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## ABU SAYYAF GROUP

by Zack Fellman

## Executive Summary

Founded in the early 1990s as a Filipino Muslim (Moro) terrorist organization, the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) emerged as a more violent Islamist alternative to the stagnated political movements of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). ASG strove to create an independent Islamic state in the southern Philippines. Abdurajak Janjalani, the group's leader, drew on personal relationships with members of al Qaeda core and directed ASG to begin bombing predominantly Christian targets in 1991. In 1995, Philippine forces were able to kill Janjalani, which forced the weakened group to take up kidnapping-for-ransom operations in lieu of high-profile terrorist bombings. By the early 2000s, government counterterrorism operations had eliminated most ASG commanders vying for control of the group. The resulting leadership vacuum enabled Abdurajak Janjalani's younger brother, Khadaffy Janjalani, to consolidate control of ASG. Buttressed by

*(Executive Summary continued next page)*

The Al Qaeda and Associated Movements (AQAM) Futures Project is a joint study undertaken by the CSIS Transnational Threats Project and the CSIS Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Program. The initiative will produce a series of alternative futures regarding the state of AQAM in the year 2025 and generate recommendations to defeat the threat over the long term. Drawing on historical analysis, social science research, expert interviews, and targeted fieldwork, this project will provide to policymakers and strategists a vision beyond the next few years and will consider the trends and shocks that may shape AQAM over the next decade and a half.

This case study is one of several examining the historic evolution and future prospects of al Qaeda and its range of affiliated groups. The purpose of the case studies is to determine the key drivers that have influenced a terrorist group's trajectory over time. Ultimately, these drivers, in conjunction with additional supporting analysis, will be used to inform projections about the future of al Qaeda and its affiliates.

operational and monetary support from Southeast Asian terrorist groups like Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), the younger Janjalani re-directed ASG to begin bombing again in late 2003. Large-scale bombings ended with Janjalani's death in September 2006. His death, during the U.S.-backed operation Oplan Ultimatum, sent the group again into disarray. Given ASG's current lack of group structure, it is difficult to differentiate between criminal and terrorist activities in the underdeveloped and undergoverned southern Philippines. While Abu Sayyaf is currently weak, Moro political discontent persists and could catalyze future Islamist terrorism.

## Key Judgments

### Foundation and Rise: Late 1991-1995/96

- *Public dissatisfaction.* Repeated failings of the MNLF and MILF to gain independence caused disillusionment with the political process and made terrorist tactics more attractive to disaffected Filipino Muslims.
- *Leadership.* The leadership of Abdurajak Janjalani, a foreign-educated veteran of the Afghan/Soviet conflict, was pivotal in bringing disparate actors into a coherent network.
- *Terrorist patron.* Foreign connections, facilitated by Abdurajak Janjalani's personal networks, enabled ASG fighters to receive training and financial support, and allowed leaders to carry out terrorist bombings on Christian targets.

### Subsistence Period I: 1995/96-2003

- *Counterterrorism pressure.* Government of the Republic of the Philippines operations eliminated key leaders within ASG, cutting off essential foreign funding and splitting the group into multiple factions. Forced to raise their own money, ASG members abandoned terrorist bombings in favor of kidnapping-for-ransom operations as a means of subsistence.

### Resurgence of Terrorism: Late 2003-2006

- *Counterterrorism pressure.* Continued operations by the Philippine government killed many leaders who were competing for operational control of the group. Yet

Khadaffy Janjalani and Abu Sulaiman remained and, with their control consolidated, directed the group to resume terrorist operations.

- *Networking.* Cooperation among Philippine and other regional militant groups allowed for the sharing of funds and expertise. As a result, ASG was able to carry out high-casualty operations like the 2004 bombing of Superferry 14 and the 2005 Valentine's Day attack.

### Subsistence Period II: 2006-Present<sup>1</sup>

- *Counterterrorism pressure.* Large-scale counterterrorism operations began in 2006, resulting in the death or capture of key ASG leaders. The ensuing loss of leadership and funding drove the remaining group members to resort to kidnapping-for-ransom operations, with attacks and skirmishes occurring periodically.

## Full Narrative

### The Emergence and Evolution of ASG

The Abu Sayyaf Group began in the early 1990s as an Islamist terrorist offshoot of existing Moro insurgent groups in the southern Philippines, namely the MNLF and the MILF. Southern Philippine insurgent groups have historically revolted in response to what they considered an usurpation of Moro territory by Christian immigrants, as well as to the underrepresentation of Moros in the Philippine government. The failure of the MNLF and the MILF to significantly improve the Moros' perceived political inequities legitimized the use of increasingly violent tactics to accomplish what peace talks and political deals did not.

It is from this increasingly dejected political milieu that ASG emerged under the guidance of Abdurajak Janjalani. Janjalani's path toward violent Islamist extremism began with his education in Libya and Saudi Arabia from 1981 to 1984, which was supported financially by Al Islamic Tabligh, a fundamentalist religious organization.<sup>2</sup> Upon completing his studies, Janjalani returned to his home island of Basilan to preach until 1987, when he traveled to Peshawar, Pakistan. While studying the Iranian Islamic revolution in Pakistan, Janjalani came into contact with Osama bin Laden.<sup>3</sup> Shortly after, Janjalani traveled with a group of MNLF dissidents to Afghanistan to fight against Soviet forces, possibly alongside bin Laden himself.<sup>4</sup> While

fighting, Abdurajak and his brother Khadaffy trained at a camp near Khost, Afghanistan, run by a fundamentalist warlord named Abdul Rasul Sayyaf. Sayyaf also influenced Riduan Isamuddin (aka Hambali), who would become the military leader of Jemaah Islamiyah.<sup>5</sup>

