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**STATISTICAL CHALLENGES IN PEACE AND NATIONAL SECURITY
STUDIES IN THE PHILIPPINES**

by

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STATISTICAL CHALLENGES IN PEACE RESEARCH AND NATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES IN THE PHILIPPINES

by

Rommel C. Banlaoi*

ABSTRACT

Statisticians working in the area of peace, armed conflict, defense, security, and counter-terrorism are faced with the formidable challenge of generating accurate and reliable statistical data that are essential for public policy making. There are exemplary practices abroad on how to overcome this challenge. In the United States, for example, the American Statistical Association has established a Section on Statistics in Defense and National Security to assist statisticians “in the advancement of knowledge in defense and national security by fostering wider and more effective use of statistical techniques, promoting the statistical profession and statistical best practices within the defense and national security governmental and affiliated organizations, encouraging professional review of statistical methods and statistical activities carried out in support of national security.” This paper aims to present these exemplary practices to provide lessons for Filipino statisticians on how to overcome some challenges in generating policy relevant statistics in peace and national security in the Philippines.

INTRODUCTION

Providing accurate and reliable statistical information on peace and national security related issues in the Philippines is a gigantic task not only to scholars and analysts who provide such information. It also a gargantuan challenge to public officials and policy makers who use the said information for peace building, conflict management and national security strategy formulation. The information gathering process requires not only skills in statistical methods. It also demands a nuanced comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted contexts and multiple players that enormously affect peace, conflict and national security situation in the country.

The use of statistics is indeed essential for policymaking and implementation as it presents complex data in numerical, tabular, graphic and diagrammatic forms that are seemingly easy and simple to comprehend by decision-makers and the public at large. But in the study of society confronted by complex peace issues, armed challenges and security threats, simplified numbers provided by statistics do not always count. Quantitative data offered by statistics have to be complimented by qualitative data generated through critical reflection, political discourse and social interpretation.

Robert Cox, a Canadian political scientist and international relations thinker, once said, “A theory is always for someone and for some purpose”.¹ It can also be said that

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¹Robert Cox, *Production, Power and World Order: Social Forces in the Making of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987).

statistics are always for someone and for some purpose. Who benefits from statistical information and who generates them is a serious query in a society distressed by internal armed conflicts, peace-building challenges and national security problems.

This paper identifies some statistical challenges in peace research and national security studies in the Philippines. The paper also presents some statistical approaches on how to overcome these challenges by learning available lessons from exemplary practices abroad. The paper concludes with the assertion that numbers presented in statistics do not always count. Statistical information, to be socially responsible, must be complimented by critical reflection, political discourse and social interpretation.

THE STATE OF STATISTICS ON PEACE RESEARCH AND NATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES IN THE PHILIPPINES

