

Special Warfare

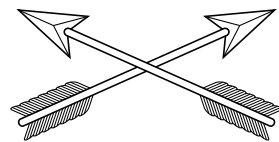
The Professional Bulletin of the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School



ARSOF in the Philippines



From the Commandant



Special Warfare

Following the terrorist attacks on the United States in September 2001, the attention of the nation and of the world was focused on the activities of U.S. special-operations forces in Afghanistan. During that same time, other U.S. Army special-operations forces, or ARSOF, were diligently training a counterterrorist force in the Philippines, as well as countering insurgent and terrorist forces there by implementing security-assistance, civic-action and humanitarian projects. Although those efforts were successful, they were overshadowed by Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, and they remain largely unpublicized.

Unlike other issues of *Special Warfare* that contain articles from a variety of authors, this issue contains only articles written by members of the Historian's Office of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command to record the role of ARSOF in the Philippines. Based upon interviews with ARSOF Soldiers who served at all levels of the operation, the articles paint a comprehensive picture of ARSOF's activities and provide observations regarding the uses of ARSOF in combating insurgency and terrorism.

While those observations reveal some areas that may require greater attention in future operations, they validate the training of Special Forces, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Soldiers — training conducted at the JFK Special Warfare Center and School.

Since June, it has been my honor to command the Special Warfare Center and School, the world's best special-operations training center and institution. Not only do we produce the Army's special-operations warriors who have the skills needed to win on today's battlefield, we also instill the flexibility that will allow them to remain relevant in the battles of the future, and we provide the doctrinal and policy support for that elite force.

We must never forget that we are training Soldiers who will go into combat, and that



their lives depend upon the training that we give them. We must do more than train to standard. We must be receptive to new ideas and responsive to changing operational requirements. We must harness new technologies and training methodologies such as digital and Web-based learning to keep pace with a new, dynamic generation of warriors coming to join our brotherhood.

There has never been a more rewarding time to be in Army special operations than now. Our Soldiers have an important job, and their skills have never been in greater demand. They have never received more recognition or greater support, and they have never been more successful. Our challenge is to ensure that we train enough of these quiet professionals to continue the success of ARSOF on the battlefield, whether it is in widely publicized engagements such as those in Iraq or in obscure operations such as those in the remote jungles of the Philippines.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim R'.

Major General James W. Parker

Commander & Commandant

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Views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect official Army position. This publication does not supersede any information presented in other official Army publications.

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Why the Philippines?: ARSOF's Expanded Mission in the War On Terror

by Dr. C.H. Briscoe

In March 2001, in response to a request from the Philippine government, a military training team composed of Soldiers from the 1st Special Forces Group arrived in the Philippines to begin training a national counterterrorist force.



U.S. Army photo

An SF Soldier shows a Filipino soldier how to adjust the sights on his weapon. Common tasks such as sight-adjustment were often neglected by Filipino soldiers prior to their training by SF Soldiers.

After the United States turned Clark Air Force Base and Subic Bay Naval Station over to the Philippines in June 1991, combined training of the U.S. and Philippine military had ended, and U.S. security-assistance funding for the Philippines had been significantly curtailed. In the ensuing decade, without U.S. support and the benefits of a U.S.-Philippines professional military

relationship, the operational capabilities of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, or AFP, declined rapidly. That military erosion allowed latent insurgencies, some of which had ties to international terrorism, to flare to the point that they posed a threat to the viability of the Philippine government.

In November 2001, members of Army special-operations forces, or ARSOF, began participating in Exercise Balikatan 02-1, again assisting in the training of Philippine forces to counter insurgency and terrorism. Following the exercise, ARSOF conducted post-Balikatan training, humanitarian and security-assistance missions. Although post-Balikatan missions ended in late 2003, some of the missions continue today, as United States troops provide security-assistance training and conduct maintenance programs with the AFP.

As part of its charter to document ARSOF's participation in past and present operations, the Office of the Historian, U.S. Army Special Operations Command, has interviewed ARSOF Soldiers who participated at all levels of operations in the Philippines. The articles in this issue of *Special Warfare*, written by the USASOC historians, explain the missions of ARSOF in the Philippines from March 2001 to late 2003 and pass along observations that may benefit ARSOF Soldiers in future operations.

The ARSOF mission of November 2001, originally combined by the Special Operations Command, Pacific, or SOCPAC, and the U.S.



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Philippine soldiers practice map reading during training in basic infantry skills provided by U.S. Special Forces Soldiers during Exercise Balikatan.

Pacific Command, or PACOM, with Exercise Balikatan in the Joint Chiefs of Staff-sponsored Cobra Gold combined exercise series, underwent several permutations. At one time, it was referred to as “America’s Second Front in the Global War on Terrorism.”

Unfortunately, that sobriquet was somewhat misleading, because the resultant hybrid exercise was principally training assistance conducted primarily in the semi-permissive combat environment of Basilan Island, which has become the primary refuge for the most active terrorist elements in the Philippines. For more than a decade, Basilan Island has been a live-fire environment for the AFP.

In light of the uncertain environment and the aggressive actions taken by terrorists against U.S. citizens, the standing “train, advise, assist and maintain” mission originally assigned to the 1st SF Group subtly transformed from unconventional warfare to foreign internal defense and development, leaving the ARSOF ground campaign best explained by using the counterinsurgency model, which is most often associated with Special Forces missions during America’s war in Vietnam.

The ARSOF benefits gained in the Philippines ranged from the validation of Special Forces, Psychological Operations and Civil Affairs training, to the reinforcement of the importance of information operations and the demonstration of the impact

that cell-telephone text messaging can have on force-protection measures.

In the end, the missions of SF, PSYOP, CA, the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment and the 112th Signal Battalion in support of SOCPAC and PACOM in the Philippines established an acceptable American military presence in the Southeast Pacific and re-established professional military relationships, both worthy objectives for future ARSOF missions in the Pacific region. ✕

Author’s note: The articles in this issue of Special Warfare would not have been possible without the emphasis provided by Lieutenant Colonel Dennis J. Downey, deputy commander of the 1st SF Group and former commander of Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines. Downey provided regular updates on the Philippines mission, a good cross-section of officers and NCOs — from detachment- to battalion- and group-level — for interviews, as well as briefings and documentation. He also reviewed the articles in this issue for accuracy. His chronology of U.S.-Philippines relations proved invaluable. Thanks are also due to Major Robert A. Culp, S2 of the 1st SF Group, for his help with the rules of engagement and for his classification reviews of the articles.

Dr. C.H. Briscoe is the command historian for the U.S. Army Special Operations Command.

A Century of Turmoil: America's Relationship with the Philippines

by Dr. Cherilyn A. Walley

In order to understand the context of current United States military operations in the Philippines, it is necessary to review more than 100 years of America's military and political involvement in Philippine affairs.

Beginning in 1898, during the Spanish-American War, and ending in 1992 with the closing of the last American base, the U.S. maintained a visible military presence in the Philippines. During that same 94-year period, U.S. participation in Philippine politics ranged from actual governance during the first half of the 20th century to Cold War patronage during the second half. Considering the legacy of U.S. military and political presence, the Philippines is understandably sensitive to sovereignty issues and to possible U.S. influence in Philippine domestic affairs.

Philippine Insurrection

Much of the political "baggage" of Philippine-American relations dates from the Spanish-American War. The U.S. fought the war to win Cuba's independence from Spain. But because the U.S. was obliged to defeat Spain's fleet in the Philippines, which Spain also claimed,

the U.S. came into possession of the Philippines as well.

Unfortunately, the U.S. acquired not only the Philippine Islands from its victory over Spain but also the Philippine Insurrection. The Philippine Insurrection began in 1896 when Emilio Aguinaldo and his guerrillas declared war on Spain. The U.S. temporarily allied with Aguinaldo, encouraging him to besiege Spanish troops in Manila while Commodore George Dewey and the U.S. Navy's China fleet destroyed Spain's antiquated armada in Manila Bay.

Aguinaldo, led to believe that his efforts would be rewarded with Philippine independence, kept the Spanish trapped in Manila until U.S. ground forces arrived in June 1898. Ever the optimist, Aguinaldo

then declared the Philippines independent and himself head of the new government. Much to his dismay, when the U.S. VIII Corps landed, U.S. officials arranged for a relatively peaceful surrender from the Spanish governor general, Fermín Jáudenes, and occupied Manila themselves.

American officials shut Aguinaldo out of negotiations and refused to recognize his government as legitimate. Having effectively traded places with the Spanish, the Americans found themselves surrounded by Filipino revolutionaries. While neither side was particularly anxious to resume fighting, the U.S. government was determined to exercise sovereignty, and the Filipino guerrillas were equally determined to be independent. Fighting resumed along the Manila perimeter on Feb. 4, 1899.¹

Instead of capitalizing on the inherent strengths of his guerrilla units, Aguinaldo formed the Republican Army to fight the U.S. troops in conventional style. Initially, the U.S. Army was able to dominate the main population centers easily, but it lacked sufficient troops to control rural areas. In November 1899, with the arrival of U.S. reinforcements, the U.S. Army



National Archives

Emilio Aguinaldo (seated, third from right) and other Filipino insurgent leaders.

began using its now superior strength to defeat the Republican Army. In the face of U.S. conventional superiority, Aguinaldo returned to guerrilla warfare.²

By April 1900, the war had become one of insurgency and counterinsurgency efforts. The Filipino revolutionaries and the American Soldiers alike fought to win allegiance and support from the populace. The Army focused on instituting civil government and on improving the lives of the common people, usually working through local leadership.³

Recognizing the value of benevolence to pacification, the Army instituted civic-action programs. Beginning in Manila and then spreading afield to other major population centers, reform programs focused on expanding the infrastructure for transportation, education and public health in an effort to raise Filipino standards of living. New railroads, bridges, roads and telegraph and telephone lines strengthened the economy and forged commercial interdependence among the islands.

Convinced that education was more effective than troops in preventing further uprisings, the U.S. Army organized a public-school system to reduce illiteracy. The military public-health assault on disease virtually eliminated smallpox and bubonic plague, and it reduced the infant mortality rate. Although these programs were often conducted with an arrogant ethnocentrism typical of Western civilization of the day, they earned Filipino admiration.⁴

The guerrilla insurgents, on the other hand, used terrorism to counter the attractive American policies. The guerrillas established shadow governments to control villagers and to mete out punishment. The system of terror and invisible governments was most



National Archives

In this 1900 photo, Philippine insurgents pray before surrendering.

successful in areas far removed from Manila and the larger cities, in which U.S. Army garrisons were stationed. In those remote areas, revolutionary civil-military officers controlled villages, collected taxes, gathered supplies for guerrilla troops and influenced local governments. They enforced their control through executions and property destruction.⁵

By September 1900, the guerrillas were sufficiently organized to increase the pressure on U.S.

troops. In response to the increased violence, and in keeping with President William McKinley's re-election promise to remain in the Philippines, on Dec. 20, 1900, Major General Arthur MacArthur placed the Philippines under martial law. Under the stricter policy, the Army began imprisoning, deporting and even executing captured guerrilla leaders.⁶ In the field, Army patrols hounded insurgent bands, denying them rest and sanctuary and isolating them from the villages, where more numerous and better-organized garrison troops were stationed to provide security. U.S. troops captured Aguinaldo in March 1901, and on April 19, 1901, the former revolutionary issued a proclamation accepting U.S. rule of the Philippines.⁷

Anticipating the collapse of the weakened Philippine insurgency, the U.S. created the Philippine Commission to assume the legislative and executive functions of the government in areas under American control. In July 1901, McKinley appointed William Howard Taft, who was head of the commission,



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U.S. Soldiers talk to Filipina women during operations in the early 1900s.

governor-general of the Philippines. In August, the commission established the Philippine Constabulary. Separate from the U.S. Army-controlled Filipino Scouts and the municipal police, the constabulary, led by American officers, maintained law and order in pacified areas. The U.S. Army continued to exercise control in the unpacified areas, concentrating its efforts where guerrilla bands were still active.

The final Army pacification campaigns on Samar Island and in Batangas Province turned brutal after an American infantry company was massacred at Balangiga, Samar, in September 1901. In response to the massacre, the Army adopted tactics of “no-quarter fighting,” crop and livestock destruction and the forcible relocation of 300,000 civilians to concentration camps.

By April 1902, the rogue guerrilla leaders Lukban and Malvar had surrendered, and Samar Island and Batangas Province had been pacified, ending Aguinaldo’s dream of an independent republic. On July 4, 1902, when President Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed an end to the Philippine Insurrection,



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Soldiers of the Philippine Constabulary stand in formation in Manila, 1907.

the Christian parts of the country were essentially secure.⁸ According to the American measures of success — the accomplishment of basic pacification objectives, the development of solid U.S.-Philippine relations and the adoption of many American democratic institutions by the Filipinos — the need for war was over.

A new enemy

Muslim Moros in the Sulu Archipelago, however, continued fighting for another 11 years on Mindanao and the adjacent islands.⁹ Unassociated with the “insurrectos” of 1899-1902, the Moro groups sought to defend their traditional practices of slavery, tribal warfare and Islam. The U.S. organized a “bamboo army” that comprised U.S. Army, Filipino Scout and constabulary companies and was led by future American military icons like John J. Pershing and Douglas MacArthur. The bamboo army began operations against the Moros in 1902 and fought a series of arduous campaigns. While these jungle campaigns influenced a new generation of Army officers, the battles with the Moros were much like 19th-century clashes with Native Americans in the western U.S.¹⁰

By 1915 the Moro Province had been pacified to the point that on March 22, Governor Frank W. Carpenter was able to convince the sultan of Jolo, Jamalul Kiram II, to relinquish his rights to political rule. With that agreement, Moroland came completely under U.S. rule, if not into complete integration with the Philippines’ Christian majority.¹¹

A new era

Beginning with Taft in 1901, U.S. presidential appointees governed the Philippines for 34 years. On July 1, 1902, the U.S. Congress



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Captain John J. Pershing was one of the leaders of the Philippine “bamboo army.”

passed the Philippine Bill of 1902, permanently establishing a Philippine civil government that included an elective assembly. Philippine politicians continued to strive for independence, even as they worked peaceably with the American civil governor and the appointed Philippine Commission, which was initially dominated by Americans. In 1901 the commission included three Filipinos, and by 1913, Filipinos filled the majority of civil-administrative positions, including five of the nine seats of the Philippine commission.¹²

In 1916, Congress passed the Jones Act, which openly stated that America intended to grant Philippine independence once a stable government was fully established. To that end, the appointed Philippine Commission was disbanded and replaced by the elective Philippine Senate. The Philippine Assembly was also renamed the House of Representatives. In an effort to appease Moro separatists in the South, two seats in the Senate, and nine in the House of Rep-

representatives, were reserved for appointees who represented the non-Christian populace. The American civil governor retained veto power, and U.S. citizens had immunity from Philippine legislation, but the Philippines was moving toward self-rule.¹³

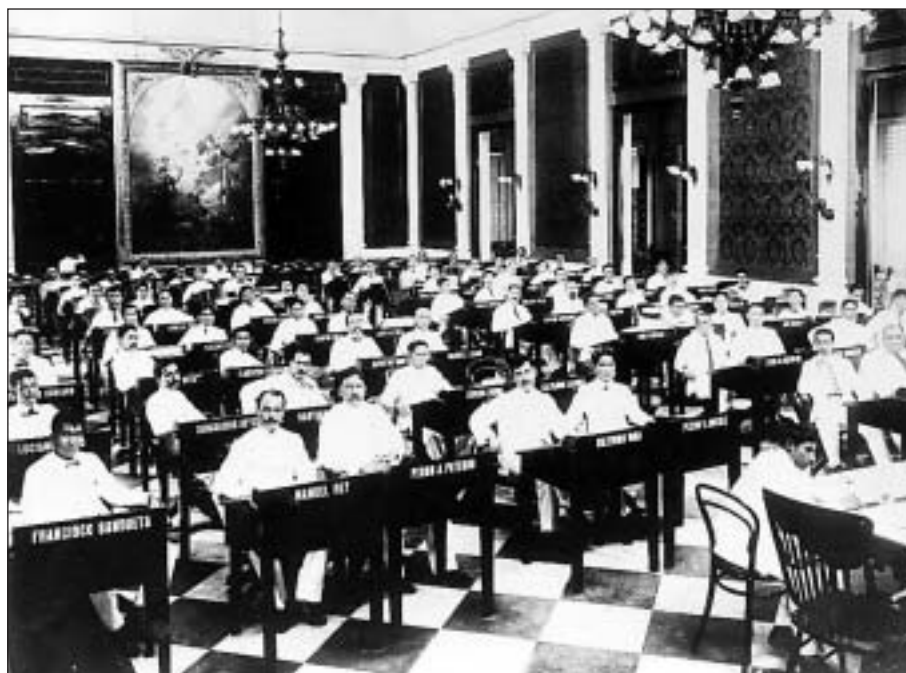
In March 1934, Congress passed the Tydings-McDuffie Act, which presented a 10-year plan for the transition to Philippine independence. In spite of certain restrictions, the new law did provide a road map to independence. As required by the law, a constitutional convention convened in July 1934, and on Feb. 8, 1935, the convention approved the Philippine Constitution.

On Sept. 17, 1935, in fulfillment of the second requirement of the Tydings-McDuffie Act, a national election was held. Manuel L. Quezon was elected president, and his former rival, Sergio Osmeña, was elected vice-president. This pattern of selecting vice-presidents from the opposition party continues today. The Commonwealth of the Philippines



National Archives

A Philippine guerrilla scout during World War II.



Library of Congress

Members of the Philippine Legislature during the 1920s.

was established on Nov. 15, 1935, marking the beginning of what was supposed to be a 10-year transition to independence.¹⁴

World War II

The march to independence was delayed slightly when the Japanese attacked the Philippines on Dec. 8, 1941. In spite of valiant efforts by U.S. and Philippine troops in such battles as those on the Bataan Peninsula and on Corregidor, the U.S.-Philippine forces had all been captured or had surrendered by May 1942. The Philippine government, still led by Quezon and Osmeña, went into exile in the U.S. Those political leaders left in the Philippines walked a fine line between collaborating with the Japanese and cooperating just enough to mitigate the effects of occupation on the populace. Japan sought to enlist Filipino support by declaring Philippine independence in October 1943. In spite of Japanese efforts, and in spite of govern-

ment cooperation with the Japanese, a considerable resistance movement developed among the farming classes.¹⁵

Although as many as 75 Philippine guerrilla groups organized, very few coalesced because the numerous islands isolated the groups and because many groups had self-serving agendas. Most groups received very little U.S. materiel support.

One of the best-organized groups, the communist Hukbalahaps (People's Army to Fight the Japanese), or HUKs, savaged rivals in central Luzon who opposed their post-war plans. In addition, Christian guerrillas seldom sided with the Muslim Moros on Mindanao. Still, the first priority for all groups was the expulsion of the Japanese occupation forces. Only after the Japanese were defeated and the Philippines was back on the road to independence would the guerrillas return to their individual causes, which ranged from land reforms to Moro sovereignty.¹⁶

Traditionally, the U.S. had focused on the northern islands, especially Luzon, in building Pacific defense bastions like Corregidor. Despite greater attention being given to liberating the north by General Douglas MacArthur in 1945, the southern islands became strategically important because they served as staging bases for U.S. aircraft attacking Japanese forces on Borneo. However, the southern airfields at Zamboanga, Mindanao and Sanga Sanga, off Tawi-Tawi Island, proved invaluable when the Allies experienced unexpected delays in getting newly captured Japanese airstrips on Borneo operational. At about the same time, a loosely organized Muslim guerrilla "division" from the southern islands fought alongside the Americans on Mindanao.¹⁷

Philippine independence

Almost a year after the war ended, on July 4, 1946, the Philippines proclaimed its independence, per the Tydings-McDuffie Act, and Manuel Roxas was inaugurated as the first president of the republic. Roxas' election signaled to the HUKs and other peasant groups that the elites were once again in control of the government and that land reforms would not be forthcoming. The HUKs subsequently disinterred their hidden weapons and proceeded to incite a rebellion on Luzon, promising overdue social, economic and political reforms that the newly independent government and its supporter, the U.S., would not produce.

In 1946, in response to the new communist insurgency, the U.S. Congress passed the Philippines Military Assistance Act, authorizing the president to provide Philippine forces with military instruction and training, maintenance services for military equipment,

and "arms, ammunition and implements of war." The act also allowed him to detail officers and enlisted men from the U.S. Army, Navy and Marine Corps to assist the Philippine armed forces. In 1947, the Joint United States Military Advisory Group, or JUSMAG, was established to fulfill this assistance mission, a role it maintains to this day.¹⁸ In addition, responding to Russia's growing influence in Eastern Europe, Congress approved \$27,640,000 in military assistance for the Philippines, Iran and South Korea as part of the Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949.

Military advisory groups

In September 1950, Ramon Magsaysay was appointed by the Philippine president as secretary of national defense. He quickly began implementing programs that attacked the causes, as well as the symptoms, of insurgency in the Philippines, relying heavily on JUSMAG assistance. Military reforms protected the peasants from the Philippine armed forces and the HUKs alike. Political reforms ensured honest elections and worked to recapture confi-

dence. Economic reforms with great symbolic importance, including a land-redistribution program, were initiated. Magsaysay presided over civic-action projects that were designed to improve the lot of the rural population.¹⁹

To enlist allied support for the United Nations' effort in Korea, Congress extended military assistance another year, authorizing \$16 million for Korea and the Philippines, with specific language that addressed the HUK guerrilla insurgency.²⁰ Congress's attempt at winning support was not lost on Magsaysay, and the Philippines was among the first countries to send an expeditionary force to Korea, establishing a legacy with the U.S. military in Korea.

In 1951, the U.S. and the Philippines signed the Mutual Defense Treaty, which formed the foundation of U.S.-Philippines relations up through the 1980s.²¹ At home, Magsaysay won a landslide victory and became president in 1953. He used the armed forces to support his civic-action campaign, while he continued to rely on JUSMAG for monetary and training support. By 1953, JUSMAG officers even accompanied AFP troops as "observers."²²

The HUKs, who had never been able to mount a strong ideological crusade, began to lose support because the programs of Magsaysay's Economic Development Corps offered more land and social reform than the communists were likely to deliver. The HUK rebellion had virtually ended by December 1955, when Congress authorized U.S. forces and appropriated funds specifically for counterinsurgency efforts in the Philippines.²³

In March 1957, during his second term in office, President Magsaysay was killed in a plane crash on Cebu. Vice President Carlos P. Garcia became president in a



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Philippine president Ramon Magsaysay presided over a number of beneficial reforms.

subsequent election, and in 1959 he renegotiated the status of some U.S. military installations in the Philippines. The agreement ceded to the Philippines a considerable amount of land that had been reserved by the U.S. for military bases but left unused. In 1965, Ferdinand E. Marcos replaced Garcia as president of the Philippines. Re-elected in 1969, Marcos ruled as a dictator from 1972 until his deposition in 1986.²⁴

Marcos regime

Under Marcos, a number of events significantly affected Philippine relations with the U.S. military. In the mid-1960s, the U.S. completed negotiations concerning the status of U.S. military personnel and bases in the Philippines. In 1965, provisions similar to the NATO Status of Forces Agreement were adopted to settle issues of criminal jurisdiction over U.S. military personnel. A 1966 amendment to the original 1947 agreement establishing U.S. bases in the Philippines moved the expiration date for U.S. base rights to 1991.²⁵

In addition to renegotiating terms for U.S. military presence in the Philippines, Marcos deployed a civil-affairs brigade task force to supplement U.S. war efforts in Vietnam for three years. The task force was comprised of an engineer construction company, a mechanized infantry company and an artillery battery (for security). Continuing a pattern of assistance that had been established during the Korean War, this act of support garnered additional economic aid and military assistance for the Philippines.

During Marcos' second term, a combination of political corruption, serious economic problems, decaying social programs and human-rights abuses helped communist

insurgents regain much of the influence they had lost under Magsaysay. Muslim secessionists in the southern Philippines were also causing trouble, and an aura of lawlessness permeated the country.

Turning the situation to his advantage in September 1972, Marcos suspended the constitution, declared martial law and imposed censorship. The measures

During Marcos' second term, a combination of political corruption, serious economic problems, decaying social programs and human-rights abuses helped communist insurgents regain much of the influence they had lost under Magsaysay. Muslim secessionists in the southern Philippines were also causing trouble, and an aura of lawlessness permeated the country.

were supposedly instituted to counter the insurgencies, but they also effectively controlled the political opposition. With the country under martial law, Marcos and his allies exploited their new power and practiced "crony capitalism," economic strategies designed to make them rich while ostensibly enacting critical land reforms.

