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RESEARCH PAPER / MÉMOIRE DE RECHERCHE

**By, With and Through : Counterinsurgency Operations in the  
Southern Philippines**

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By /par COL D. Casey Griffith

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## **ABSTRACT**

The United States military and supporting agencies are conducting a counterinsurgency campaign in the Philippines, called Operation Enduring Freedom – Philippines. The approach to the counterinsurgency is very much different to the on-going operations in Iraq and Afghanistan where the United States has maintained a lead role in combat operations. This time the United States is taking a low-key approach while assisting the Government of the Philippines in defeating the insurgency. The United States strategy for counterinsurgency in the Philippines is based on the “Basilan Model” and uses a “By, with and through,” construct.

This paper will explain how the US is executing a supporting role to the Government of the Philippines. The paper will also explain the current US strategy for counterinsurgency in the Philippines and define the partner relationships between the United States and the Philippines. An in-depth explanation will be provided for the current US counterinsurgency model being executed in the Philippines, the Lines of Operations that apply to the model, and US military goals and objectives. Finally, Measures of Effectiveness (MOE) will be provided in the form of process explanation and data presented for quantitative analysis.

The paper will analyze and assess the combined counterinsurgency efforts between the Government of the Philippines and the United States and show that these efforts have provided a potential model for similar future operations in the War on Terrorism (WOT)

## ***“I Shall Return”***

### **General Douglas MacArthur, 1942**

In 1899, America campaigned against the Army of the Philippines which eventually evolved into a counterinsurgency in the Republic of the Philippines. “The Philippine Insurrection of 1899-1902 was America’s first major combat operation of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>1</sup> The conflict broke out following the Spanish-American War and as America was colonizing the Philippines. The people of the Philippines had previously been fighting a revolution with the Spanish when the United States (US) purchased the Philippines from Spain. The people of the Philippines were not anxious to be ruled again as a colony and fought for their independence with America. After three years of brutal jungle fighting and suffering several thousand US and 16,000 Philippine soldiers killed, the insurgency was eliminated and the US desired end state was achieved.<sup>2</sup> During that period US relevant policy included rewarding those who supported American efforts and punishing any opposition to those efforts. This policy was called “attraction and chastisement”.<sup>3</sup> An effective operational strategy at the time, the US has since learned numerous lessons in conducting operations on foreign soil and more specifically in the area of counterinsurgency. Today, the US is again

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<sup>1</sup> Timothy K. Deady, “Lessons from a Successful Counterinsurgency: The Philippines, 1899-1902,” *PARAMETERS*, U.S. Army War College Quarterly, (Spring 2005). 53.

<sup>2</sup> Casualty figures are estimates. Number of US personnel wounded are estimated at 3,000. Civilian casualty estimates range from 25,000 to 1 million over the entire period of conflict. Contributing factors to the large number of civilian casualties included both Philippine and US combat operations, famine and disease. Source: <http://www.answers.com/topic/philippine-american-war>: accessed on 21 Oct 07.

<sup>3</sup> Timothy K. Deady, “Lessons from a Successful Counterinsurgency: The Philippines, 1899-1902,” *PARAMETERS*, U.S. Army War College Quarterly, (Spring 2005). 53.

conducting a counterinsurgency campaign in the Philippines, called Operation Enduring Freedom – Philippines (OEF-P) and are using a different strategy. This time the US is taking a low-key approach while assisting the Government of the Philippines (GOP) in defeating the insurgency rather than taking the lead role. US Strategy for counterinsurgency in the Philippines this time is essentially a “By, with and through,”<sup>4</sup> strategy and is in support of Philippine combat operations while keeping US military personnel out of direct combat.

The concept of “by, with and through” essentially means the US is taking a supporting role to a host nation and provides it with advice and assistance in order to enable the host nation to take the lead role. Essential to this concept is the desire by both the US and the host nation government to achieve the same or similar desired end-state. Specific to the Philippines the common shared goal of both US and Philippine governments is to contain or eliminate insurgency in the Southern Philippines.<sup>5</sup>

This paper will explain how the US is executing a supporting role to the Government of the Philippines (GOP) in an attempt to reach the end-state. This paper will also explain the current US strategy for counterinsurgency in the Philippines and define the partner relationships between the US and the GOP.

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<sup>4</sup> Military intent for deploying forces in support of Government of the Philippines. Philippine Government and Military forces are lead agency. “By, with and through” is not a US doctrinal term or concept and is not the official documented policy of the US for relations with the Philippines. The concept has become a strategic to tactical strategy for conducting operations for OEF-P.

<sup>5</sup> Gregory Wilson, Colonel, U.S. Army, “*Anatomy of a Successful COIN Operation: OEF-Philippines and The Indirect Approach*,” Military review, (November-December 2006): 2-11.

The paper will analyze and assess the combined counterinsurgency efforts between the Government of the Philippines and the United States and show that these efforts have provided a potential model for similar future operations in the War on Terrorism (WOT).

The paper will review US interest in the Philippines, post 9/11 as it relates to terrorist organizations. A brief description of the three primary terrorist organizations will be provided as background and to give the reader an understanding of their relationship to each other in the Southern Philippines. An in-depth explanation will be provided for the current US counterinsurgency model being executed in the Philippines, the Lines of Operations that apply to the model, and US military goals and objectives. Finally, Measures of Effectiveness (MOE) will be provided in the form of process explanation and data presented for quantitative analysis. The conclusion of the paper is the author's analysis of all information presented in the paper and assessment of overall counterinsurgency operations in the Southern Philippines.

### **Background and Threat:**

Following the events of 9/11, as the world focused on Osama Bin Laden, Al Qaeda, and the Taliban. Terrorist organizations<sup>6</sup> operating in the Southern Philippines were almost un-noticed, except by United States Pacific Command

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<sup>6</sup> Terrorist groups are defined as organizations that threaten the security of US nationals or US national security (national defense, foreign relations, or the economic interest) of the US. Organizations are identified and listed on the US State Department Designated Foreign Terrorist Organization list. Source document: US Department of State Designated Foreign Terrorist Organization listing, 11 October 2005. Available on-line: <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/fs/37191.htm>: Accessed on 21 October 2007.