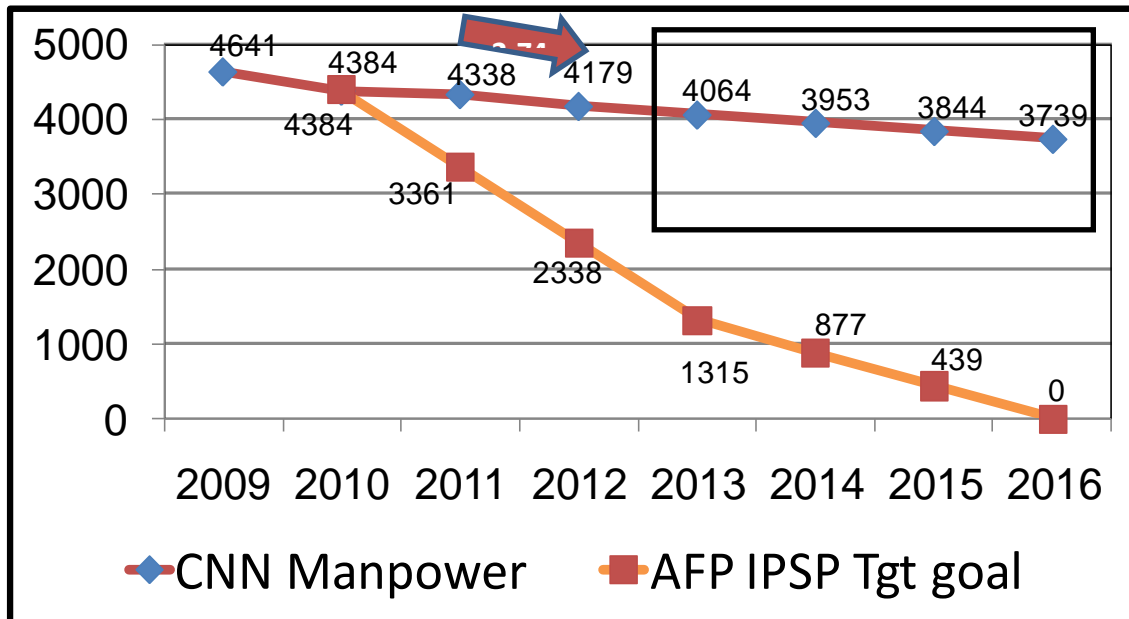
In the area of peace research and national security studies, statistical data are often generated by government sources. One official source that provides authoritative statistical information on the subject matter is the Internal Peace and Security Plan (IPSP) of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). Otherwise known as “The Oplan Bayanihan” publicly released in 2010, the document offers important official statistical information on internal peace and security threats confronting the Philippines, particularly on “Ideology-Based Armed Threat Groups” (IBATGs), “Terrorist Groups” (TGs), and “Auxiliary Threat Groups” (ATGs).

The IPSP regards the New People’s Army (NPA), the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and the “rogue elements” of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) as IBATGs. As of 2010, the IPSP states that the NPA has 5,000 fighters and firearms influencing around 2.4% of the total barangays nationwide.² The MILF, on the other hand, has 10,500 members covering 18% of the total 9,962 barangays in Mindanao. Finally, rouge MNLF has 650 members affecting 23 barangays in Zamboanga, Basilan and Sulu provinces. Based on these statistical information, the total number of IBATGs can be “16,150” armed individuals all over the country.

From other official statistical sources, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP)/National Democratic Front (NDF)/NPA, collectively known in the military as CNN, has a strength of 4,179 members in 2012. Through its current counter-insurgency efforts, the military aims to decrease the membership of CNN to 3,739 in 2016 as shown in Figure 1.

²General Headquarters of the AFP, *Internal Peace and Security Plan, Bayanihan* (Quezon City: Armed Forces of the Philippines Headquarters, 2010), pp. 10-11.

Figure 1



Source: Armed Forces of the Philippines, March 2013.

During the first semester of 2013, the Philippine Army estimated the armed strength of the NPA to be less than 4,000. But the Joint Foreign Chambers and Commerce in the Philippines has estimated the total armed strength of NPA to be at least 10,000 during the same year.³ The Philippine Institute for Peace, Violence and Terrorism Research (PIPVTR) has estimated the armed strength of NPA to be 18,000 as of May 2013 based on a 12% annual increase in their membership since 2010.⁴ Apparently, official statistical data are not consistent with non-government data on the strength of the NPA. These conflicting statistical reports have tremendous bearing on peace-building and conflict management.