Marcos also undermined the AFP by promoting officers on the

basis of their personal loyalty, not their ability, and by encouraging a corrupt patronage system at every level. The resulting AFP dealt harshly, and ineffectively, with the growing communist and Muslim insurgencies, often resorting to brutal tactics in dealing with civilians, which served only to strengthen the insurgencies the AFP was trying to quell.²⁶

The U.S. maintained close ties with the Marcos regime, even as the two countries renegotiated trade and defense agreements. In 1979, the U.S. and the Philippines signed another amendment to the Military Bases Agreement of 1947, emphasizing Philippine sovereignty over the bases and again reducing the bases' total area. Marcos finally ended martial law in 1981, and he was overwhelmingly re-elected president that year. Although the well-publicized assassination of opposition leader Benigno Aquino Jr., on Aug. 21, 1983, escalated domestic turmoil and invoked formal complaints by the U.S. government, senior American officials, congressmen and the military, preoccupied with perceived Soviet threats, continued to support the Marcos regime.

In February 1986, anxious to reaffirm U.S. support for his regime, Marcos held an early presidential election. To his astonishment, although the regime-friendly National Assembly ratified the corrupt election results, various rebel factions united in protest. Between Feb. 22 and 24, the ranks of protesters grew to include religious officials, children and even military officers.

Finally tiring of Marcos, the U.S. threatened to suspend all foreign aid to the Philippines unless Marcos stepped down, and U.S. Embassy officials quietly boycotted the inauguration. Realizing that he no longer had U.S. support, Marcos

and his wife, the infamous Imelda, abandoned the capital and left the country in defeat.²⁷

A new leader

With Marcos' self-imposed exile, opposition candidate Corazon Aquino took office as president of the Philippines, an office that she had rightfully won in the elections. Aquino successfully fought off numerous coup attempts over the next few years, sometimes with U.S. military support. Following Aquino's accession to power, the U.S. Congress twice boosted aid to the Philippines. House Resolution 4515, of July 2, 1986, provided an additional \$100 million in economic support funds, or ESF, and \$50 million in military assistance. On Oct. 20, 1986, the minimum ESF for the Philippines was set at \$200 million for 1987.²⁸

Despite U.S. programs of foreign internal defense, or FID, during Aquino's term in office, the problems of insurgency grew. A recalcitrant government bureaucracy purposely delayed critical political improvements and economic measures, exacerbating serious social problems and furthering insurgent causes. The AFP, while seemingly incapable of combating insurgencies, attempted four coups against President Aquino. Still, Congress continued to support the Aquino government.

In 1989, U.S. support to the Philippines included \$124 million in ESF, \$125 million in military assistance and the promise of \$50 million for land reform if the Philippine government could create a suitable program. In 1990, Congress appropriated \$40 million for developmental assistance and \$125 million for military assistance,²⁹ but the murder of U.S. servicemen during the base-rights negotiations revealed how com-

bat-ineffective and politicized the AFP had become and how inadequate U.S. assistance had been to change the situation.³⁰

With U.S. base rights due to expire in 1991, Aquino's government began negotiations with the U.S. in 1990 to define future military relations between the Philippines and the U.S.

Philippine concerns over sovereignty had been increasing for decades, and they were heightened by the awareness that sovereignty prerogatives that the U.S. accorded Panama in the Canal



USASOC Historical Archive

Philippine President Gloria Arroyo speaking to the United Nations.

Treaty settlements had not prevented American intervention in that country in 1989. In 1991, the U.S. announced plans to close Clark Air Force Base, initiating a turnover of the base to Philippine military and civilian interests. Filipino insurgents' threats to evict American forces from perpetually leased bases increased pressure for the handover, and the June 1991 eruption of Mount Pinatubo hastened the departure of the U.S. military. By late 1992, the U.S. had closed all its military installations in the Philippines.³¹

In 1992, Fidel Ramos succeeded Aquino as president of the Philippines. In accordance with his platform of unification, the Ramos administration began talks with

insurgent groups. While some insurgent groups later entered into peace agreements with the government, the more radical groups refused to negotiate, turning instead to banditry and terrorism. In May 1998, Joseph Estrada was overwhelmingly elected president. His term in office was quickly stigmatized by allegations of corruption, and in January 2001, Estrada was forced from office and replaced by his former vice-president, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. As well as inheriting a faltering economy, Arroyo faced aggressive terrorist threats in the south, where the Abu Sayyaf Group and the Moro National Liberation Front, as well as other splinter groups with Islamist agendas, were becoming increasingly bold in their kidnapping and bombing campaigns.

Decline of the Philippine army

The 1990s were a period of uncertainty in U.S.-Philippine relations, and America reduced its security-assistance funding significantly. As a result, the Philippine military declined measurably in terms of its operational capabilities, logistics, professionalism and morale. The Philippine government's 1999 ratification of the Visiting Forces Agreement restored protections to U.S. military personnel during combined exercises and raised the possibility of resuming exercises in the Philippines as part of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Cobra Gold training series in the Pacific theater.³²

In 2001, President Arroyo requested U.S. help in suppressing the continually escalating insurgent threat in the south and agreed to allow U.S. forces to train Philippine troops to be more effective in the new Global War on Terrorism. When U.S. special-operations

forces arrived in the Philippines, they carried, in addition to their rucksacks, the baggage of more than 100 years of military and political tensions between the two allies. ✂

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Multiple Insurgent Groups Complicate Philippine Security

by Dr. C.H. Briscoe and Lieutenant Colonel Dennis Downey

For more than a century, the Philippines has struggled with unrest. Today, that unrest continues as various ethnic, religious and political factions compete for control of the country, often using terror as a means to their end.

Four main insurgent factions, along with various splinter groups and criminal organizations spread throughout the republic's more than 7,000 islands, currently threaten the Philippines. Claiming that all the factions are actually "money-seeking thugs" rather than ideologically oriented insurgents, the Government of the Republic of the Philippines, or GRP, officially refers to all insurgent groups as "bandits" rather than as terrorists or rebels. That stance enables the GRP to refuse any international antiterrorism assistance that might conceivably infringe on Philippine sovereignty.

In spite of official protests to the contrary, the Philippines are indeed both a target and a producer of terrorism. It is this latter role, more than any other reason, that has recently focused the attention of the United States military on the southern Philippines.

New People's Army

The most serious insurgent threat in the Philippines is the militant arm of the Communist People's Party, known as the New

People's Army, or NPA, which was founded in 1969. As the successor to the Hukbalahap, or HUK, insurgency of the 1940s and 1950s, the NPA has always sought to overthrow the Philippine republican regime. Although the NPA has been engaged



in peace talks since 1986, it continues guerrilla operations, primarily on Luzon Island. The group also claimed responsibility for the assassination of U.S. Army Colonel Nick Rowe, founder of the special-operations Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape Course, in 1989. The NPA maintains a small presence in northern Mindanao, but it has done little in the predominantly Muslim southern Philippines.

Moro National Liberation Front

The Moro National Liberation Front, or MNLF, was founded in the 1960s to push for Moro autonomy in the southern Philippines. In 1972, under the leadership of Nur Misuari,



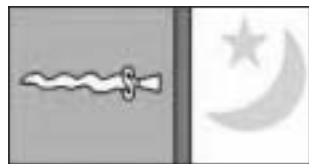
the group escalated its efforts to the level of guerrilla warfare. After more than two decades of armed conflict, the MNLF and the GRP signed a peace agreement in 1996, signaling the MNLF's metamorphosis from an

armed faction to a political entity. The peace agreement called for the creation of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, or ARMM; the appointment of Nur Misuari as governor of the ARMM; and the integration of 5,500 ex-guerrillas into the Armed Forces of the Philippines, or AFP, and the Philippine Navy.

Many in the MNLF, however, felt betrayed by Misuari's peace negotiations, taking particular umbrage at the concessions he had negotiated for himself. Over the next five years those dissatisfied members of the MNLF pushed for Misuari's dismissal as governor. In April 2001, the GRP finally removed Misuari on charges of graft and corruption. That act prompted other members of the MNLF who were loyal to Misuari to form the Misuari Renegade Group, or MRG, which began conducting terrorist attacks in Jolo and Zamboanga. In the wake of these attacks, Misuari fled to Indonesia, where he was subsequently arrested, returned to the Philippines, and imprisoned on Luzon. While the MRG continued its bombing campaign and became involved in attacks on the AFP, the MNLF continued its primarily political activities.¹

Moro Islamic Liberation Front

In 1978, MNLF members who were disgusted with Nur Misuari's leadership of the group broke away to form the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, or MILF, and continued



militant resistance against the Philippine government. The MILF has become the strongest and

most active insurgent group in the southern Philippines, as well as the most vocally anti-American. Although Mindanao is its primary area of operations, the MILF has support cells based on Basilan Island. During 2002, terrorists with links to the MILF repeatedly bombed Manila's business district and transportation system. The MILF has recently been linked to the Indonesia-based Jemaah Islamiyah terrorist organization. In spite of its continued terrorist

activities, the MILF has been conducting peace negotiations with the GRP since 1997, and it signed a formal peace agreement in 2001.

Abu Sayyaf Group

The U.S. has been most concerned with the emergence of the third major insurgent faction in the southern Philippines, the Abu Sayyaf Group, or ASG. Abdurajak Janjalani, a teacher influenced by fundamental Islamism, founded the group between 1990 and 1992. Janjalani, a radical MILF unit commander who had fought in Afghanistan in the late 1980s, adopted the nom de guerre Abu Sayyaf (Father of the Sword) from a celebrated Afghan resistance leader, Abdul Rasul Sayyaf.

Originally organized to fight against the Philippine government in the cause of an independent Muslim rule for Basilan, Jolo and Tawi-Tawi, the ASG has also become an extortion and kidnap-for-ransom gang. In assuming the revolutionary struggle for Muslim independence, the ASG sought to gain the attention of other Islamic countries and to garner the international funding that was provided to the MNLF prior to the establishment of the ARMM. The ASG also maintains tenuous ties to al-Qaeda.²

In 1992, the ASG launched its first operations, mainly bombings in the Zamboanga area of Mindanao. The following year, in addition to bomb attacks, the ASG began its signature activity: kidnapping foreigners for ransom. The AFP, focused on the larger MNLF and MILF groups, did not consider the ASG to be a legitimate threat until the spring of 1995, when a well-executed attack devastated the Christian town of Ipil. Fifty dead civilians and soldiers, as well as more than 100 wounded, changed the AFP's and the U.S. Pacific Command's assessments of the ASG. The group's more than 100 attacks soon elevated it to regional-threat status with the U.S. Pacific Command.

Periodic well-coordinated major attacks continued until December 1998, when members of the AFP killed Janjalani during a shootout on Basilan Island. As a testament to his importance to the GRP, Jan-

jalani had been the country's most wanted man, with a "dead or alive" reward of 1.5 million pesos. His demise most likely prompted the transition of the ASG from an ideologically motivated organization into a primarily kidnap-for-ransom group that also used bombings to extort money from the local population in a terrorist version of the protection racket.³

Originally organized to fight against the Philippine government in the cause of an independent Muslim rule for Basilan, Jolo and Tawi-Tawi, the ASG has also become an extortion and kidnap-for-ransom gang. In assuming the revolutionary struggle for Muslim independence, the ASG sought to gain the attention of other Islamic countries and to garner the international funding that was provided to the MNLF prior to the establishment of the ARMM.

In early autumn 2002, the ASG initiated a month-long bombing campaign on Mindanao. The campaign eventually spread to Manila and other parts of the Philippines in response to increased AFP patrols. On Sept. 19, 2002, two bus bombs were found in southern Mindanao — one was defused, but the other, in Zamboanga, exploded and killed a guard. Eight days later, ASG leader Khadaffy Janjalani (brother of Abdurajak) appeared on Radio Mindanao and called for a Muslim offensive against U.S. forces in the Philippines. The Pakistan-educated leader called on "all believers in the oneness of Allah and who fear the day of judgment to do their sacred duty to protect the interest of Islam and strike at its enemies, both foreign and local."

After promising attacks against American civilian and military targets in retaliation for continuing government offensives against rebels, Janjalani announced that the ASG would change its name to Islamic Movement, thereby affiliating with the

Indonesia-based Jamaah Islamiya and elevating the organization's fight to a higher level — Islamic jihad.⁴ Shortly afterward, the group's bombing campaign escalated dramatically.

The ASG has ensured that it would become the primary focus of the Philippine government's antiterrorism attention in recent years by conducting high-visibility kidnappings of Western foreigners. To build notoriety, the ASG has held American hostages on Basilan with impunity, and it has even beheaded some of its victims. It is the ASG with which U.S. forces have had to contend most directly as they have conducted military training and civic-assistance missions in the southern Philippines. ✕

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Notes:

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Rugged Terrain Makes Philippine Islands Haven for Insurgent Groups

by Dr. C.H. Briscoe

The Republic of the Philippines, located in Southeast Asia, comprises 7,107 islands that are bounded by the Philippine Sea on the east and the South China Sea on the west. The Philippines lie south of Taiwan, northwest of Malaysia and north of Indonesia. The Philippines' largest island, Luzon, is home to the capital city, Manila. The nation's second largest island is Mindanao. Approximately 250 miles to the northwest of Mindanao is Palawan, a resort area that became widely known in 2001 following the kidnapping of 20 individuals, including two American missionaries, Gracia and Martin Burnham.

Extending south from the Zamboanga Peninsula of Mindanao is the Sulu Archipelago, which includes the islands of Basilan, Jolo and Tawi-Tawi. During the ongoing Global War on Terrorism, the United States military's interest has focused primarily on the island of Basilan, only 12 miles south of Zamboanga. Basilan measures approximately 40 miles east to west and 25 miles north to south.

Because of the topography of the island, most of Basilan's residents live in the lower elevations, along the perimeter of the island. In fact, the majority of the 330,000 residents live in and around the major cities.

The perimeter of the island is almost entirely cultivated. Rubber, coconut and



Defense Mapping Agency

The topography of Basilan causes most of the island's residents to live along the perimeter of the island. The rugged interior provides good defenses for guerrilla groups.

palm-tree plantations predominate, and casaba melons are grown in adjacent fields. Inland, a triple-canopy jungle is prevalent, resulting in good natural cover and concealment, as well as in good defensive areas for guerrilla forces.

Basilan is also part of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, a self-governing territory populated predominantly by Muslims. ❧

Dr. C.H. Briscoe is the command historian for the U.S. Army Special Operations Command.

Balikatan Exercise Spearheaded ARSOF Operations in the Philippines

by Dr. C.H. Briscoe

The Global War on Terrorism, or GWOT, brought a new United States military presence to the Philippines. The U.S. military had conducted large peacetime joint training exercises in the Philippines during the early-to-mid 1990s, including the successful Balikatan exercise, until it was dropped from the Cobra Gold series after 1995. With the increase in insurgent activity in the southern Philippines during the late 1990s, the U.S. began to follow Philippine military activities with renewed interest.

Terrorist activity

When U.S. citizens became targets of the Abu Sayyaf Group, or ASG, leaders of the U.S. Pacific Command, or PACOM, began to pay special attention to terrorist factions and to develop strategies for helping the Philippines deal with threats to its internal stability.

Even before terrorists attacked the U.S. on Sept. 11, 2001, Balikatan had been revived, and the U.S. military was already training Philippine troops to more effectively combat terrorism in their own country. The events of 9/11, however, emphasized the necessity



of confronting terrorism in the Philippines and refocused U.S. efforts to help the Philippine military enhance its capabilities and its joint operability.

In April 2000, the ASG threatened to kill Americans in the Philippines and then seized 20 Western foreigners at a resort in Sipadan, Malaysia. These two developments compelled PACOM to closely track all terrorist groups and to begin developing strategies for combatting terrorism in the region.

Focusing on the Philippines as a historic ally and as a critical theater for the struggle against terrorism, PACOM began to look at training-assistance options designed to upgrade the capabilities of the Armed Forces of the

Philippines, or AFP, to combat terrorism and restore popular confidence in the national government. In a number of incidents during July and August 2000, the ASG kidnapped another 30 hostages, including U.S. citizen Jeffrey Schilling. The incidents prompted PACOM to offer training help to the Government of the Republic of the Philippines, or GRP.

Mobile training teams

In September 2000, Admiral Dennis C. Blair, commander of PACOM, accompanied by officers from the Special Operations Command, Pacific, or SOCPAC, traveled to Manila to brief leaders of the GRP and the AFP on the concept of a mobile training team, or MTT, designed to train and equip a company-sized unit to respond to the escalating terrorist threat. President Joseph Estrada rejected the American offer of assistance, but when Estrada was forced out of office in January 2001, his replacement, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, proved to be much more amenable to PACOM's offer of assistance.

Under Arroyo's leadership, the

GRP invited PACOM to send an MTT to train the AFP in more effective counterinsurgency techniques in the southern Philippines. In March 2001, Company B, 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group, out of Okinawa, began training the first AFP light reaction company, or LRC.

LRC training was conducted in phases in order to develop soldiers' tactical skills at the individual level before progressing to squad, platoon and company tactics and to live-fire field operations.



USASOC Historical Archive

A Philippine SF soldier takes aim during a training exercise.

"Since the vast majority of American instructors teaching leadership, professional ethics, responsibility and small-unit tactics were SF noncommissioned officers, the young Philippine sergeants and junior officers in the LRC quickly grasped the advantages of empowered leaders at all levels. That was a real success story," said Major Marty Cromwell (pseudonym) of the 1st SF Group.¹

Despite their students' improvements, the SF trainers assessed the AFP's tactical capabilities as weak, and their equipment as poor. It was obvious why terrorist groups were enjoying success against the AFP.

The ASG's superiority was driven home on May 27, 2001, when

the terrorist group raided the Dos Palmas Resort on Palawan Island, kidnapping 17 Filipinos and three Americans, including missionaries Martin and Gracia Burnham.

TCAV visit

After the LRC completed training in July, it was sent south to Basilan Island, the ASG's sanctuary and its staging base for the Dos Palmas raid.

Unfortunately, the LRC's command and control, or C², had not been clearly established before departure, which drastically reduced the company's effectiveness. Attempting to address the C² issue, Brigadier General Donald Wurster, commander of SOCPAC, and Colonel David Fridovich, commander of the 1st SF Group (now a brigadier general), scheduled a meeting for Sept. 11, 2001, to discuss incorporating a terrorist coordination and assistance visit, or TCAV, into the initial-planning survey for Exercise Balikatan 02-1.

The meeting's emphasis shifted abruptly, however, with that day's terrorist attacks in the U.S. The SOCPAC staff quickly focused on identifying al-Qaeda connections in the region in order to help PACOM develop its Southeast Asian GWOT campaign plan. The TCAV planning was left to Fridovich, and the assessment trip was pushed back to October.²

The SF-heavy TCAV included planners from the 1st SF Group, Naval special-warfare units and the Air Force's 353rd Special Operations Group. While the planners considered military interdiction to be important, the majority of the AFP belonged to the army, and the anticipated mission of the exercise would be to train and advise the AFP in

countering ASG terrorism.

The TCAV team, after visiting Manila, Zamboanga and Basilan, reconfirmed the deficiencies that affected the AFP's ability to conduct effective combat operations against terrorist groups: A marginal communications structure, ineffective civil affairs, limited mobility and a lack of the intelligence fusion needed to support operations.³

Combating terrorism

During November and December 2001, SOCPAC and its components worked to develop a training package that would improve the AFP's capability to conduct internal defense and thereby combat terrorism.

In addition to the TCAV's recommendations, the planners had a grim logistics and maintenance assessment from PACOM focusing on the key AFP mobility systems, including aircraft, trucks and naval patrol craft. The assessment found many of the assets to be under-supported, with repairs taking longer than they should have because of a lack of parts and know-how.

Because the state of its mobility systems severely hampered the AFP's ability to conduct effective operations, any effort to upgrade the AFP's capability would have to include a long-term logistics and maintenance-support plan.⁴

Evidently the GRP gave serious attention to the SOCPAC/PACOM recommendations. During President Arroyo's Nov. 19-23, 2001, visit to Washington to meet with President George W. Bush, the two national leaders affirmed their intent to continue working on a vigorous, integrated plan for strengthening the AFP's capability to combat terror and protect Philippine sovereignty.



USASOC Historical Archive

One of the keys to bringing Philippine troops up to speed was ensuring that they had up-to-date equipment, like this body armor being issued to Philippine soldiers.

The plan included a robust package of training, assistance and mobility equipment. After President Bush pledged to provide \$100 million in military assistance (including a C-130 transport airplane and 30,000 reconditioned M-16 rifles) and \$4.6 billion in economic aid, Arroyo agreed to allow the U.S. military to deploy to the Philippines to “advise and assist the AFP.”

Arroyo also undercut the terrorists’ political support by suspending Nur Misuari, leader of the Moro National Liberation Front, or MNLF, from the governorship of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, or ARMM.

In response to his dismissal by President Arroyo, Misuari declared war against the GRP on Nov. 19. Four hundred MNLF fighters loyal to Misuari formed the Misuari Renegade Group and attacked the AFP airfields on Jolo and at Zamboanga City. Although the AFP successfully defended both airfields, 60 AFP troops were

killed and 100 wounded, while just over 100 insurgents were killed during the week the battles lasted.⁵

JTF-510

In response to the terrorists’ aggression, PACOM activated a standing joint task force, JTF-510, that would plan and prepare to implement the first phase of Operation Freedom Eagle as part of Exercise Balikatan 02-1. In deference to the Philippines’ sensitivity to sovereignty issues, the 1st Battalion, 1st SF Group, modified its initial plan. Rather than use Exercise Balikatan as a springboard for conducting a combined unconventional-warfare, or UW, campaign against terrorism in the Philippines, U.S. forces would advise and assist the AFP in internal defense and development.⁶

The SOCPAC and PACOM staffs labeled their effort the GWOT Southeast Asian Campaign, a name that connoted their regional and long-term involve-

ment. “It was a unique mission, because in one sense SF was ‘training, advising, assisting and maintaining,’ but the location was a combat zone where AFP soldiers were fighting the Abu Sayyaf Group,” observed Cromwell.⁷

Gearing up

While the SF companies and teams began their UW mission planning, the staff of the 1st SF Group began preparing a statement of requirements for supporting the GWOT in the tropics with all three of the group’s battalions. It would be a major environmental shift for the two battalions based at Fort Lewis, Wash.

Those battalions found that they lacked items necessary for conducting operations in a tropical combat zone: multiband interteam radios (PRC-148s); mobile satellite antennas; additional PRC-112 radios; and individual jungle uniforms, boots, field equipment and body armor. The battalions were forbidden to purchase the equipment

using operations funds, so they had to rely on the standard supply system. Because special-operations elements already engaged in OEF-Afghanistan received a higher priority from the U.S. Special Operations Command, or USSOCOM, U.S. Army Special Operations Command, or USASOC, and the U.S. Army Special Forces Command, or USASFC, most new equipment arrived after the SF detachments were already in the Philippines.

One exception to the late supply situation was the individual emergency medical package, an item that proved to be most critical. The 24-hour helicopter medical evacuation plan was “soft” for life-threatening injuries or wounds, because of the unreliability of the UH-1 Huey helicopters of the Philippine Air Force, or PAF, during the day, and basic time-distance issues for the MH-47Es of the Army, which were supposed to handle night rescues.