(USPACOM) and Special Operations Command Pacific (SOCPAC). USPACOM as the US geographic command in the Pacific and in an effort to support the Global War on Terrorism from a regional perspective began to focus on several existing and emerging terrorist groups operating in the Southern Philippines. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo,<sup>7</sup> the President of the Philippines, following 9/11 had publicly given her support to the US and efforts to conduct the GWOT.

The most notorious of the terrorist groups in the Southern Philippines is the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), meaning “Sword Bearers” in Arabic. Operating normally from the islands of Basilan, Mindanao, and Jolo, the ASG was founded in 1990 by Abubakar Janjalani. “The ASG’s stated goal is the establishment of an Islamic state in Mindanao in the Southern Philippines.”<sup>8</sup> The ASG uses ambushes, bombings, kidnappings and executions as their terrorist tactics.

Today the ASG operates in the Southern Philippines and in coordination with two other terrorist organizations, Jeemah Islamiah (JI) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). Primarily these operations have been contained on the island of Jolo and the ASG’s current strength is estimated as 200 insurgents.<sup>9</sup>

Sharing the ASG views for the creation of a pure Islamic state is another terrorist organization operating in the Southern Philippines known as the Moro Islamic

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<sup>7</sup> President Arroyo publicly announced the Philippines was prepared to “go every step of the way” with the United States. CRS Report to Congress, July 26, 2007. Congressional Research Service.

<sup>8</sup> Abu Sayyaf ideology from Military.com Resources. Available on-line: <http://fleetweek.us/Resources/ResourceFileView?file=ASG-Ideology.htm>: Accessed on, 21 October 2007.

<sup>9</sup> Estimated by the Philippine National Security Advisor, Norberto Gonzales, 2006.

National Front. Although the MILF share ASG common views for a pure Islamic state with the ASG, it has maintained a less violent method of operation. The MILF was founded in 1984 as an organization once it separated from the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), an organization pursuing peaceful negotiations with the GOP for an autonomous Muslim region in Mindanao.<sup>10</sup>

MILF force strength has been estimated at 12,000 to 20,000 throughout the Southern Philippines. Although the MILF is well manned and armed they have avoided continuous combat operations against the AFP. Historically the MILF have negotiated and voluntarily harbored themselves in base camps while the AFP executed operations in close proximity against the ASG and JI. This is believed to be due to significant loss over the past several years of base camps and personnel to the AFP while involved in direct combat.<sup>11</sup>

The third and final Designated Foreign Terrorist Organization that operates in the Southern Philippines is Jeemah Islamiah. JI was designated as a terrorist organization by the United States in October 2002.<sup>12</sup> The organization was uncovered shortly after 9/11 and was found to have extensive ties with Al

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<sup>10</sup> Moro National Liberation front is not on the US list of terrorist organizations and is currently in negotiations with the Government of the Philippines for an autonomous Muslim region in the Southern Philippines. MNLF restrains from violence during negotiations and President Arroyo has negotiated with US to keep the MNLF off the Terrorist Watch List.

<sup>11</sup> MILF and AFP senior leaders continue to negotiate during operations that encroach on MILF base camps. Occasionally, contact occurs between the two but the AFP prefers to keep the MILF contained rather than engage in a direct contact scenario. Additional information on MILF history and operations available on-line: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/milf.htm>; accessed on 21 October 2007.

<sup>12</sup> United States, Congressional Research Service, *CRS Report for Congress, Terrorism in Southeast Asia*. The Library of Congress. (updated 14 February 2006).



Qaeda.<sup>13</sup> JI is a terrorist organization that has operational cells across Southeast Asia in Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines, Australia and Thailand. Closely aligned and in collaboration with Al Qaeda, JI seeks to attack Western interest and establish an Islamic Caliphate and establish an Islamic regime in Indonesia.<sup>14</sup>

There is no exact number of JI members, but estimates range from 500 to several thousand.<sup>15</sup> As JI relates to the Philippines the number is much less due to continued AFP operations targeting JI High Value Individuals (HVIs) in the Sulu Archipelago. The most notorious of these operatives is JI member Dulmatin<sup>16</sup> and Omar Patek.<sup>17</sup> Both JI members have established operations on Jolo Island in the Southern Philippines and have enjoyed a high level of support from the ASG and MILF. All three organizations, the ASG, JI and MILF are currently being pursued by the AFP in the Southern Philippines with US assistance.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, summary

<sup>14</sup> Globalsecurity.org report, Jemaah Islamiya. Available on-line.  
<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/ji.htm>: Accessed on 21 October 2007.

<sup>15</sup> Globalsecurity.org report, Jemaah Islamiya. Available on-line.  
<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/ji.htm>: Accessed on 21 October 2007.

<sup>16</sup> Dulmatin is a designated US State Department High Value Individual on the Rewards for Justice program (\$10,000,000.00). Dulmatin is believed to have been one of the masterminds behind the 2002 bombings in Bali, Indonesia, which killed 202 people, including seven U.S. citizens.

<sup>17</sup> Omar Patek is a designated US State Department High Value Individual on the rewards for Justice program (\$1,000,000.00). Patek is believed to have served as the assistant for the field coordinator of the 2002 bombings in Bali, Indonesia, which killed 202 people, including seven U.S. citizens.

## US Assistance:

Although the State Department and the US Embassy-Philippines are the main proponents for assistance to the GOP, USPACOM is the US executive agent for military operations executed in support of OEF-P. In January 2002 and in order to facilitate OEF-P, USPACOM established a Joint Operations Area (JOA) in the Southern Philippines and assigned Special Operations Command Pacific (SOCPAC) as the supported command for operations within the JOA. SOCPAC established and deployed Joint Special Forces Task Force – Philippines (JSOTF-P) in order to command and control US military efforts and to facilitate GOP and AFP counterinsurgency operations in the JOA. JSOTF-P operates as the coordination and synchronization element for all US military and interagency efforts within the JOA. Additionally, JSOTF-P coordinates and synchronizes all efforts with the GOP and AFP counterinsurgency operations within the JOA (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Joint Operations Area<sup>18</sup>



<sup>18</sup> Southern Philippines JOA includes land and sea area as highlighted in figure 1 from the North and South of Mindanao, East of Malaysia and includes the Sulu Archipelago. JOA is 8000 square miles of land and sea.