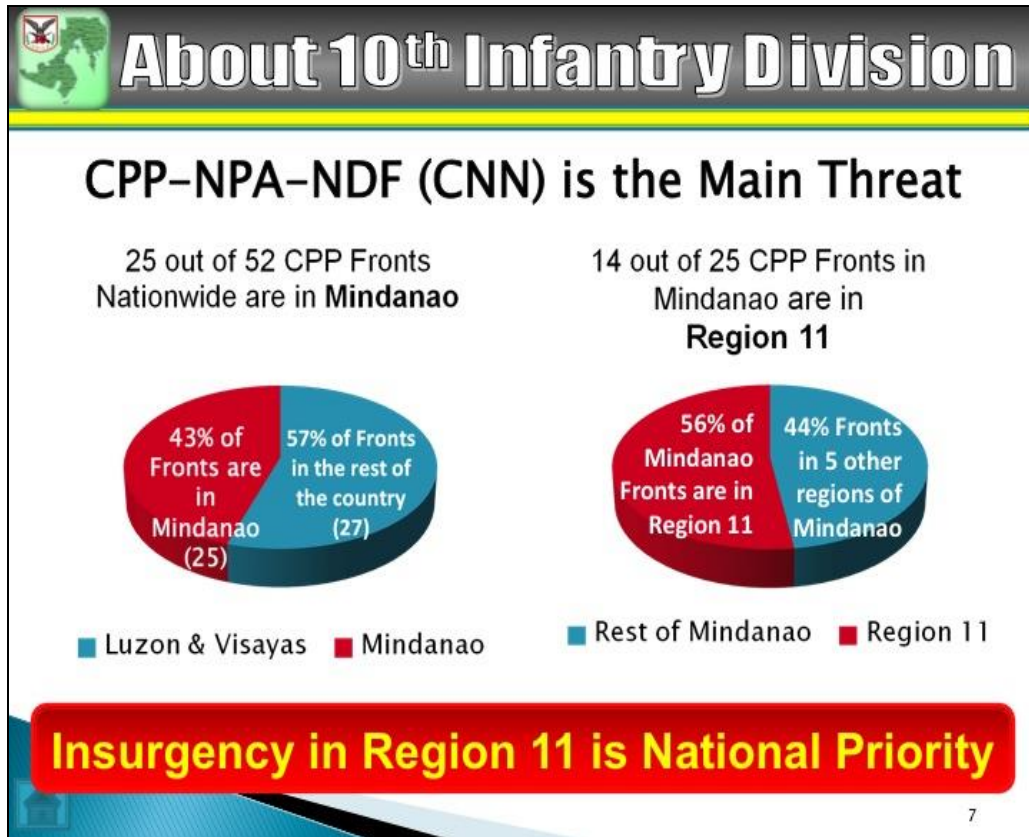
Based on government statistics, half of the total NPA strength is believed to be deployed in Mindanao, particularly in the Eastern side covering the provinces of Agusan del Sur, Agusan del Norte, Bukidon, Davao del Sur, Compostela Valley, Davao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, Surigao del Norte, and North Cotabato. The huge deployment of police and military troops to conflict-affected areas of Mindanao is based on this statistical information. As shown in Figure 2, the 10th Infantry Division of the Philippine Army said the Southern Mindanao has become the epicenter of NPA activities in the entire island of Mindanao with 14 out of 25 reported NPA guerrilla fronts located in three Davao provinces and Compostela Valley.⁵

³Joint Foreign Chambers and Commerce. "Security". *Arangkada Philippines 2010: A Business Perspective* (Makati City: Joint Foreign Chambers and Commerce, December 2010), pp. 353-367.

⁴Rodolfo B. Mendoza, Jr., *Current Situation and Latest Assessment of the Philippine Armed Communist Movement* (Presented during the public symposium entitled, "The Current State of Armed Communist Movement in the Philippines: Prospects for Peace and Implications for Tourism" held at the Asian Institute of Tourism on May 9, 2013).

⁵"Southern Mindanao is NPA's New Epicenter", *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (9 October 2011).

Figure 2



Source: The Philippine Army, June 2013

Past official statistical data from 1977 to 2008 indicated that the communist movement had its peak in 1986 with a membership of 25,000. Its membership started to decline in 1987 with a lowest membership recorded in 1995 with 6,020 followers. It rose to 11,930 members in 2011. In 2012, the CNN membership started to decline again until it reached a membership of 5,761 in 2008 (Figure 3).