Aircraft of Company E, 160th Special Operations Regiment, were initially based at Mactan Air Base, Cebu, with the C-130P aerial refuelers of the 351st Special Operations Wing based 350 miles north of Basilan Island. Both locations were too far from the area of operations to make night extractions practical. The PAF Hueys were much closer — only 20 minutes flight time away at Zamboanga, Mindanao — but the aircraft were unreliable, and their pilots had no training in night operations.⁸

Anticipating approval of the counterterrorism mission, Fridovich decided to establish his initial staging base at Torii Station, Okinawa. This would allow the SF detachments to focus on mission preparation and to train in the jungle before they deployed to the Philippines. Facing a long-term “train,

advise, assist and maintain” mission, Fridovich planned to use SF companies from all three battalions, rotating the forward-operating-base, or FOB, mission, as well as the companies, every six months. FOB 11 planned for the first hand-off and redeployment period to be from May 1 through June 15, 2002.⁹

After the Christmas holidays, the advance echelons, or ADVONs, of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions’ companies began deploying to Okinawa to coordinate billets and training areas for the forthcoming SF detachments. The SF teams, three per company, rotated through the northern jungle training area and the various firing ranges as part of their UW mission prep. The 1st SF Group’s ADVON, which included a C² element, “slices” of the headquarters and headquarters company and the general-support company, and two more detachments for force protection, followed them. By Jan. 28, 2002, the group tactical operations center, or TOC, was fully operational on Okinawa.¹⁰

Exercise opening

On Jan. 29, Fridovich with his group C² pilot team flew directly from Kadena Airbase, Okinawa, to Edwin Andrews Air Base in Zamboanga, Mindanao. Two days later, on the official opening day of Exercise Balikatan, SF detachments 112 and 134 joined the 1st SF Group commander to provide antiterrorist protection and force protection for the C² element, the JTF-510 ADVON on Basilan. These detachments would later rotate between the Quick Reaction Force and the Zamboanga forces training mission.¹¹

In order to establish rapport with the AFP, the three companies and their detachments were based

with the Philippine headquarters elements down to the battalion level. FOB 11, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Douglas Mandarin (pseudonym), acted as the backbone of the Army special-operations task force, or ARSOTF, of JTF-510 and was aligned with the 1st Infantry Division (Forward) or Task Force Comet (Forward), at Isabela, Basilan, when it arrived on Feb. 12. With the ADVONs already in place, the remainder of the 1st Group personnel began deploying into Basilan on Feb. 17, 2002, getting Phase I of Exercise Balikatan under way.¹²

The ARSOTF was also responsible for the two SF detachments (180 at Isabela and 150 at Lami-tan) that supported the 103rd Infantry Brigade Army Task Group Thunder, which controlled the northern half and southeastern sector of Basilan, and SF B-detachment 120, which supported the 2nd Marine Brigade Task Group Tornado at Maluso in the southwest sector.

The detachments were located throughout the area of operations, or AO. SF Detachment 114 was located at Abungabung with the 1st Marine Battalion Landing Team. SF Detachment 125 was posted in the north central part of Tornado’s area of operation, with the 5th Marine Battalion Landing Team, and SF Detachment 126 advised the Marine Force Reconnaissance Battalion at Libak.

SF Detachment 143 was assigned to advise the Civil Augmentation Force Geographical Unit, or CAFGU, at Mahebal. SF Detachment 153 advised the 32nd Infantry Battalion at Tipo-Tipo, and SF Detachment 163 supported the 18th Infantry Battalion from Yacan. SF Detachment 134 was tasked to “train, advise and assist” the LRC. Other detachments were

assigned to the infantry and Marine battalions for a one-year rotation on the island.¹³

Force protection

Because the AFP had very little in the way of heavy firepower, the SF teams had to provide their own force protection. Heavy-weapons fire support for the AFP brigades and battalions stationed on Basilan consisted of two pre-Vietnam War vintage M-101 105 mm howitzers. Each fired a single round daily into the AO as harassment and interdiction fire. Additional firepower for the battalions consisted of a variety of 81 mm mortars (the tubes, base plates and sights had been manufactured in three different countries), and a few Simba armored personnel carriers that had inoperable guns.¹⁴ The teams consequently relied on their HMMWV-mounted MK-19s and .50-caliber heavy machine guns.

Unlike the SF units preparing for Afghanistan, the 1st Group Soldiers did not receive additional ammunition on Okinawa for use in qualifying on the heavy-gun systems, nor did they receive M-240 machine guns, claymore mines for self-protection or smoke grenades for marking medevac landing zones. Balikatan was still categorized as a training exercise, so SF Soldiers got off the MH-47Es on Basilan carrying only 5.56 mm M-4 carbines, M-203 grenade launchers, 9 mm Beretta automatics and hand grenades.¹⁵

Base-camp security was greatly enhanced after the arrival of the SF teams. Because many of the Philippine soldiers had their families living with them, the Americans stressed the necessity of providing more secure living conditions for women and children. They encouraged the soldiers to push the outer

camp perimeter further out — beyond hand-grenade range — and to clear fields of fire all around. The Philippine soldiers then built fighting bunkers to defend the camp, and they staked and stretched barbed wire along the outer perimeter. Those simple improvements greatly enhanced force protection for the SF teams and the Philippine military. The AFP later contracted bulldozers to build marksmanship ranges and to further improve the camp defenses. While they waited for the ammunition, the Soldiers took advantage of down time by teaching basic individual tactical skills and schooling the junior officers and sergeants in leadership, planning and defensive measures.¹⁶

Shortly after it arrived, JTF-510 changed the ARSOTF's priorities from making tactical assessments of the AFP's needs for counterterrorism training to improving the legitimacy of the GRP through the use of the counterinsurgency model, or COIN. PACOM was determined to get the Philippine military involved

in helping to meet the needs of the populace on Basilan. To that end, the teams were tasked to conduct security assessments of all the Basilan villages.

The SF Soldiers were also told to determine the needs of the populace by surveying at least 60,000 of the 350,000 residents on the island.¹⁷ The JTF furnished a 70-question survey form, heavily oriented toward civic and humanitarian programs, with a March 31 assessment-completion date. To fulfill the security aspect of their mission, the SF teams developed force-protection plans for each village that would support future tactical offensive operations.

In a survey of more than 100 communities, the SF detachments found that the Christian villages were relatively safe, and that Philippine forces rarely visited Muslim villages. AFP units would not enter a Muslim stronghold without overwhelming strength, because they wanted to be prepared to fight the entire village, not just the ASG or MNLF fighters hidden inside.¹⁸ The SF teams "expected to shoot or



USASOC Historical Archive

A Philippine soldier moves through Basilan Island's dense foliage while on patrol.



U.S. Army photo

American aviators train Philippine soldiers in casualty evacuation during the Balikatan exercise.

to be shot in the Muslim villages.¹⁹

In spite of improvements to the security situation, SF teams often found themselves having to depend on local AFP for force protection. In the north central area of the Task Group Thunder AO, SF Detachment 184, led by Captain James Brown (pseudonym), was based with the AFP's 10th Infantry Battalion at Calvario. The primary focus of the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Ray Ordeñez, was the Christian town of Lantawan, an ASG breeding ground and hometown of the Hapilon brothers, two well-known guerrilla leaders.²⁰ Ordeñez kept track of what was happening in his AO by providing troops for village security and by employing intelligence agents. His security arrangement with Lantawan's mayor was to keep squad-sized elements in the outlying villages on a rotational basis to augment CAFGU personnel.

In addition, Ordeñez maintained a number of intelligence operatives in the villages to collect informa-

tion and to warn him of potential guerrilla activity. Because more than 5,000 former MNLF fighters had been integrated in the AFP as part of the Tripoli Accords in 1996, the compromising of current operations was an ever-present danger, and Ordeñez used his own agents to try to counter that threat.²¹

The SF teams were initially unable to contribute much in the way of intelligence resources. Neither current information nor intelligence came down from the battalion to the detachments operating on Basilan — JTF-510's intelligence focus was elsewhere. With the exception of occasional closehold photo imagery, the team commanders could contribute little to the AFP battalion commander's planning efforts besides intelligence fusion. Because the Philippines had been off PACOM's "radar screen" for almost 10 years, up-to-date map sheets (1/50,000 scale) were not available when the teams deployed. The most current tactical maps arrived after the SF teams had been "on-station" nearly two

months, and the maps were more than 40 years out-of-date.

Vital language skills were also lacking on the teams. Among the 1st SF Group personnel who initially deployed to the Philippines, only two Soldiers were of Filipino descent. While their Tagalog language skills were useful with Chavacano, a combination of Tagalog and Spanish, they helped little with the Tausug and Yacan dialects that are common to Basilan and the southern Philippines.²²

Training the AFP

Once the teams had taken appropriate force-protection measures, they were able to focus on their primary mission: training the AFP. The SF Soldiers' initial operational assessments of the tactical proficiency of the AFP battalion elements confirmed the findings of the PACOM TCAV in mid-October 2001. Those assessments formed the basis of a long-term military-training strategy for correcting the AFP's tactical shortcomings on Basilan. The basic concept for training was that the detachment commanders, team sergeants and intelligence sergeants would focus on teaching the military decision-making process; the planning and execution of basic joint operations; the simple fusion of various sources of intelligence in planning future operations; and the method for exploiting emerging situations.

The rest of the team would teach the basics: troop-leading procedures, rifle marksmanship, map-reading and land navigation and individual combat-lifesaving skills. From fire team through platoon level, they instructed the troops in small-unit tactics, live fire, maneuver and immediate-action drills. Training progressed through company level following the crawl-walk-run methodology. Progress

was impeded by the fact that each “company” available for training operations consisted of only 20 soldiers, with the balance of the company, the NCOs, being detailed to supervise CAFGU detachments and to fulfill other responsibilities.

As part of their training program, SF teams accompanied AFP troops on patrols as often as possible, which was permitted only during the last 415 days of JTF-510’s presence in Zamboanga. As SF Detachment 184, attached to the AFP 10th Infantry Battalion, found out, patrolling could be more complicated than expected. At his battalion headquarters, Ordeñez kept a company-sized strike force ready to act on intelligence leads. The strike force served as his primary agent for attacking the ASG, and it received the majority of the training provided by Detachment 184. Conducting split-team operations, half of the detachment taught individual and collective training, while the other half accompanied the battalion’s patrols.

Split-team operations were supportable because the AFP units rarely conducted operations after dark.²³ Still, the necessity for SF-detachment personnel to have the JTF’s approval before accompanying the infantry battalion commanders on each operation became an administrative nightmare for detachment commanders. To preclude compromise, the AFP battalion commanders typically kept movement plans to themselves until just before departure. Because the SF teams could not participate in operations without permission from the JTF, they were unable to go on missions when they had only five minutes notification, and their credibility was called into question. FOB 11’s solution was to write an all-encompassing concept of operations and get it pre-



USASOC Historical Archive

SF teams were welcome on AFP patrols because they could call for casualty evacuations using their satellite telephones.

approved by the JTF. Thereafter, the detachment commander needed only telephonic approval from the company commander. The solution allowed SF teams to accompany AFP troops on seemingly spur-of-the-moment operations.²⁴

Despite the fact that Basilan had been a live-fire situation for more than a decade, the Philippine soldiers and marines stationed there were not proficient jungle fighters. They were certainly no match tactically for the guerrilla forces operating from the remote areas of Basilan. A typical firefight resulted in one AFP killed and three AFP wounded; many of the casualties were the result of friendly fire.

ASG casualties were light unless the guerrillas resorted to conventional tactics. SF teams were welcome on AFP patrols, not only because they were trainers, but also because they could call for casualty evacuations, or casevacs, using their satellite telephones. Staff Sergeant Ronald Vandergrift (pseudonym), an SF Detachment 184 medic, applied his combat-lifesaving skills and administered intravenous fluids after the firefights, and he was eventually able to train the Filipinos in combat-

lifesaving. With the extra medical and casevac support provided by SF teams, the AFP soldiers more willingly engaged the enemy.²⁵

CAFGU training

SF teams also trained members of the CAFGU. Each week, one or two members of the CAFGU would attend the individual and collective training with the 10th Battalion elements. These village civil guards wore mixed uniforms and carried a variety of older American military rifles: Vietnam War-era M-14s, World War II-vintage M-1 Garands and even pre-World War I M-1903 Springfields. Disbanded in the early 1990s for alleged human-rights violations during the Marcos regime, the CAFGUs had been resurrected in remote areas, like Mindanao, where the AFP presence was reduced.

CAFGU personnel were authorized to carry weapons and ammunition only when “in uniform.”²⁶ Two AFP NCOs supervised each CAFGU detachment. By regulation, the NCOs controlled all CAFGU ammunition — in response to an incident in which CAFGU person-

nel shot and killed their AFP supervisors.²⁷ The next scheduled orientation training for CAFGU troops was months away, so SF Detachment 143 conducted a “train the trainer” class for the more senior members of the CAFGU: those 30 to 40 years of age. Training that group proved to be difficult, because while the group members were receptive to the training, they proved to be complacent about their regional-guard responsibilities.

The CAFGU veterans, most of whom were illiterate, had little hope and regarded their peacekeeping role as meaningless. To compound matters, U.S. Title 10 restrictions prevented the Americans from conducting training using their unit basic load of ammunition. The AFP had no .30-caliber ammunition for the CAFGU M-1 rifles and 1903 Springfields and only belted 7.62 mm ammunition for the M-14s. In the end, the SF trainers resorted to conducting small-unit tactical training in patrolling and reconnaissance.

SF Detachment 186, assigned to advise the 55th Infantry Battalion at Isabela, was based at Sugpan-gan in the mountainous center of the island. It had a much different experience from Detachment 184, according to Staff Sergeant Vance Wood (pseudonym), although the two teams were in the same north-central AO. While Isabela had 50/50 mix of Christians and Muslims, the majority of the villages in the mountainous interior were predominantly Muslim. Because the 55th commander considered all interior roads to be “ambush alleys,” he insisted that the Americans travel in their pickup trucks with Simba APC escorts in the front and rear.²⁸

The 55th Infantry Battalion maintained three company-sized camps. While platoon-sized combat patrols went out daily, they avoided the low areas because the ASG

stayed there. SF Detachment 186 quickly assessed the battalion’s level of training, equipment and soldier morale. The officers were tactically proficient, but because enlistment terms were indefinite in the Philippine army and marines, the sergeants were basically just older soldiers. When officers were not around, no one was in charge. In addition, “the M-16 rifles could not be zeroed — rear-sight adjustment knobs and the front post sights were frozen solid.

The AFP emphasizes property control, not maintenance. When a soldier enlists, he is issued a basic set of equipment, including ammunition, for which he is ever after responsible, and for which he must account — down to the last bullet — upon leaving the AFP.

Equipment and weapons maintenance was not in the AFP lexicon,” Wood stated.²⁹

The AFP emphasizes property control, not maintenance. When a soldier enlists, he is issued a basic set of equipment, including ammunition, for which he is ever after responsible, and for which he must account — down to the last bullet — upon leaving the AFP. Such an arrangement discourages handling the equipment, even for cleaning and maintenance.³⁰ (The PACOM logistics and maintenance assessment in September 2001 had cited the same problems.) The 30,000 M-

16 rifles that had been promised by President Bush would do much to improve AFP combat effectiveness at the tactical level.

Instead of improving the battalion’s overall readiness, however, the 55th Infantry Battalion commander wanted SF Detachment 186 to select, organize and train a reconnaissance platoon of 30 soldiers to act as his strike force. The more experienced SF Soldiers on the team prepared a training program to accomplish this. They started with basic rifle-squad tactics and rehearsed immediate-action drills that would prepare the platoon for combat operations. Then, while refining collective tactical training, they focused on individual soldier skills, including combat lifesaving and basic NCO leadership. They selected the best marksmen for sniper training.³¹

In May 2002, intelligence reports indicated that two American missionaries who had been kidnapped by the ASG in May 2001, Martin and Gracia Burnham, had been moved from Basilan to Zamboanga del Norte, some distance from Zamboanga City. AFP Major General Glicerio Sua directed the staff of the AFP’s 1st Infantry Division to develop plans for finding and rescuing the Burnhams, and Operation Day Break began.

The Burnham rescue became all-encompassing for the AFP: Blocking ASG resupply and escape routes required all elements of the AFP to get involved in the operation. Several of the battalions from Basilan that had been preparing for major combat operations against the ASG were reassigned to mainland Mindanao to hunt for Abu Sabaya, the ASG leader holding the kidnapped Americans. As a result, many of the SF detachments on Basilan were left with only remnants of

the units that they had been tasked to train.

Advisory teams authorized

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's long-awaited order allowing American SF teams to advise and assist AFP company-level tactical operations came shortly after the Burnham rescue mission. When the PACOM execution order arrived on July 1, 2002, it was somewhat anticlimactic to permit "advisory teams down to company level," because the American hostage situation had been resolved. By then, the official end date for Exercise Balikatan 02-1 was little more than a month away, and the JTF was already hard at work planning its redeployment. The SF teams had four weeks to train and advise at the company level and to accompany units on patrols against the remaining ASG on Basilan. The PACOM commander had retained the approval authority to expand advisory work to the ASG home islands of Jolo and Tawi-Tawi.³²

In retrospect, Wurster had a more pragmatic view of the expanded mission: "Significant tactical success" in the Philippines in the few weeks remaining was not realistically achievable, and the possibility of killing some ASG terrorists did not outweigh the risks to American advisers. The SOCPAC commander wanted to impress on the AFP the value of unity of planning efforts, of rapid adaptation to current intelligence and of fused operations from brigade down to company level, because the joint operations center would know exactly where all the ground forces were. This was not a change from his original long-term AFP training and education focus.³³

Still, the tactically-oriented SF

teams aggressively tackled their extended mission in the remaining weeks of Balikatan. Having acquired ground-truth awareness about the operational capabilities of the infantry companies, the teams were ready to move against the ASG, but they bumped into a conservative JTF that screened concepts of operations, or CONOPs, closely to mitigate risk. CONOP approvals took between 24 and 48 hours, often negating the exploitation value of intelligence leads.³⁴

The commander of SF B-Detachment 170, Major Clark Saunders (pseudonym), stated that SF Soldiers actually performed the role of trainer and adviser for company field operations where "the guys were in the thick of it." The major advantage of working with the rifle companies in the field was that after ascertaining strengths and weaknesses, the SF Soldiers could more assertively train the units and effectively advise the leaders. When the Americans began routinely participating in AFP company operations, morale for both groups rose: The SF Soldiers were anxious to "get in the fight," and the Filipinos patrolled more aggressively because the U.S. Soldiers had the ability to call for helicopter casevacs.³⁵

Early in April, a raid by the AFP's 18th Infantry Battalion on the house of the mayor of Tuburan demonstrated the positive results of the mission planning and rehearsals stressed by SF B-detachment 150. Unfortunately, the raid also demonstrated how the pervasive corruption in the AFP and GRP could negate tactical improvements. According to agent reports, the mayor was harboring the most outspoken ASG leader, Abu Sabaya. Having placed the house under surveil-

lance, Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Lucero, the battalion commander, went to civil authorities to obtain a warrant for Sabaya's arrest, as required by law. Lucero was primarily responsible for the 18th being the AFP's "best infantry battalion," and he was widely considered to be incorruptible. His proper actions in this case, however, compromised the mission, because they allowed corrupt officials to leak information about the raid to the ASG. Sabaya was long gone when the 18th initiated its raid.³⁶

Balikatan ends

While the JTF-510 headquarters continued to "draw down" during August after the formal closing ceremony for Exercise Balikatan 02-1, the remaining SF detachments on Basilan provided security for humanitarian assistance-funded projects that were still ongoing: The drilling of several deep-water wells, and the conducting of site surveys for schools and medical clinics to be constructed later in the year. While the SF Soldiers were no longer officially advising and assisting the AFP units on Basilan, the rapport they had previously established helped to maintain the government's positive relationship with the people, a relationship that was critical to the triangular COIN model. When the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines was formed in late August 2002, Wurster kept SF B-detachment 170 and four SF A-detachments on Basilan to continue "overwatching" the HA projects in progress.³⁷

Even as Osama bin Laden and his terrorist group were preparing to attack the U.S., the Philippines were already experiencing an increase in domestic terrorism. Concerned with a sudden upsurge

in Islamist activity in the southern Philippines, leaders of PACOM and SOCPAC capitalized on a change of Philippine leadership, as well as the outpouring of support after 9/11, to expand their fight against terrorism to the Philippines. ✕

Dr. C.H. Briscoe is the command historian for the U.S. Army Special Operations Command.

Notes:

¹ Classified interview with Major Marty Cromwell (pseudonym) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe and Dr. Kenn Finlayson, 20 June 2003, MacDill AFB, Fla., tape recording in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Cromwell interview; classified interview with Lieutenant Colonel Duane Dillard (pseudonym) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 6 May 2003, Fort Lewis, Wash., tape recording in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Dillard interview.

² Dillard interview; classified interview with Lieutenant Colonel Douglas Mandarin (pseudonym) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 23 May 2003, Fort Bragg, N.C., tape recording in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Mandarin interview.

³ Mandarin interview.

⁴ Mandarin interview.

⁵ Dillard interview.

⁶ On order, in support of Operation Freedom Eagle, FOB 11 was to conduct UW operations in the southern Philippines through, by and with the AFP to assist the GRP in the destruction of terrorist organizations and separate the population from those groups. JSOTF-P, "Enduring Freedom-Philippines brief," undated.

⁷ Cromwell interview.

⁸ Mandarin interview; classified interview with Captain James Brown and Staff Sergeant Vance Wood (pseudonyms) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 6 May 2003, Fort Lewis, Wash., tape recording in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Brown and Wood interview.

⁹ 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group, briefing (undated), "Operation Eagle Freedom (S)," copy of briefing in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Eagle Freedom brief.

¹⁰ Eagle Freedom brief.

¹¹ Eagle Freedom brief.

¹² Brown and Wood interview; Eagle Freedom brief.

¹³ 1st SF Group Philippine Islands brief for historian (January-December 2002), dated 5 May 2003, hereafter cited as 5 May 2003 brief; classified interview with Captain Eldon Williams (pseudonym) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 6 May 2003, Fort Lewis, Wash., tape recording in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Williams interview; classified interview with Major Edward Dougherty (pseudonym) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 7 May 2003, Fort Lewis, Wash., tape recording in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Dougherty interview.

¹⁴ Brown and Wood interview; Eagle Freedom brief.

¹⁵ Forrest L. Marion, "Opening the Second Front: Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines, January-August 2002," USSOCOM classified draft history of JTF-510 stored in the classified files of the USSOCOM History Office, MacDill AFB, Fla.; Brown and Wood interview.

¹⁶ Classified interview with Sergeant First Class Peter Kenshaw (pseudonym) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 6 May 2003, Fort Lewis, Wash., tape recording in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Kenshaw interview.

¹⁷ Brown and Wood interview.

¹⁸ Brown and Wood interview.

¹⁹ 5 May 2003 brief.

²⁰ Brown and Wood interview.

²¹ Classified interview with Captain Edward Wilkins, Captain James Brown and Staff Sergeant Vance Wood (pseudonyms) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 6 May 2003, Fort Lewis, Wash., tape recordings in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Wilkins interview.

²² Brown and Wood interview; classified interview with Major Robert Conrad (pseudonym) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 18 August 2003, Fort Lewis, Wash., tape recordings in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Conrad interview.

²³ Brown and Wood interview.

²⁴ Brown and Wood interview; Cromwell interview.

²⁵ Brown and Wood interview.

²⁶ Brown and Wood interview.

²⁷ Classified interview with Sergeant First Class Mark Schwartz (pseudonym) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 19 April 2004, Fort Lewis, Wash., tape recording in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Schwartz interview.

²⁸ Brown and Wood interview.

²⁹ Brown and Wood interview.

³⁰ Schwartz interview.

³¹ Brown and Wood interview.

³² Marion, "Opening the Second Front."

³³ Marion, "Opening the Second Front."

³⁴ Classified interview with Staff Sergeant Michael Carter and Master Sergeant James Upchurch (pseudonyms) by Lieutenant Colonel Forrest Marion, 28 February 2003, Fort Lewis, Wash., tape recordings in the classified files of USSOCOM History Office, MacDill AFB, Fla.

³⁵ Classified interview with Major Clark Saunders (pseudonym) by Lieutenant Colonel Forrest Marion, 28 February 2003, Fort Lewis, Wash., tape recordings in the classified files of the USSOCOM History Office, MacDill AFB, Fla., hereafter cited as Saunders interview.

³⁶ Dougherty interview.

³⁷ Saunders interview.

Wanted Dead or Alive: Psychological Operations During Balikatan 02-1

by Dr. C.H. Briscoe

Psychological operations are an integral part of any program of counterinsurgency, and the Exercise Balikatan-related campaign of unconventional warfare conducted by United States Army special-operations forces in 2002 was no exception.

In spite of a challenging operating envi-

or ASG, in the southern Philippines.

In the wake of 9/11, the Army special-operations forces, or ARSOF, community focused on Islamist terrorists around the world. The battalion of the Fort Bragg-based 4th Psychological Operations Group oriented on the U.S. Pacific Command, or PACOM, focused its research efforts on countries with significant Muslim populations and concentrated on developing appropriate target-audience analyses.

