efforts will become more attractive to U.S. policymakers in the future. These efforts have some marked advantages over unilateral military operations.[62] Economy-of-force operations by nature, they are characterized by a small footprint, low resource requirements, and limited visibility. This makes them ideal to use in politically sensitive areas where a large foreign military presence would undermine the host-nation government's legitimacy and serve to rally opposition extremist elements. Additionally, with their low profiles, SF advisory operations can usually be sustained for a long time, a distinct benefit during protracted struggles.[63] Operations in the Southern Philippines have been ongoing since 2002, and so far they have received very little attention from the U.S. media and public.

The SF advisory approach also creates a more favorable impression of U.S. military efforts. Advisers are much more politically acceptable than Soldiers who take a direct role in combat. Humanitarian and civic-action activities performed with indigenous forces demonstrate the U.S. and host-nation government's commitment to promoting long-term peace and development. In 2002, U.S. advisers operating on Basilan went from seeing throat-slash hand gestures to receiving smiles and handshakes from local Muslims after the latter discovered the true nature of the SF's activities.[64] In 2005, U.S. military forces received a hero's welcome when they returned to Basilan for training exercises. The people repeatedly thanked them for their assistance during Balikatan 02-1.[65]

This good word has spread to the neighboring island of Sulu, a notorious Abu Sayyaf and extremist stronghold. In 2005, the Sulu provincial government asked U.S. military and AFP officials to conduct the "Basilan Model" on their island during Balikatan 06.[66] Prior to the exercise, local Islamic religious leaders asked the Muslim populace of Sulu to welcome U.S. forces.[67] Patricio Abinales, Associate Professor at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, credits the American military presence in the Southern Philippines for contributing to the emergence of reformist leaders (especially former Moro rebels) and politicians identified with "moderate Islam" who represent a change in conduct from the "guns, goons, gold" custom associated with traditional politicians.[68]

A Regional Approach

A regionally networked approach will optimize U.S. efforts to build indigenous capacity. The enemy is part of a transnational global network and flows across borders in many regions of the world like Southeast Asia. Terrorists and insurgents use ungoverned areas to their advantage so that efforts

by individual states alone will not be effective. The best way to confront a network is to create a counter-network, a non-hierarchical organization capable of responding quickly to actionable intelligence. The goal should be a networked regional capability that can seamlessly pass intelligence among SF advisory teams collocated with indigenous forces in strategic locations. In denied or unfriendly areas, surrogate forces developed and operating under the direction of SF and interagency partners should perform this task. As Steven Sloan notes, "The development of counter terrorist organizations that are small, flexible, and innovative cannot be done in the context of a unilateral approach to combating terrorism. There must be unity of action on the regional and international level that breaches the jurisdictional battles among countries that often seem to take precedence over an integrated war against terrorism."[69] The U.S. Government, military, and people must understand that these long-duration efforts require patience and determination. Gaining access, fostering trust, building relationships, and developing an indigenous or surrogate military capacity can take years, and success can often be difficult to measure. SF advisory teams must deploy forward to access indigenous capability and develop the situation in critical areas near suspected terrorist safe havens and transit locations. Once they complete their assessments, more refined plans ranging from small-scale LCE operations to larger Basilan-type efforts can be developed. This strategy has the added benefit of being preventive instead of just reactive. Positioning SF advisory teams as "global scouts" forward will provide early warning and allow our policymakers to assist our partners in shaping a more favorable environment.

Basilan in Iraq?

The "Basilan Model" and follow-on U.S. efforts offer a template for a sustainable, low-visibility approach to supporting America's allies in the WOT. In Iraq, where unilateral conventional operations have often been ineffective and even counterproductive, we should consider employing SF advisory teams on a large scale. Because they know the geography, language, and culture of the region and are skilled in working "by, with, and through" indigenous forces, SF is uniquely suited to adeptly navigate Iraq's politically and culturally sensitive terrain to enable effective host-nation operations against our common enemies.

By itself, however, just building the host-nation's capacity to capture or kill insurgents will not guarantee victory. The United States must employ a holistic approach that enhances the legitimacy of the host-nation government and its security forces in the eyes of the local populace. Using the Diamond Model, it must focus on the people at the grassroots level as the enemy's center of gravity. Ultimately, we will win the "long war," as the *Quadrennial Defense Review* now calls it, by gaining broader acceptance of U.S. policy within the moderate Muslim community. The best way to do this is by working in the shadows, "by, with, and through" indigenous or surrogate forces to marginalize the insurgents and win over the people. In an irony befitting the often paradoxical nature of counter-insurgency warfare, "the indirect approach" offers us the most direct path to victory. ***MR***

DOD

A U. S. Army Special Forces Soldier conducts security assistance training for members of the Phillipine Armed Forces on the Zamboanga Peninsula, 20 March 2003.

