

The Abu Sayyaf in the Archipelago: Discrediting Islam. Abetting USA Foreign Policy.

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Abstract

The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), a fundamentalist al-Qa'ida linked Muslim terrorist organisation, predominately domiciled in the three Philippine Provinces of the Sulu Archipelago, has been responsible for Killings and kidnappings in the name of honouring the greater cause of Islam. This paper examines the rise and gradual demise of the ASG to the stage where its existence at this time, is at the best, minimal in Basilan Province, and questionable in Sulu Province. The paper argues that the ASG has abandoned its original founder's¹ goal of establishing an independent Islamic State in the southern Philippines, opting now for *hiraba*² rather than *Jihad*³. This in turn allows the Philippine Arroyo Administration to pursue its domestic counterinsurgency policies in the predominately Muslim provinces of the Sulu Archipelago, by likening the actions of criminals who discredit Islam to the more acceptable liberation insurgency actions of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). Furthermore the criminal actions of the ASG have given legitimacy to the USA's military presence in the Sulu Archipelago, and legitimacy to their counterinsurgency foreign policies, which are, in part, an extension of their "*Global War on Terror*". The paper finds that for peace to return to the Sulu Archipelago it is important that the USA withdraw its forces from the Sulu Archipelago. As well the Arroyo Administration must allow the Philippine National Police, not the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), to pursue these criminals who purport to have commitments to a higher cause.

Introduction

The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) had its beginning in the early 1990s in the Sulu Archipelago Province of Basilan. Its original founder, Abdurajik Abubakar Janjalani studied Islamic theology in the 1980s in Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Libya before returning to the Southern Philippines in 1990. It is widely believed that Abdurajik Janjalani received financial backing from Osama Bin Laden in an endeavour to establish an independent Islamic State in Mindanao. The ASG under the leadership of Abdurajik Janjalani could lay some claims to adhering to the original doctrines of *jihad*, as outlined in the *Qur'an* (2.190). Broadly, it states that when participating in *jihad*, women,

¹ Abdurajak Abubakar Janjalani: Killed in 1998 by the AFP in Basilan.

² *Hiraba*: can be described as a criminal act, perpetrated by an individual or a group of people causing public disruption or killing/s.

³ *Jihad*: may be seen as having some degree of legitimacy. That is, it may be seen as "protecting of the faith".

children, the aged, and injured are to be respected. Furthermore the destroying of livestock and fields is not permitted, and to do so is to commit *hiraba*, a crime of which the 21st century ASG is now accused.

Methodology

This paper was researched using data drawn from both primary and secondary sources, including archival text analysis. The ASG is now being blamed by the Philippine Arroyo Administration and the USA Administration of George W. Bush for any kidnappings or atrocities that occur in the Southern Philippines and not attributed to the major Muslim separatist organisations, namely the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), or the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). With that in mind, careful interpretation and scrutiny of crimes attributed to the ASG was necessary when accessing media reports, and press releases, especially from the “official” voice of the Philippine Government: “The Office of the President”. Furthermore, because the ASG is included in the list of terrorist organisations that are targeted in the *Global War on Terror*, personal communication was neither possible, nor indeed was it sought. However personal communication was possible with key players in the peace process in the Southern Philippines. In fact at the time of writing of this paper communication was being conducted with a chief negotiator in a kidnapping in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) province of Basilan.

Literature Review

Possibly the most graphic first-hand account of a major kidnapping event, which was attributed to the ASG, was written in 2001. The title of the publication was, *Into the Mountain. Hostaged by the Abu Sayyaf* (Torres 2001). This publication traced the 45 day ordeal of 23 teachers and 30 students who were kidnapped by the ASG from the Claret School of Tumahubong, Basilan Province. Although the ordeal was traumatic for the hostages, Torres managed to show a “human” side to the then leader of the ASG, Khadafi

Janjalani. This was in sharp contrast to Janjalani's "lieutenant", Abu Sabaya, who was accused of raping some of the hostages (Torres 2001, p. 83).