Even as the 4th POG began targeting Muslim extremist groups in the southern Philippines, it sent a small military/civilian mission-planning cell to Hawaii to assist the staffs of PACOM and the Special Operations Command, Pacific, or SOCPAC, in developing the proposal for a regional campaign of the Global War on Terrorism.

A large part of the resulting campaign plan focused on the Philippines as a critical theater of operations in the Pacific region. The initial concept of operations called for a six to 10-person PSYOP element to support JTF-510, which was based at Zamboanga on the southern island of Mindanao, and a tactical PSYOP detachment, or TPD, headquarters and three tactical PSYOP teams to support the U.S. forces operating on Basilan Island, just south of Zamboanga.

The PSYOP element that the 4th POG sent to the Philippines was a skeleton operation: It had little print capability,



USASOC Historical Archive

The "wanted" poster, a product of the 4th POG, was key in driving ASG terrorists from the island of Basilan in the Philippines.

ronment, including media-driven force limitations and residual Philippine suspicion of psychological operations, or PSYOP, caused by abuses under the Marcos regime, PSYOP personnel were able to contribute to the effort to rescue two American missionaries, Martin and Gracia Burnham, from the terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group,

performed communication and research primarily through laptop-computer connections and carried only small, portable loudspeakers.¹

Although the 4th POG had developed a rapport with the psychological-warfare personnel of the AFP during the annual Balanced Piston and Balikatan exercises, they could not use that rapport to fill PACOM's lack of information on the Philippine media. The Philippine psychological-warfare personnel were more interested in the Communist People's Army — the Hukbalahaps, or HUKs — the oldest, largest and best-organized terrorist group in the Philippines, which operated primarily throughout the central and northern islands.

Fortunately, the primary Southeast Asia analyst in the 4th POG, Nate Godwin (pseudonym), had been staying abreast of the activities of Muslim insurgents in the southern islands and was well-versed in the ideologies and methods of the Moro National Liberation Front, or MNLF, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, or MILF, and the ASG.²

While Captains Roger Oswald and Cathy Hines (the TPD commander) worked with the 1st Special Forces Group, first at Fort Lewis and then at the 1st SF Group's initial support base on Okinawa, the remainder of the PSYOP element deployed to the Philippines to prepare a PSYOP support plan. On Jan. 23, Major Dan Helms and Sergeant Chuck Andrews (pseudonyms) briefed the plan to the deputy commander, the J3 and the PSYOP staff officer at SOCPAC, Major Rebecca Sims (pseudonym), the former commander of the Headquarters Support Company of the PACOM battalion.

In addition to developing and staffing the PSYOP annex to the operations plan, or OPLAN, for Freedom Eagle, the operation that comprised all operations against the ASG, the PSYOP team also had the task of developing an appropriate strategy for handling the Philippine media. Some segments of the Philippine media have a decidedly anti-American bias. The media loudly objected to the presence of U.S. Soldiers on Philippine soil. Media

negativity toward ARSOF activities contributed to an already hostile operating environment in the Sulu Archipelago. The media had to be taken into account as ARSOF conducted information activities in support of the counterinsurgency campaign. Despite the fact that JTF-510 operated a press center and embedded Philippine journalists with AFP elements in Basilan, the activities of the Muslim guerrillas did not generate any significant disapproval within the local population.³

One of the PSYOP Soldiers, Andrews, was able to establish a rapport with his host-nation counterparts by drawing on his language abilities and his previous experi-



U.S. Army photo

Two Filipino children read the "wanted" flyer. The flyer was prepared by the 4th PSYOP Group as a means of gaining information about the ASG, an insurgent group that was holding two American missionaries for ransom.

ences in the Philippines. He had spent two years living and working with residents of Leyte and Samar, and he had learned to communicate in Tagalog, Ilocano, Cebuano and Waray-Waray, which gave him credibility with natives and Americans alike. Andrews' time in the Philippines also had given him an insight into the culture that came in useful to both the PSYOP team and the JTF staff.

The initial idea for stimulating a flow of new information about the kidnapped missionaries was to saturate the southern Philippines with baseball-type "trading cards" of the ASG leaders to obtain information on their whereabouts as part of the FBI's "Rewards for Justice" program. After collecting photos of prominent ASG

leaders, Andrews used computer software to create layouts for printing individual trading cards.

He realized that “wanted” posters would be more effective and simpler to produce. The posters would enable the team to simultaneously publicize the role of all the ASG leaders involved in the Burnhams’ kidnapping, instead of relying on chance to get people to see every photo. After reviewing the legal implications, PACOM agreed to support the initiative as part of its command-information program, as long as the posters were clearly marked as being products of the Department of State Diplomatic Security Service. The resulting tips on the fugitives’ whereabouts had to be han-

but time was of the essence.”⁵

Having worked with the State Department’s regional print center in Manila since Exercise Balikatan 1999, Andrews was familiar with the administrative and financial details of preparing products.⁶ After getting approval, the PSYOP team of only two people had 96 hours in which to produce 3,000 large, glossy, color posters and 15,000 color picture leaflets featuring the top-ranking ASG leaders. The task took a considerable amount of scrambling, but it was done in 72 hours, allowing the American ambassador to announce the program at a special press conference on May 29, 2002. A photo of Ambassador Frank Ricciardone holding an ASG wanted poster made the front page of the Manila-based *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, and the story was carried by most Philippine news media outlets for a week.

SOC PAC’s intent had been to do a “media blitz” — to distribute 3,000 posters at the press conference and 24 hours later to saturate the Sulu Archipelago with six focused leaflet drops. But just as the toll-free Rewards for Justice telephone number began to ring steadily with calls, and text messages and e-mail traffic began to flow, the follow-up air delivery of leaflets ran into legal problems.⁷

When the State Department assumed responsibility for the posters, the project planners no longer had the authority to use Department of Defense military aircraft to transport and disseminate the leaflets. The final legal determination was that the State Department had to reimburse DoD for the use of its aircraft. Brigadier General Donald Wurster, the SOCPAC commander, considered the prompt delivery of the leaflets to be essential to sustaining the momentum of the Rewards for Justice program: American lives were at stake.

Just as he had done to get critical equipment to the Philippines in order to start the training of the national counterterrorist Light Reaction Company in May 2001, Wurster authorized the transport mission to be taken “out of hide” by using training flying hours. The State Depart-

The fact that cell-phone usage was widespread throughout the Philippines was both a challenge and an advantage to the U.S. in its operations against the ASG. Virtually every Filipino had a cell phone, and covert text messaging of U.S. forces’ movements had already proved to be a major challenge to force protection on the islands.

dled by the American Embassy, and indictments had to be issued by the Justice Department before the posters could be publicly released.⁴

For Andrews, it was an opportunity, in his words, to “fulfill every PSYOPer’s dream — to design, produce and distribute products in combat and see the results.”

“It would be the biggest success of my military career,” he said. “It blew the whole [standard] PSYOP production process out of the water,” but the desired results were achieved in the limited time allotted. The wanted posters and leaflets had to be printed in numerous dialects common to the southern Philippines. A Chavacana woman, Carol Landers (pseudonym), helped with the translations into Tausug, Yacan and Chavacano. Andrews observed, “They weren’t the best linguistic products,

ment paid a nominal \$1 fee for the MC-130 flight, and the leaflets were distributed almost on schedule.⁸

Unfortunately for Andrews, distribution meant kicking the leaflets and posters out of the airplane, and that did not occur until after his rotation. The closest he got to seeing the project through, as had been his dream, was constructing the makeshift leaflet drop boxes and accumulating the necessary static lines from the 1st SF Group. He had to be satisfied with 85 percent of his dream. Staff Sergeant Andy Keltner, Sergeant Al Norman and Major Bob Watson (pseudonyms) received the honor of actually distributing the leaflets.⁹

The fact that cell-phone usage was widespread throughout the Philippines was both a challenge and an advantage to the U.S. in its operations against the ASG. Virtually every Filipino had a cell phone, and covert text messaging of U.S. forces' movements had already proved to be a major challenge to force protection on the islands. In the case of the Rewards for Justice program, however, the easy access to cell phones facilitated the passing of confidential tips (verbally or by text message) to the phone numbers listed on the posters and leaflets.

The concept of offering money for information sat well with the Filipinos, too. The proffered rewards appealed to a culture in which a large portion of the population lives below the subsistence level. The exchange of money for information could work for the greater good in a poverty-ridden society.

The AFP rescued Gracia Burnham on June 7, 2002.¹⁰ The ASG had already moved the Burnhams and Deborah Yap, another hostage, from Basilan Island to a location north of Zamboanga City, on the island of Mindanao, sometime in April 2002, so it is debatable whether or not the reward posters and leaflets were the key to determining the whereabouts of the captives. Considering the timing, however — the operation took place less than two weeks after Ambassador Riccardo promoted the wanted poster at his press conference in Manila — it is quite

likely that the PSYOP team's efforts contributed to the rescue. ✕

Dr. C.H. Briscoe is the command historian for the U.S. Army Special Operations Command.

Notes:

¹ Classified interview with Major John Matsumoto (pseudonym) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 7 January 2004, Fort Bragg, N.C., tape recordings in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Matsumoto interview; classified interview with Staff Sergeant Weldon C. Andrews (pseudonym) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 9 January 2004, Fort Bragg, N.C., tape recordings in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Andrews interview.

² Andrews interview.

³ Andrews interview; classified interview with Lieutenant Colonel Douglas Mandarin (pseudonym) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 23 May 2003, Fort Bragg, N.C., tape recording in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C.

⁴ Andrews interview.

⁵ Andrews interview.

⁶ Andrews interview.

⁷ Matsumoto interview.

⁸ Matsumoto interview.

⁹ Andrews interview.

¹⁰ Gracia Burnham, *In the Presence of My Enemies* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2003), 246, 254.

Civil Affairs: A Weapon of Peace on Basilan Island

by Dr. Cherilyn A. Walley

The entrenched nature of the terrorist and criminal elements on Basilan Island in the Philippines led the United States to apply the counterinsurgency, or COIN, model to its efforts of unconventional warfare, or UW, in the region.

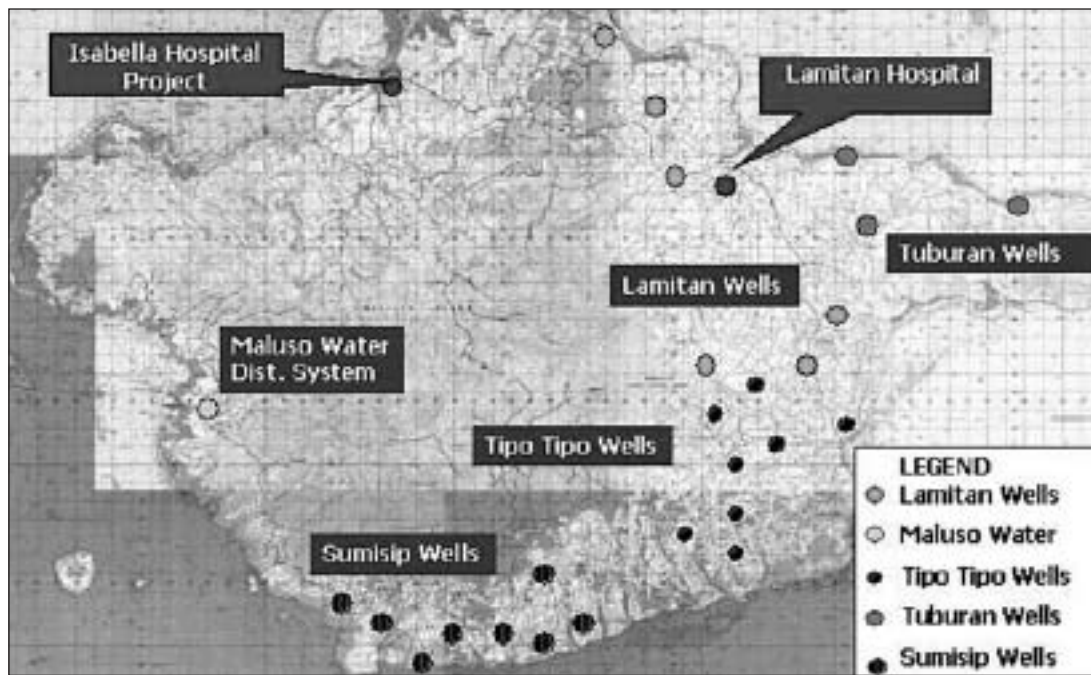
The COIN model emphasizes the relationships between the populace and the government, between the populace and the insurgents, and between the military and the insurgents. In order to strengthen the crucial relationship between the populace and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines, or GRP, U.S. Army special-operations forces, or ARSOF, undertook a number of Civil Affairs, or CA, projects on the island.

Because of a force cap imposed by the U.S. Pacific Command, or PACOM, in response to restrictions of the GRP, which were a response to public and political concerns about possible violations of Philippine sovereignty, very few CA specialists were actually deployed to the island. The CA effort was supplemented by activities of the Naval Construction Task Group, or NCTG, comprising Navy Seabees and Marine engineers, and of Army Special Forces operational detachments. In addition to building schools, bridges and piers, improving roads and upgrading numerous water systems, ARSOF personnel treated thousands of Filipinos as part of medical civic-action programs, or MEDCAPs, and dental civic-action programs, or DENTCAPs.

The plans for a CA mission to the Philip-

pinos were made during the post-9/11 flurry of activity at the headquarters of PACOM and the Special Operations Command, Pacific. Company B of the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion immediately began making plans with the 1st Battalion of the 1st Special Forces Group, which is stationed in Okinawa. By January 2002, the 96th had orders to send a CA team to the Philippines via Okinawa. On March 10, 2002, several CA teams flew from their home at Fort Bragg, N.C., to Okinawa, where they were attached to the 1st Battalion, 1st SF Group.¹

Before the CA teams even arrived in theater, 1st Battalion, 1st SF Group, kicked off Balikatan 02-1. In February 2002, SF personnel, including a number of SF detachments, had deployed to Zamboanga and to Basilan Island in order to train troops of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, or AFP, in counterterrorism tactics. Joint Task Force 510 retained control of the operations of all U.S. special-operations forces, or SOF, in the Philippines, and in late February or early March, the task force ordered the SF detachments to shift their focus from making security-focused assessments of the Basilan villages to conducting a general humanitarian survey that dealt with socio-economic trends and living conditions. The goal was to sample 60,000 of the island's 350,000 residents by March 31 and to use the information to place SF teams and AFP forces where they could best strengthen the relationship



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A map of Basilan Island shows some of the humanitarian-assistance projects that were planned during Exercise Balikatan 02-1.

between the government and the people.²

The CA teams were prevented from fully deploying to Basilan Island by PACOM's force cap. The Philippine press was sensitive to the presence of American forces in the Philippines, insisting that their presence was a violation of the Constitution of the Philippines. Because of the force cap, only one of the slated CA teams, CAT-A23, was able to deploy to Basilan Island. Several other CA teams were broken up, with some members left on Okinawa while others deployed to Zamboanga, on Mindanao. On March 24, 2002, three members of CAT-A23, Sergeant First Class Derek Thomas, Master Sergeant Nelson and team medic Roger Larsen, (pseudonyms) arrived by helicopter on Basilan Island. Two other CA Soldiers from CAT-A23 found berths on a boat with the Marines, where they could wait until spaces on the island opened up.³

When CAT-A23 arrived outside Isabela, it discovered that it had much more work to do than had been originally indicated. The information the team had received prior to deployment was that over the years, the island had been repeatedly assessed for humanitarian projects, and that the CA teams would simply need to start planning and completing projects. The reality was that hardly any detailed

CA assessments had been done: a complete CA survey was needed. To that end, the team sergeant, Nelson, based himself in Isabela, and Thomas and Larsen took a two-week whirlwind tour of the island.⁴

The two spent one week surveying the west side of the island, from Lantawan down through Sumisip, and one week surveying the east side, from Lamitan down to Tipo-Tipo. The survey revealed that no non-governmental organizations, or NGOs, had worked on Basilan since 1999, and that most of the islanders lived in distinctly substandard conditions. The insurgents had driven away all schoolteachers and medical personnel outside the predominantly Christian villages of Lamitan and Isabela, leaving the majority-Muslim islanders without adequate health care or educational opportunities. The water was not safe to drink, and there was little or no electricity.

Isabela, the largest city, was subject to brownouts, and in Lamitan, electricity was sparse. Maluso and Sumisip had one or two private generators each, which provided sporadic electricity to a few residents. By the time the CA specialists returned to Isabela, they had a much better idea of the projects they needed to plan and execute. Upon their return to Isabela the ship with the other CA team was given permission to land, and the

number of CA Soldiers on the island doubled.⁵

While the primary CA mission was humanitarian assistance, or HA, the teams had to operate in the hostile environment of an island that so favored the Abu Sayyaf Group, or ASG, that the AFP used it as a live-fire training center. Thomas and Larsen, both SF-qualified, were in full agreement with the guidelines for force protection set down by JTF-510. The teams generally traveled in convoys of at least four vehicles, one of which usually sported a mounted M-240B machine gun as a visual, and actual, deterrent. The SF teams' standard operating procedure for entering

Muslim villages was to enter "guns up," recognizing that such villages often harbored insurgent forces. Even MEDCAPs could be targets of ASG attacks, so AFP and SF personnel maintained a close watch at all gatherings.⁶

Because of force-protection requirements, the CA teams remained close to the SF teams as they conducted their planning and execution. CAT-A23's usual routine was to travel from the forward operating base in

Isabela down to the advanced operating base in Maluso and to stay with various SF detachments in the area for three to four days at a time, then move on to Sumisip and do the same. Once the assessments and plan were complete, the CA teams would return to Isabela and turn in their reports.⁷

An important part of CA work is making contacts among the local populace. The most important connection Thomas made on Basilan was an officer in the AFP marines. He was the CA liaison for the AFP marine battalion located in the southern part of Basilan Island, but his value stemmed more

from his personal abilities than from his official position. The officer had grown up on the island, in Lamitan, and spoke all of the island languages, which made him an invaluable liaison for the CA Soldiers. Perhaps even more useful were the officer's connections with the local leadership. He seemed not only to know everybody of significance, regardless of their religious or political affiliation, and he was respected as an incorruptible arbitrator. His presence assured cooperation and safety, even in ASG-controlled areas of the island.⁸

A telling example of the AFP marine officer's influence, and the way that he facilitated CA involvement on the island, was his mediation of a conflict on a small outlying island between a camp of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, or MILF, and two local village chiefs, according to Thomas. Thomas and a number of SF Soldiers, the officer and some of his own marines, rowed over to the island in small boats. The Soldiers set up a MEDCAP in the center of one of the villages (whose people had abandoned it out of fear of the MILF), in order to entice the villagers back with the offer of free medical care. Once the MEDCAP was concluded, the concerned parties met with the AFP marine officer. When it became clear that the warring parties would not make peace themselves, the officer indicated that if they did not work out a viable truce, he would return with his entire battalion of marines and force them to get along. In Thomas' words, everyone shook hands and agreed to a truce, albeit reluctantly.⁹

A survey conducted by the SF detachments echoed many of the CA team's conclusions regarding the state of the island's humanitarian services. Using the data collected by the SF detachments on Basilan, the JTF staff and AFP leadership developed plans of action for addressing the most pressing concerns of the populace and set priorities for providing resources. Highest on the list was the desperate need for potable water to reduce the high childhood death rate caused by waterborne diseases. The next priority was improving local medical facilities and establishing clinics in areas where none existed.



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One of the primary CA projects was ensuring residents had potable water, which was accomplished in part by drilling wells.

The third priority was improving the transportation infrastructure: providing all-weather roads, building and improving bridges and linking existing roads to create a viable perimeter road that would help commerce and would expand markets for agricultural products. These priorities became the focus of JTF and AFP efforts during the early months of Exercise Balikatan, when infrastructure improvements benefited U.S. trainers and advisers and contributed to force protection.¹⁰

In addition to planning humanitarian projects, Thomas and Larsen were tasked to act as CA liaisons with the Navy Seabees. Thomas noted that while the Seabees were excellent at construction, they had little training in dealing with the populace. The CA team would step in to settle disputes or conduct preliminary negotiations between the Seabees and local landowners or leaders. The CA Soldiers' skill at working with the locals smoothed the way for the Seabees a number of times, such as when the Seabees needed to ask a local farmer for permission to temporarily store some bridge-building equipment on his land. Thomas appreciated the opportunity to prevent problems rather than to have to react to a bad situation, and the partnership between CA and the Seabees was beneficial to all concerned.¹¹

While the NCTG and the CA contingent both placed potable water at the top of their priority lists, they favored different solutions to the problem. The Seabees, whose area of responsibility included most of the eastern side of the island, favored wells as a solution to the islandwide problem of polluted water. CA Soldiers are trained to assess situations according to the Special Operations Imperatives, which include ensuring that applied solutions are culturally appropriate and sustainable in the long-term. Thomas and Larsen concluded that gravity-fed pipe systems would last longer and would be more economical in the long run.

While the wells had to be dug several hundred feet deep and required expensive and relatively fragile submersible pumps to operate, the gravity-fed pipe system relied on simple pipes (buried to avoid

unauthorized water diversion) to bring water to a distribution point. The pipe system had the added advantage of being repairable by local Filipinos, unlike the technologically advanced pump systems. Unfortunately, Thomas said, many of the gravity-fed systems were later downgraded to wells. Either solution, however, was a vast improvement of local water resources and positively affected the island.¹²

Medical improvements were also a priority for ARSOF teams. Once PACOM approved the MEDCAPs in the summer of 2002, they proved to be the most successful CA program on the island and were conducted not only by the CA teams, but also by SF detachments in the field. By the time SF Detachment 186 rotated out of the Philippines, its members had arranged and supported between 20 and 25 MEDCAPs and DENTCAPs. Sergeant First Class Jack Wallace (pseudonym), an SF medic, also held a regular "sick call" for the local populace with the help of AFP medics he had trained. It became a standard practice for SF medics to offer medical care to anyone who needed it.¹³

The MEDCAPs were also ARSOF's most effective tool in building good relations with the populace. Staff Sergeant Roger Madison (pseudonym), SF Detachment 114, was instrumental in taking heroic measures to save a critically ill Muslim baby. Madison administered lifesaving treatment until the JTF could arrange to transport the child to a hospital in Zamboanga. In spite of everyone's best efforts,



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MEDCAPs proved to be the most successful CA program and went far in winning the hearts and minds of the people.

the baby died in the hospital; however, Lieutenant Colonel Douglas Mandarin (pseudonym) noted, “The people from Geong, on the southern coast, were eternally grateful for the SF team’s gallant efforts. From that time forward, the SF team could do no wrong in that area.”¹⁴

Less dramatic efforts were likewise rewarded with good feelings and acceptance from the locals. One Muslim village leader expressed his deep gratitude when a medic removed a large, rusty fishhook from his five-year-old granddaughter’s thigh. A Christian village’s mayor was similarly grateful when an SF medic set the broken foot of one of the

In spite of the ASG’s retaliatory measures, the MEDCAPs improved lives and won hearts wherever they were held. Villagers in Tuburan were so won over that they warned U.S. and AFP forces of impending ASG attacks, realizing that if the American and AFP troops withdrew, the villagers would no longer benefit from their humanitarian assistance.

village’s small children. By engendering positive feelings among the locals, the MEDCAPs became an effective force-protection measure.

In September 2002, ARSOF achieved an impressive MEDCAP record on Basilan, seeing 687 patients at Libug on Sept. 5; 537 in Lumbang on Sept. 8; and 786 in the Tubaran area on Sept. 9. On Sept. 11, SF personnel conducted the largest ever MEDCAP on Basilan Island, treating 1,028 patients in one day. The next day, they saw 867 in Magcawa.¹⁵

Some of the most concerted MEDCAP efforts, however, were performed in an effort to offset the ASG’s influence. After the ASG kidnapped four Mindanao State University teachers on Sept. 13, ARSOF and AFP personnel simultaneously held two MEDCAPs in large villages near Zamboanga City, serving both Christians and Muslims. A Bud-

dhist relief organization called Tzu Chi assisted as well, and in the Christian village of Guisao, 718 people were treated. In the Muslim area of Mariqui, a shantytown built over the waters of Zamboanga harbor, SF and AFP medical personnel treated 2,334 patients. Unfortunately, the ASG immediately countered the good feelings engendered by the MEDCAPs with further terrorist bombings.