After Janjalani's educational and combat experiences abroad, he returned to Basilan. There he drew on his connections with Filipino veterans of the Afghan war and disgruntled hardliners within MNLF to continue the struggle to create an Islamic state in the southern Philippines.<sup>6</sup> Janjalani's group went through several iterations before emerging as the Abu Sayyaf Group in 1991. Janjalani stated that the group's objective should be "an Islamic state—not autonomy, not independence, not revolution."<sup>7</sup>

### Al Qaeda Ties and the Degeneration of ASG

In 1991, ASG carried out a string of bombings, primarily against Christian targets seen by some Moros as a symbol of the seizure of their land. Among the most infamous attacks in this early period were the 1991 bombing of the Christian missionary ship *M/V Doulos*, the 1992 assassination of a prominent Christian missionary in Mindanao, and the 1995 raid of the Christian town of Ipil on Zamboanga del Sur.<sup>8</sup>

Essential to this first wave of attacks were Janjalani's ties to al Qaeda core, which provided ASG with financing and training. The connection to al Qaeda ran through bin Laden's brother-in-law, Muhammad Jamal Khalifa, who headed the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO) as well as other charitable organizations used as fronts for financing terrorist activities.<sup>9</sup> At the same time that ASG emerged, bin Laden dispatched Khalifa to the Philippines where he arranged for terrorist training and funneled money to ASG using his network of front organizations.<sup>10</sup> Large shipments of Libyan arms were also paid for with al Qaeda money and delivered to ASG.

Between 1991 and 1992, Ramzi Yousef, the perpetrator of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, traveled in and out of the Philippines with Janjalani. Over this period, Yousef trained a small ASG cadre in bomb-making techniques.<sup>11</sup> After 1992, Yousef left the Philippines, only to return in the wake of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. There, the Yousef cell (including Khalid Sheikh Mohammad) received operational support from ASG as it

planned to bomb a dozen western airliners traveling over the Pacific in 1995, an operation dubbed the Bojinka plot.<sup>12</sup>

Prior to the attack, in February 1995, Ramzi Yousef was arrested in Pakistan.<sup>13</sup> In the ensuing investigation, it was revealed that Muhammad Jamal Khalifa was connected to the bombing, and he was subsequently barred from returning to the Philippines. These two events severed the lines of funding and communication between ASG and al Qaeda core.<sup>14</sup> ASG's organizational structure was further compromised in 1998 when Abdurajak Janjalani was killed by government forces.

As a result, ASG split into two major factions, one headed by Abdurajak's brother Khadaffy on Basilan, and the other headed by Galib Andang (aka Commander Robot) on Sulu. Even within these two factions, internal competition kept Khadaffy and Robot from establishing complete control. The competition and a loss of external funding led ASG to give up terrorism in favor of kidnapping-for-ransom activities in order to subsist. At the peak of kidnapping operations between 2000 and 2001, ASG kidnapped and ransomed approximately 140 people.<sup>15</sup>

The September 11, 2001, attacks brought about a dramatic increase in U.S. government support for the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) counterterrorism operations. In 2002, as part of Operation Enduring Freedom—Philippines, the United States deployed 1,650 personnel, including 150 Special Forces operators, to the southern Philippines to help eradicate ASG.<sup>16</sup> In a major blow to ASG leadership, U.S. forces and the AFP killed Janjalani's principal rival within his own faction, Abu Sabaya, in June 2002. Seven months later, in December 2003, U.S. forces and the AFP also captured the leader of the second faction, Commander Robot.<sup>17</sup>

### Terrorism Resurgence

The removal of Sabaya and Commander Robot allowed Khadaffy Janjalani and fellow radical commander Abu Sulaiman to assert at least a modicum of control over the entire organization. Khadaffy and Sulaiman also tightened their ties to JI and hard-line members of the MILF. This step was necessary because the MILF had agreed to distance itself from terrorist organizations like ASG as a concession during negotiations with the Philippine government. Losing the support of their traditional benefac-

tors caused the more radical groups to increasingly rely on one another for operational support.<sup>18</sup>

A consolidated leadership hierarchy and closer relationships with like-minded militants allowed ASG to once again make itself relevant as a purely terrorist organization.<sup>19</sup> In 2003, two heads of JI, Umar Patek and Dulmatin, sought refuge with the ASG in the wake of the 2002 Bali bombings.<sup>20</sup> While there, Patek and Dulmatin passed along bomb-making techniques to their ASG hosts and assisted in procuring operational funds for the group.<sup>21</sup> The year 2003 also saw the launch of a second operational phase for ASG, which began with two simultaneous bombings, one at the Davao airport and one at the Sasa Wharf, killing 48 and wounding 204 in total.<sup>22</sup> These bombings were followed in February 2004 by the bombing of Superferry 14, which killed 116, and in 2005 by the simultaneous bombing of three cities on Valentine's Day, which killed 8 and injured at least 70.<sup>23</sup>

## Re-fragmentation of ASG

The 2003–2004 attacks underscored ASG's increasing capabilities, drawing the attention of the Philippine and U.S. forces. In August 2006, 200 U.S. military support personnel and 10 AFP battalions launched Oplan Ultimatum.<sup>24</sup> The operation targeted approximately 500 ASG fighters and succeeded in killing both Khadaffy Janjalani and Abu Sulaiman.<sup>25</sup>