Zachary Abuza, arguably one of the world's leading academic researchers on terrorism in Asia, in particular Southeast Asia, published in 2005 a chilling account of the ASG and its atrocities and goals titled, *Balik-terrorism: The Return of the Abu Sayyaf* (Abuza 2005). This report on the ASG was commissioned by the Strategic Studies Institute of the USA Army War College, and focused on crimes attributed to the ASG, and its affiliations. Abuza has published widely on terrorism in Southeast Asia, and has always given the same warnings of the threat to peace and stability that the ASG poses, notwithstanding that the ASG, as reported by many reliable sources is comprised of less than 200 operatives (International Crisis Group 2008; Meo 2007; Focus on the Global South 2007).

Steve Rogers, a journalist based in the Philippines, wrote an article in *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2004, titled *Beyond the Abu Sayyaf*. Rogers claimed that the ASG and other Muslim insurgency organisations have nothing to do with the "Global War on Terror", but is a manifestation of century-old grievances that 'neither soldiers nor money will end' (Rogers 2004, p. 1).

Dr. Peter Sales of the University of Wollongong, when presenting a paper at the 16th Biennial Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia, stated, in part, that the ASG was comprised of a outlaw band of thugs and criminals, and any claim to fighting for a higher cause was "nonsense" (Sales 2006, p. 14)

The above publications and articles paint a disturbing picture of the ASG, showing only the contemporary violence in which they have participated. None were prepared to concede that the ASG, may, at some time in the past, had a more acceptable or indeed worthwhile agenda. That is, a commitment to the cause of liberation insurgency: (antagonists fighting a ruling government/group that can be seen as outside occupiers).

The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) Formation

The ASG, originally called *Al-Harakatul al-Islamiya*, which in Arabic literally means “sword bearer of Islam”, was founded in the early 1990s, in the Sulu Archipelago Province of Basilan by a charismatic young Philippine “*Moro*”, Abdurajak Janjalani. Janjalani attended Islamic universities in Libya and Saudi Arabia in the 1980s is believed to have travelled to Pakistan and eventually Afghanistan to join the *Mujahideen* in fighting the Soviet Forces who had occupied Afghanistan. The irony of the *Mujahideen* struggle against the Soviets is that the United States Central Intelligence Agency, during the Regan and Carter Administrations actually militarily financed the Muslim *Mujahideen*. It is now a popular belief that during the time Janjalani was fighting with the *Mujahideen* he was befriended by the al-Qa’ida leader, Osama bin Laden. It is also now believed that bin Laden indirectly financed Janjalani in his *jihād* to establish an independent Islamic State in the Southern Philippines. Abuza (2003) claimed that there was a connection between the two, and this link was established in Afghanistan, a belief that Smith, (2005) writing in *Terrorism and Violence in Southeast Asia*, does not subscribe to; in fact Smith claimed the friendship was established in Peshawar, Pakistan. To add further to the confusion on the early life of Abdurajak Janjalani, Sales (2006), arguably one of Australia’s leading authorities on the ASG makes no mention of any connection between bin Laden and Janjalani in his paper on the ASG which he presented to the 16th Biennial Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia. Moreover, Sales claims that Janjalani only began his commitment to Islamic separatism in the southern Philippines when he was teaching at various *Madrassahs* in Mindanao (Sales 2006, p. 4).

When Abdurajak Janjalani established the ASG in the mid-1980s the goal of the ASG was, as mentioned, to establish an independent Islamic State in the southern Philippines. This goal was no different from the other two major Muslim paramilitary groups, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF); moreover many early members of the ASG were actually disillusioned MNLF members. (McKenna 1998; Rasul 2003; Vitag & Gloria 2000). The MILF was more “Islamised”

than the partially secular MNLF; however the MILF was still in its infancy and not as well organised, militarily, as the MNLF which had been “fighting” for over a decade. This may have been a contributing factor why the ASG did not attract any MILF members.

In the early 1990s the ASG was responsible for some charitable work in the form of establishing orphanages and schools, the funding for which, it is believed came from Middle East al-Qa’ida affiliates. In true insurgency tradition the idea was to secure the support of the local people through actions which on the surface appeared benevolent. However, the early goal of the ASG was no different to any other Jihadist Group. That is, the expansion of Islamic influence, and possibly self-determination at the expense of secular or Christian interests. Just as some secular or predominately Christian States see Islam as a threat, the ASG saw the predominately Christian (Catholic) Philippines Administration, and Western culture also, as the “enemy”. Having established who the “enemy” of Islam was, in the Southern Philippines, it then followed that *jihad* was justifiable. However the Qur’an has strict rules which must be adhered to in *jihad*, such as not harming women and children, old people, or those injured. To do any of these acts whilst fighting in *jihad* is to “transgress”. Qur’an (2.190) states “fight in the way of God against those who fight against you, but do not transgress. God does not love transgressor” (Quadrant 2007).