In spite of the ASG’s retaliatory measures, the MEDCAPs improved lives and won hearts wherever they were held. Villagers in Tuburan were so won over that they warned U.S. and AFP forces of impending ASG attacks, realizing that if the American and AFP troops withdrew, the villagers would no longer benefit from their humanitarian assistance.¹⁶

When SOF personnel deployed to the southern Philippines in 2002, they were tasked with fighting the Global War on Terrorism by training a foreign military to counter domestic terrorist threats, and to win local support for the Philippine government (and indirectly for the U.S.) by improving living conditions on Basilan Island. In the face of a hostile insurgent force, and hampered by lack of manpower and support, ARSOF nevertheless managed to accomplish their training and humanitarian missions.

The medical contributions alone justified the SF and CA teams’ efforts, as by November 2003, more than 30,000 people had received treatment through ARSOF-sponsored MEDCAPs and DENTCAPs. In addition to the medical programs, however, CA and SF teams improved water sources, designed public-sanitation systems, contributed to infrastructure upgrades and planned numerous other life-improving projects. Each success and show of interest in the well-being of the local populace served to further the ARSOF mission in the region.¹⁷

The NCTG also accomplished its mission of supporting the ARSOF training efforts. By the end of their 60-day deployment, Navy Seabees had cleared, graded and compacted a 3,000-foot by 60-foot C-130-capable runway, and they had cleared eight helicopter landing zones used by the military



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An SF medic's removal of a rusty fishhook from a village leader's granddaughter's thigh won the leader's support.

for casevacs. Seabees also repaired and improved 80 kilometers of road, connecting more overland routes to the all-weather perimeter road, which enabled ARSOF and AFP troops to travel more quickly. The NCTG erected four bridges and built a pier at Lamitan to enable ARSOF resupply and to generally improve the port. In addition to the surface improvements, the Seabees also drilled three much-needed deep-water wells, which not only supported ARSOF personnel but also improved the lives of the populace.¹⁸

The purpose of having ARSOF in the southern Philippines was to reduce the impact of terrorism in that area and in the Southeast Asia region as a whole. To that end, ARSOF applied the COIN model to battling the terrorist and criminal activities on Basilan Island. The medical programs and infrastructure improvements sponsored and completed by ARSOF, as well as the money the projects infused into the local economy, however temporarily, went a long way toward improving feelings between the populace of Basilan Island and the GRP, which is one of the three critical relationships in the COIN model.

The fact that ARSOF personnel always dealt honestly with the populace also reduced corruption on the island, if only temporarily. While time and resources were too limited to allow ARSOF to fully eradicate the insurgency, the efforts of CA, SF and NCTG personnel made a difference in the lives of the local population and laid the groundwork

for further counterinsurgency and antiterrorism efforts in the Philippines. ✕

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Notes:

¹ Interview with Sergeant First Class Derek Thomas (pseudonym) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 5 December 2003, Fort Bragg, N.C., tape recording and notes in USASOC Classified Archives, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Thomas interview.

² Classified interview with Captain James Brown and Staff Sergeant Vance Wood (pseudonyms) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 6 May 2003, Fort Lewis, Wash. Tape recording in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Brown and Wood interview; JSOTF-P Enduring Freedom-Philippines briefing, n.d., in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C.

³ Thomas interview.

⁴ Thomas interview.

⁵ Thomas interview.

⁶ Thomas interview; Brown and Wood interview.

⁷ Thomas interview.

⁸ Thomas interview.

⁹ Thomas interview.

¹⁰ 1st SF Group Philippine Islands brief for historian (January 2002 through December 2002), 5 May 2003, in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C.

¹¹ Thomas interview.

¹² Thomas interview.

¹³ Brown and Wood interview; Thomas interview.

¹⁴ Classified interview with Lieutenant Colonel Douglas Mandarin (pseudonym) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 23 May 2003, Fort Bragg, N.C. Tape recording in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C.

¹⁵ Classified interview with Lieutenant Colonel Duane Dillard (pseudonym) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 6 May 2003, Fort Lewis, Wash. Tape recording in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C.

¹⁶ Dillard interview.

¹⁷ 1st SF Group Philippine Islands brief for historian (January 2002 through December 2002), dated 5 May 2003.

¹⁸ Forrest L. Marion, "Opening the Second Front: Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines, January-August 2002," USSOCOM classified draft history of JTF-510, stored in the classified files of the USSOCOM History Office, MacDill AFB, Fla.; classified interview with Captain Eldon Williams (pseudonym) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 6 May 2003, Fort Lewis, Wash., tape recording in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C.

Impact of the Semipermissive Environment on Force-Protection in Philippine Engagements

by Dr. Cheryl A. Walley

Conducting a major joint combined training exercise in the semipermissive environment of the Philippines posed serious challenges during the planning and execution of Balikatan 02-1, as well as during the security-assistance missions that continued after the exercise ended.

In 2001, the 1st Special Forces Group was tasked to advise, assist and train the Armed Forces of the Philippines, or AFP, to combat the Abu Sayyaf Group, or ASG, the same terrorist group that had kidnapped 20 Western hostages and in April 2000 had threatened to kill Americans. The first American hostage held by the ASG, Jeffrey Schilling, was taken captive on Aug. 29, 2000, on Jolo Island. In May 2001, Martin and Gracia Burnham and Guillermo Sobero became the second, third and fourth American citizens to be kidnapped by the ASG in the southern Philippines. In spite of the demonstrated danger to American lives and the focus on counterterrorism by both the American and Philippine governments, Balikatan was an exercise, and the rules of engagement, or ROE, were structured accordingly.

The legal guidelines for participation by American Soldiers in the

exercise were laid out in the 1999 Visiting Forces Agreement in the exercise-specific terms of reference, or TOR, and in an appendix to the original Joint Task Force-510 operations order, or OPORD. Subsequent annexes to the OPORD clarified the ROE. Under the original ROE, armed force up to and including deadly force was authorized for U.S. troops in self-defense and in defense or protection of U.S. troops, U.S. citizens, Philippine forces and third-country citizens designated by JTF-510, as well as in protection of AFP property and U.S. mission-essential property.

The TOR also authorized the use of U.S. assets and resources, in combination with those of the AFP, for medical evacuations. As it turned out, casualty evacuations, or casevacs, became necessary during the course of the joint field exercises on Basilan Island. While U.S. forces were not authorized to initiate combat operations, they were authorized to act in self-defense and in defense of others in their presence while they were on field operations with the AFP.¹

During America's heightened emotional state in the months immediately following 9/11, the military and civilian planners at the Special Operations Command,

Pacific, or SOCPAC, at the U.S. Pacific Command, or PACOM, and at the 1st SF Group began developing a regional campaign plan for the Global War of Terrorism, or GWOT. The SOCPAC commander, Brigadier General Donald Wurster, considered Exercise Balikatan to be a contingency operation for the GWOT plan, so his staff and the staff of PACOM planned it as a peacetime combined exercise.

The commander of the 1st SF Group, Colonel David Fridovich, and the commander of the 1st Battalion, 1st SF Group, Lieutenant Colonel Douglas Mandarin (pseudonym), headed a SOCPAC team for making a tactical capability assessment visit, or TCAV, while accompanying the larger PACOM planning-survey staff traveling to the Philippines in preparation for Exercise Balikatan 02-1.

In accordance with the standard procedures for peacetime combined training exercises, the PACOM planning-survey party was composed of senior staff officers who met with their AFP counterparts in Manila, at Mactan Air Base on Cebu, and in the Southern Command headquarters at Zamboanga, Mindanao. In order to complete the TCAV, Fridovich and his assessment team traveled to

Zamboanga and Basilan Island, the projected area of operations for Balikatan. Because of its remote location more than 500 miles south of Manila, and because of its primarily Muslim population, Basilan Island had been both a safe haven and a training site for Philippine insurgent groups for decades.

The Moro National Liberation Front, or MNLF, Moro Islamic Liberation Front, or MILF, and the ASG regularly engaged the local AFP battalions in combat. The AFP battalions moved between Basilan Island and southern Mindanao on a two- to three-year rotation schedule that offered little opportunity for enlisted soldiers to move up and out of the region. The sergeant major of the 32nd Infantry Battalion had reportedly been in Basilan since 1976, when the battalion was first stationed on the island.

The situation had degraded to the point that AFP soldiers no longer aggressively pursued the insurgents. The AFP went so far as to hire local guides instead of using its own scouts on patrol, which ensured that the patrols would never purposely encounter opposing forces. The combination of neglect and lack of military initiative created circumstances that were less than ideal, not only for the continuing presence and even growth of insurgent groups but also for the genesis of new terrorist and criminal organizations.²

In the middle of newly-appointed President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's first official visit to Washington, Nov. 19-23, 2001, a combined assault force from the MNLF and the Misuari Renegade Group attacked Jolo Air Base, inflicting heavy casualties on AFP forces and on local civilians. The attack was in retaliation for Arroyo's recent suspension of Nur Misuari (the former MNLF leader) as governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim

Mindanao because of his corruption.

In light of the escalating terrorist threat in the southern Philippines, President Arroyo accepted President George W. Bush's offer of \$100 million in military assistance (including a C-130 turboprop aircraft and 30,000 M-16 rifles) and \$4.6. billion in economic aid. She also stated that she would allow the U.S. military to advise, train and assist the AFP in the fight against the ASG, the group that had been specifically targeting Americans earlier in the year. With Arroyo's decision, Exercise

The combination of neglect and lack of military initiative created circumstances that were less than ideal, not only for the continuing presence and even growth of insurgent groups but also for the genesis of new terrorist and criminal organizations.

Balikatan became directly linked to America's GWOT.

In accordance with Exercise Balikatan's new importance, the PACOM standing Joint Task Force-510 was activated for planning purposes. While Fridovich turned Torii Station, Okinawa, into an initial staging base for deploying elements of Army special-operations forces, or ARSOF, a PACOM engineer-survey team was sent to Camp Navarro at Zamboanga, Mindanao, to identify, assess and obtain facilities for "bedding down" the JTF.

A U.S.-based contractor accompa-

nied them as part of the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program. Significant repairs and construction improvements were needed to house, feed, support and protect the JTF headquarters, which would consist of more than 300 personnel. Edwin Andrews Air Base's flight line also required barriers to be installed for protection against small-arms fire. Force-protection considerations also dictated that upon arrival, JTF aircraft and crews would have to be placed outside the operational area at Mactan Air Base.

The PACOM operations order issued in December 2001 set the tone for Exercise Balikatan. The exercise's TOR established a U.S. military force cap for the Philippines — 500 personnel for the JTF headquarters in Zamboanga and 160 SF Soldiers on Basilan Island, at the battalion level. Initially, PACOM's focus was to get the JTF headquarters operational before troop elements arrived. Unfortunately, that meant that when Fridovich and his 1st SF Group command-and-control group for ARSOF arrived at Edwin Andrews on Jan. 29, 2002, JTF-510 had already exceeded the exercise-force cap limits. Fortunately, the exercise's area of operations, or AO, was limited to southern Mindanao and Basilan Island, which put the U.S. air assets — aircrews, aircraft-maintenance personnel, the staff of the joint special-operations air component, and aircraft at Mactan Air Base on Cebu — outside the area covered by the force cap.

Two SF teams from the 1st SF Group, detachments 112 and 134, arrived in the AO at the end of January to provide antiterrorist protection and force protection for the JTF headquarters and for the 1st SF Group's advance echelons at Zamboanga and on Basilan Island. The detachments rotated between performing their force-protection role, providing an on-call quick-reaction force, and conducting training for AFP soldiers around

Zamboanga. In the semihostile environment of the southern Philippines, providing force protection over such a large AO proved to be a major task for the two operational teams.³

As the realities of the situation in the Philippines became evident to the ARSOF personnel, the term “contingency operation” proved to be a misnomer. Although required to deploy with unit basic loads of ammunition for contingency purposes and required to carry loaded weapons at all times as part of force-protection measures, ARSOF personnel had to adhere to peacetime supply-accountability rules — a single round of ammunition missing was cause for an investigation.

Additional ammunition required for qualification on basic and crew-served weapons was not provided at the intermediate staging base on Okinawa, and claymore mines, hand grenades and crew-served weapons — from heavy machine guns to mortars — were therefore not carried into the Philippines by the units. (The forward operating bases later brought in crew-served weapons.) Armored HMMWVs were also limited, in spite of their obvious force-protection value. So tight was the ammunition accountability that AFP basic weapons training and weapons qualification were delayed until security-assistance-allocated ammunition arrived.

Soldiers traveling off-base had to remain in groups of two or more, all group members had to carry loaded sidearms, and each group had to carry at least one rifle. All vehicles going off-base had to establish and maintain radio or cell-phone communications with the joint operations center. Because the handgun became the primary weapon for force protection, proficiency was critical, but pistol and rifle qualification were taken for granted at JTF-510 and at the ARSOTF headquarters.⁴

In the Philippines, the cell phone was an unusual challenge to force protection. Cell-phone technology is widespread in the Philippines, as in much of the developing world, because the land lines date to before World War II and are concentrated in the few large cities. While the number of cell-phone providers is limited, the commonplace mixing of local dialects with English and Tagalog, and the sheer volume of traffic, created major challenges for signals-intelligence personnel.

The popularity among younger Filipinos of using cell phones to send coded-text messages and photographs had major affects upon force protection. During firefights, AFP lieutenants were prone to send cell-phone messages to company commanders (and to the press) instead of using their tactical radios. Even with the occasional dead spots on the cellular networks, especially in southern Basilan, cell phones often outperformed the tactical radios. The AFP’s standard field radio was the early Vietnam War-era PRC-25, but AFP units also used more modern tactical radios, for which they had repeaters set up across Basilan. Senior AFP officers accepted the tactical radios’ short ranges and unreliability under the triple-canopy jungles of Basilan as a good rationale for the common field use of cell phones, in spite of the security risk inherent in the practice.⁵

As a way of strengthening their relationships with the populace, the SF teams turned from performing tactical missions to implementing the counterinsurgency model that had been practiced by the American military in Vietnam. The teams also prepared a force-protection plan for each village.

Having established themselves with the village leaders on Basilan during the security, civic and humanitarian-needs assessments, the Soldiers of Forward Operating Base 11 initiated area medical

civic-action programs, or MEDCAPs, using their assigned medical personnel, to demonstrate their commitment and to build rapport.

While the families of terrorists routinely received free medical treatment along with the other inhabitants, the terrorist groups did not consider MEDCAP sites to be sacrosanct, and force protection for MEDCAPs was always an issue. An AFP motorcyclist usually preceded vehicle convoys to the MEDCAP sites, and personnel of the local Civilian Auxiliary Force Geographical Unit were pulled in by the infantry battalions to augment AFP security while the MEDCAPs were conducted. Nonmedical SF personnel continually patrolled in and around the village to make their presence known, and the military helicopters used to transport the medical teams normally loitered overhead to provide early warnings in case of attack. The SF teams and JTF-510 never lost sight of the fact that the same people who welcomed humanitarian assistance could be supporting terrorists.⁶

The SOCPAC commander wanted to focus on unity of planning and on making coordinated operational responses to current intelligence, from the brigade down to the company level. The JTF-510 operations center knew where all AFP ground forces were positioned, so that was not a change to the commander’s original focus on long-term AFP military training and education.⁷ However, the SF detachments on Basilan had already acquired ground truth about the operational capabilities of the AFP infantry companies, as they had patiently trained them for five months. The SF teams were eager “to go to work” on the ASG, but their enthusiasm had to be restrained as they bumped into a very conservative JTF-510. The JTF-510 screened all concepts of operations closely to mitigate risk, and situation reports from the SF teams in the field grew volu-

minous. Approvals for concepts of operations routinely took 24 to 48 hours, often negating the exploitation value of current intelligence leads and frustrating the detachments.⁸

At the same time that the SF teams were attempting company-level operations, JTF-510 was preparing to draw down to 400 personnel by the end of July 2002, and to transition to a headquarters for a 50-person joint special-operations task force, or JSOTF, for the Philippines by Oct. 31.⁹ The riptide of the JTF-510 exodus was so strong that the JSOTF-P “stood up” on Sept. 1, 2002, within 30 days after the official end of Balikatan.

The accelerated transition time was facilitated by the 1st SF Group’s change of command in the Philippines. Since the 1st SF Group had functioned as the ARSOTF for JTF-510, Colonel Joseph Smith assumed command of JSOTF-P when he assumed command of the SF troops in theater.¹⁰

With the end of Exercise Balikatan, both funding and command and control of continuing operations made transitions. SF teams were asked to train two more AFP light reaction companies and four more light infantry battalions, while other special-operations forces were committed to training Philippine Air Force UH-1H pilots and crews in night flying. While similar to the operations carried out during Balikatan, these missions now fell in the category of security assistance, which was specifically funded by a \$25 million congressional appropriation. With the transition to security-assistance funding, control of the missions also passed to the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group, or JUSMAG, in Manila. The JUSMAG supervised, but since it was located at the U.S. Embassy in Manila, the JSOTF-P had tactical control over the Army SF teams in the joint operating area.¹¹

There had been no overt terrorist



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U.S. Special Forces Soldiers trained Philippine forces in recognizing a variety of improvised explosive devices.

acts against U.S. personnel during Exercise Balikatan, and JTF-510 presumed that most of the ASG had left Basilan Island by the time of the Burnham rescue in June 2002. With a much smaller American presence in the south after the transition — JSOTF-P headquarters at Zamboanga and an SF battalion on Basilan — the force-protection package was commensurately reduced. Forgotten was how much the extensive information-collection effort by the SF detachments had contributed to the “safe environment” that the Philippines had enjoyed during Balikatan.

Indications that a bombing campaign was imminent — a satchel charge was found on the airfield fence, people were observed watching troop movements through binoculars, attempts were made to block U.S. vehicles, and an AFP officer was murdered — were downplayed in the face of the draw-down, and previous force-protection assessments were assumed to have remained valid in spite of the changing situation. In this environment, ARSOF lost its first Soldier to terrorist action since the JTF had stood up in January 2002.¹²

At 8:20 p.m., Oct. 2, 2002, a bomb was detonated at a small open-air restaurant along the main road to Camp Enrile, Malagutay, killing four people and wounding more than 40. Having been too close when he detonated the bomb, the “trigger man” was also killed.¹³ Among the victims were two members of SF Detachment 145 who had been conducting advanced special-operations work in the surrounding area in support of force protection and had stopped for a late meal before returning to their base. Captain Max Horton (pseudonym) was seriously wounded in the explosion, and Sergeant First Class Mark Jackson was killed. Fortunately, the Air Force surgical team had not yet redeployed, although their emergency room had already been closed down and their medical equipment packed. The surgeons broke into the locked equipment containers to treat the captain and the injured Filipinos.¹⁴

The bomb had been rigged into a motorcycle that was parked in front of the restaurant just three kilometers from the JSOTF-P headquarters. No terrorist group claimed credit, and after several days it was presumed that the two Americans had

Jackson, Chapman early casualties from 1st SF Group in GWOT

When Sergeant First Class Mark W. Jackson was killed in action near Zamboanga on Oct. 2, 2002, his team, SF A-detachment 145, had the enhanced force-protection mission for JTF-510. Jackson, a team sergeant, was part of the ARSOF contingent training Philippine soldiers to combat the terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group. A 19-year Army veteran, Jackson had served in the 82nd Airborne Division and the 75th Ranger Regiment prior to his nine years of service in Special Forces. A Farsi and Arabic speaker, he had served in Kuwait, Jordan, Bahrain, Haiti and numerous countries in Southeast Asia.

Jackson was not the first Soldier from the 1st SF Group to die in the Global War on Terrorism. As Soldiers from the 1st Group prepared to deploy to the Philippines, Sergeant First Class Nathan R. Chapman, 3rd Battalion, 1st SF Group, was killed in action on Jan. 4, 2002, near the town of Khowst in Afghanistan. A communications NCO in SF A-detachment 194, Chapman was attached to Task Force Dagger during Operation Enduring Freedom. The 13-year Army veteran had participated in the 75th Rangers' parachute assault into Panama during Operation Just Cause and was also a veteran of Operation Desert Storm. Chapman, a Tagalog speaker, had served nine years in Special Forces and had deployed to Panama, Kuwait, Jordan, Iraq, Haiti and numerous countries in Southeast Asia. Chapman's fellow Special Forces Soldiers named the airfield at Khowst in his honor.

served as a "target of opportunity" for the bomber. Rather than flooding the area with advanced special-operations-trained SF and intelligence personnel to assess the threat and to recommend additional force-protection measures, the second JSOTF-P commander "locked down" the Americans on Camp Enrile for 72 hours and imposed an 11 p.m. curfew for all Americans under the task force's control, including those troops on Basilan Island.

All advanced special-operations work was stopped, as the danger outside the wire seemed to outweigh the long-term security gains of such a posture. While the lockdown may have kept the troops temporarily safe, the momentum of the information-collection effort

was lost, and the necessity of quickly regaining situational awareness was ignored. The AFP and other U.S. government elements were left to investigate the bombing site, but even the AFP did not survey the site until the next morning.

The urgent need for the resumption of information-collection efforts in the surrounding area appeared to be ignored even as the terrorist bombing campaign escalated with boldness. In response to the heightened danger, the Marine security element was quickly reinforced from Hawaii to improve the defensive posture of JSOTF-P at Camp Navarro, Zamboanga. Since constant support to the advanced operating base on Basilan was a necessity, schedules for resupply convoys

were constantly varied and switched to the late-night hours.¹⁵

While the JSOTF-P regrouped, the ASG and MILF exploited the opportunity with an abundance of counter-propaganda and more attacks. The groups bombed the Tiguma Police Station near the Pagadian Airport and threw grenades into a crowd at the Iglesia Christos Cathedral to add to the unrest. On Oct. 4 and 5, bombs were found and defused at a hardware store and in a dumpster at the Zamboanga City mall. Because many of the AFP soldiers based on Basilan Island had families in the provinces of Zamboanga del Norte and Zamboanga del Sur, the bombings had an added effect.

To recover lost face, JSOTF-P conducted a MEDCAP with the support of the AFP, the Rotary Club, a non-government organization, and the Tzu Chi, a nongovernment organization, in Toloso, just north of Zamboanga City. SF Detachment 145 organized tight security, and the Marine security element was supported by AFP armored cars and UH-1Hs flying overhead. The MEDCAP was successful, treating 803 people. However, the MEDCAP was not enough to turn the tide against the terrorists.

The ASG countered the U.S.-AFP effort with more bombings. On Oct. 7, four bombs were discovered in and around the hotels Paradise, Imperial and Platinum in Zamboanga. Fortunately, only one exploded. On Oct. 9, another bomb was discovered and defused on a vehicle near Edwin Andrews. On Oct. 10, a bomb exploded in Kidapawan near Cotabato City, killing eight people and wounding 60, while another exploded on a bus in North Cotabato, killing six and wounding 10. Two days later, two AFP infantry battalions operating on Jolo were caught by a well-executed ambush by the ASG and MRG. They suffered heavy losses, and all AFP who surrendered were summarily executed by the organizations' signa-

ture machete beheadings.¹⁶ The term “semi-permissive environment” suddenly took on new meaning in the southern Philippines.

In and around Zamboanga, MEDCAPs and dental civic-action programs conducted to counter the negativism of the bombing campaign were limited to the AFP bases. The JSOTF-P commander was reluctant to assume responsibility for Americans operating outside the wire, and he put an end to advanced special-operations work. Since he felt that the tactical information-collection was a critical element for recommending viable force-protection measures, the commander of SF Detachment 145 requested redeployment of his team. The commander felt that the “risk aversion and bunker mentality” in the face of renewed terrorist activity went against his training and experience and made the situation intolerable for him. His request was granted, and Detachment 145 was replaced.¹⁷

In spite of the increased terrorist activity on Mindanao, the security- and humanitarian-assistance programs and projects on Basilan were relatively unaffected. The rotational training of AFP rifle companies and the operation of an NCO academy on southern Mindanao were delayed until after the Christmas holidays of 2002–2003 because of PACOM’s inexperience with the technicalities of security-assistance funding, not because of force-protection concerns. In February 2003, training began again in earnest, and it is still ongoing in the Philippines.