Without its leadership, ASG's ability to carry out large bombings once again collapsed. Broken down into factions, ASG members resumed kidnapping-for-ransom activities in the latter half of 2007 and have continued to do so into 2011.<sup>26</sup> Information gathered from recent clashes and bombings in the south, as well as from captured ASG members, indicate that while a small cadre of ASG members may still have the desire to perpetrate mass-casualty attacks despite their lack of leadership, a more capable Philippine national security apparatus has made this task difficult.<sup>27</sup>

## Analysis

### Period I: Foundation and Rise

- *Political dissatisfaction.* Decades of colonization, foreign control, underrepresentation, and underdevelop-

ment had an enormous impact on the Moro populace.<sup>28</sup> These factors all played a role in stirring Moro disillusionment with the political process over the past several decades. Beginning shortly after Philippine independence in 1946, Christians began migrating to traditionally Muslim-dominated population centers in the south with the support of the state.<sup>29</sup> Eventually, Christians outnumbered Muslims in several areas.

The Moro populace became increasingly frustrated by their newfound minority status, until tensions with the Philippine government boiled over in an MNLF-led revolt in 1972. Moros rose up in an effort to establish a secular and independent Moro state in the southern Philippines. The group fell short of its stated goal and settled for an autonomous region in exchange for a cease-fire in 1976. Angered that the MNLF had settled for an autonomous region and not full independence, a group of hardliners broke away from the MNLF to renew the fight for a Moro state in the south, based on the tenets of Islamic law under the banner of a newly formed MILF.<sup>30</sup> Like the MNLF, the MILF has not achieved its stated goal and remains engaged in episodic peace negotiations with the government.

The perceived inability of the Philippine government and Moro political organizations to substantively address Moro grievances buttressed the idea that violence and radicalism could accomplish what the political process did not. Khadaffy Janjalani, when speaking of his brother's decision to split from the MNLF, stated that because of interference with the "Moro right to self-determination, independence was lost forever in favor of the so-called autonomy." Khadaffy went on to state that his brother had been correct in splitting from the MNLF because "up to now, nothing came out of that autonomy option."<sup>31</sup> His statement suggests that ASG is merely the latest, albeit most violent, iteration of Moro political dissatisfaction that has existed for the last several decades.

- *Leadership.* Strong leadership, specifically that of Abdurajak Janjalani, helped turn Moro dissatisfaction with the political process into Islamist terrorism. As a Filipino who had been radicalized abroad, the elder Janjalani was uniquely positioned to co-opt the plight of the Moros by reinterpreting their regional struggle through an Islamist lens. He framed the struggle for Moro political independence as a *jihad* ("struggle") to obtain *kaadilan* ("justice") for the Moro people.<sup>32</sup>

Furthermore, Abdurajak was able to use a Christian “invasion” of traditional Muslim lands as a Moro call to arms, serving to further unite disaffected and like-minded Moros against a common enemy. This underlying antagonism toward Christians explains why the majority of attacks in ASG’s well-coordinated first wave of terrorism were directed against individuals and institutions associated with Christian proselytization.<sup>33</sup>

Leadership is especially crucial in Moro communities because the fundamental rules governing Moro political alliances are predicated upon friendship and kinship and less on a sense of overall Moro community.<sup>34</sup> This aspect of Moro communities manifests itself in how Moro fighting groups can form. Often dubbed “maximal alliances,” Moro fighting groups are often bound together by friendship among leaders, not by a common cause that unites the fighters themselves. Maximal alliances are created when smaller groups of 25–60 individuals, dubbed “minimal alliances,” unite to fight under a local headman.<sup>35</sup> ASG’s structure roughly parallels this model, as the group relied on Abdurajak Janjalani to leverage his relationships with local headmen to unite small groups into a larger network capable of coordinated acts of terrorism. ASG’s network-of-networks<sup>36</sup> construction also explains how the group disaggregated when these high-level alliances were undone by Janjalani’s death.

- *Terrorist patron.* Just as Abdurajak Janjalani’s leadership was necessary to unite a network of disaffected Moros, a terrorist patron was necessary to operationalize ASG. Thus, the elder Janjalani again utilized his own contacts to procure funding and training from al Qaeda core.

As previously stated, two individuals served as ASG’s main connection to al Qaeda core: Muhammad Jamal Khalifa, who mainly provided funding, and Ramzi Yousef, who mainly provided training.<sup>37</sup> Both Khalifa and Yousef were dispatched by al Qaeda core to the Philippines in support of ASG.<sup>38</sup> Khadaffi Janjalani’s understanding of ASG’s affiliation with al Qaeda core demonstrated an alliance of necessity, not unlike those that underpinned ASG itself. He stated that “our friendship with them is dictated by necessity, convenience and the need to help one another. They needed at that time volunteers for Afghanistan, while we need money to buy arms, ammunition and other necessities to fight the oppressive government.”<sup>39</sup>

## Period II: Subsistence Terrorism I

- *Counterterrorism pressure.* Counterterrorism pressure caused ASG to devolve from a hierarchical terrorist organization into a kidnapping-for-ransom gang. The first major blow to ASG was dealt in 1995, when Mohammad Jamal Khalifa was refused entry into the Philippines for his role in Ramzi Yousef’s Bojinka plot. As Khalifa was ASG’s main financial conduit to al Qaeda core, his prohibition from operating in the Philippines cut the flow of funds to ASG. Later, in 1998, counterterrorism operations achieved a key victory in killing Abdurajak Janjalani.