NOTES

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5. Kalev I. Sepp, "Best Practices in Counterinsurgency," *Military Review* (May-June 2005), and Byman, 2.

6. Robert D. Kaplan, "Imperial Grunts," *Atlantic Monthly Online*, October 2005, 2, <www.theatlantic.com/doc/200510/kaplan-us-special-forces/2>.

7. Aylwin-Foster, 4.

8. According to an Al-Qaeda fatwa delivered in 1996, "The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies—civilian and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate al-Aqsa Mosque and the holy mosque [Mecca] from their grips, and in order for their armies to move out of all lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim." Full text available online at <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/terrorism/international/fatwa_1996.html>.

9. Peter Bergen and Alec Reynolds, "Blowback Revisited," *Foreign Affairs* (November-December 2005): 4.

10. Zachary Abuza, "Balik Terrorism: The Return of the ASG [Abu Sayyaf Group]," *Strategic Studies Institute* (September 2005): 31.

11. John P. Sullivan, "Terrorism, Crime and Private Armies," in *Networks, Terrorism and Global Insurgency*, 72.

12. The Philippines were occupied by the Spanish from 1542 to 1898; the United States from 1898 to 1941; the Japanese from 1941 to 1944; and the United States again from 1944 to 1945. The United States granted the Philippines full independence in 1946.

13. Sean K. Anderson, "U.S. Counterinsurgency vs. Iranian-Sponsored Terrorism" in *Networks, Terrorism and Global Insurgency,* 85.

14. Abuza, 2.

15. Ibid., 5. Jamal Khalifa, Osama bin Laden's brother-in-law, was dispatched to the Philippines in 1991 and established a network of Islamic charities that have been linked to terrorist financing in the region.

16. The Abu Sayyaf Group conducted numerous kidnappings prior to 9/11, but it is best known for kidnapping three American citizens, including a missionary couple, and several wealthy Filipino citizens from Dos Palmas Resort on the island of Palawan, 27 May 2001. ASG subsequently moved the hostages to Basilan Island.

17. The "indirect approach" was first advocated by British military theorist, journalist, and historian Basil Henry Liddell Hart to prevent a repeat of earlier trench warfare deadlock. His theory included a form of blitzkrieg using both tanks and infantry.

18. In 1994, Dr. Gordon McCormick created the triangle insurgent/COIN model. He later created the Diamond Model to capture the interaction with external international actors. See Gordon H. McCormick, "A 'Pocket Guide' to Internal War," Department of Defense Analysis, Naval Postgraduate School, forthcoming.

19. Maria Ressa, *Seeds of Terror* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 124.

20. Class notes from Dr. Gordon McCormick's "Seminar on Guerilla Warfare," Department of Defense Analysis, Naval Postgraduate School, October 2005.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Rick Webster, "Counterinsurgency: The John Paul Vann Model," *Sitrep* (Winter/Spring 2004), <www.lists.opn.org/pipermail/org.opn.lists.vwar/2004-May/001227.html>.

24. Andrew F. Krepinevich, *The Army in Vietnam* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1988), 190.

25. McCormick, class notes.

26. For a more detailed discussion of applying strategic counterinsurgency models to the planning process, see LTC Eric Wendt, "Strategic Counterinsurgency Modeling," *Special Warfare Magazine* (September 2005).

27. Close coordination with the ambassador, the Joint United States Military Assistance Group, the regional affairs team, local representatives of the United States Agency for International Development, the political-military adviser, and other key members of the country team will ensure unity of effort.

28. Joint Special Operations Task Force—Philippines (JSOTF-P) lines of operation were developed by the JSOTF-P and Special Operations Command, Pacific staff.

29. Balikitan means "shoulder to shoulder" in Tagalog. While the U.S. Government views OEF-P efforts in the Southern Philippines as military operations in a declared hostile-fire area, the Philippine Government describes them as training exercises to avoid perceived constitutional restrictions against foreign troops participating in internal combat operations.

30. COL Darwin Z. Guerra, "Peace-Building in Basilan: The Army's 103rd Brigade Soldier's Final Battle," unpublished, 1.

31. COL Dave Maxwell, "Operation Enduring Freedom—Philippines: What Would Sun Tzu Say?", <www.army.mil/professionalwriting/ volumes/volume2/june_2004/6_04_3.html>.

32. Wendt, 10-11.

33. Ibid.

34. Sepp, 9.

35. Maxwell, 1.

36. Cherilyn A. Walley, "Impact of the Semi-permissive Environment on Force-protection in the Philippines Engagement," *Special Warfare*, 2004, 1, <www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0HZY/is_1_17/ai_n954388>.

37. Ibid., 4. Interview of an SF adviser by Dr. C. H. Briscoe.

38. MAJ Joe McGraw, SF Detachment Commander on Basilan during Balikatan 02-1, interview by the author, Monterey, CA, 19 January 2006. Training initially focused on basic individual infantry skills and progressed to more advanced collective skills. Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) units have very little training ammunition and rarely fire their weapons other than in combat situations.