JSOTF-P is executing the US strategy of “by, with and through” in the Philippines at the operational and tactical levels by co-locating elements within AFP headquarters. Liaison Coordinating Elements (LCE) are co-located at the Major Command, Brigade level command and Battalion level command. LCEs primary purpose is to “Advise and Assist”<sup>19</sup> AFP units with intelligence fusion and operational planning. LCEs do not engage in direct combat with insurgents, but do advise AFP commanders on possible actions that would offer an advantage while in contact with insurgent elements. There have been numerous claims by local Philippine citizens and newspaper editorials that American forces have engaged in direct contact in the Southern Philippines. However, there has been no creditable evidence or actual attribution to specific incidents provided.

Advising foreign forces is one of the primary missions for US SOF and is not a new mission as it applies to Foreign Internal Defense (FID).<sup>20</sup> Historically and currently in Iraq and Afghanistan, US SOF forces have been involved in direct combat operations with foreign forces while “advising and assisting.” In the Southern Philippines, the intent of “by, with and through” is to “advise and assist” the AFP in order to for the host nation forces to actively conduct the counterinsurgency. The purpose of this intent is to gain legitimacy and credibility

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<sup>19</sup> "Our mission here is to train, advise and assist the Philippine military to beat terrorism in the southern Philippines," Brigadier-General Donald Wurster, Commander of US forces, Philippines. 20 April 2002. Advise and assist in the above context is conceptual as a method of providing the Philippines with an increased capacity to conduct counterinsurgency operations and pursue terrorist organizations.

<sup>20</sup> US Doctrine includes Foreign Internal Defense as one of the five primary Special Operations Missions: Counterterrorism, Direct Action, Foreign Internal Defense, Special reconnaissance and Unconventional Warfare. FID missions are primarily conducted by SOF to assist and train the military and national defense forces of foreign nations.

for the GOP and AFP with population base. Additionally, this methodology can have a positive impact on relationship building among other Pacific regional governments and populations, facilitating future operations with other nations for prosecuting the WOT.

Regionally, relationship building for long lasting regional partners is the goal of the USPACOM Theater Strategic Cooperation Plan (TSCP).<sup>21</sup> The goal for relationship building is to gain understanding of other countries socio-culture and to gain productive relationships over an extended period of time. USPACOM as well as governmental partners combating terrorism have invested a significant time and effort in order to build and maintain these relationships. Investments have been and continue to be made across the Diplomacy, Information, Military and Economic (DIME)<sup>22</sup> spectrum. After years of exchange programs, frequent deployments, exercises and multi-lateral conferences, USPACOM as well as other governmental agencies continue to immerse themselves in the Pacific region to gain lasting, effective relationships in order to build partnerships in the War on Terrorism.

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<sup>21</sup> "Theater Security Cooperation Program (TSCP) is the vehicle through which we extend U.S. influence, develop access, and promote competence among potential coalition partners. These activities directly support the War on Terror and enhance readiness for contingency actions against emerging threats." Testimony of Admiral Thomas B. Fargo, Commander USPACOM to the US House Armed Services Committee, 31 March 2004.

<sup>22</sup> "Diplomatic, Information, Military and Economic (DIME) - Areas of national power that are leveraged in "effects-based" operations against an adversary's vulnerabilities and targeted against his will and capability to conduct war." US Joint Forces Command, Joint Force Command Glossary

The driving principle behind US aims in building relationships is to have partner nations accept the lead on combating terrorism in their own countries. This strategy is based on believing that success in the long term can only be achieved through bilateral or multilateral cooperation. Using the “Advise and Assist” technique in order to win the counterinsurgency fight “by, with and through” the Philippine Government and Armed Forces is a potentially effective strategy to prevent the perception of US unilateral actions.

TSCP also includes relationship building as a vital process in combating terrorism in the Pacific region and involves the whole of government approach rather than just a military approach. It is a strategy that includes US military, US Department of State, interagency, and the Government of the Philippines cooperation. All coordinated and synchronized in a methodological manner that allows for the achievement of a common desired end-state.

### **The Basilan Model:**

In the Philippines, the method being employed to achieve this process is known as the Basilan Model.<sup>23</sup> Originally known as the McCormick’s Diamond Model (figure 2),<sup>24</sup> the Basilan Model depicts the relationships between host nation governments, the insurgents, the population, and international actors or agencies. Initially used for operations in 2002 on Basilan Island the Basilan

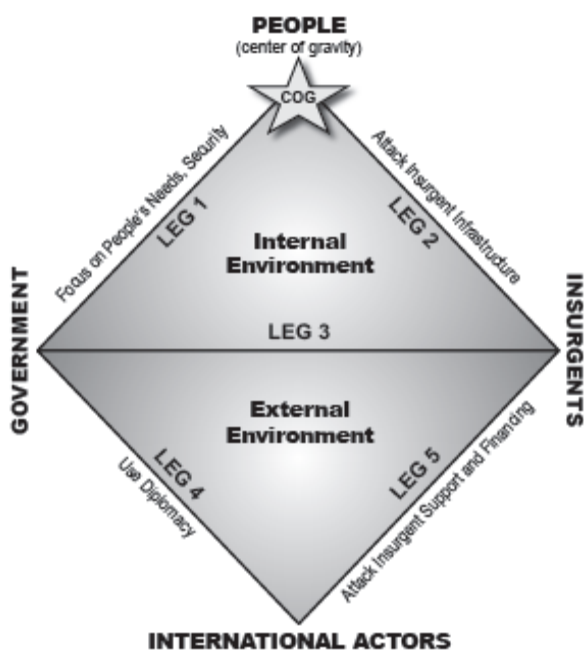
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<sup>23</sup> The Basilan Model is based on the original McCormick’s Diamond Model. Following operations on Basilan Island in 2002 the Philippine Government began to describe this model as the Basilan Model.

<sup>24</sup> Dr. Gordon McCormick created the Diamond Model to capture the interaction with external international actors OEF-P planners used the Diamond Model as their guiding strategy for operations in the Philippines.