Crimes Transgressing the Rules of *Jihad*

Having stated that *jihad* has rules of war which must be adhered to, the ASG eventually lost any credibility by kidnapping for ransom and indiscriminate killings. The first large scale attack on civilians occurred in the town of Ipil in the province of Zamboanga del Sur in April 1995. This attack by members of the ASG saw 50 civilians taken hostage, of which 6 were killed. There was at the time, rumours claiming that the MILF or even the AFP may have been responsible for the attack. This has subsequently been disproved and all responsibility has now been attributed to the ASG. The next major crime attributed to the ASG was the kidnapping of 23 teachers and 30 students from the Claret School in

Tumahubong, Basilan Province, in the Sulu Archipelago. The hostages were held and made walk through the mountains of Basilan for 45 days, until eventually being rescued by members of the AFP. However a number of the hostages were killed in the rescue attempt.⁴ Even at that time, the Abu Sayyaf cause had some sympathy, albeit small. A number of the female hostaged teachers and students remarked how Khadafi Janjalani showed “kindness” to them; although they also made mention of the callous actions of Abu Solaiman. (Abu Solaiman eventually went on to be leader of the ASG after the death of Khadafi Janjalani).

Flushed with ransom money and arrogance, the ASG in May of the same year, (2000), went on to kidnap twenty-one tourists from a resort on Sipadan Island, Malaysia; eventually all hostages were either released or freed by members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). However, disturbing news of the treatment of some of the female hostages had been forthcoming. It was reported on BBC News in September 2000 that a number of the female hostages had been raped. The claim was made by Risto Vahanen, a hostage who had been held for more than 20 weeks before he was released. Following on from the Sipadan kidnappings, May 2001 saw more tourists kidnapped from another tourist resort. This time it was in Palawan Province in the Philippines. However, this kidnapping included 3 USA citizens one of whom, Guillermo Sobero, was beheaded, whilst the other two, Martin and Gracia Burnham, were kept prisoners until June 2002 when a rescue attempt by the AFP resulted in the death of Martin Burnham and the release of his wife Gracia Burnham. Coinciding with the terrorist attacks in the USA in September 2001 and the deaths of Sobero and Burnham the USA declared the ASG to be a terrorist organisation and as such was targeted in the so called *Global War on Terror*.

From 2001 to 2008 the following killings (not exhaustive) have been attributed to the ASG. The account of the killings listed below can be accessed in the web-sites of the

⁴ Refer to the very moving account of the hostage’s ordeal, as mentioned in the Literature Review, written by Jose Torres Jr. that is, *Into the Mountain: Hostaged by the Abu Sayyaf*, Quezon City, Claretian Publications, 2001.

major Philippine media outlets. Further details of these killings can be found in (Abuza 2005; & Reuters 2009).

In August 2002, six Filipino members of the religious “Jehovah Witness” were beheaded. March 2003 saw the bombing of the Davao International Airport in Mindanao, resulting in 21 deaths and the wounding of 148 persons. The ASG immediately claimed responsibility for the bombing; however, doubt still exists as to the authenticity of their claims of responsibility. It was first believed that the MNLF or the MILF were responsible. Informants of this author, with knowledge of local issues, have claimed that local citizens objecting to the construction of the new Davao International Airport may have indeed been responsible. Less than 12 months later in February 2004, Superferry 14 sank after an explosion which killed 116 people: the ASG claimed responsibility. On 21 April 2007, six construction workers were kidnapped, in Sulu Province, by ASG members headed by Albader Parad. After Sulu’s Governor, Benjamin Loong refused to pay a ransom, reportedly as much as seven million Philippine Pesos, the six hostages were decapitated. There were other smaller atrocities attributed to the ASG between 2004 and 2007 such as the February 2006 killing of six people in a farm in Patikul Municipality, Sulu Province. Furthermore the ASG have also committed atrocities against prisoners who have been captured in clashes with the AFP, further adding to their list of transgressions whilst supposedly engaging in *jihad*. In July 2007, in an encounter with the AFP in Basilan Province, 14 Philippine Marines were killed, including 10 of which were decapitated.