Figure 3

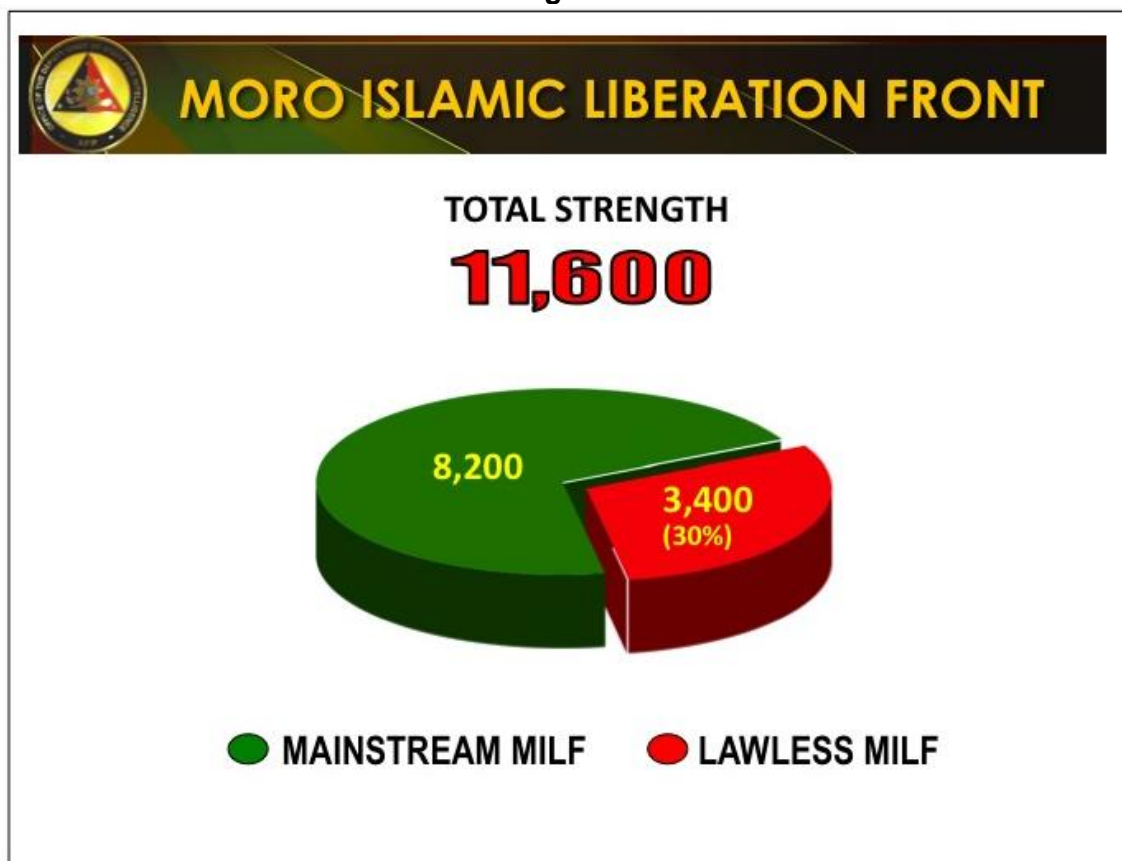


Source: Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, 2008.

On the MILF, past statistical data indicated that out of 11,600 members in 2010, 30% were considered lawless elements of the MILF (Figure 4). These lawless elements are not believed to be associated with the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) of Commander Ameril Umbra Kato who used to be the Commander of the 105th Base Command of the MILF. However, based on the MILF source, their armed strength can reach at least 100,000 combatants, not to mention their affected and influenced communities that are also armed. Those armed communities also provide moral and material support to the BIFF. Unfortunately, there has been no reliable data than provide an accurate picture of the number of armed communities in Mindanao. But the estimate on loose firearms in the Philippines gives an idea of the armed situation in the area. The PNP says that as of May 2013, the loose firearms in the country were around 400,000. But other sources find this estimate conservative arguing that loose firearms in the country can reach at least 1,000,000.⁶ The number of firearms displayed by the BIFF during their launching ceremony in 2010 provides an idea on the seriousness of the problem of loose firearms in Mindanao.

⁶ See Jennifer Santiago Oreta, et. al., *Gun Proliferation and Violence: Complicating Conflict Dynamics and Peace Building* (Quezon City: Ateneo De Manila University, Department of Political Science, 2012).

Figure 4



Source: Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, 2010.

The IPSP failed to cover the BIFF as the group was only founded in December 2010 when Kato officially left the MILF. On 26 February 2011, Kato renamed the BIFF as BIFM during its First General Assembly “owing to its increasing mass base.”⁷ Philippine law enforcement authorities have suspected the BIFF to be responsible for the recent series of bombings in Mindanao.