Model is still applicable today and is the cornerstone for JSOTF-P coordination throughout the JOA for all military and interagency efforts. The model uses six main principles to achieve the host nation's principle goal of destroying the insurgents, while reducing their influence and growth in the region. The six principles are: 1. Consider popular support the Center of Gravity, 2. Enhance government legitimacy and control, 3. Focus on the people's needs and security, 4. Target insurgent safe havens, infrastructure, and support, 5. Share intelligence, and 6. Develop local security forces.<sup>25</sup>

Figure 2 (McCormick's Diamond Model)



<sup>25</sup> Gregory Wilson, Colonel, U.S. Army, "Anatomy of a Successful COIN Operation: OEF-Philippines and The Indirect Approach," *Military review*, (November-December 2006): pp-4.

Using the Basilan Model as a focus tool, JSOTF-P coordinates all actions and activities inside the JOA in coordination with the host nation government and armed forces to ensure a well synchronized approach to fighting the insurgency.

Legs 1 through 5 of the model depict the actions the Philippines and supporting agencies should take throughout the course of the counterinsurgency. Legs 1 through 3 should be executed sequentially.<sup>26</sup> The Philippine's internal environment and actions required are depicted in the upper half of the model. In order to gain a fundamental understanding or "base" of needs the Government of the Philippines should first work along leg 1. The further the government moves along leg 1 the more influence it will gain over the population. There are many techniques to assess population needs and when possible as many varying methods should be used in an effort to gain a sense of true understanding. From a Southern Philippines perspective, Human Intelligence (HUMINT) and gaining information from the Armed Forces working in the areas are very beneficial to gaining insight into the population's needs. Technological means can be beneficial but most likely do not give the Government the full understanding of the populations culture and informal communications structures and meanings.

As the Philippine Government moves up leg 1 they are taking from the insurgents influence over the population in the Southern Philippines. The advantage of this process is the gain of opportunities to gather information from the population that may have previously been held back. Now, information gained from the

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid, pp-5

population that exposes vulnerabilities in the insurgent's infrastructure can be used to exploit leg 2 of the model. In a general sense, military forces normally do not attack along legs 1 and 2.<sup>27</sup> These avenues are pursued by the Philippine Government. Additionally, gaining information while attacking along legs 1 and 2 often leads to gained intelligence that can quickly become "Actionable Intelligence".<sup>28</sup> As actionable intelligence is gained, leg 3 can be attacked using military forces in order to have a direct impact on the insurgent's combat power, capabilities, infrastructure of a military type and overall reducing his influence over the population. As described, legs 1, 2, and 3 are executed by different agencies within the Philippine government and non-governmental agencies but are mutually supporting.<sup>29</sup>

Throughout the upper half of the Basilan Model or Internal Environment, the Government of the Philippines is the supported or main effort. US involvement in the upper half is in a supporting role. Using the "by, with and through" construct the US effort can support along each leg. US State Department and US Military Information Support Teams (MIST) support the Philippine Government for assessing the needs of the population through various means that include surveys, open source analysis, and needs analysis. MIST can also be used to produce informational products that inform the population of the Rewards for

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, pp-5

<sup>28</sup> Actionable Intelligence is intelligence that affords the opportunity to quickly use the information for exploitation against the enemy, resulting in a desired effect being achieved based on the timeliness of the information.

<sup>29</sup> Gregory Wilson, Colonel, U.S. Army, "Anatomy of a Successful COIN Operation: OEF-Philippines and The Indirect Approach," *Military review*, (November-December 2006): pp-5.



Justice Program, the purpose of government operations, planned and on-going Civil Military Operations, general public information and explanations for US presence in the area. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is used to support the Philippine Government in developing a better infrastructure and quality of life in support of providing for the needs of the population. All US government operations are coordinated and synchronized by JSOTF-P to ensure maximum effect with respect to GOP operations.

Continuing to support in the upper half of the model, the US shares intelligence<sup>30</sup> with the Philippine Government in order to allow them better opportunities to attack insurgent infrastructure (leg 2) and the insurgents themselves (leg 3). Again, the intent is to provide better equipment, training, share intelligence and assist in planning to afford the GOP better capabilities and opportunities for success of their own – “by, with and through.”

The External Environment depicted in the model refers to those forces that can influence or provide an advantage to insurgents from outside the borders of the Philippines. Supplies from Indonesia or financing from radical Islamic sources are examples of these External Environments. The Government of the Philippines remains the supported party for actions taken against these environment actors, but in some instances it may need assistance from the

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<sup>30</sup> United States, Congressional research Service, CRS report for Congress, “*Abu Sayyaf: Target of Philippine-U.S. Anti-Terrorism Cooperation*”. The Library of Congress. (updated 26 July 2007). pp-CRS16.

international community in order to attack along legs 4 and 5.<sup>31</sup> This environment also tends to move from the operational arena and more into the strategic level of operations. In this environment the US again is supporting the Philippines and can at times take the lead effort in influencing the international community. The US Ambassador and the Department of State support through diplomatic pressures and possible recommendations for the US Government to take punitive measures against sponsors of the insurgency in the Southern Philippines. Some level of technical assistance and information sharing is offered to the Philippines for influencing this environment, but all efforts remain in support of the Government of the Philippines and not as a US unilateral action.

The practical application of the Basilan Model begins well outside the borders of the Republic of the Philippines (RP), in Washington, D.C. US national policy for the Philippines is the start point and drives all military, Department of State, interagency, and coordination with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO). Inside the geographic Pacific region, the USPACOM TSCP specifically addresses the RP and incorporates the US Government's policy. The overarching USPACOM plan or guidance for the Philippines is shared with the US Embassy-Manila and Country Team, all USPACOM Component Commands and agencies operating in the Philippines. This guidance is coordinated with all agencies involved in supporting the Philippines and is the basis for operations coordinated within the model.

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<sup>31</sup> Gregory Wilson, Colonel, U.S. Army, "Anatomy of a Successful COIN Operation: OEF-Philippines and The Indirect Approach," *Military review*, (November-December 2006): pp-5.

**Lines of Operation:**

Inside the borders of the Philippines the major players consist of the GOP, the AFP, the US Embassy and Country Team, Joint United States Military Assistance Team (JUSMAG), USAID, and JSOTF-P.<sup>32</sup> JSOTF-P as the executive agent for operations inside the JOA must coordinate and synchronize the efforts of the interagency team. Coordination and synchronization is executed along three lines of operation; capacity building, civil-military operations and information operations.<sup>33</sup> JSOTF-P conducts regular meetings with all agencies to ensure unity of effort and optimal results. Additionally, numerous Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) having humanitarian and stability interest in the region are included in the coordination process to ensure all efforts are synchronized for maximum effect.