Condemnation

After the kidnappings and killings in Sipadan, Malaysia, the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) condemned the actions of the ASG. (Islam Online 29 September 2000). Similarly the actions of the ASG at Tumahubong, Basilan Province were also condemned by the OIC. Possibly the most poignant condemnation of terrorist acts committed by the ASG since 2000 must go to the Islamic scholar, Sheik Yusuf al-Qaradawi of Qatar. Sheik Yusuf al-Qaradawi is the head of the European Council for

Fatwa and Research (ECFR), and the President of the International Association of Muslim Scholars. The Sheik is also known for support of the Philippine Moros and their quest for self-determination. Sheik Yusuf al-Qaradawi is fearful that such actions taken by followers of the Islamic Religion only helped to strengthen the mistaken belief that Islam is the enemy of the West, and by association Christianity. The Sheik further believes that philosophical “education” of the faithful is necessary if it was to produce pious Muslims who are not only good to themselves, but tolerant of non-Muslims as well (Islam Online 25 September 2008).

USA Involvement

Following the terrorist events in the USA in September 2001, and the subsequent placing of the ASG on the enemy list in the Global War on Terror, the Philippine Arroyo Administration “invited” the Bush Administration to participate in military exercises in the Southern Philippines with the AFP. The first USA troops to join in exercises with the AFP did so in February 2002. Under the Philippine Constitution it is unlawful for foreign troops to have military bases in the Philippines. It is also unlawful to have foreign troops engaged in military operations against Philippine nationals, even if they are classified as terrorists or national insurgents. With that in mind, it is worth remembering that Zachary Abuza (2005) argued that the Communist Party of the Philippine’s paramilitary wing, the New Peoples Army (NPA), which numbers in the thousands, is a much greater threat to Philippine domestic security than is the ASG. It is also probably worth remembering that the NPA is not included in the “enemy list” in the Global War on Terror. However, the prime reason for USA military involvement in the Southern Philippines was, and still is, the existence of the ASG in that area. Although the ASG, which at the highest end of calculations numbers somewhere around 200, and offers no threat to USA domestic or foreign interests are nevertheless seen as USA enemy combatants. This may very well be because the ASG are believed to have ties to al- Qa’ida. Or, the ASG, in some arcane reasoning may be seen as convenient, insomuch that their presence justifies USA counterinsurgency policies and clandestine operations, in conjunction with Philippine domestic counterinsurgency operations in the southern Philippines.

Rewards

Because the ASG operatives were seen as “terrorists” or “outlaws” by the USA it was deemed necessary to offer rewards for their capture, or more desirable, their deaths. Furthermore, such was the enthusiasm to eliminate the leaders of the ASG in the Southern Philippines that the USA made these rewards quite substantial. These USA rewards were displayed as “wanted posters” showing a number of ASG operatives and were distributed in Mindanao. The reward offered for capture or death of these individuals was USD 5 million. A promise that was upheld a number of years later.

At the same that the USA was offering rewards for ASG operatives, the Philippine Administration of President Gloria Arroyo was also issuing wanted posters for the same operatives. However, the Philippine wanted posters offered no bounties. However, to return to the composition of the wanted posters. In the wanted posters issued by the USA Government five operatives, Sabaya, Sali, Janjalani, Solaiman, and Hapilon, had their images displayed. They were certainly members of the ASG. The wanted posters issued by the Philippine Government did not include Sabaya or indeed Solaiman; although it may very well be that they were issued post 21 June 2002, the date that Sabaya was killed by the AFP in Tilao, Sulu.

What is of interest in the Philippine wanted posters were images of a number of so called “terrorists” who were not members of the ASG. It is more than likely that the majority of these unnamed terrorists were nothing more than criminals and bandits who were taking advantage of the unrest in Sulu to pursue their criminal endeavours. This is a view which is held by many academics including Dr. Peter Sales of the Wollongong University and Herbert Docena, a research associate at Bankok’s, *“Focus on the Global South”*.