Janjalani’s death and the loss of financing caused the network-of-networks to collapse, but it did not spell the death of the movement as a whole. ASG split into two factions, with one faction headed by Abdurajak’s brother Khadaffi, on Basilan, and the other headed by Commander Robot on Sulu.<sup>40</sup> With no central leadership guiding tactics and strategy, the leftover separate alliances chose to forgo terrorism in favor of kidnapping-for-ransom activities. These operations peaked between 2000 and 2001, when ASG factions kidnapped approximately 140 people. That only 16 hostages were executed explains that the principal value of the hostages was monetary rather than symbolic.<sup>41</sup> It is precisely this facet of ASG—its reliance on central leadership to unite several smaller alliances—that makes it easy to destabilize yet resilient enough to elude complete eradication.<sup>42</sup>

## Period III: Resurgence of Terrorism

- *Leadership.* Beginning in 2003, a reconsolidated leadership structure enabled ASG to reemerge as a terrorist organization. ASG’s leadership solidified as a result of Khadaffi Janjalani being well positioned to take advantage of the deaths of his internal competitors.<sup>43</sup> Ironically, counterterrorism pressure led to a newly cohesive ASG.

As a result of 2002’s Operation Enduring Freedom–Philippines, the Philippine government succeeded in neutralizing Abu Sabaya, a competitor for the control of the Basilan faction, and Commander Robot, the commander of the Sulu faction.<sup>44</sup> With his two principal rivals out of play, Khadaffi Janjalani was able to assert his control over ASG and refocus the group on using terrorism to establish an Islamic state in the south. When asked why there had been a decrease in ASG kidnappings since his assumption

of power, Janjalani acknowledged the decrease but explained that the reasons were a “military secret.”<sup>45</sup>

- *Networking.* Networking among Philippine and Indonesian militants provided ASG with operational support after its ties with Qaeda core evaporated. ASG’s support structure was further threatened when the MILF conceded to government requests to distance itself from radical elements within its own camp, as well as from groups like JI and ASG.<sup>46</sup> Disassociated from its traditional hosts, JI and radical elements within MILF tightened their ties with ASG.<sup>47</sup> That JI leaders Umar Patek and Dulmatin sought refuge with ASG after JI carried out the 2002 Bali bombing suggests a closer working relationship between the groups.<sup>48</sup> While being hosted by ASG in 2003, Patek and Dulmatin trained ASG and MILF members in bomb-making techniques. Patek was able to solicit funds for both JI and ASG operations.<sup>49</sup> Concrete evidence suggests that Patek’s efforts to fund ASG were at least partially driven by his concern that ASG could return to subsistence kidnapping if not adequately funded to carry out larger acts of terrorism.<sup>50</sup>

For the second time in ASG’s history, strong internal leadership, supplemented by the support of external radical organizations, enabled the group to carry out deadly terrorist attacks. However, this period of terrorism was more violent than the first and included the 2004 Superferry 14 bombing and the 2005 Valentine’s Day bombing.<sup>51</sup> Arrests of ASG personnel during this period uncovered large caches of explosives as well as plans to carry out further bombings.<sup>52</sup>

## Period IV: Subsistence Terrorism II

- *Counterterrorism pressure.* The fourth period of ASG’s development occurred because of sustained counterterrorism pressure from the United States and the Philippine government. Oplan Ultimatum succeeded in killing ASG leaders Khadaffy Janjalani in late 2006 and Abu Sulaiman in early 2007. Without these two figures, the alliances that shaped ASG’s relationships with radical MILF splinters and JI atrophied. ASG itself reacted to Khadaffy Janjalani’s death in much the same way it had reacted to his brother Abdurajak’s death years earlier: individual members fell back on the smaller alliances with friends and family in close proximity. In June 2008, AFP chief Alexander Yano stated that a “leadership vacuum”

was responsible for ASG’s return to kidnapping for ransom and that AFP could not “confirm a single leader in the stature of Janjalani, who could have welded the Abu Sayyaf into a united, formidable group.”<sup>53</sup> This leadership vacuum explains why ASG elements again reverted to kidnapping-for-ransom operations as a means of financial support, beginning in the second half of 2007 and continuing through 2011.<sup>54</sup> For example, in 2010, Abu Sayyaf conducted 11 kidnappings and received around \$704,000 in ransom payments. Similar to its actions in prior periods of subsistence terrorism, ASG appears to only execute hostages that it fails to ransom, suggesting that the group takes hostages for their monetary rather than symbolic value.<sup>55</sup> According to Vice Governor of Basilan Al-Rasheed Sakkalahul, “they’re not fighting for a cause...they’re kidnapping people and raising money for survival.”<sup>56</sup>

Given its degraded organizational structure, as well as its tactics and membership overlap with criminal gangs, ASG’s operational capability, objectives, and size are difficult to discern.<sup>57</sup> Bombings are still occurring in the Philippines, including a church bombing in December 2010 followed by a bus bombing in January 2011.<sup>58</sup> If those bombings were undertaken by ASG, they could represent a slow return to terrorism. The lack of sophistication in the bombs, however, could demonstrate that while ASG may have the desire to return to large-scale acts of terrorism, it has neither the means nor the expertise to do so. For now, ASG seems to be kept off balance by the large government presence in its traditional areas of operation, highlighted by frequent news reports documenting ASG casualties induced by AFP operations.<sup>59</sup>