Executing capacity building requires that SOF forces conduct assessments for AFP abilities in a wide range of areas that include cultural awareness, unit combat capabilities, and normal training programs. Based on assessments, Special Operations Forces work closely with the AFP to increase the effectiveness and professionalism of their operations. A great emphasis is placed on human rights training during the capacity building process in order to ensure programs are inline with US political and legal constraints for conducting operations with foreign forces.

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<sup>32</sup> David P. Fridovich and Fred T. Krawchuck, "The Special Operations Forces Indirect approach," *Joint Force Quarterly*, issue 44, (1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2007): pp-24.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. pp-25

Capacity building is one of the core missions for US SOF personnel and is known as Foreign Internal Defense (FID). JSOTF-P executes this mission daily in the Southern Philippines with the AFP. Using intelligence relevant to the JOA and SOF Subject Matter Expert Exchanges (SMEE), JSOTF-P prepares focused training for the AFP.<sup>34</sup> Through these exchanges, the AFP are able to increase their skills in order to gain and maintain security for the population living in the Southern Philippines. Additional areas covered by SMEEs, include marksmanship, combat life saving techniques, maritime interdiction processes, close air support and leadership development among numerous other areas assessed as needing improvement.<sup>35</sup>

Another supporting agency in the area of capacity building for the GOP is the US State Department through a program called the Philippine Defense Reform (PDR). Although a GOP program primarily funded by the GOP, the State Department began supporting the program with funds in 2005.<sup>36</sup> PDR focuses on improving and modernizing the AFP with equipment, training, institutional education and improved quality of life for AFP members. The intent of US State

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<sup>34</sup> William Eckert, US Army Command Sergeant Major, *“Defeating the Idea: Unconventional Warfare in the Southern Philippines,”* Special Warfare, (November-December 2006). pp 18.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid

<sup>36</sup> Philippine Defense Reform (PDR) initiative began in FY 2005, and requirements are projected to continue through FY 2008. Philippines: Security Assistance, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Washington, DC. July 11, 2007. <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/65040.htm> , accessed: 2 Oct 2007.

Department backing is to increase these capacities as a contributor in the overall campaign against terrorism and regional stability.

Civil-Military Operations (CMO) capitalizes on the broader population that support terrorist groups when the terrorist groups enjoy popular local support in what are normally economical and educationally deprived areas. By encouraging and assisting partner countries with the establishment of security, better infrastructure, economic stability and educational institutions, populations are provided numerous opportunities other than potential radical indoctrination.<sup>37</sup>

CMO projects are targeted at areas where terrorist organizations enjoy public support or hold influence over the area. Secure conditions must be established first in these areas by pressuring the terrorist out of the area. Once areas are secure enough to begin CMO, assessments are made regarding the needs of the people. The intent is to demonstrate to the population that the AFP is an avenue for a better quality of life. It is important to gain population “buy-in” for CMO projects in order to turn the projects over to the local population when complete. Working in conjunction with the other two lines of operations, Capacity Building and IO, the US, GOP and NGOs have been able to access and execute numerous CMO projects in areas that were previously hostile.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> William Eckert, US Army Command Sergeant Major, “*Defeating the Idea: Unconventional Warfare in the Southern Philippines*,” *Special Warfare*, (November-December 2006). pp 19.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* pp-21

JSOTF-P along with the AFP have executed numerous CMO projects in the Southern Philippines during the course of OEF-P. Using 2006 as an example year, the AFP and JSOTF-P have built 19 schools, dug 10 wells, begun five road projects, started work on five community centers and built five water-distribution centers on Jolo Island.<sup>39</sup> Other CMO activities that take place by both JSOTF-P and the AFP are Medical Civil Action Programs (MEDCAP), Dental Civil Action Programs (DENCAP) and Veterinarian Civil Action Programs (VETCAP). These CAP programs have benefited thousands of personnel living in the Sulu Archipelago that would otherwise not have had the resources to pay for medical services.<sup>40</sup>

As security capabilities increase through capacity building and the IO campaign continues to produce a positive perception of the GOP, CMO activities will have a compounding effect and will continue to achieve the desired result of turning the population away from supporting the terrorist.

Information Operations are critical to the process and must be mutually supporting to all other efforts. IO starts with an overarching IO campaign that targets not only the population inside the JOA but all relevant external factors as well. The perception of all operations executed in support of the Philippines must be viewed as supportive and not as US unilateral actions. Many of the people in the Southern Philippines see the presence of US military as a threat to their

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

independence and as US intervention in national affairs. JSOTF-P recognizes this and has taken on a large IO campaign using local media outlets and key influential parties in the JOA to reduce this perception and to maintain the focus on the GOP goals.<sup>41</sup> Additional factors regarding the IO campaign against the Philippine insurgency are those external support structures for terrorist groups that include finance, logistics, communications networks and ideology. The goal in prosecuting programs against external factors is to isolate terrorist groups from this type of critical support using interagency and other nations support.

The IO campaign is truly a combined effort by all agencies involved in the counterinsurgency of the Southern Philippines. From the GOP and US Embassy Public Affairs branch to the AFP and US Psychological Operations teams on the ground, all agencies must present common themes and messages in order for the population to perceive the credibility of the information. In addition the IO campaign is interwoven into all capacity building events and CMO projects to enhance the impact of those events. JSOTF-P manages the combined IO campaign to ensure unity of messages and themes and to ensure a synchronized effort by all parties.