According to Abu Misrry Mama, a former MILF commander and now the BIFM Spokesperson, the movement has almost 10,000 mass membership based largely in Central Mindanao. The armed-wing of BIFM is the BIFF with 4,815 assorted arms in its local arsenal. But Mama admitted that the only armed individuals of the BIFM were only 1,500 distributed among the four military divisions of the BIFF. Each military division has around 2,000 followers but only 200-250 individuals are actually armed. Mama claims that almost all members of the families of BIFM followers have their personal arms, “so the armed potential of the BIFM should not be underestimated.”⁸

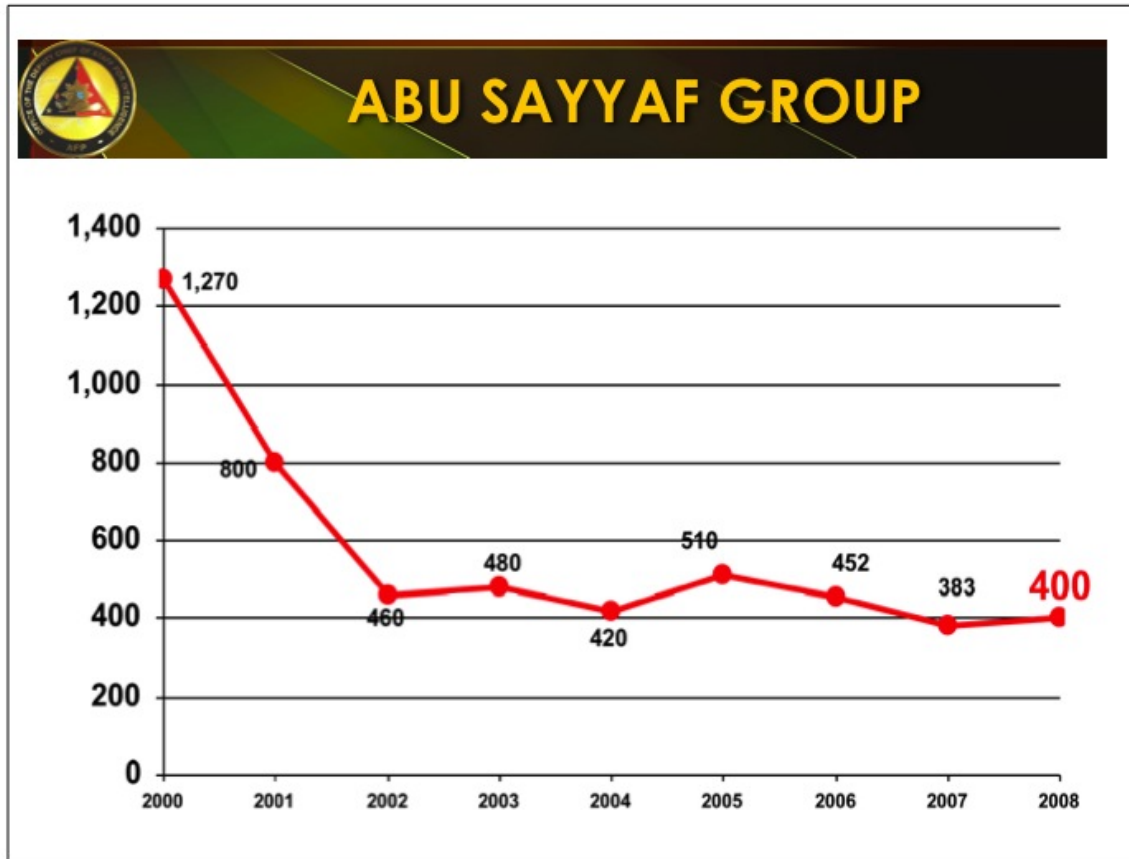
On TGs, the IPSP identifies the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI)/Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) under this category. The IPSP says that the ASG has 400 members and 300 firearms as of 2010. Statistical data

⁷Author’s interview with BIFM Spokesman Abu Missry Mama on 15 December 2011.