There are a couple points of interest in regard to the USA rewards. Khadafi Janjalani was killed in October 2006 (although the exact date may be a little later: DNA testing confirmed the identity but not the exact date of death). Abu Solaiman was killed in

January 2007 in an encounter with the AFP in Talipao, Sulu Province. Four citizens of Jolo, the capital of Sulu shared \$4 million US dollars in June of this year for the deaths of Janjalani and Solaiman. \$4 million US dollars is equivalent to approximately 490 million Philippine pesos. To put that into some perspective the average manual worker in Sulu earns about 200 pesos a day. Therefore this amount would translate into approximately 2½ million working day wages. One can only imagine how much poverty this would have eliminated in Sulu, the poorest Province in the Philippines had it been paid in wages to workers rather than to 4 individuals, who it understand have changed their names and no longer live in Sulu.

Demise, disintegration & theories

Since 2001 the ASG, or those criminals who the USA or the Arroyo Administration find it convenient to label as such, have gradually been eliminated or captured. The following (not exhaustive) have been killed in clashes with the AFP, or have disappeared. (Not necessarily in order of importance)

- Khadafi Janjalani: killed in late 2006, Jolo Island, Sulu Province. Age at death 31 years.
- Radilan (Radillan) Sahiron: reportedly captured in 2005 but subsequently this claim was rescinded by the Arroyo Government. There have been no reports of sightings of Sahiron for a number of years and he may very well be dead. He would have been 75 years old in 2007.
- Isnilon Hapilou: reportedly last seen July 2007 with MILF members in an encounter with Philippine Marines in Basilan Province. In this encounter 10 Philippine Marines were beheaded, an act usually attributed to the ASG. The reported sighting of Hapilou would be convenient insomuch that the ASG and not the MILF could be blamed for the beheadings. The United States Department of State has a reward of US\$5 million for the apprehension or conviction of Hapilou.
- Binang Sali: spiritual leader of the ASG. Killed by AFP in Patikul, Sulu Province, January 2007.

- Hamsiraji Sali: killed by AFP 08 April 2004, Basilan Province. US \$1 million was shared by three Filipino civilians on 25 October 2004.
- Abu Solaiman: killed by AFP Monday 15 January 2007, Talipao, Sulu Province.
- Abu Sabaya: killed by the AFP 21 June 2002, off the coast of Zamboanga del Norte. Sabaya was 40 years of age when he was killed.

In March 2006, Professor Herbert Docena, writing for Focus on the Global South, stated ‘Almost all of the Abu Sayyaf’s leaders have now been killed. The ones that remain are those leaders and factions that are more political than criminal and which reportedly objected to the kidnapping operations’. In contrast, in 2007 and 2008 hardly a month went by without the Philippine press reporting that a top “al-Qa’ida, linked” or “Jemaah Islamiah linked” Abu Sayyaf leader has been killed in the Southern Philippines. Which begs the question, is the ASG still an entity in its own right, or an extension of al-Qa’ida or Jemaah Islamiah? Even more confusing are the conflicting number of operatives the ASG had/has, and what they are actually capable of. For instance, contemplate the following statement/s from Docena in the same publication.

The supposed number of Abu Sayyaf members, and the accompanying pronouncements, tell the tale: In December 2001, the chief military commander in the South said there were only 80 members. A Department Defence report in late 2002, after the deployment of Americans, put the number at 250, down from 800 in 2001. A few months after, just as the government had announced the deployment of US troops to Sulu, the military chief of staff said a review of military documents showed that the membership is actually bigger, closer to 500. Near the end of the US deployment to Basilan, US Army Brig Gen Donald Wurster remarked, “[The Abu Sayyaf] are non-functional as an organization.” At this time, Presidential Spokesperson Ignacio Bunye was saying, “It is widely acknowledged that the training, advice and assistance we received in Basilan [from the US] were critical factors that led to the defeat of the Abu Sayyaf there.” A senior US diplomat was quoted by the New York Times as saying that the Abu Sayyaf is “practically null and void.” In May 2004, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, triumphantly said that the Abu Sayyaf “can no longer resuscitate itself under other guises or names.” As of June 2004, a government report states that the group counts only 508 members, down from 1,300 in 2001. In August 2005, just as certain military officials were blaming Abu Sayyaf members for a spate of bombings in the South, newly installed