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid. pp-21

### Measures of Effectiveness:

*The two best guides, which can not be readily reduced to statistics or processed through a computer, are an improvement in intelligence voluntarily given by the population and a decrease in the insurgents' recruiting rate. Much can be learnt merely from the faces of the population in villages that are subject to clear-and-hold operations, if these are visited at regular intervals. Faces which are at first resigned and apathetic, or even sullen, six months later are full of cheerful welcoming smiles. The people know who is winning.*

*Sir Robert Thompson*  
*Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam*

Using the Basilan Model and the “by, with and through” construct desired effects are being achieved in the Southern Philippines and US assistance is being noticed by regional partners. Major General Fridovich, Commanding General Special Operations Command Pacific summed his assessment up in the following manner during an interview in 2007: “After two years on Basilan Island, for example, the environment no longer fostered terrorist activities and the ASG left the island. The AFP effectively drained the swamp of underlying conditions without assistance. The Basilan people now live in a safe and secure environment.....Terrorism has been disrupted in the region. This is a direct result of our partner nations’ efforts, our indirect approach, and the quality of relationships we have built over time in the region.”<sup>42</sup> However, the challenge is measuring effectiveness and being able to show future partner countries in the region US effectiveness and how it impacts the War on Terrorism.

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<sup>42</sup> Jeff McKaughan, “*Pacific Warrior: Building Capacity and Partnerships Throughout the Region*”, Special Operations Technology. (Volume 5, Issue 2, 2007). pp-25-29.



Compounding the problem of the assessment process is the simple fact that US and GOP actions in the Southern Philippines are normally not measurable with immediate success and take time to assess the true impact of operations. In the long term the US and GOP both want to neutralize the insurgency and stabilize the region. Progress has been made in both areas, but the insurgency in the Southern Philippines continues and remains a threat to global security if not contained. In order to assist in the process success has been defined in terms of goals and objectives and have been further refined in terms that can be assessed. The US military's goals and objectives for operations in the Southern Philippines consist of the following areas:

1. **Training AFP individuals and units in conducting counterinsurgency operations, including night operations using night vision goggles.**<sup>43</sup>

Through the use of SMEEs and MTTs, the US military trained two AFP Special Forces Battalions and one Scout Ranger Battalion. These units have been assessed as sufficiently trained and are currently conducting operations on the Island of Jolo in the Southern Philippines. Training Assistance Teams continue to work with units from the Philippine Army, Navy, and Marines in order to increase their effectiveness in the Southern Philippines.

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<sup>43</sup> United States, Congressional research Service, *CRS report for Congress, Abu Sayyaf: Target of Philippine-U.S. Anti-Terrorism Cooperation*. (The Library of Congress, updated 26 July 2007), pp-CRS16.

2. **Providing better equipment, including communications and night vision devices to the AFP.**<sup>44</sup> Currently all AFP units operating in the Southern Philippines have common and compatible communications systems provided by the US. Units conducting night operations have been provided, trained and assessed as proficient with night vision devices.
3. **Providing intelligence gathering assets to the AFP.**<sup>45</sup> In addition to providing equipment and training on collection assets, the US shares gained intelligence with the AFP to better focus operations. The benefits of this intelligence fusion process have accounted for multiple operations directed against known terrorist locations and activities with a great amount of success. The death of Abu Soluman,<sup>46</sup> ASG High Value Individual (HVI), is an example of shared intelligence for identification, location and timing shared with the AFP that lead to the execution of a successful operation.
4. **Providing operational planning assistance to the AFP.**<sup>47</sup> JSOTF-P organized and embeds Liaison Coordination Elements (LCE) with AFP Brigades and Battalions conducting counterinsurgency operations on the islands of Basilan, Jolo and Mindanao. The LCEs are responsible for advising and assisting the AFP with intelligence fusion, planning for

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid

<sup>46</sup> Ibid

<sup>47</sup> United States, Congressional research Service, *CRS report for Congress, Abu Sayyaf: Target of Philippine-U.S. Anti-Terrorism Cooperation*. (The Library of Congress, updated 26 July 2007), pp-CRS16.

- operations and assessing operations for future actions. SOF LCEs are a three to six person element that have been fully integrated into respective AFP staffs, they do not engage in direct combat actions but continuously advise and assist the AFP staff during operations.
5. **Providing AFP with aerial reconnaissance in support of operations in the Southern Philippines.**<sup>48</sup> JSOTF-P is organized with an aerial reconnaissance detachment that provides 24/7 on call capabilities. These platforms and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) are capable of providing real-time intelligence and operational assessments to the AFP through the JSOTF-P headquarters and LCEs.
  6. **Improving the quality of life for the population in the Southern Philippines by assisting and working with the AFP on civic action programs.**<sup>49</sup> Together, US military personnel and the AFP have conducted hundreds of MEDCAPs, VETCAPs, and DENCAPs in the Southern Philippines, providing medical assistance in locations that had previously never been afforded those opportunities. Numerous lives have been improved in regards to medical support through these on-going programs and the result has been a turn in the population from supporting the terrorist to seeking assistance from the AFP. Military engineers have constructed roads and piers and repaired schools for the people in the Philippines. All have provided positive results to for a population that

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid

<sup>49</sup> Ibid

- continues to struggle with poverty and oppression by terrorist organizations seeking their support.
7. **Support USAID projects in the Southern Philippines to improve the quality of life for the population.**<sup>50</sup> JSOTF-P and AFP personnel conduct joint planning with USAID for projects that will benefit the population and support the goals of the GOP. Security is provided during the execution of projects and ownership of completed projects is turned over to the local community. The support for USAID is a mutually supporting relationship that has gained increased credibility for the US Government, the GOP, JSOTF-P and the AFP in the Southern Philippines.

The above seven goals and objectives are relatively tangible actions that can be assessed as measures of performance,<sup>51</sup> or in other words “Are we doing this?” Answering the question “Are we doing this?” is simply a question of observing our actions in the physical sense. There is no subjective measuring that takes place. The degree of effectiveness is where analysis and subjective assessment must take place. Continuous assessments must be done in order to sustain this support and improve on areas that require adjustments, but it is a relatively simple process for JSOTF-P to execute. The more difficult part of the process is to measure what effect efforts are having on the overall campaign.

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid

<sup>51</sup> Measure of Performance. A criterion used to assess friendly actions that are tied to measuring task accomplishment. Also called MOP. Joint Pub 3.0, Operations, 17 September 2006.

SOCPAC as the command element for JSOTF-P and as the USPACOM component responsible for operations in the JOA has taken the lead for developing a system to measure effectiveness in the Southern Philippines.<sup>52</sup>

The principle belief for measuring effects in the Philippines is a long term process that is based on assessing operational results and changes that occur following operations. SOCPAC analyzes US activities with host nation activities and the US investment made for those activities. The system is not designed to count the number of activities conducted, it is instead focused on how the US is doing in building relationships and improving Philippine capacity to conduct operations. SOCPAC conducts a “Measures of Effectiveness”<sup>53</sup> assessment quarterly in order to better prioritize efforts, shift resources, and ensure the focus of operations remains balanced in regards to the “by, with and through” construct.