Force protection in the semipermissive environment of the Sulu Archipelago meant different things during Exercise Balikatan than it did during the period associated with JSOTF-P. It proved to be incidental during the exercise when pressure was being applied to the ASG on Basilan. Having resolved the Burnham hostage situation

before the end of the exercise, the regional command, satisfied with its GWOT contribution, reverted to preparing for the AFP security-assistance mission to come.

Just as end-of-combat operations had stimulated rotations in Afghanistan and provided time for the al-Qaeda and Taliban to regroup (before Anaconda), the post-Burnham-rescue lull in AFP operations during the post-Balikatan transition facilitated terrorist efforts to publicly discredit the accomplishments of the U.S.-assisted AFP. The counterinsurgency progress made during Balikatan was lost under the flurry of terrorist actions and propaganda, and it would not be regained until several months after Jackson had been killed. Everyone involved in the post-Balikatan mission was reminded the hard way of the importance of force protection, even in a semipermissive environment. ❧

Dr. Cherilyn A. Walley is a historian on the staff of the USASOC Historian's Office.

Notes:

¹ Classified interview with Captain James Brown and Staff Sergeant Vance Wood (pseudonyms) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 6 May 2003, Fort Lewis, Wash., tape recording in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Brown and Wood interview; Armed Forces of the Philippines and U.S. Pacific Command, “Terms of Reference for RP-US Exercise Balikatan 02-1”, 9 February 2002, copy in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C.; JTF-510, “Appendix 2 to Annex C in OPOD Freedom Eagle,” 20 December 2001, copy in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C.; 1st Special Forces Group, “Law of War, Deployment Readiness Training Brief,” 2001, copy in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C.

² Classified interview with Sergeant First Class Mark Schwartz (pseudonym) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 19 April 2004, Fort Lewis, Wash., tape recording in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Schwartz interview.

³ 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group, briefing (undated), “Operation Eagle Freedom (S),” copy in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Eagle Freedom brief.

⁴ Classified interview with Colonel William C. Ball by Forrest L. Marion, 12 April 2002, Camp H.M. Smith, Hawaii, tape recording in classified files of the USSOCOM History Office, MacDill AFB, Fla.; classified interview with Lieutenant Colonel Douglas Mandarin (pseudonym) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 23 May 2003, Fort Bragg, N.C., tape recording in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C.; classified interview with Staff Sergeant James Holmes (pseudonym) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 6 May 2003, Fort Lewis, Wash., tape recording in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C.

⁵ Schwartz interview.

⁶ Brown and Wood interview.

⁷ Forrest L. Marion, “Opening the Second Front: Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines, January-August 2002,” USSOCOM classified draft history of JTF-510, stored in the classified files of the USSOCOM History Office, MacDill AFB, Fla.

⁸ Classified interview by Lieutenant Colonel Forrest Marion, 28 February 2003, Fort Lewis, Wash., tape recordings in the classified files of the USSOCOM History Office, MacDill AFB, Fla.

⁹ Marion, “Opening the Second Front.”

¹⁰ Marion, “Opening the Second Front.”

¹¹ Marion, “Opening the Second Front”; classified interview by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 7 May 2003, Fort Lewis, Wash., tape recording in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C.

¹² Schwartz interview.

¹³ Classified interview with Lieutenant Colonel Duane Dillard (pseudonym) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 6 May 2003, Fort Lewis, Wash., tape recording in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Dillard interview.

¹⁴ Classified interview with Chief Warrant Officer 3 Jack Landers and Sergeant First Class Bart Johnson (pseudonyms) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 7 May 2003, Fort Lewis, Wash., tape recording in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Landers and Johnson interview.

¹⁵ Landers and Johnson interview; classified interview with First Sergeant Steve Donner and Lieutenant Colonel Duane Dillard (pseudonyms) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 6 May 2003, Fort Lewis, Wash., tape recordings in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C.; classified telephone interview by Dr. C.H. Briscoe at Fort Bragg, N.C., 9 December 2003.

¹⁶ Dillard interview.

¹⁷ Landers and Johnson interview.

Special Forces Training Exercises Continue Balikatan Mission

by Dr. Cheryl A. Walley

Exercise Balikatan 02-1 ended in July 2002, but the presence of Army special-operations forces, or ARSOF, in the Philippines did not. Even as Joint Task Force-510 stood down and handed command and control, or C², over to Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines, or JSOTF-P, teams of Special Forces Soldiers continued to provide force protection for ongoing humanitarian-assistance projects.

The end of the exercise did signal a shift in funding sources, however. During Balikatan, funding came from security-assistance funds

cise, they also became more involved in projects of humanitarian and civic assistance, or H/CA. SF teams found themselves spending much of their time providing force-protection support to H/CA project teams. In 2003, however, a few mobile training teams, or MTTs, did deploy, giving SF troops the opportunity to continue training Philippine troops in the techniques and strategies of counterterrorism.

In September 2002, decision-makers from the U.S. Army Security Assistance Command, or USASAC; the Joint United States Military Advisory Group, or JUSMAG; the Defense Security Coordination Assistance, or DCSA; and the Security Assistance Training Management Office, or SATMO, met at PACOM headquarters to discuss security-assistance plans for the Philippines. Congress had allocated \$25 million in security-assistance funds, and those at the meeting were tasked with deciding how best to use those funds. SATMO was specifically tasked with funding and coordinating already-planned MTT missions for training troops of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, or AFP.¹

Soldiers of the 1st SF Group, based at Fort Lewis, Wash., and the 1st Battalion, 1st SF Group, based at Torii Station, Okinawa, were tapped to conduct the MTTs.² As the 1st SF Group began preparing for the MTTs, however, the staffs of SATMO, PACOM and the Special Operations Command, Pacific, or SOCPAC, encountered difficulties working out the details of allocat-

“Coordinating with the SOUTHCOM director of training, a lieutenant colonel, was much like dealing with a guerrilla chief. It was the Robin Sage scenario every day.”

of the United States Pacific Command, or PACOM, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff that were re-allocated from the budget for joint combined exercise training. Following Balikatan, funding came from a Department of Defense-administered security-assistance fund and from humanitarian- and civic-assistance funds administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development. With the shift in funding sources came a shift in mission focus.

For ARSOF, the shift meant that while they were still able to build on the gains made during the Balikatan training exer-

ing funds and tasking personnel. Recent changes in the procedures of the U.S. Special Operations Command, or USSOCOM, prevented SATMO from directly tasking ARSOF personnel for MTTs, which complicated personnel issues. In addition, the Air Force's 6th Special Operations Squadron, based at Hurlburt Field, Fla., had also been tasked to the Philippines MTTs, which complicated fund movements. SOCPAC itself had to learn the new procedures for requesting personnel and funds before the 1st Battalion, 1st SF Group, would be able to deploy.³

The procedural delays pushed the first set of MTT deployments back. In January 2003, the 1st SF Group's 2nd Battalion, based at Fort Lewis, Wash., deployed to Camp Enrile, Malagatay, Mindanao, to begin training an AFP light infantry battalion. SF B-Detachment 140 (+) arrived with five SF teams: one team to provide force protection, three to teach light-infantry tactics to company-sized ele-

ments, and one to conduct a tactical leaders' course.

The MTT's goal was to combat insurgency in the southern Philippines by improving the tactical effectiveness of the AFP. The three training teams conducted a six-week program of instruction for the companies in three phases: basic infantry skills, weapons marksmanship and a field-training exercise on platoon and company tactics. A new company entered the training cycle every two weeks, and the six-week tactical leaders' course (for 40 soldiers) was conducted six times. The goal was to train four AFP infantry battalions — the 10th, 32nd and 55th Infantry, and the 5th Marine Beach Landing Team, or MBLT, during the course of a year. All four battalions had previously trained with teams from the 1st SF Group during Exercise Balikatan.⁴

As the earlier SF detachments had discovered, the involvement of the leaders of the AFP's army and marine battalions was lukewarm. The AFP commanders recognized the value of the SF training, but while the 1st Infantry Division Training School, the Scout Reconnaissance Battalion, the Philippine Special Forces Battalion and the marines all provided quality English-speaking soldiers to act as assistant instructors in support of the "train the trainer" concept, only the commander of the 5th MBLT, whose forces were based nearby, actually visited training. The other commanders remained on Basilan: They even missed the formal graduations of the companies and the tactical leaders' classes.⁵

The readiness of weapons and equipment presented another obstacle to effective training. Thirty percent of the army's M-16 rifles (primarily manufactured in the Philippines) were technically dead-lined, with shot-out barrels and chambers, frozen extractors and locked sights. Some barrels were so worn out that the bullets fired from them hit the flash suppressor and disintegrated, resulting in dangerous splashback. The marines' weapons were in slightly better shape, with only 10 percent of their rifles dead-lined; on the other hand, 80 percent of their M-16s were manufactured in the U.S. But neither service performed routine weapons cleaning and maintenance, and the SF trainers found



U.S. Army photo

After Balikatan, SF Soldiers continued to train Philippine infantry soldiers in basic skills such as marksmanship.



U.S. Army photo

Training by SF medics in casualty-evacuation procedures made Philippine soldiers more proficient and improved their morale.

small-arms lubricants and cleaning equipment to be nonexistent. The AFP soldiers' explained that after all, the bullets cleaned the barrels.⁶

Teaching the required classes posed even more challenges. Working with the AFP leadership proved to be difficult: "Coordinating with the SOUTHCOM director of training, a lieutenant colonel, was much like dealing with a guerrilla chief. It was the Robin Sage scenario every day," remem-

Despite the constraints and their uncertain status as combatants during field operations, members of SF Detachment 144 made great headway with the AFP sergeants and junior officers during training. As these were future AFP leaders, the training would have a lasting impact on AFP preparedness and tactics.

bered Captain Mark Williams (pseudonym), the commander of SF Detachment 144. Neither were the AFP troops necessarily equipped to learn quickly. After the 1996 Moro National Liberation Front, or MNLF, Accords integrated former Muslim insurgents into the AFP, the Army battalions in the southern Philippines became 30-percent Muslim. The former MNLF soldiers came from the southern islands and had little or no education, and they spoke primarily either Tausug or Yakan. They had little or

no ability to speak Tagalog, and they had no knowledge of English. Literacy was higher among the marines, who were reputedly all high-school graduates, and all of them spoke Tagalog and had at least a smattering of English. SF Detachment 140 had only two Tagalog speakers, Sergeant First Class Lonny Woods and Staff Sergeant Mike Bellows, so in the face of such educational and language gaps, the trainers determined that the language of instruction would be English, with the Filipino assistant instructors interpreting as necessary. "Still, as all SF are taught in school, the surest way to convey the message to the Filipinos was through photos, pictures and demonstrations," said Williams.⁷

The infantry company training culminated with a "graduation" combat operation from a base camp outside of Camp Enrile. The troops and trainers had to provide their own water, fuel, rations, laundry and marksmanship ranges — and they had to do so under heightened levels of force protection. The SF Soldiers found themselves in a dilemma created by the nature of their security-assistance mission and the live-fire training environment of Basilan Island. Security-assistance missions preclude the trainers from being combatants or from performing duties in which they are likely to become combatants. But the trainers' credibility and effectiveness as teachers mandated that they accompany the AFP troops on their graduation exercise, of which combat was an integral part. By carefully applying their mission's rules of engagement during the mission, the SF trainers managed to walk a fine line and fulfill their training responsibilities.⁸

Despite the constraints and their uncertain status as combatants during field operations, members of SF Detachment 144 made great headway with the AFP sergeants and junior officers during training. As these were future AFP leaders, the training would have a lasting impact on AFP preparedness and tactics. The SF Soldiers were also able to form personal relationships with, and further influence, some AFP soldiers. Detachment 144's commander developed such a good professional relationship with the commander of Company C, 10th Infantry Battalion, 1st Lieutenant

Julius Navales, that he was asked to be a god-parent for the Navales' third child. When Navales was promoted to captain, he became the 10th Infantry Battalion's operations officer, an honor that reflected well on his performance as a commander and on the SF team that trained him.⁹

The SF Soldiers accomplished their missions in spite of numerous challenges. At the regional-command level, a shifting mission focus and new sources of funding complicated and delayed MTT deployment. On the ground, the readiness of AFP troops and equipment, as well as AFP commanders' indifference, limited the amount of training that could be offered. Strict rules of engagement further challenged the SF trainers to balance their responsibilities as combat instructors with their roles as security-assistance providers.

In the end, however, the Soldiers of the 1st SF Group managed to increase the AFP's ability to combat terrorism in the southern Philippines, increasing security not only in that country but also in the entire region. ✕

Dr. Cherilyn A. Walley is a historian on the staff of the USASOC Historian's Office.

Notes:

¹ Interview with Lewis J. Grastie Jr., conducted by Dr. Cherilyn A. Walley, 6 January 2004, Fort Bragg, N.C., tape recording in the files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Grastie interview.

² Grastie interview.

³ Classified interview with Captain Mark Williams (pseudonym) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 7 May 2003, Fort Lewis, Wash., tape recording in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Williams interview; Grastie interview.

⁴ Williams interview.

⁵ Williams interview.

⁶ Williams interview; Classified interview with Sergeant First Class Mark Schwartz (pseudonym) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 19 April 2004, Fort Lewis, Wash., tape recording in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Schwartz interview.

⁷ Schwartz interview.

⁸ Schwartz interview.

⁹ Schwartz interview.

Rescuing the Burnhams: The Unspoken SOCPAC Mission

by Dr. C.H. Briscoe

While the primary mission of Army special-operations forces in the Philippines was to train the Armed Forces of the Philippines, or AFP, in counterterrorism, the kidnapping of two American missionaries changed the scope of the mission to include facilitating the rescue of American citizens held hostage by the Abu Sayyaf Group, or ASG.

The selection, organization and training of a light reaction company, or LRC, for the Philippines by United States Special Forces Soldiers had been under way at Camp Aguinaldo, Luzon, for nearly two months when the ASG attacked the Dos Palmos Resort, offshore of Palawan Island, on May 27, 2001. The daring 200-mile cross-ocean raid netted the ASG 20 hostages for ransom. Among them were three American citizens, Gracia and Martin Burnham, both missionaries, and Guillermo Sobero.

The difficult maritime operation, launched across the Sulu Sea from Basilan, reflected detailed reconnaissance, good logistics planning and a well-rehearsed dawn assault that neutralized resort security and caught the vacationers by surprise. The Dos Palmas kidnappings occurred about a month after the first American hostage, Jeffrey Schilling, a converted Muslim, had been released unharmed by ASG terrorists following eight months of captivity on Jolo Island. Now, the ASG held three Americans, and

the U.S. State Department recommended that military assistance be provided.¹

ASG threats and the group's seizure of 20-Western guests from Sipadan resort in Malaysia in April 2000 had energized the staffs of the U.S. Pacific Command, or PACOM, and the Special Operations Command, Pacific, or SOCPAC. While intelligence analysts had expanded their efforts to track all Philippine terrorist groups, operations planners had developed security-assistance recommendations for improving the AFP's capabilities of combating increased terrorism and for restoring law and order in the predominantly Muslim southern archipelago.

After Libya had paid the ASG terrorists more than \$20 million to release the Sipadan hostages, the ASG seized more hostages in July and August 2000 — more than 30 people in several actions. By the time Schilling was kidnapped in Jolo on Aug. 29, 2000, Admiral Dennis C. Blair, commander, PACOM, accompanied by officers from SOCPAC, had already traveled to Manila to brief the government of the Republic of the Philippines and the AFP on the concept of a mobile training team that would train and equip a company-sized unit to respond to the escalating terrorism. The creation of a Philippine response unit might restore popular confidence in the Philippine government.

President Joseph Estrada rejected the American offer of assistance, but with a

change of the Philippine administration a few months later, the Philippines welcomed American assistance. Company B, 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group, began training the LRC in March 2001.

The 1st SF Group's mission was to organize and train a national counterterrorist force for the Philippines in five months. The challenge for SOCPAC had been to accumulate equipment for the 90-man LRC — M-4 carbines, Kevlar helmets, body armor, night-vision goggles and radios — and deliver it to Fort Magsaysay on Luzon before the start of training. Brigadier General Donald C. Wurster, commander of SOCPAC, tasked the Air Force's 353rd Special Operations Group, based at Kadena Airbase, Okinawa, to deliver the equipment as a training mission, "taking the costs out of hide" because it was the only way to execute the program.²

The mass ASG kidnapping at Dos Palmas prompted the U.S. Department of State to support security assistance for the Philippine armed forces, allowing PACOM to shift \$2 million from its regional security-assistance program to fund the ongoing LRC training. When the AFP discovered that Sobero had been beheaded shortly after his capture, and that some hostages seized in the Dos Palmas raid were being held on Basilan, the Philippine military leadership felt pressured to use the LRC to rescue them. Fortunately, senior U.S. officials convinced them that the LRC would be more capable of rescuing the hostages after it completed training.³

In the meantime, Major General Glicerio Sua, commander of the Philippine 1st Infantry Division, was working jointly with Wurster and with Colonel David Fridovich of Joint Task Force-510 as the Southern Command Task Force Comet commander responsible for Mindanao and Basilan Island. Under the auspices of the combined Exercise Balikatan, starting Jan. 1, 2002, Sua used the first two phases of his Operation Liberty to get the army and marine infantry battalions on Basilan ready to conduct major combat operations against the ASG. When SF detachments from the 1st SF Group began providing individual and collective training to the Philippine battalions on Basilan in late February

2002, Sua concentrated TF Comet's efforts on finding the Burnhams and preparing plans to rescue them.

JTF-510 supported the development of intelligence-driven operations by the Southern Command, and it promoted coordinated staff work and the fusion of intelligence from all sources in the AFP joint operations center. PACOM dedicated a Navy P-3C Orion surveillance aircraft to JTF-510. Signal-intercept teams from the 1st SF Group worked with AFP elements at Camp Enrile, Zamboanga, as part of the 1st SF Group mission of "training, advising and assisting" the AFP in joint command, control and communications, fusion of all-source intelligence, counterterrorism, information operations and civil-military operations.⁴

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The individual and collective training conducted by the SF teams assigned to the Philippine battalions on Basilan raised Philippine soldier confidence levels, because most culminated in "graduation" combat operations in the field. Despite the fact that Basilan had been serving as the "combat JRTC" for AFP battalions for more than 10 years, the Filipino soldiers and marines were not proficient jungle fighters. Tactically, they were no match for the guerrilla forces operating from the remote areas of Basilan. A typical firefight resulted in one AFP killed and three AFP wounded, with many casualties of friendly fire.

The presence of the Americans who had direct radio contact with helicopters (Phil-

ippine Air Force UH-1D Hueys during the day and U.S. aircraft at night) also meant prompt air medical evacuations of Filipino casualties when contact was made with the guerrillas.⁵ But the first evidence that increased combat operations in remote areas of the island were having the desired effect — pressuring the ASG elements to disperse and move from long-established support areas — was the mass surrender of guerrilla fighters on the southern coast of Basilan in early April, 2002.⁶

SF Detachment 114, with the 1st Marine Battalion Landing Team at Abungabung, arranged the surrender of an ASG guerrilla and his extraction to Manila. The guerrilla agreed to be the “test case” for his

locals, the few Army Civil Affairs teams (protected by the SF detachments) that coordinated humanitarian and security-assistance activities with all ethnic groups, seemed to be everywhere.⁸ The increased American presence also constrained the movement of terrorist elements on Basilan at the same time that local Muslim support of the ASG was being eroded by the humanitarian projects in progress and by the widespread public knowledge of the ASG’s inflated ransoms and abuse of female hostages.

When multiple-source intelligence from Philippine and American assets confirmed that the Burnhams had been moved from Basilan to Zamboanga del Norte, some distance from Zamboanga City, in late May or early June 2002, planning for the rescue mission, Operation Day Break, began in earnest, making the Burnham rescue the major focus of the Southern Command. Southern Command began making arrangements for moving several infantry battalions aboard Philippine Navy vessels to southern Mindanao to hunt for Abu Sabaya, the ASG leader holding the kidnapped Americans.

Interdiction of ASG maritime supply and escape routes required greater naval support and made Operation Day Break on southern Mindanao a joint effort. As more Basilan infantry battalions were included in the operation, many of the SF detachments were left with only remnants of the AFP units that they had been tasked to train. Some detachments split, so that part of the detachment could accompany their AFP battalion commanders during combat operations on Mindanao.

Fridovich, as the ARSOTF commander of JTF-510, assigned key staff from the 1st SF Group to develop viable courses of action based on a detailed intelligence preparation of the battlefield. He used those plans to steer the AFP leadership and to convince them of the need for conducting joint rehearsals on the islands off Mindanao. Nightly aerial surveillance by U.S. Navy P-3C Orion aircraft had been arranged through PACOM. After a night-surveillance photo was leaked to the Philippine press, access to that imagery was

When multiple-source intelligence from Philippine and American assets confirmed that the Burnhams had been moved from Basilan to Zamboanga del Norte, some distance from Zamboanga City, in late May or early June 2002, planning for the rescue mission, Operation Day Break, began in earnest, making the Burnham rescue the major focus of the Southern Command.

group of 19 fighters who were short of food and tiring of running from AFP patrols. After the guerrilla received his first demand of several cheeseburgers and a large order of French fries, he was flown to Manila for further interrogation. A cell-phone call assuring his buddies that they would receive similar meals prompted the surrender of another 18 hungry ASG fighters three days later.⁷

As the large force (more than 300 personnel) of Seabees and Marine engineers composing the Naval Construction Task Group from Okinawa arrived to begin work on humanitarian and civic-action projects throughout Basilan, the increased American presence provided rural residents with assurance that some of their basic needs would be met. The primary contact for the

strictly controlled. Success with unmanned aerial vehicles was limited. Despite the fact that the Southern Command (TF Comet) and JTF-510 had made considerable progress integrating and verifying all-source intelligence, the AFP battalion commanders would not investigate every possible terrorist location identified, and they would not consider night operations.⁹

Primary casualty evacuation was assigned to the MH-60L Black Hawks of the 3rd Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, which replaced the Air Force's 33rd Rescue Squadron HH-60Gs in May 2002. Wurster, at Camp Navarro, maintained control of the 160th SOAR helicopters.¹⁰

JTF-510 worked closely with Southern Command at Camp Enrealy as Sua and JTF Comet on Camp Navarro coordinated the naval movement of army and marine elements from Basilan and the truck movement into assigned operational areas of southern Mindanao and observed the rehearsals conducted on the offshore islands. Three army battalions (the Scout Reconnaissance and the 10th and 55th Infantry) were brought north by ship to support the joint operation designed to locate and rescue the Burnhams.¹¹ For a short time, Fridovich had a temporary tactical operations center aboard a Philippine naval vessel to monitor the marine landings, the navy-patrol-boat interdiction of key estuaries, the offshore naval patrolling to blockade the southern Mindanao coast, and the ground movement of army battalions into battle positions.¹²

The movement of AFP elements was reported by the news media and did not go unnoticed by locals sympathetic to the ASG. The volume of cell-phone traffic increased significantly: Surreptitious text messages kept ASG field elements informed of AFP movements.¹³ By May 27, 2002, even the captive Burnhams had heard on the radio that several shiploads of AFP soldiers had landed on the Zamboanga peninsula.¹⁴

Gracia Burnham later stated that during the early days of May 2002, several of her ASG captors, expecting a night resup-

ply boat, inadvertently greeted an AFP element coming ashore on the beach. As the ASG party finished saying "Salam alaikom" (Peace to you), they realized that the boat contained AFP, and they immediately fled into the heavy undergrowth. The AFP characteristically failed to pursue the ASG. It was dark, the AFP units had very few operational night-vision goggles, and, the AFP did not like night operations.¹⁵

Following a scheme of maneuver developed during Operations Liberty I and II, JTF Comet employed the 10th and 55th Infantry battalions as fixed blocking forces while the Scout Ranger Battalion conducted platoon and company-sized movements to contact in areas where ASG elements were reportedly operating. In southern Mindanao, as on Basilan, contact often occurred by chance, when the Scout Rangers bumped into ASG groups who were moving out of concentrated-search areas. Despite these cautious, deliberate and readily compromised Philippine combat operations, elements of the 55th Infantry Battalion managed to capture a local forester while moving to surround a suspected ASG element. Questioned, the forester said that he had seen a group with hostages, two of whom were Americans.¹⁶

As it turned out, the ASG element that had the Burnhams, unfamiliar with southern Mindanao, had started using logging roads to move faster. They, too, captured a local forester and forced him to act as their guide. The ASG, like the AFP, did not operate after dark, and they kept the forester chained up at night. The absence of local Muslim support — food, shelter and village silence — had made the Burnham captors vulnerable. To further complicate their movement, seasonal rains had turned the logging roads into sucking mud, and the fleeing ASG group was leaving plenty of footprints.¹⁷

Despite additional details provided by the forester and by signal intercepts that Wurster and Fridovich provided, Sua remained unconvinced that the hostages had been moved to Mindanao. After his search proved fruitless, Sua agreed to insert Scout Rangers into the area where the Burnhams had been spotted, and while

moving up a riverbed toward the suspected ASG site, a platoon-sized patrol of Scout Rangers bumped into the terrorist element encamped on the back side of a hill.