39. C. H. Briscoe, "Reflections and Observations on ARSF [Army Special Forces] Operations during Balikatan 02-1," *Special Warfare*, 2004, 1, <www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0HZY/is_1_17/ai_n9543891>.

40. Ibid., 1.

41. McGraw interview. SF advisers initially were not allowed to accompany AFP units below the battalion level during operations, but after a lengthy mission review process (CONOPS), advisors were allowed to work at company level toward the end of the operation.

42. "A 'PACOM-imposed force cap' on Army SF personnel and heavy weapons in the exercise area of operations constrained the use of CA [civil affairs] teams. That compelled the commander of Forward Operating Base 11 to task SF detachments with the CA mission." C. H. Briscoe, 1.

43. Cherilyn A. Walley, "Civil Affairs: A Weapon of Peace on Basilan Island," *Special Warfare*, 2004, 3. <www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0HZY/is_1_17/ai_n9543 878>.

44. C. H. Briscoe, 1.

45. Ibid., 1.

46. Guerra, 2.

47. McGraw interview.

48. After security was reestablished during Balikatan 02-1, the Philippine Government, the Growth with Equity in Mindanao Program, the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, and various nongovernmental organizations provided economic and developmental assistance to Basilan Island. The U.S. Government provided an average of $80 million of economic and developmental assistance a year to the Philippines from 2002 to 2006, of which 60 percent was designated for the Mindanao region. See U.S. Department of State, Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2006 (P. L. 109-102).

49. The ASG no longer poses a threat on Basilan. Its armed strength has fallen from an estimated 1,000 in 2002 to somewhere between 200 and 400 in 2005. Thomas Lum and Larry A. Niksch, "The Republic of the Philippines: Background and U.S. Relations," Congressional Research Service Report to Congress, 10 January 2006, 8.

50. AFP forces deployed on Basilan improved their capacity while working directly with Army Special Forces during Balikatan 02-1. Follow-on security assistance train-and-equip modules and SF advisory efforts have continued to build AFP capabilities.

51. Balikatan 02-1 enabled the Philippine Government and AFP to reduce security forces on Basilan Island by 70 percent and transition to peace-building activities.

52. Sepp, 10.

53. Khaddafy Janjalani assumed leadership of the ASG after Abu Sabaya's death during an AFP-led, U.S.-assisted operation in June 2002.

54. Lum and Niksch, 7.

55. JSOTF-P has fluctuated between 50 and 300 personnel. Advisory teams interface at the strategic level with the U.S. Embassy in Manila and the AFP General Headquarters in Manila; at the operational level, with AFP Southern Command in Zamboanga; and at the tactical level, with select AFP combat units. Advisory teams also work with AFP civil affairs and psychological operations forces.

56. Humanitarian assistance and civic-action project funding was greatly reduced after Balikatan 02-1. Some funding was diverted to tsunami relief in 2005.

57. Liaison Coordination Elements generally consist of 4 to 12 SF advisers who are embedded with select AFP ground, naval, and air forces down to the battalion level.

58. JTF-510 advisory efforts were directed strictly at the ASG while JSOTF-P advisory efforts have expanded to include Jemaah Islamiyya.

59. This Military Information Support Team consists of psychological operations personnel who develop combined products with the AFP Civilian Relations Group. Products are approved through both AFP and U.S. chains of command.

60. U.S. Government rewards programs in the Philippines have led to the apprehension of 23 terrorists. Products are designed by AFP and U.S. personnel working together to ensure they are portrayed in the correct cultural context. Muslim soldiers within the AFP have played a key role in this effort, translating products into native languages like Talsug.

61. Cited in a speech by Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld to the Council on Foreign Relations, Harold Pratt House, New York, NY, 17 February 2006, <www.defenselink.mil/speeches/2006/sp20060217-12574.html>.

62. Stretched by frequent troop rotations to Iraq and Afghanistan, the Army has become a "thin green line" that could snap unless relief comes soon, according to Andrew F. Krepinevich, *The Thin Green Line*, Report to the Pentagon, <msnbc.msn.com/id/11009829/>.

63. Sepp, 9. SF advisory efforts in El Salvador were conducted for over 12 years.

64. Robert Kaplan, *Imperial Grunts* (New York: Random House, 2005), 245.

65. Author's experience on Basilan, March 2005.

66. Author's experience on Sulu, February 2005.

67. Roel Pareno, "Sulu sultan leads Jolo rally backing Balikatan," *Philippine Star*, 12 Feb 2005.

68. Patricio Abinales, "American Military Presence in the Southern Philippines: A Comparative Historical Overview," *East-West Center Working Papers, Politics and Security Series* 7, (October 2004): 14.

69. Stephen Sloan, "Forward: Responding to the Threat," in *Networks, Terrorism and Global Insurgency*, xxi.