### **Assessment:**

Although much of the assessment process is subjective and based on continuous operations and changes over time, there is quantifiable data that suggest OEF-P and the “by, with and through” approach to counterinsurgency in the Philippines appears to be working. JSOTF-P Command Sergeant Major Eckert states the current assessment of OEF-P in this way, “The SOF indirect role is proving itself in the Southern Philippines, and with patience and

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<sup>52</sup> David P. Fridovich and Fred T. Krawchuck, “The Special Operations Forces Indirect approach,” *Joint Force Quarterly*, issue 44, (1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2007): pp-27.

<sup>53</sup> Measure of Effectiveness. A criterion used to assess changes in system behavior, capability, or operational environment that is tied to measuring the attainment of an end state, achievement of an objective, or creation of an effect. Also called MOE. JP 3.0, Operations, 17 September 2006.

persistence, the unconventional warfare tools used here, along with proven SOF methodologies, will continue to succeed and to provide a powerful new tool for our nation in fighting the Global War on Terrorism.”<sup>54</sup>

Although US forces in the Philippines are not involved in direct contact, the JOA is a designated combat zone. Therefore, casualty numbers should be looked at as a source data for comparison of the mission versus other theaters where US forces are conducting counterinsurgency. Beginning with the SOCPAC initial investment of 350 Special Forces personnel early in 2002 and eventually augmenting the force with approximately 1,500 additional personnel in various roles of support, force levels have remained constant between 2,000 and 2,500 for the past five years. In the last five years, US forces operating in the Southern Philippines have lost only one military member in a combat manner. The death related from an IED exploding in front of an AFP compound on Basilan Island while a convoy carrying several American military members past. This death equates to a .04 percent of the constant US military presence in the Philippines. Using estimates from the Iraqi theater of approximately 3,133<sup>55</sup> deaths with a constant force level of 150,000<sup>56</sup> military personnel in theater over the last four years, the percentage equals 2.1. Although the two theaters have numerous differences, comparative analysis shows that the Philippine’s theater of operation

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<sup>54</sup> William Eckert, US Army Command Sergeant Major, “*Defeating the Idea: Unconventional Warfare in the Southern Philippines*,” *Special Warfare*, (November-December 2006). pp 22.

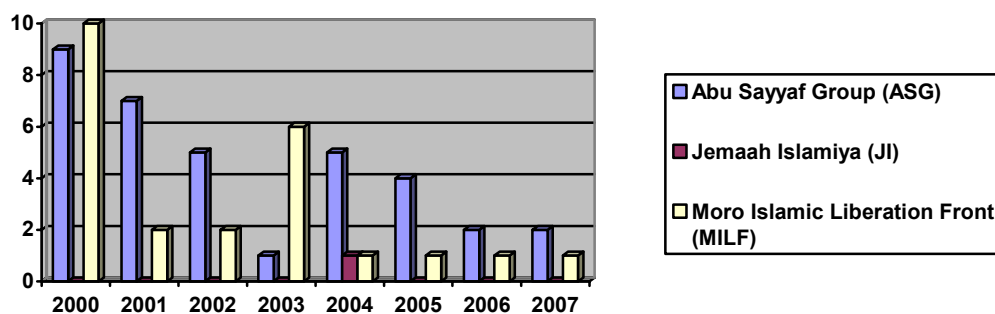
<sup>55</sup> Data collected on 5 Oct 2007 from Casualties in Iraq., <http://www.antiwar.com/casualties/index.php>. Accessed on 5 Oct 2007.

<sup>56</sup> 150,000 is an estimated average based on current surge of US forces in Iraq which bring the total number of personnel in Iraq on 5 Oct 2007 to 168,000 rounded to nearest thousand).

has a far less US death rate than Iraq. This is not conclusive enough to state that OEF-P is more successful, but it is an indicator that methods being used in the Philippines should be explored further to capitalize on any success that can be identified.

From the beginning of operations in 2002 until present and due to the efforts of the AFP to include ground and maritime forces, the GOP has been able to contain much of the insurgency to the Southern Philippines. In fact, for the last two years bombing incidents and deaths caused by the ASG, JI, and MILF have been rare events North of Mindanao. Again, this is a positive indicator that efforts in the area of capacity building are having an overall impact on the Philippines. The chart below (Figure 3) shows the downward trend in number of incidents from 2000 to 2007 conducted by the ASG, JI and MILF. The figure shows only those events in the Philippines and that can be attributed to one or another of the specific terrorist organizations.

Figure 3. Incidents by group<sup>57</sup>



<sup>57</sup> Figure 2. Incidents by group include attributed IEDs and bombings attributed to ASG, JI or MILF only in the Philippines from 2000 to 2007. Chart is a recreation of data taken from MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base, <http://www.tkb.org/>; accessed on 30 September 2007.

The chart shows a clear drop in number of incidents from 2000 to 2007. The initial decline in terrorist incidents from 2000 to 2003 can be attributed to initial operations on Basilan when the Philippine initiated military operations against the ASG. The spike in 2004 includes the sinking of a Philippines Supper Ferry that departed Manila on 27 February 2004 and was sunk 90 minutes later. The Supper Ferry was sunk using an IED and the incident was claimed to have been executed by the ASG. All other incidents have primarily been contained in the Sulu Archipelago.