Army chief Maj. Gen Hermogenes Esperon said, "We are on full offensive and the Abu Sayyaf are not likely to be able to launch any offensive that could inflict harm to our people." (Docena 2006)

It would appear that the Abu Sayyaf was totally miscalculated when it came to its strength or otherwise. Following on from the figures quoted by Docena, the BBC in 2003 put the number of Abu Sayyaf at around two dozen. In September 2006 the Manila Times reported that 6000 Philippine military personnel were in pursuit of the remaining 200 Abu Sayyaf members in Sulu. Seven months later, and after hundreds of Abu Sayyaf members were killed, the BBC news reported in April 2007 that the number of Abu Sayyaf terrorists in the Sulu Archipelago had dwindled to around 200. The contradiction in number of ASG members killed, and how many were/are remaining is confusing to say the least. Just who were the hundreds of people killed in this 7 month period? It would appear that practically every person killed in an encounter with the Philippine military in the Sulu Archipelago is either identified as an Abu Sayyaf member or an Abu Sayyaf sympathiser.

The ASG was a fearful terrorist organisation in the late 1990s and the first 4-5 years of the 21st century, and their influence and presence was felt in Malaysia, the Sulu Archipelago, and provinces in Mindanao especially Zamboanga. However, after their changing of strategies, which went from military operations against the AFP to kidnapping and killing of civilians, official support from the other major Muslim paramilitary groups in the Southern Philippines diminished. Nevertheless there were some military leaders in the AFP that believed that the MNLF was still supporting, in some way, the ASG. This was especially so in August 2007 when 26 members of the AFP were killed in ambushes on Jolo Island; the AFP immediately laid the blame on the ASG. However it was reported in the *Weekend Australian* on 11/12 August 2007 that the MNLF deputy chairman, Hatimil Hassan, claimed it was members of the MNLF and not the ASG that were responsible for the 26 deaths. To add further to the confusion, AFP military spokesman Eugene Batara claimed that the ASG lost 31 fighters however only one body was accounted for. Significantly, one ambush which involved an AFP truck convey resulted in the loss of M-16 rifles and other military equipment (ABC News 10 August 2007).

Successful raids and ambushes on well trained AFP soldiers could have only been carried out by well disciplined operatives acting under instructions from efficient officers or leaders, and the ASG in Sulu lacks both. As well it must be remembered that the ASG lost its two most experienced leaders, Janjalani and Solaiman less than 9 months before these successful operations. If this military action was not the ASG, and if indeed the MNLF had been responsible why does the AFP and more importantly the Arroyo Administration continues to blame the ASG for attacks against the AFP? The answer is twofold. Firstly, the fragile 1996 GRP/MNLF Peace Agreement is only just holding out, even though many of the recommendations have not been carried out. To admit that the MNLF was involved in large scale action against the AFP could signal a formal ending to the fragile peace treaty. Second, and more important, if the MNLF was blamed for military action against the AFP, USA military and civilian assistance could be in jeopardy. It is worth remembering that the ASG, and not the MNLF, is included in the list of terrorist organisations targeted by the Bush Administration in the Global War on Terror. Finally, it is convenient to continue the “myth” that the ASG is a viable enemy in the Southern Philippines, insomuch that USA aid will continue in that area, and the Arroyo Administration can claim that their domestic counterinsurgency policies are aimed at the ASG and not the MNLF, or indeed the MILF.

Conclusion

It has been shown that the ASG, which earlier in its history had a vision of creating a pure Islamic State, quickly succumbed to greed. Having seen that violence against “innocents” paid dividends, and the rules of *jihad* could be ignored, the ASG changed its original focus. And by changing focus it forfeited any chance it may have had for acceptance by the Islamic World at large. Also by embarking on such an agenda it was inevitable that the USA would be drawn into the broader conflict in the Southern Philippines. In conclusion, this paper has attempted to argue that the ASG, which at one time was a well disciplined organisation, is now only comprised of bandits and criminals

whose only agenda is greed and violence, and any claim they have to doing so in the name of a *Higher Authority* is pure fantasy and heresy.

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