## Abu Sayyaf through 2025

It is likely that some manifestation of ASG or its offshoots will exist in the southern Philippines in 2025. ASG’s network-of-networks structure and its flexible ideology make it susceptible to instability, but resistant to complete eradication.<sup>60</sup>

Some common threads in ASG’s history may serve as harbingers for future terrorist networks operating in the southern Philippines. Most importantly, the machinations behind negotiations between the Philippine government and MILF will play a strong role in exacerbating or prolonging Moro political discontent. Public dissatisfaction

with political progress is a latent phenomenon among Moros and continues to manifest itself in the emergence of violent splinter groups. In December 2010, a group of 60 to 80 Moro fighters, led by disgruntled MILF commander Ameril Umbra Kato, split off from MILF.<sup>61</sup> Kato and his group were responsible for a series of attacks on Christian communities that had suspended the government/MILF peace process in 2008.<sup>62</sup> The emergence of Kato's splinter group, like that of MILF and ASG before it, suggest that some Moros will be unwilling to forsake violence regardless of any political progress. These splinters serve as peace spoilers that may disrupt or derail negotiations between the Philippine government and the mainstream Moros.

Assuming that a network-of-networks model will continue to define the manner in which Moro terrorists organize themselves, leadership will be essential to ASG's future viability. Specifically, Moros with connections and experience acquired through foreign religious education or combat experience will be more predisposed to success. Both Janjalanis benefited immensely from their time spent in Afghanistan where they fought against Soviet forces, but it was the coupling of combat experience with their personal understanding of the Moro political struggle that allowed them to create the alliances necessary to operationalize their radical agendas.

Currently, there is no indication that Moros are present in places like Yemen, Somalia, or other areas in which al Qaeda-affiliated groups have a strong presence. Without experience in foreign areas of operation, future ASG leaders are less likely to focus terrorist attention on defeating "far enemies,"<sup>63</sup> and are more likely to focus on Moros' indigenous political and socioeconomic grievances. This lack of participation in fighting against "far enemies" could mitigate the ASG threat to the United States in 2025.

There are two complicating factors in this formulation, however. The first is ASG's relationship with JI. The relationship between the groups was thought to have atrophied in the wake of Dulmatin's death in Indonesia in March 2010 and Umar Patek's arrest in Abbottabad, Pakistan, in January 2011.<sup>64</sup> However there is increasing evidence that JI and ASG are endeavoring to conduct future joint operations and could have already merged.<sup>65</sup> While questions remain as to how the groups would or could effectively merge,<sup>66</sup> a united JI/ASG remains a potentially destabilizing force in the southern Philippines.

The second complicating factor is U.S. troop presence in the Philippines. Much in the same way that Christian migration did decades earlier, troop presence has the potential to bring symbols of the "far enemy" to the Moros' doorstep. While U.S. support of combat operations in the south has been limited and discrete, future ASG commanders could utilize the image of U.S. troops in the south to catalyze a new wave of Islamist violence in the Philippines.

That there are still potential flashpoints in the southern Philippines draws attention to the fact that current policies do not adequately address the root causes of Moro political dissatisfaction. Ending the Moro insurgency is a prerequisite for eradicating Islamist terrorism in the Philippines. Yet U.S. involvement at the tactical level, coupled with law enforcement efforts by the Philippine government, may be all that is required to limit ASG's operational capability.

## Notes

1. This timeline of Abu Sayyaf's two cycles of rise and decline roughly parallel the timeline laid out in Zachary Abuza, *Balik Terrorism: The Return of the Abu Sayyaf* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2005), <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB625.pdf>.

2. Michael Carter, *Islamic Terrorism in Southeast Asia: An Effects-Based U.S. Regional Strategy Against Jemaah Islamiyah and Abu Sayyaf* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: United States Army Command and General Staff College, 2004–2005), 13, <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA437439%26Location=U2%26doc=GetTRDoc.pdf>.

3. Abuza, *Balik Terrorism*, 2; and Rommel C. Banlaoi, "From Mere Banditry to Genuine Terrorism," in Daljit Singh and Lorraine C. Salazar, eds., *Southeast Asian Affairs* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2006): 251.

4. Abuza, *Balik Terrorism*, 2.

5. *Ibid.*, 2.

6. Banlaoi, "From Mere Banditry to Genuine Terrorism," 249.

7. Abdurajak Janjalani, "Jihad: The Misunderstood Doctrine" (undated sound recording, c. 1992), as quoted in International Crisis Group, *The Philippines: Counter-Insurgency vs. Counter-Terrorism in Mindanao*, Asia Briefing No. 152, May 14, 2008, [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/south-east-asia/philippines/152\\_counterinsurgency\\_vs\\_counter\\_terrorism\\_in\\_mindanao.ashx](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/south-east-asia/philippines/152_counterinsurgency_vs_counter_terrorism_in_mindanao.ashx), 7.

8. See Eliza Griswold, "Waging Peace in the Philippines," *Smithsonian.com*, December 2006, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/people-places/philippines.html>; Banlaoi, "From Mere Banditry to Genuine Terrorism," 248; and "Abu Sayyaf Kidnappings, Bombings and Other Attacks," *GMA News*, August 23, 2007, <http://www.gmanews.tv/story/154797/abu-sayyaf-kidnappings-bombings-and-other-attacks>.