The Scout Rangers had been following the ASG and the hostages for almost 24 hours. On the day before the firefight (June 6), they had spotted tracks crossing the logging road late in the afternoon and began following them. The next morning the Rangers discovered the remnants of a hurried breakfast of fruit at a farm and kept tracking the ASG and hostages until the group stopped for the day.¹⁸ Using a rainstorm to cover their maneuvers, they attacked the ASG. Until this action, the Filipino military had been reluctant to conduct operations when it was raining. Caught by surprise by the change in modus operandi, Abu Sabaya initially thought that he was being attacked by an American SF team.

Gracia Burnham describes the attack:

We (Martin and Gracia) had just closed our eyes when a fearsome barrage of gunfire cut loose from the crest of the hill. The AFP? Surely not. It was raining and they never fought in the rain ... My instincts, after sixteen previous battles, told me instantly what to do: drop immediately. I flipped my feet around to get out of the hammock — and before I even hit the ground, I felt the zing! of a bullet slamming through my right leg. I rolled down the steep hill maybe eight feet, dazed. I looked up and saw Martin on the ground, too, so I quickly crawled to his side. He was kind of twisted, with his legs underneath his body ... blood was beginning to soak through his shirt on his upper left chest ... Shots continued to ring out. The Abu Sayyaf were just getting themselves positioned to fire back ... The shooting continued. Grenades blew up ... The shooting gradually became more sporadic. At the top of the ridge I heard shouting in Tagalog, the language of the AFP. No sounds came from the bottom, however, which told me that the Abu Sayyaf had fled down the streambed. I didn't want to startle anyone who might be nearby, so I slowly waved my hand to signal that I was still alive.¹⁹

Radio communications became very spo-

radic when the encounter turned into a firefight, but the Rangers managed to confirm the presence of the Americans and to report casualties. When the firefight began, the JTF-510 quick-reaction force, an SF detachment on standby at Camp Navarro, Zamboanga, was immediately activated, although the Burnham contact site was 45 minutes away via Black Hawk. Beyond the confirmation that Americans were present and that the Rangers had suffered casualties, the SF team and the MH-60L aircrews had only vague information.²⁰

Actually, both sides had casualties — seven AFP had been wounded, and three ASG had been killed. Martin Burnham and a Filipino hostage had been killed; Gracia Burnham had been wounded. When the firefight ceased, the QRF mission was scrubbed, and the Black Hawks were used for casevac. She was evacuated by MH-60L to Camp Navarro for treatment and subsequently flown to Manila on an MC-130P refueling aircraft.²¹

After the firefight, the majority of the ASG captors, including Sabaya, escaped down the riverbed toward the coast. The AFP continued to pursue Sabaya, however, it was believed that since his element was short of food and lacking Muslim support, the group would probably try to escape Mindanao by boat.

Wurster praised the SF teams for making the AFP battalions more tactically proficient, for training them to be better marksmen and for instilling confidence in the soldiers. The Scout Rangers had practiced combat lifesaving on their wounded as well as on Gracia Burnham.

The individual and collective training of the army and marine infantry battalions by the SF teams, and JTF-510's emphasis on JTF Comet using multisource intelligence to plan operations against the ASG, made the rescue possible. Operations Liberty I and II not only coordinated army and marine field operations but increased pressure on the ASG on Basilan, while the Psychological Operations wanted-poster campaign and the humanitarian projects of Civil Affairs reduced Muslim popular support of the terrorists. Despite the constraints imposed by the Philippine govern-

ment, the ARSOF elements managed to accomplish their assigned “advise, assist and train” mission and significantly altered ASG power on Basilan. ✂

Dr. C.H. Briscoe is the command historian for the U.S. Army Special Operations Command.

Notes:

¹ Classified interview with Lieutenant Colonel Douglas Mandarin (pseudonym) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe and Dr. Kenn Finlayson, 23 May 2003, Fort Bragg, N.C., tape recording in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Mandarin interview.

² Classified interview with Brigadier General Donald C. Wurster by Forrest L. Marion, Camp Navarro, Zamboanga, Republic of the Philippines, 31 March 2002, tape recording in the classified files of the USSOCOM History Office, MacDill AFB, Fla.

³ Mandarin interview.

⁴ Forrest L. Marion, “Opening the Second Front: Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines, January-August 2002,” USSOCOM classified draft history of JTF-510, stored in the classified files of the USSOCOM History Office, MacDill AFB, Fla.

⁵ Classified interview with Captain James Brown and Staff Sergeant Vance Wood (pseudonyms) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 6 May 2003, Fort Lewis, Wash., tape recording in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Brown and Wood interview.

⁶ Mandarin interview; Marion, “Opening the Second Front.”

⁷ Mandarin interview; Marion, “Opening the Second Front.”

⁸ Classified interview with Sergeant First Class Darrel Thomas (pseudonym) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 5 December 2003, Fort Bragg, N.C., tape recording in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C.; Company B, 96th CA Battalion, “OEF-P briefing,” undated, in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C.

⁹ Classified interview with Chief Warrant Officer 3 John J. Hemingway (pseudonym) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 7 May 2003, Fort Lewis, Wash., tape recording in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Hemingway interview. Filipino fishermen helped to retrieve a U.S. military unmanned aerial vehicle that crashed into the sea near Zamboanga on 31 March 2002, while on a training mission.

¹⁰ Classified interview with Staff Sergeant Clark Keltner (pseudonym) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 26 July 2003, tape recording in the classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C.; classified interview with Staff Sergeant John Price and First Sergeant Fred Randolph (pseudonyms) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 13 September 2003, Fort Campbell, Ky., tape recordings in the

classified files of the USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, N.C.

¹¹ Hemingway interview.

¹² Hemingway interview.

¹³ Hemingway interview.

¹⁴ Gracia Burnham, *In the Presence of My Enemies* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2003), 252, 257.

¹⁵ Mandarin interview.

¹⁶ Hemingway interview.

¹⁷ Burnham, 252, 257.

¹⁸ Burnham, 266.

¹⁹ Burnham, 262-65.

²⁰ Hemingway interview.

²¹ Hemingway interview.

112th Signal Battalion Opens the ‘Big Pipe’ During Balikatan 02-1

by Dr. Kenn Finlayson

Operations in the United States Pacific Command’s theater typically involve movements and communications over vast distances. Exercise Balikatan 02-1 was no exception, and the Soldiers of the 112th Special Operations Signal Battalion, headquartered at Fort Bragg, N.C., were charged with helping to shrink the distances and with allowing U.S. special-operations forces stationed in the Philippines to stay in touch.

When the 1st Special Forces Group took part in Exercise Balikatan 02-1, Company C, 112th Signal Battalion, developed and perfected improved satellite communica-

tions procedures that enhanced the effectiveness of operations in the theater.

Company C, created in July 2001 entirely with internal assets, is the newest of the 112th’s three companies. The formation of the unit allowed the 112th to institute a three-cycle training model: support to joint and Army special operations forces; intensive mission training; and support and recovery.¹

Because it was created “out of hide,” Company C obtained some of its equipment by rebuilding older communications systems acquired from a variety of sources. The signal Soldiers put all their ingenuity and skill into the refurbishing and upgrading of the equipment — and their efforts resulted in enhanced capabilities that played a key role in the Philippine operations.

Even though Company C stood ready to deploy to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, a change of mission required that it follow the 1st SF Group to the Philippines, without the benefit of an established communications package. In conjunction with the 1st SF Group, the 112th held a planning conference at Fort Lewis, Wash., in early January 2002 to work out the details of the company’s operations.² Sergeant First Class James Sierra (pseudonym) represented the 112th. The communications-support portion of the joint special-operations task force, or JSOTF, of the Special Operations Command, Pacific, or SOCPAC, would be



USASOC Historical Archive

A satellite dish and a communications van belonging to the 112th Signal Battalion sit next to Landing Zone X-Ray on Mindanao.

performed by the Joint Communications Support Element, or JCSE, based at Tampa, Fla. Company C rapidly put together a support package for augmenting the 1st SF Group's signal detachment and for ensuring communications throughout the area of the group's operations.

The mission pre-deployment site survey took place Jan. 6, 2002, in Hawaii, and Company C moved to Zamboanga, on the southern Philippine island of Mindanao, on Jan. 10. With preparations for deployment under way, the company worked hard to complete validation of its systems. During Company C's buildup to deployment, it designed, tested and validated its improved satellite multiple access system, the 93 V-3 system, also known as the "Big Pipe." The Big Pipe uses a standard 3036-disk antenna and a TSC-93 van with an enhanced tactical satellite signal processor — the components of the 93C V (2) system.³

But the 112th Soldiers modified their 93 V-3 system to make it capable of simultaneous satellite-communications access to two of the Department of Defense's standardized entry-point, or STEP, facilities. This was a first for the 112th, because most communications systems provide access to only one STEP facility at a time. The 15 worldwide STEP facilities provide a standardized, tactical-communications package to deployed warfighters in order to support global command, control, communications, computers and intelligence. By providing simultaneous primary and secondary satellite links,⁴ the 93 V-3 system effectively doubles the capacity of the 93C V (2) system and provides a safety net for communications.

When rotating into the Philippines, the first troops from the 112th moved to Torii Station, Okinawa, on Feb. 7, 2002, and set up and tested their equipment.⁵ From Okinawa, the 112th personnel moved to the island of Basilan, establishing their operations on the helicopter-landing area at Landing Zone X-Ray. From that location, the 93 V-3 could access two-step sites — one at Fort Buckner, Okinawa, the other at Wahiawa, Hawaii.⁶

Colonel David Fridovich, the 1st SF

Group's commander, could talk not only to the JSOTF in Camp Navarro, on Mindanao, but also to the forward operating base on Basilan. The commander of 1st Group's 1st Battalion, Lieutenant Colonel Douglas Mandarin (pseudonym), could communicate with Fridovich, with the battalion's rear element on Okinawa, and with the JSOTF. All the elements mentioned had the ability to communicate with SOCPAC.⁷

At the JSOTF, the JCSE set up with a force of more than 90 Soldiers, three times the size of the standard 112th JSOTF package.⁸ Because of the force-cap issues that plagued the exercise, Company C operated the Big Pipe with the bare minimum number of personnel.

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Conditions were austere on LZ X-Ray. The airfield was the primary rotary-wing landing zone for the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, whose MH-47E Chinooks provided the aviation capability to the 1st SF Group's detachments. The 112th was forced to erect its antenna dishes and set its communications van in close proximity to the landing area, where the prop wash of each landing and takeoff threatened the integrity of the systems.⁹ Ever resourceful, the Soldiers found a way of repositioning the equipment and vehicles that counteracted the prop wash.

While Company C's standard of living improved over time, space restrictions did not abate, forcing the unit to leave its repair parts and equipment on Okinawa during the first rotation.¹⁰ After several



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A member of the 112th sets up a communications van near Landing Zone X-Ray. The Soldiers had to find ways of positioning the signal equipment that would counteract the prop wash of the helicopters.

rotations, one container full of equipment was moved forward to Zamboanga. Despite separation from their source of resupply, Company C maintained continuous communications while it was on Basilan.

The 1st SF Group made arrangements for a civilian contractor to move supplies by water from Mindanao.¹¹ As the materials were moved up from the beach landing area, the signal teams pitched in to assist with the off-loading and security of the supplies. Security became a common mission for the teams, as well as intensive training on force protection and individual Soldier skills, making the 112th Soldiers invaluable as a security force for convoys and operations.

The 112th also played a vital role in improving the infrastructure on the island and in providing humanitarian assistance to the local populace, by supporting the Naval Construction Task Group with secure and nonsecure communications and phone lines, as well as by pulling security as the construction teams moved to and from job sites.

Company C Soldiers demonstrated their versatility and ingenuity during their deployment to the Philippines. Their successful fielding of the Big Pipe system became a model for future operations, and their ability to deliver uninterrupted com-

munications support earned high marks with the 1st SF Group. ✕

Dr. Kenn Finlayson is the command historian for the U.S. Army JFK Special Warfare Center and School.

Notes:

¹ Patrick Flood, "Special Operations Signal Support: Operation Iraqi Freedom" (draft) for submission to *Army Communicator*, 29 Jul 2003. Fort Gordon, Ga. In author's possession.

² Interview with Sergeant First Class James Sierra (pseudonym) by Dr. Kenn Finlayson, USASOC History Office, 24 December 2003, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Sierra interview.

³ Interview with Sergeant Andy Arlen (pseudonym) by Dr. Kenn Finlayson, USASOC History Office, 24 December 2003, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Arlen interview.

⁴ Arlen interview.

⁵ Sierra interview.

⁶ Interview with Robert Lamore (pseudonym) by Dr. Kenn Finlayson, USASOC History Office, 24 December 2003, Fort Bragg, N.C., hereafter cited as Lamore interview.

⁷ Arlen interview.

⁸ Sierra interview.

⁹ Lamore interview.

¹⁰ Arlen interview.

¹¹ Classified interview with Major Edward Dougherty (pseudonym) by Dr. C.H. Briscoe, 7 May 2003, Fort Lewis, Wash.; and Forrest L. Marion, "Opening the Second Front: Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines, January-August 2002," USSOCOM classified draft history of JTF-510, stored in the classified files of the USSOCOM History Office, MacDill AFB, Fla.

Reflections and Observations on ARSOF Operations During Balikatan 02-1

by Dr. C.H. Briscoe

While the United States Pacific Command's efforts to aid the Philippine government in combating the terrorists of the Abu Sayyaf Group, or ASG, did not become a second front in the Global War On Terrorism, or GWOT, the operation was successful and yielded a number of valuable lessons.

Official special-operations lessons learned are the purview of the chief of staff for operations, U.S. Army Special Operations Command, and are beyond the scope of this article. Still, the observations presented here, taken from interviews with non-attributable sources — primarily participants in all grades and at all levels of the operation — are valuable as aspects of a successful mission that can be applied to other operations.

That the mission of Army special-operations forces, or ARSOF, in the Philippines was successful is evident from five measurements of success. First, ARSOF training efforts significantly improved the operational capability of more than 10 infantry battalions of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, or AFP. The most notable long-term effect of the individual and collective training conducted by U.S. Special

Forces teams was the impact on the younger Philippine NCOs and junior officers (to the captain level). From the SF Soldiers, the junior leaders learned the basics of decision-making, of command and control, of staff coordination and of the way that intelligence should drive operations. 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.

Second, humanitarian and civic-action projects, or H/CA, medical visits and the daily presence of American SF teams on Basilan improved the images of the AFP and the Manila government, and they helped return law and order to the island.

Third, the ASG presence and the threat on Basilan were significantly reduced, and the communist New People's Army was added to the AFP terrorist target list. Fourth, the AFP resolved a hostage situation involving two American missionaries, Martin and Gracia Burnham. As a result, the ASG

leader responsible for multiple kidnappings, Abu Sabaya, was later presumed killed offshore as he tried to flee southern Mindanao.

Finally, the Philippine government agreed to contribute an AFP infantry battalion for service in Iraq as part of the recently established Operation Iraqi Freedom International Division.

Although the presence of SF detachments advising the AFP on Basilan and in southern Mindanao deterred the activities of the ASG, the ARSOF mission to the Philippines did not become the second front of the GWOT. Planners at the United States Pacific Command, or PACOM, and at the Special Operations Command, Pacific considered Balikatan 02-1 to be a joint combined training exercise, not a separate campaign of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The U.S. did not authorize the use of additional training ammunition for predeployment weapons-qualification, nor did it initially permit the use of heavy, crew-served weapons. Those two restrictions, as much as any consideration of Philippine sovereignty, precluded Balikatan from becoming a springboard for U.S.-led combat operations against terrorist groups

in the southern Philippines.

The majority of the combat-equipment needs identified by the 1st SF Group in its statement of requirements for supporting “contingency” operations in the Philippines could not be funded, and the priority of the Philippine mission fell well below the mission of the ARSOF elements committed to OEF in Afghanistan. The receipt of outdated 1:50,000-scale topographical maps two months after the SF detachments arrived on Basilan reflected the priorities.

It made sense to employ all three critical elements of the counterinsurgency, or COIN, model — SF; Civil Affairs, or CA; and Psychological Operations, or PSYOP. However, the PACOM-imposed “force cap” on ARSOF personnel and heavy weapons in the exercise area of operations constrained the use of CA teams. That compelled the commander of Forward Operating Base 11 to task SF detachments with the CA mission. The use of tactical PSYOP teams to train, advise and assist AFP psychological-warfare elements was not approved by the Philippine government because the Philippine Psychological Warfare Group had been severely compromised during the regime of President Ferdinand Marcos.

For the exercise to be successful, all three critical elements of the COIN model needed to support one another. Unfortunately, while the role of PSYOP support had been identified as early as December 2001, planners had not developed an information-operations plan to emphasize H/CA accomplishments on Basilan. The H/CA projects received little or no news coverage from the Filipino media, while Abu Sabaya, who was holding the Burnhams captive, was readily given radio-broadcast access for his telephone call-ins. In a country in which the media has a dramatic

effect on government leaders, Joint Task Force-510 took a traditional public-affairs approach, reacting to negative press accounts and focusing on winning journalists over by facilitating media access to the AFP elements on Basilan and in Zamboanga. Consequently, self-serving commanders and staff officers, anxious to promote their careers in Manila, regularly “leaked” information to the media representatives.

The original unconventional-warfare, or UW, mission envisioned by the 1st SF Group leadership never materialized. Sympathy

Although the presence of SF detachments advising the AFP on Basilan and in southern Mindanao deterred the activities of the ASG, the ARSOF mission to the Philippines did not become the second front of the GWOT.

toward America for the tragic 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington did not extend to national-sovereignty rights. As a former U.S. colony, the Philippines was extremely sensitive regarding its sovereignty. Still, the impertinent ASG tactic of seizing and holding Westerners hostage for large ransoms had become embarrassing to the Philippine government, forcing it to make a show of targeting the ASG as a “political sop” for the American government, while other insurgent elements that posed greater threats to law, order and stability were allowed to continue

disrupting the country. However, the U.S. military presence, AFP training and increased operations drove most of the ASG from its Basilan sanctuaries.

Observations

Based on ARSOF’s experience in the Philippines during Balikatan, there are a number of observations that we can make that will apply to the force in other situations.

- Every regional special-operations command, or SOC, will operate differently. The characteristics of each SOC will be affected by a number of factors: the maturity of the SOC headquarters: the military service and the prior experience of the SOC commander in dealing with special-operations forces, or SOF; the service orientation and priorities of the combatant command; the experience of the SOC and the combatant command with the nuances of security assistance; and the experience of the SOC and the combatant command with Army Reserve and National Guard mobilizations.

- Issues of national sovereignty and a colonial heritage will inhibit U.S.-dominated security assistance and military training. U.S. SF-led “Mike Forces,” popularized during the Vietnam War, are history in today’s developing world. U.S. security-assistance and military-training operations will be more accepted if there is parity between U.S. and host-nation forces.

- Large population centers are becoming the natural geographical environment for UW operations.

- The Special Forces Qualification Course’s Robin Sage exercise prepares Soldiers for challenging advisory missions, such as those they encountered in the Philippines.

- CA will continue to be a major SF mission, based on SF Soldiers’ daily contact with the local populace at all levels and the continued

imposition of force caps on ARSOF and other U.S. forces. Limitations on crew-served heavy weapons, armored vehicles, tanks and artillery are another form of force caps.

- Aggressive AFP patrolling denied the ASG its habitual sanctuary and curtailed ASG movement, while U.S.-directed H/CA projects earned local respect, improved force-protection measures and reduced Muslim village support for the terrorists on Basilan.

- MEDCAPs did much to foster the image that the AFP was providing a secure environment. The medical and dental-assistance visits reached out to those areas lacking medical care and provided much-needed aid. The MEDCAPS also enabled the AFP, Philippine officials, nongovernment organizations and the SF detachments to work together and interact with the Basilan populace in a positive manner.

- Logistics proved challenging for the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, as well as for the 1st SF Group, because units had to be self-sufficient; there was no forward support team from the 528th Special Operations Support Battalion attached to the Army special-operations task force to support its SOF-unique requirements. The most reliable assistance came from the units' home bases in the continental U.S., Korea and Okinawa.

- In OEF-Philippines, in OEF Afghanistan, and later in Operation Iraqi Freedom, peacetime supply rules applied. The simultaneous conduct of two GWOT campaigns stretched Army materiel and ARSOF-specific equipment thin. Statements of requirements should include the needs of CA and PSYOP attachments; otherwise the needs of these small ARSOF elements will get lost.

- Force protection was, and continues to be, a constant challenge. Improvised explosive devices are the simplest and safest tools for terrorists to use. Acquiring a situational awareness and keeping a presence "on the streets" proved to be key to a proactive force-protection program. Neither a semipermissive/uncertain environment nor a reduced U.S. troop presence justifies maintaining a lower force-protection posture — the bombing death of Sergeant First Class Mark Jackson and the serious wounding of his team leader during the joint special-operations task force phase of the Philippines mission, when the American presence was limited, demonstrated that force protection is a constant in the asymmetric war against terrorism.

- Maintaining a high state of alertness and being well-armed at all times proved to be good deterrent to terrorist attacks, just as regular firing of heavy weapons on the ranges emphasized the firepower and the well-honed capabilities of U.S. troops.

- The widespread use of cell phones in countries of the developing world — the most common workplace for ARSOF — compounds the challenges of force protection. Text-messaging using code words, dialect slang and linguistic code-switching — the mixing of English, Spanish, Tagalog and local dialect words — demonstrated how Filipinos have capitalized on technology to which Westerners are still getting accustomed.

- Access to certain U.S. Embassy message traffic during "contingency" missions overseas required top-secret clearances and focal-point "read-ons." Those clearances were difficult for SF groups to obtain because of the limited number of top-level security positions the groups are allocated. The 5th SF Group experienced a similar

problem during its planning for OEF missions. Groups have just over 30 top-secret billets, and even fewer positions for focal-point program read-ons. As relations with other U.S. government elements have grown during the GWOT, the need for more top-level security billets has increased.

The Philippines mission is an ARSOF success story. Balikatan is again an integral part of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Cobra Gold exercise series for the Pacific. After more than 10 years, PACOM has re-established an acceptable presence in the Philippines and is now better able to monitor the pulse of the region. AFP training and initiatives on Basilan compelled the ASG to return to its home islands. The 1st SF Group detachments, by focusing their efforts on the professional development of junior officers and NCOs, have had a major impact on the AFP of the future. Side benefits from a constant ARSOF presence are that the AFP is looking at its diverse ethnic population in a different way and that the H/CA projects have given the Basilan islanders significantly improved lives. ✕

Dr. C.H. Briscoe is the command historian for the U.S. Army Special Operations Command.

Enlisted Career Notes

Special Warfare

CMF 38 approved, MOS 38A becomes 38B

The Department of the Army approved the revision of Career Management Field 38 (Civil Affairs) on July 21. Changes to CMF 38 will be effective Oct. 1, 2005. The 38B military occupational specialty, or MOS, (Enlisted Civil Affairs) will be added to the Active Army, and Soldiers serving in MOS 38A (Enlisted Civil Affairs) will be converted to MOS 38B. The Army is developing a process that will allow Soldiers currently assigned to the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion to request reclassification to MOS 38B and remain in the Active Army Civil Affairs community. Other Soldiers seeking to reclassify into Civil Affairs must have five years of service and be in the grade of E5 or E6. The Army is also developing a process that will enable Army Reserve Soldiers to become members of the Active army 38B MOS.