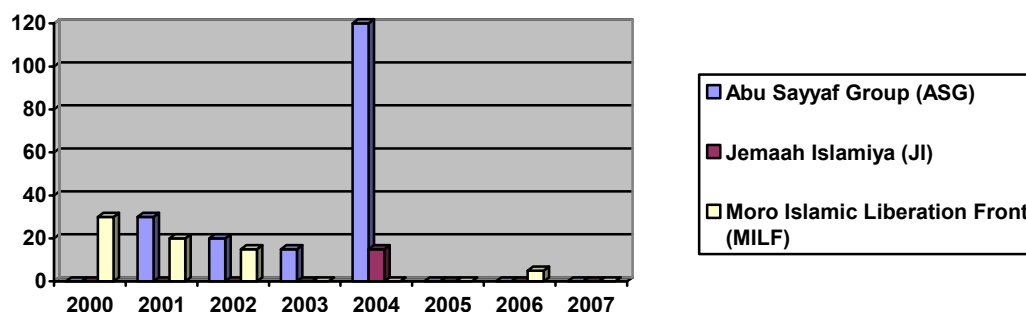
The only incident attributed to JI during the period between 2000 and 2007 in the Philippines, on the island of Mindanao, occurred in December 2004. A single explosive device was detonated in an open market in General Santos City, killing 15 people and injuring 58.

When analyzing the amount of death caused by the three terrorist groups during the same time period, another clear pattern of decline can be observed. The below chart shows the decline in deaths caused by the ASG, JI and MILF in the Philippines caused by the incidents included in Figure 3 above. With the exception of the Supper Ferry bombing described above, the majority of deaths have occurred in the Southern Philippines where the AFP have contained the terrorist threat. The decline in “deaths caused”, with the exception of the Supper Ferry incident is another indicator that capacity building has enabled the AFP to



reduce the threat and provide a more secure environment for the population of the Southern Philippines.

Figure 4. Deaths by Group<sup>58</sup>



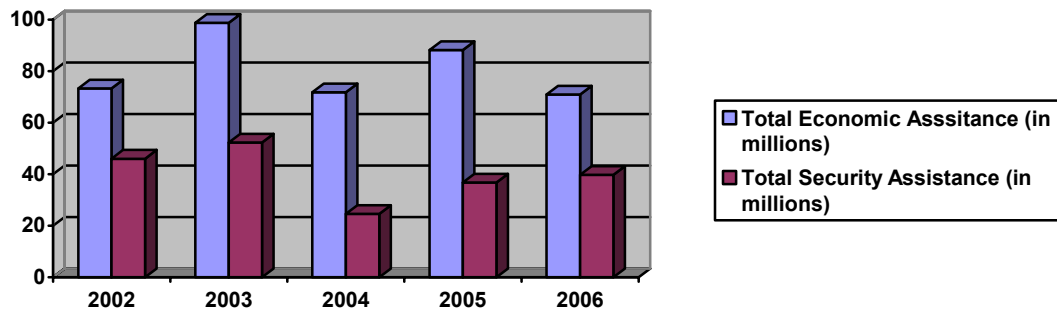
Deaths caused by the Supper ferry Bombing in 2004 accounted for over 100 persons and was the last recorded major bombing incident conducted by the ASG. The market bombing incident described above and conducted by JI accounts for all of the attributed deaths (15) caused in the Philippines.

In the area of CMO, the partnership created between JSOTF-P, the US Department of State, USAID and Non-Governmental Organizations have produced immeasurable results regarding the positive impacts on the population of the Sulu Archipelago. MEDCAPs, DENCAPS, VETCAPs, school building projects, piers constructed, roads constructed, donated goods and money have all contributed to influencing a population that previously supported the insurgency. These programs have given the population base a better quality of life that was not even perceived as previously possible. Additionally, using the

<sup>58</sup> Figure 3. Deaths by group attributed to ASG, JI or MILF only in the Philippines from 2000 to 2007. Chart is a recreation of data taken from MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base, <http://www.tkb.org/>: accessed on 30 September 2007.

“by, with and through” construct, these programs have brought credibility to the GOP and AFP that did not exist before. One of the biggest indicators of credibility and trust in the GOP is the increase in the amount of information being received from the population regarding insurgent activities and locations. Information received from the population is directly related to legs 1 and 2 of the Basilan Model and are large contributors to leg 3 which in turn relate directly to the decrease in amounts of incidents and deaths described earlier.

One area of data regarding the CMO effort in the Southern Philippines that can be quantified is the amount of US assistance, in dollars, the Department of State is continuing to allocate. Figure 5 below displays the amount of dollars that continue to be invested in providing economic and security growth for the Philippines during the years 2002 to 2006. These relatively large amounts of funding are indicators of positive results in the Philippines and an obligation by the US to continue to support the GOP, which in turn has a positive influence on the GOP to continue the fight against terrorism.

Figure 5. U.S. Assistance to Philippines, FY2002-2006<sup>59</sup>

### Conclusion:

In conclusion, from the US national level to USPACOM and into the Joint Operations Area, US policy for conducting counterinsurgency operations in the Southern Philippines is aligned. Successful execution of OEF-P as a current operation and the “buy-in” of the Philippine Government for the Basilan Model is the result of this alignment. From US national policy, through the PACOM TSCP and SOCPAC’s continued relationship building in the Pacific region including JSOTF-P’s synchronization of operations in the JOA, themes and messages are shared. The potential successes of “by, with and through” operations in the Philippines will certainly be recognized by other Pacific region nations facing increased terrorist threats, enabling an even more regionally widespread host nation assistance program.

<sup>59</sup> United States, Congressional Research Service, “*CRS Report for Congress, Terrorism in Southeast Asia.*” The Library of Congress. (updated 14 February 2006)

The Philippine Government's willingness to take the lead for counterinsurgency operations within its own borders has established credibility for both the GOP and the US with the population of the Philippines. Their increased capacity to become an effective fighting force to conduct counterinsurgency operations has accounted for a significant reduction in the terrorist threat by containing them in the Southern Philippines. Ensuring the population understands the US is in support of the GOP for CMO projects in the Southern Philippines has increased popular opinion for the government and the AFP. Focused IO efforts in support of all operations have produced a positive impact on the people of the Southern Philippines and have made them more likely to provide the AFP with information about the insurgents. Terrorist activities in the Southern Philippines have been reduced and the insurgency has been contained. The GOP is maintaining its commitment to annihilate the insurgency and JSOTF-P is continuing to coordinate the effort. The "by, with and through" construct for executing the Basilan Model appears to be productive and effective in regards to containing terrorist in the Southern Philippines and increased stability in the region. The PACOM and SOCPAC method for employing the Basilan model of providing assistance rather than leading counterinsurgency operations in the Southern Philippines suggest a level of success at this stage and can potentially be used as a model for further counterinsurgency operations of similar type.

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