9. See Victor Comras, “Al Qaeda Finances and Funding to Affiliated Groups,” *Strategic Insights* 4, issue 1 (January 2005), [http://www.apgml.org/frameworks/docs/7/Al%20Qaeda%20Financing\\_%20V%20Comras\\_Jan05.pdf](http://www.apgml.org/frameworks/docs/7/Al%20Qaeda%20Financing_%20V%20Comras_Jan05.pdf); and “Taking From The Poor,” *Newsweek*, October 22, 2001, <http://www.newsweek.com/2001/10/22/taking-from-the-poor.html>.
10. Abuza, *Balik Terrorism*, 5; and Rommel C. Banlaoi, “The Sources of the Abu Sayyaf’s Resilience in the Southern Philippines,” *CTC Sentinel* 3, issue 5 (May 2010):18, <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/CTCSentinel-Vol3Iss5-art6.pdf>, 18.
11. Abuza, *Balik Terrorism*, 3.
12. The bombing of Philippine Airlines Flight 434 on December 11, 1994, was a test run for Yousef to test the timing devices he would attempt to use in the Bojinka plot. See Global Security, “Yusef Bombs Philippines Airlines Flight 434,” [http://www.globalsecurity.org/security/profiles/yusef\\_bombs\\_philippines\\_airlines\\_flight\\_434.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/security/profiles/yusef_bombs_philippines_airlines_flight_434.htm); *The 9/11 Commission Report* (New York, N.Y.: W. W. Norton, 2004), 147; and Abuza, *Balik Terrorism*, 6.
13. “‘Proud Terrorist’ Gets Life for Trade Center bombing,” *CNN.com*, January 8, 1998, <http://www.cnn.com/US/9801/08/yousef.update/>.
14. Renato Cruz De Castro, “Confronting Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: The Case of the Abu Sayyaf Group in the Philippines,” *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* 21, issue 3 (2009): 351; and Zachary Abuza, “The Philippines Chips Away at the Abu Sayyaf Group’s Strength,” *CTC Sentinel* 3, issue 4 (April 2010), <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/sentinel/CTCSentinel-Vol3Iss4.pdf>, 11.
15. Abuza, “The Philippines Chips Away,” 11.
16. “Operation Enduring Freedom—Philippines Balikatan 2002-1,” *Global Security.org*, [http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/balikatan\\_02-1.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/balikatan_02-1.htm).
17. Stuart Grudgings, “‘Commander Robot’ captured,” *Indian-express.com*, December 9, 2003, <http://www.indianexpress.com/oldStory/36846/>; and Mark Bowden, “Jihadists in Paradise,” *The Atlantic*, March 2007, <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2007/03/jihadists-in-paradise/5613/>.
18. Cruz De Castro, “Confronting Militant Islam,” 349; and Zachary Abuza, “Abu Sayyaf Still Holds Philippines to Ransom,” *Jane’s Defense & Security Intelligence & Analysis*, April 17, 2009, <http://www.janes.com/products/janes/defence-security-report.aspx?id=1065925957>.
19. Some sources denote that Khadaffy Janjalani may have had al Qaeda funding to carry out certain kidnapping-for-ransom attacks. See Abuza, *Balik Terrorism*, 26.
20. Zachary Abuza, “Umar Patek: Indonesia’s Most Wanted,” *Militant Leadership Monitor* 1, issue 4 (2010), [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/mlm0/feature-single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=36333&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=469&cHash=a4da04cea0](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/mlm0/feature-single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=36333&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=469&cHash=a4da04cea0).
21. Banlaoi, “The Sources of the Abu Sayyaf’s Resilience,” 18.
22. Abuza, *Balik Terrorism*, viii, 10.
23. Human Rights Watch, *Lives Destroyed: Attacks on Civilians in the Philippines*, July 30, 2007, [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/reliefweb\\_pdf/node-238545.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/reliefweb_pdf/node-238545.pdf), 12; and Edith Regalado, John Paul Jubelag, and Evelyn Macairan, “Valentine’s Day Bombing Spree, Abu Claims Responsibility,” *Star* (Manila), February 15, 2005, <http://www.newsflash.org/2004/02/hl/hl101798.htm>. While this period is generally characterized by bombings, some kidnappings did take place. However, the few kidnappings the group did carry out over this period were politically motivated and ended with public executions rather than release after ransom payment. See Abuza, “‘Abu Sayyaf Still Holds Philippines.’”
24. International Crisis Group, *The Philippines: Counter-Insurgency*, 12.
25. *Ibid.*, 12; and Kate McGeown, “Is This the End for Abu Sayyaf?” *BBC News*, January 23, 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/6290805.stm>.
26. Abuza, “The Philippines Chips Away,” 11; and “Philippine Troops Kill 3 Militants, Rescue Trader,” Associated Press, September 19, 2011, <http://news.yahoo.com/filipino-troops-kill-3-militants-rescue-trader-115752655.html>.
27. See Abigail Kwok and Alcuin Papa, “Abu Sayyaf Plotted Chapel Bombing -- Report,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, January 27, 2010, <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/breakingnews/nation/view/20101227-311213/Abu-Sayyaf-plotted-chapel-bombingreport>; and “Military Sees Advances vs Terror Group,” *ABS-CBN News*, February 3, 2010, <http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/nation/regions/03/02/10/military-sees-advances-vs-terror-group>.
28. World Bank figures from 2000 show 92 percent of Sulu residents live below the poverty line, as compared to a national average of 27 percent. See Kitt Collier, “7: The Philippines” in Greg Fealy and Virginia Hooker, *Voices of Islam: A Contemporary Sourcebook* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies) 2006.
29. Carter, *Islamic Terrorism in Southeast Asia*, 12.
30. Larry Niksch, *Abu Sayyaf: Target of Philippine-U.S. Anti-Terrorism Cooperation*, Congressional Research Service Report, <http://www.fas.org/irp/crs/RL31265.pdf>, 2. The Islamist insurgency that emerged in the wake of the cease-fire agreement was not known as the ‘MILF’ until 1984. For a comprehensive review of these revolutions, see Mike Fowler, “Philippine Counterinsurgency Strategy: Then and Now,” *Small Wars Journal*, January 18, 2011, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/651-fowler.pdf>.
31. Octavio A. Dinampo, “A Last Extended Interview with Janjalani,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, January 22, 2007, [http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/inquirerheadlines/nation/view/20070122-44761/A\\_last\\_extended\\_interview\\_with\\_Janjalani](http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/inquirerheadlines/nation/view/20070122-44761/A_last_extended_interview_with_Janjalani).
32. Banlaoi, “From Mere Banditry to Genuine Terrorism,” 251.
33. Abuza, “The Philippines Chips Away,” 11; and Rommel C. Banlaoi, “ASG Ideology,” *Declassified Information blog*, January 27, 2001, <http://declassifiedrommelbanlaoi.blogspot.com/2011/01/asg-ideology.html>.