Retirement authority transferred to HRC

Authority for approving the voluntary retirement of enlisted Soldiers has been transferred to the commander of the Army Human Resources Command, or HRC, effective Aug. 1, 2004. Soldiers affected by the transfer of authority include retirement-eligible NCOs in the grades of staff sergeant (promotable) and above from all branches of service. Retirement-services officers at all installations will continue to process applications for voluntary retirement, but they will submit the requests to HRC for approval. Soldiers in the grade of staff sergeant and below, or Soldiers who have been denied continued service under their service's retention-control-point policy, will not be affected by the changes. Enlisted Soldiers who have at least 20 years of active federal service are generally eligible for retirement, but they are not entitled to retire upon request, while Soldiers with at least 30 years of active federal service are.

The transfer of retirement-approval authority is not intended to deny retirement to Soldiers but to ensure that the timing of authorized retirements is consistent with services' manning priorities. The authority for the approval of officer retirements has resided with HRC for several years. Under the officer retirement-approval system, the chief of each officer branch identifies a replacement for each officer who requests retirement before the officer's separation date is established. If a replacement cannot be identified prior to the officer's requested date of separation, the losing unit will be requested to accept a personnel shortage. In nearly all cases, officers are allowed to retire within 12 months of their date of application for retirement. It is unlikely that the Special Forces Branch at HRC will defer retirement requests from enlisted Soldiers if those requests are received at least six months before the Soldier's requested date of separation. For more information, telephone Master Sergeant Larry P. Deel at DSN 239-7594, commercial (910) 432-7594, or send e-mail to deell@soc.mil.



Officer Career Notes

Special Warfare

SF warrant officer earns prestigious award

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Thomas K. Asselta was awarded the Department of the Army's MacArthur Award for outstanding leadership in March. Asselta is assigned to Company B, 2nd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group, Fort Campbell, Ky.

The MacArthur Award, named in honor of General Douglas MacArthur, was started by the Army in 1987 as a way of promoting and sustaining effective company- and junior-grade officer leadership in the active Army and in the reserve components. It is jointly sponsored by the United States Army and the General Douglas MacArthur Foundation and is given to officers and warrant officers who exhibit extraordinary leadership abilities and embody the ideals embraced by MacArthur — duty, honor and country.

Army Regulation 600-89, *General Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award Program*, outlines the Department of the Army selection criteria for board- ing 13 active-Army winners out of a group of 24 nominees — 23 from Army major commands and one from Headquarters, Department of the Army. The board also chooses Army National Guard and Army Reserve winners of the MacArthur Award. The Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Per- sonnel oversees the program and announces the winners each February.

Asselta joins the ranks of three other SF warrant officers who have achieved this honor. Chief Warrant Officer 2 Nicholas L. Punimata, an SF detachment commander in the 1st SF Group, was the first warrant officer to earn this honor, in 2000. Chief Warrant Officer 2 Paul W. Herber, Com- pany B, 1st Battalion, 10th SF Group, took the honor in 2001, and in 2002, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Anthony J. Linza, Company C, 3rd Battalion, 5th SF Group, won the award.

Following the presentation of the Macarthur Award, Asselta and his fam- ily participated in a number of events, including a wreath-laying ceremo- ny at Arlington National Cemetery's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, a visit to Congress and briefings and discussions with senior Army officials.



Foreign SOF

Special Warfare

Chinese armed police emphasize special operations

Components of the Armed Police Corps of Xinjiang Province in the Peoples Republic of China are placing increased emphasis on counterterrorist training and improved force structure for special-purpose elements. This includes a recent exercise focusing on rapid crisis response and on the integrated use of helicopters, paratroopers and ground combat vehicles, as well as on creating a special-operations component and reorganizing the anti-hijacking component of the corps. The police corps has also reportedly upgraded its communications infrastructure. While the Armed Police Corps concerns generally include what are characterized as “criminal gangs” and other violent lawbreakers, the force has also been involved in rural and urban suppression and counterinsurgency efforts against Uighur independence activities in “Eastern Turkestan,” a republic that was incorporated into China in the wake of the Chinese communist victory. Approximately 15,000 personnel of the Armed Police Corps are stationed in the southern portion of Eastern Turkestan to ensure what officials of the regional Chinese Communist Party call “the unity of the great motherland.”

Russian arms-export agency threatens national security

The Russian Federation’s principal defense-arms sales agency — known by the contraction Rosoboronexport — pursues highly active initiatives to provide foreign clients with a range of modern, if often less than top-of-the-line, weaponry. Among the modern arms offered for sale are a variety of weapons billed as “special operations” small arms. These include the 4.5 mm SPP-1M, an underwater pistol designed to provide personal protection for combat swimmers; the 5.66 mm APS underwater assault rifle, which may be used for personal protection underwater or on shore, or mounted on underwater vehicles and used against mini-sub; a 9 mm silenced assault rifle and sniper rifle, and a variety of 9 mm submachine guns, body armor, night-vision and surveillance equipment. Rosoboronexport is heir to the highly corrupt Rosvoorouzhnie, whose irregular and illegal weapons transactions in the 1990s were the focus of official Russian-government prosecution. The reputation for irregularity has followed the successor organization Rosoboronexport. Critics charge that its ill-considered and wholly profit-driven sales of weaponry to rogue regimes and groups is undermining Russian security by arming terrorist sponsors whose goals and activities are contrary to Russia’s asserted support for the Global War on Terrorism.

Japan looks at combating external special-ops threats

Japan’s 2004 defense white paper has identified general development directions for Japanese special-operations forces and has reaffirmed previous Japanese initiatives. The paper’s recommendations are based on Japan’s continued assessment of serious external threats, notably from North Korea and from terrorist groups, as well as the identified need for improved self-defense forces. In reviewing the force posture of North Korea, the white paper noted that Pyongyang is believed to maintain some 100,000 special-operations personnel intended for missions that range “from intelligence gathering and sabotage to guerrilla warfare.” Particular attention will be

Lithuania restructures special-operations unit

given by Japan to the threat of enemy special forces and guerrillas — to their early detection and their subsequent destruction or capture. Maritime and ground dimensions of the challenge are identified, as is the need for protecting critical infrastructure. As in other countries around the world, the interaction of military and police forces will receive more emphasis.

The Lithuanian Army's special-operations unit — known by the acronym SOJ — is scheduled to undergo some restructuring and training that may result in a decrease in its size, but which reportedly will increase the capabilities of its main components. Changes will feature greater cross-training among components and some realignment in light of the army's new NATO responsibilities. Missions will include "special reconnaissance of strategic installations, short-term direct combat actions and antiterrorist activity," as well as supporting law-enforcement inside the country when required. Lithuanian special-operations components have been operating in Afghanistan, where their performance has been, by all accounts, highly regarded.

Russia beefs up special-warfare units

The famed Russian counterterrorist unit "Alfa" celebrated its 30th anniversary July 29. Formed in 1974 under KGB control, during the supposed high-water mark of Soviet military power, the unit became publicly visible to Western eyes following its role as a special-operations spearhead for the invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Now under the Russian Federal Security Service, Alfa is better known because of its involvement in post-Soviet internal counterterrorist actions, hostage-rescue, and in the serial conflicts in Chechnya. Most recently, Alfa suffered a substantial number of casualties during its failed efforts to resolve the hostage crisis at Besian, Ossetia, in Russia. Hundreds of hostages were killed and wounded in a firefight among Russian security forces, Chechen hostage-takers, and armed family members and civilians at the scene. Alfa and other security forces were severely criticized for their poor performance and lack of coordination. Veterans of Alfa also have been prominent in private security and paramilitary activities. New or recast special-purpose units continue to join Alfa and other military, intelligence and police special-operations forces in Russia. In this regard, the commander of the Russian airborne troop recently announced the formation of special mountain-warfare units trained to conduct counterinsurgency and counterterrorist operations. He noted that the units would be provided with new equipment, and while Chechnya was not specifically designated, it appears to be the targeted environment. There are currently more than 1,500 airborne troops in Chechnya, comprising three battalion and tactical groupings from the 76th Airborne Division, as well as a special-forces detachment. It is unclear whether the new units referred to will be formed from these units or from other existing airborne units. New police antiterrorist units also continue to be formed. One such "21st century" 16-man unit, operating near Moscow, is said to be experimental in nature, although the counterterrorist skills, approaches and missions described, including the assault on tall urban structures from multiple directions, appear to be analogous to those of some other units now in service. They will provide high-quality local support for counterterrorism.



Articles in this section are written by Dr. Graham H. Turbiville Jr, who served in a number of Army and Department of Defense intelligence positions and is now a Texas-based defense consultant working on regional-security issues.

Update

Special Warfare

SWCS names best instructors for 2004

The JFK Special Warfare Center and School, or SWCS, named its 2004 Instructors of the Year Aug. 11.

Major General James W. Parker, the commanding general of SWCS, recognized the winners and presented awards to the top officer, NCO and civilian instructors.

The officer instructor for 2004 is Chaplain (Major) Charles E. Reynolds, who served as the SWCS staff chaplain during the nomination period and taught classes in cross-cultural communication, religious issues in special operations, suicide prevention and ethics.

The NCO instructor of the year is Sergeant First Class Fernando Verones Jr., who is assigned to the SWCS NCO Academy as a small-group leader.

The civilian instructor of the year is Ernest K. Tabata. Tabata, whose military and civilian service total more than 58 years, is a civilian instructor with the 1st Special Warfare Training Group. He has trained every Special Forces engineer sergeant who has served since 1985.

All three of the SWCS instructors will participate in the Army Training and Doctrine Command instructor-of-the-year competition in November.

Wolff takes command of 96th CA Battalion

Lieutenant Colonel James J. Wolff assumed command of the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion from Lieutenant Colonel Michael J. Warmack during a ceremony at Fort Bragg's Bull Simons Plaza June 17.

Wolff previously served during Operation Iraqi Freedom as chief of operations for the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance Southern Region.

Book details ARSOF activities in OEF-Afghanistan

The U.S. Army Special Operations Command has published a book that details the activities of members of the Army special-operations community during Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

The book, *Weapon of Choice: ARSOF in Afghanistan*, was produced by the USASOC command historian's office. The book was written by military historians who all have special-operations experience. According to Dr. C.H. Briscoe, the USASOC command historian, the book is an attempt to share the stories of ARSOF soldiers with the American public.

The USASOC Historian's Office is distributing copies of the book to all ARSOF units and welcomes reader comments and suggestions. For more information, contact the USASOC command historian at DSN 239-3732 or commercial (910) 432-3732.

112th Signal Battalion holds change of command

Lieutenant Colonel Randy S. Taylor assumed command of the 112th Special Operations Signal Battalion from Lieutenant Colonel Peter A. Gallagher during a change of command ceremony at Fort Bragg June 24.

Taylor, a native of Gowanda, N.Y., enlisted in the Army in 1982. He was commissioned in Infantry

upon his graduation from the University of Maryland in 1987.

Specializing in advanced communications capabilities, Soldiers of the 112th Signal Battalion provide communications support to Army special-operations forces as well as to joint special-operations forces around the globe.

Manuals to update doctrine for SF skills

The Special Forces Doctrine Division, Directorate of Training and Doctrine, JFK Special Warfare Center and School, is working on new and updated doctrinal publications that have applicability to SF skills.

The SF Doctrine Division's Advanced Skills Branch has completed FM 3-05.210, *Special Forces Air Operations*, and graphic training aid, GTA 31-02-001, *Special Forces Air Operations*. Both are scheduled for distribution to field units during the fall of 2004. For more information, telephone Master Sergeant Antonio Masterjohn at DSN 239-3043 or commercial (910) 432-3043, or send e-mail to: masterj@soc.mil.

The Advanced Skills Branch has also completed the final draft of FM 3-05.212, *SF Waterborne Operations*. The FM has been updated with changes that will enable users to conduct waterborne missions more efficiently. The manual has been submitted to the Army Training Support Center for printing and is scheduled for distribution to field units during the fall of 2004. For more information, telephone CWO 3 Jeff Kula at DSN 239-5952 or commercial (910) 432-5952, or send e-mail to: kulaj@soc.mil.

The Advanced Skills Branch has

also updated FM 3-05.211, *SF MFF Operations*. The updated manual contains comprehensive information on military free-fall missions so that users will not need to consult any other publications. FM 3-05.211 is also scheduled for distribution to field units in the fall of 2004. For more information, telephone CWO 3 Randall C. Wurstr at DSN 239-5952 or commercial (910) 432-5952, or send e-mail to: wurstr@soc.mil.

The Collective Training Branch has completed ARTEP 31-805-MTP, *Special Forces Group and Battalion*, which is also scheduled for distribution to field units during the fall of 2004. For more information, telephone Chief Warrant Officer 4 Douglas Jenkins at DSN 239-8286 or commercial (910) 432-8286, or send e-mail to: jenkindo@soc.mil.

USASOC chooses top NCO, Soldier for 2004

The United States Army Special Operations Command announced the winners of its 2004 competition for NCO and Soldier of the Year in August.

Sergeant John R. Parker and Specialist Joseph R. Camire, both of the 3rd Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, are the 2004 winners.

Runners-up were Sergeant Brendan N. Gleespen, 6th Psychological Operations Battalion, 4th Psychological Operations Group; and Specialist James K. Campbell, 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment.

Other competitors for NCO of the Year included Sergeant First Class Michael J.A. Vault, NCO Academy, JFK Special Warfare Center and School; Sergeant Mark C. Reed, 1st Special Forces Group, Fort Lewis, Wash.; Staff Sergeant Matthew D. Leland, 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment; and Staff Sergeant Michael H. Daigle, 528th Special Operations Support Battalion.

Soldier of the Year competitors

also included Specialist Michelle L. Maguire, Support Battalion, JFK Special Warfare Center and School; and Specialist Brandon A. Lantz, 415th Civil Affairs Battalion, Kalamazoo, Mich. — *Specialist Jennifer J. Eidson, USASOC PAO*

528th Support Battalion welcomes new commander

Lieutenant Colonel Patrick V. Pallatto Jr., assumed command of the 528th Special Operations Support Battalion from Lieutenant Colonel Michael P. Saulnier during a ceremony at Fort Bragg's Dick Meadows Field July 16.

Pallatto, a native of Pittsburgh, Pa., enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve in 1983. He graduated from Indiana University of Pennsylvania in 1987 and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Infantry through the Army Reserve Officer Training Corps. His previous assignment was with 1st Corps Support Command.

Specializing in resupply capabilities, Soldiers of the 528th provide supplies, maintenance, equipment and expertise to Army and joint special-operation forces around the globe. They were among the first deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, and since that time they have continuously deployed in support of the Global War on Terrorism.

SF officers, NCOs must meet new DLPT minimum

The commander of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, or SWCS, has established a new minimum standard for the Defense Language Proficiency Test, or DLPT, for all graduates of the Special Forces Qualification Course, or SFQC.

The new standard of 1/1/1 (reading, listening and oral proficiency) reflects a priority on foreign-language capabilities for the force. The change indicates a serious commitment to

increasing the base of proficiency before SFQC graduates arrive in the force. The prior standard was 0+/0+.

Additionally, the Officer Record Brief, or ORB, will be modified Army-wide to reflect officers' reading, listening and oral proficiency, DLPT scores and their test date. All SF officers and NCOs, regardless of their assignment, will be required to test annually and to maintain language proficiency.

SWCS and the U.S. Army Special Operations Command's language office are working to identify methodologies and resourcing for supporting initial language training and unit language-enhancement programs to maximize the benefits to the force and to support the long-term language initiative.

For more information, telephone Lieutenant Colonel Mark Strong, in the SWCS Special Operations Propensity Office, at DSN 239-3296, commercial (910) 432-3296, or send e-mail to strongm@soc.mil.

SF warrant officers get new collar insignia

The U.S. Army Special Operations Command, or USASOC, hosted a ceremony July 8 to mark a change of insignia for all Special Forces warrant officers.

SF warrant officers now wear the same uniform collar insignia as that worn by SF commissioned officers.

USASOC commanding general Lieutenant General Philip R. Kensinger Jr., hosted the ceremony, which featured the changing of the branch insignia from the warrant-officer eagle, worn by all Army warrant officers since May 1921, to the crossed arrows worn by SF officers since June 1987.

The ceremony coincided with the 86th anniversary of the Army Warrant Officer Corps July 9.



Book Reviews

Special Warfare

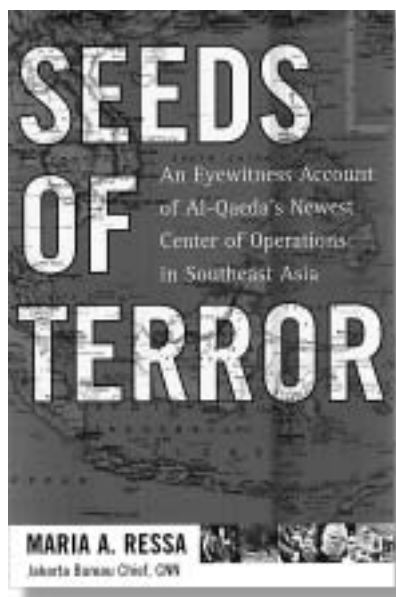
Seeds of Terror: An Eyewitness Account of al-Qaeda's Newest Center of Operations in Southeast Asia. By Maria Ressa. New York: The Free Press, 2003. ISBN 0-7432-5133-4. 274 pages. \$26.

For more than 16 years, Maria Ressa, the current CNN Jakarta bureau chief, has lived and worked in Southeast Asia, and she has called on that experience to provide insight into the development of today's global insurgency networks in her new book, *Seeds of Terror*. For special-operations personnel charged with conducting counterinsurgency, her book provides an excellent understanding of the terrorist organizations we face today.

While serving in Indonesia and the Philippines, Ressa has made connections and contacts throughout the region that have given her access to sensitive information on the existing threats. Ressa's book is a detailed analysis of the inner workings of al-Qaeda and its Southeast Asian operational arm, Jemaah Islamiah, or JI.

The book opens with a detailed list of al-Qaeda and JI key leaders, followed by a timeline that chronicles the inception and growth of the existing network. Ressa explains how Osama bin Laden took advantage of opportunities to expand his reach from the Middle East into Southeast Asia and to connect with the already-growing JI cells created by Abu Bakar Ba'aysir, who is known as the "Asian Osama bin Laden."

Ressa, privy to nongovernment sources as well as to classified reports of the CIA, FBI and Southeast Asian intelligence agencies, tracks the progress of Southeast Asian Muslims who traveled to



Afghanistan in the late 1980s to help fight the Soviets and then returned home with a thirst for Jihad. The book outlines in detail the 2002 JI bombing of a Bali nightclub that left 202 dead, followed by the 2003 bombing of the J.W. Marriott Hotel in Jakarta that left 11 dead and 150 injured.

Ressa documents how every terrorist attack since 1993, including 9/11, has had a connection to the Philippines. She recounts how during Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines, or OEF-P, in 2001, 660 United States Special Forces Soldiers deployed to the southern Philippine islands of Zamboanga and Basilan to train, advise and assist the Armed Forces of the Philippines, or AFP, in combating terrorist insurgents. The book also documents the impact that SF had on the fight against the ASG and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, or MILF, two of the leading terrorist organizations in the region. Ressa

explains why U.S. forces and the AFP were unable to eliminate those terrorist threats because of politics and policies, and she implies that the terrorists will be a force to be reckoned with in the future.

In conclusion, Ressa explains that a security vacuum has been created in Southeast Asia while the world's attention is on the Middle East. She describes the war on terror as a global insurgency that will be won only after the world has a greater understanding of the radical Islamist threats being mobilized today. The author contends that, armed with new intelligence, the U.S. has the capability of rising above its own self-interest, of communicating with the reasonable and rational Muslims of the world, and of eliminating the global insurgency.

An expert on the workings of Southeast Asian terrorist networks, Ressa had her credibility and status as an authority reinforced when the Army invited her to speak at West Point's 2004 conference on Asian security issues, titled "Terrorism in Asia: Threats, Options, Implications." Colonel David Maxwell, chief of staff of the Special Operations Command – Korea, said, "She understands the nature of unconventional warfare and counterinsurgency and the fight in the ideological wars. She also understands the importance of intelligence and link analysis."

Seeds of Terror documents the growth of the Southeast Asian terrorist networks that today's special-operations forces must understand and eliminate. This book is a "must read" for anyone interested in the Global War on Terrorism,

Southeast Asian security affairs or the development of the global insurgency networks that the world faces today.

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In the Presence of My Enemies.

By Gracia Burnham with Dean Merrill. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2003. ISBN 0-8423-8138-4 (hard cover). 307 pages. \$22.99.

For a little more than a year, two American missionaries, Martin and Gracia Burnham, were held captive by Filipino rebels on the Philippine island of Basilan. *In the Presence of My Enemies* is the story of their captivity, told firsthand by Gracia Burnham.

The Burnhams, New Tribes Mission evangelicals, became pawns in the kidnap-for-ransom racket in the Philippines. The couple was taken captive by the Abu Sayyaf Group, or ASG, and held hostage for 376 days before being rescued by members of the Filipino Army. Martin was killed during the rescue operation. Gracia Burnham provides the reader with candid descriptions of life as a hostage under the control of Islamic warriors, painting a picture of contrasting cultural contexts and giving insight into the Philippine kidnap-for-ransom industry.

Burnham focuses on their captivity, which began May 21, 2001, when the ASG took 20 people, including the Burnhams, captive from the Dos Palmas resort.

With brutal honesty, Burnham reflects on that captivity, bringing to light her own battles with despair, hunger and physical exhaustion. She articulates her spiritual odyssey, as she questioned her faith in God. She credits Martin for her survival.

Abdurak Janjalani, an Islamic scholar and a member of the mujahideen during the Afghan-Soviet war, founded the ASG in 1991 as a

means of achieving an independent Muslim state. Upon his death, the group changed its philosophy and began to cash in on the kidnap-for-ransom culture of the country. The ASG maintains ties to militant Islamic groups like al-Qaeda.

In the book, Burnham provides a graphic account of ASG operations. While the group usually had sufficient equipment, it did occasionally lack funding.

Without being overly dramatic, Burnham talks about the ASG's treatment of hostages, including the beheading of Guillermo Sobero on June 11, 2001. She notes that his death served as a warning against agitating their captors.

In talking about the jihad, Burnham contrasts the ASG's views of Allah with the Burnhams' idea of God. According to Musab, the second-in-command, the mujahid code acknowledged that "the civilian is nothing; the normal person is nothing. The mujahid must go on." For the members of the ASG, death in a jihad was a great honor, so the wounding or death of a comrade or innocent civilian could easily be dismissed as destiny.

The Burnhams found that the ASG altered its interpretation of the Koran to meet its needs. The Koran makes it clear that slave

owners are to treat slaves with respect and feed them well; however, the rebels did not abide by that rule and kept supplies for themselves, maintaining that the rule applied only to Muslim slaves.

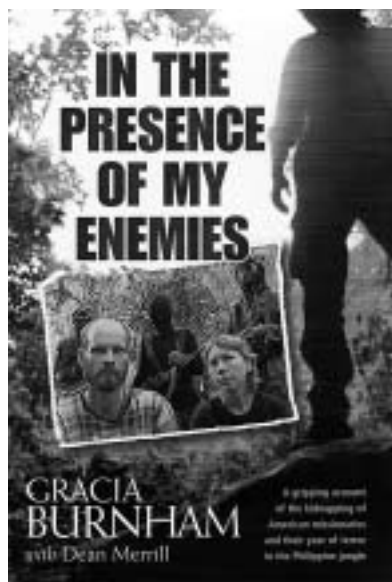
While Burnham acknowledges that the ASG was her true enemy, she does criticize the AFP and the government of the Philippines, noting that the ASG maintained that its source of ammunition was none other than the AFP. Although she stops short of assigning blame for the death of her husband to the military, she clearly implies collusion between the ASG and government officials.

The book describes the hope that the Burnhams felt when they observed U.S. reconnaissance planes flying over Basilan. While Burnham believes that the presence of U.S. military helped focus the rescue effort, she hints that a greater participation by the U.S. military might have produced a different, less costly ending to the hostage-taking.

The book poses some interesting questions: Should the U.S. and missionary agencies maintain a no-ransom policy? Is the U.S. government doing enough to protect its citizens abroad? Is victory in the war on terrorism possible, especially given the ambition of the enemy? While she doesn't try to answer these questions, Burnham does draw the reader into the hostages' reality.

While at one level a Christian audience will identify with the spiritual aspects of the book, *In the Presence of My Enemies* has a broader scope and will draw audiences who will appreciate this account of survival under the malicious control of Islamist terrorists.

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Special Warfare

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