34. See Eduardo F. Ugarte, “The Alliance System of the Abu Sayyaf, 1993–2000,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31, issue 2 (2008): 125–144; and Kit Collier, “‘A Carnival of Crime’: The Enigma of the Abu Sayyaf Group,” in Arnaud de Borchgrave, Thomas Sanderson, and Dave Gordon, *Conflict, Community, and Criminality in Southeast Asia and Australia: Assessments from the Field* (Washington, DC: CSIS, 2009).

35. Concepts of maximal and minimal alliances are taken from Thomas Kiefer’s 1960s’ research on ethnic Tausugs on the island of Jolo. Kiefer describes “minimal alliances” as kinship- and friendship-based alliances that form the basis of a community headman’s power. “Maximal alliances” are the “formation of dyadic friendship alliances between leaders of minimal alliances groups, and the pyramiding of these alliances into large fighting forces.” See Thomas M. Kiefer, “Institutionalized Friendship and Warfare Among the Tausug of Jolo,” in Peter G. Gowing and Robert D. McAmis, eds., *The Muslim Filipinos* (Manila: Solidaridad Publishing House, 1974), 238; Ugarte, “The Alliance System of the Abu Sayyaf”; and Kiefer “Modes of Social Action in Armed Combat: Affect, Tradition and Reason in Tausug Private Warfare,” *Man* 5, no. 4 (1970): 586–596.

36. The International Crisis Group defined ASG as “a network of networks, an alliance of smaller groups around individual charismatic leaders who compete and cooperate to maximize their reputation for violence.” This characterization will be used throughout the case study. See International Crisis Group, *The Philippines: Counter-Insurgency*, 7.

37. “Bin Laden’s Brother-in-law Killed,” *CNN*, January 21, 2007, <http://web.archive.org/web/20070202030010/http://www.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/meast/01/31/khalifa.death/index.html>; and Abuza, *Balik Terrorism*, 3.

38. Abuza, *Balik Terrorism*, 5; and Billy Hutchison, *Abu Sayyaf*, Air University Counterproliferation Center, Future Warfare Series No. 49, September 2009, 6. Bin Laden had also previously dispatched Khalifa to the Philippines to recruit fighters for the jihad in Afghanistan in 1988. See Zachary Abuza, “Funding Terrorism in Southeast Asia: The Financial Network of Al Qaeda and Jemmah Islamiyah,” *National Bureau of Research Analysis* 14, no. 5 (December 2003), [http://www.apgml.org/frameworks/docs/7/Abuza%202003\\_Dec\\_TF%20in%20SE%20Asia.pdf](http://www.apgml.org/frameworks/docs/7/Abuza%202003_Dec_TF%20in%20SE%20Asia.pdf), 26.

39. Dinampo, “A Last Extended Interview with Janjalani.”

40. Even the factions themselves suffered from a lack of leadership, as neither Khadaffy nor Robot exerted total control. In 2002, both the Basilan and Sulu factions were said to consist of at least 15 subdivided independent groups, and Khadaffy was involved in a struggle for control with a commander named Abu Sabaya. Accounts from Abu Sabaya’s abduction of two Americans in May 2001 highlight the inter-Basilan rivalry. When FBI officials delivered ransom money for two American hostages being ransomed by Sabaya, they handed over the money to Janjalani. However, no alliance existed between Sabaya and Janjalani, and Janjalani refused to give the ransom to Sabaya. One of the American hostages, Gracia Burnham, eventually escaped during a firefight between ASG and the AFP, although

her husband, Martin, was killed in the cross fire. See Banlaoi, “From Mere Banditry to Genuine Terrorism,” 252; and Raymond Bonner and Eric Scmitt, “Philippine Officials Detail the Trap, Set with U.S. Help, That Snared a Rebel Leader,” *New York Times*, September 22, 2002, <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/09/22/world/philippine-officials-detail-the-trap-set-with-us-help-that-snared-a-rebel-leader.html?src=pm>.

41. Abuza, “The Philippines Chips Away,” 11.

42. Kiefer, “Institutionalized Friendship.”

43. Abuza, “‘Abu Sayyaf Still Holds Philippines.’”

44. Bowden, “Jihadists in Paradise.”

45. Dinampo, “A Last Extended Interview with Janjalani.”

46. The main vehicle through which the MILF and the government coordinated counterterrorism efforts was the Ad Hoc Joint Action Group (AHJAG). The AHJAG facilitated intelligence sharing and kept the two sides from accidentally clashing. Although intermittently implemented, the AHJAG produced significant and tangible results. See International Crisis Group Report, *The Philippines: Counter-Insurgency*.

47. Abuza, “‘Abu Sayyaf Still Holds Philippines.’”

48. Abuza, “Umar Patek.”

49. Banlaoi, “The Sources of the Abu Sayyaf’s Resilience,” 18.

50. Abuza, “Umar Patek.”

51. Human Rights Watch, *Lives Destroyed*; and Regalado et al., “Valentine’s Day Bombing Spree.”

52. Abuza, *Balik Terrorism*, 10–11.

53. Joel Guinto “Abu Sayyaf Reduced to ‘Plain Bandits—Armed Forces Chief,” *Inquirer.net*, June 26, 2008.

54. Abuza, “The Philippines Chips Away,” 11; and Julie Alipala “Abu Sayyaf Demanded P5 Million Initial Ransom for Malaysian Hostage–Police,” *Inquirer Mindanao*, May 21, 2011, <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/7835/abu-sayyaf-demanded-p5-million-initial-ransom-for-malaysian-hostage-police>.

55.

56. Jim Michaels, “Philippines a model for counterinsurgency,” *USA Today*, March 31, 2011, [http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2011-03-30-secretwar30\\_ST\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2011-03-30-secretwar30_ST_N.htm).

57. For more information about the overlapping and intertwining social identities of Moros, and how Abu Sayyaf can serve as a catchall for lawless activity, see Charles O. Frake, “Abu Sayyaf: Displays of Violence and the Proliferation of Contested Identities among Muslim Philippines,” *American Anthropologist* 100, issue 1 (March 1998): 41–54; Kit Collier “A Carnival of Crime”; Steven Rogers, “Beyond the Abu Sayyaf: The Lessons of Failure in the Philippines,” *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 1 (January/February 2004): 15–20, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/59528/steven-rogers/beyond-the-abu-sayyaf>; and Ugarte, “Alliance System of Abu Sayyaf.”

58. As of May 2011, however, the group has not issued its usual claims of responsibility for the attacks. Arlyn del Cruz and Alcuin Papa, “Int’l terrorist Named Brains of EDSA Bus Blast,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, January 28, 2011, <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/inquirerheadlines/nation/view/20110128-317059/Intl-terrorist-named-brains-of-EDSA-bus-blast>; and Rommel

Banlaoi, “Makati City Bus Bombing: Which Group Could Have Done It?” *The Lobbyist*, February 2, 2011, <http://www.thelobbyist.biz/perspectives/open-secret/417-makati-city-bus-bombing-which-group-could-have-done-it>.

59. Florante S. Solmerin, “Five Sayyaf bandits fall,” *Manila Standard Today*, June 23, 2011, <http://www.manilastandardtoday.com/insideNation.htm?f=2011/june/23/nation3.isx&d=2011/june/23>; Florante S. Solmerin, “2 Marine soldiers beheaded,” *Manila Standard Today*, July 30, 2011; and “Philippine Troops Kill 3 Militants,” Associated Press, September 19, 2011.

60. Kiefer, “Institutionalized Friendship.”

61. Kato’s defection is potentially problematic, as he allegedly has access to outside funds. See International Crisis Group, *The Philippines: Back to the Table*, 8.

62. “Aquino Gov’t, MILF Rebels Revive Peace Talks,” *ABS-CBN News*, February 10, 2011, <http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/nation/02/10/11/aquino-govt-milf-rebels-revive-peace-talks>.

63. “Near enemy”-centric terrorism principally targets local “apostate” rulers of Muslim-majority countries, as opposed to “far enemy”-centric terrorism, which targets foreign, “imperial” regimes that facilitate the “apostate” rule. The debate stems from the early rise of Global Islamist ideology. “Near enemy”

advocates include Sayyid Qutb—“the forefather of Islamist terrorism”—and his disciple Muhammad Abdel Salam Faraj, who argued that “the overthrow of the ‘near enemy’ (the local ruler) was more important than fighting the ‘far enemy’ (the Israeli state) because if an infidel ruler [i.e., a corrupt ruler who did not govern according to Islamic law] captured Jerusalem, it would still be infidel and nothing would have changed.” See Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 37–38.

64. International Crisis Group, *The Philippines: Back to the Table, Warily, and Mindanao*, Asia Briefing No. 119, March 24, 2011, <http://www.observatori.org/>; and Chris Brummitt and Asif Shahzad, “Exclusive: Militant’s Road Ends in Pakistan,” *Yahoo! News*, April 15, 2011, [http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20110414/ap\\_on\\_re\\_as/as\\_pakistan\\_militant\\_end\\_of\\_the\\_road](http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20110414/ap_on_re_as/as_pakistan_militant_end_of_the_road).

65. Dona Z. Pazzibuganm “Jemaah Islamiyah, Abu Sayyaf now merged, says antiterror expert,” *Philippine Daily Enquirer*, September 29, 2011, <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/67043/jemaah-islamiyah-abu-sayyaf-now-merged-says-antiterror-expert>.

66. Jun Pasaylo, “Expert: No Abu Sayyaf, JI merger yet,” *Philippine Star*, September 29, 2011, <http://www.philstar.com/nation/article.aspx?publicationsubcategoryid=200&articleid=732196>.

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