⁸Ibid.

obtained from 2000 to 2008 indicated that the ASG membership experienced a sharp decline from 1,270 followers in 2000 to 460 followers in 2002. Since then, ASG membership fluctuated until reached a membership of 400 in 2008 (Figure 5).

Figure 5



Source: Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, 2008.

During the first semester of 2013, the Philippine government says that the ASG membership has declined to around 300 armed followers. Thus, the ASG is only a very miniscule armed group. But the small number of the ASG members does not really count. The ASG threat looms large because it wields tremendous strength from its superb ability to network with countless armed groups in Mindanao engaged in various criminal, terrorist, insurgent and even partisan political activities. These armed groups serve as force multipliers of the ASG. Strictly speaking therefore, the armed strength of the ASG can be more than 300 armed followers. ASG's connection with JI also contributes to its current strength and resilience.

According to IPSP, JI has 28 fighters while FTOs have 50 followers who have connections with Al-Qaeda. In October 2012, the PNP reported that almost 30 foreign terrorist personalities are associated with JI. Armed groups associated with the ASG, MILF and even MNLF are reportedly coddling them.

But strictly speaking, it is very difficult to provide statistical information on JI elements operating in the Philippines as foreign terrorist personalities operating in the

country already refuse to be identified with JI. In fact, the use of the term JI in the Philippines has become a generic label to foreign nationals involved in various acts of terrorism in Mindanao. Most of these foreign nationals come from Indonesia, particularly from the province of Sulawesi. An Indonesian based jihadist facilitating terrorist activities in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Southern Philippines is leading this so-called "Sulawesi Extremist Group" (SEG).

The SEG currently serves as the main hub of what was previously known as the JI activities in Mindanao. SEG members and operatives are also associated with Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT), a new extremist group in Poso, Central Sulawesi.⁹ Philippine law enforcement authorities believe that through the SEG, the JAT can operate in Mindanao using its existing networks with the ASG, the MILF, the MNLF and other foreign Jihadists. JI is operating in the Philippines through a new shadowy group called Khilafa Islamiya, which is currently being suspected for its involvement in the series of bombings in Mindanao recently.

The Philippine military argues that JI operatives in the Philippines have limited capabilities to launch terrorist attack. But the threat they pose to internal peace and security "is their transfer of terrorist knowledge (i.e. assembly and use of improvised explosive devices) to local groups".¹⁰

On ATGs, the IPSP identifies the Pentagon Group (PG), the Al Khobar Group (AKG), and the Partisan Armed Groups (PAGs) under this category. Curiously, the IPSP fails to provide statistical data on the strength of these ATGs. Sources from the Philippine National Police (PNP) state that the PG has 200 members as of 2003. At present, PG has been decimated and contained.¹¹ The AKG has only 30 followers who have been engaged in extortion and bombing activities in Central Mindanao, particularly in cities of Tacurong, Kidapawan and General Santos. PNP estimates as of April 2013 say that PAGS nationwide are 86 (Figure 6).¹²

⁹International Crisis Group, "Indonesia: The Dark Side of Jama'ah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT)", *Asia Briefing*, No. 107 (6 July 2010).

¹⁰General Headquarters of the AFP, *Internal Peace and Security Plan, Bayanihan*, p. 12.

¹¹Soliman Santos, et, al. *Primed and Purposeful: Armed Groups and Human Security Efforts in the Philippines* (Geneva: Small Arms Survey, 2010), p. 393.

¹² Philippine National Police, *Statistics on Partisan Armed Groups* (31 April 2013).

Figure 6

Statistics on PAGs as of April 31, 2013				
PRO	TOTAL NR OF PAGs	With Identified members		With No Members Identified
		Nr of Groups	Nr of Members	Nr of Groups
1	4	4	26	
2	4	4	53	
3	5	5	49	
COR	3	3	34	
4A	7	6	54	1
4B	4	4	68	
5	8	8	111	
6	1	1	29	
7	2	2	11	
8	2	2	76	
12	4	4	46	
ARMM	42	2	1,211	40
GRAND TOTAL	86	45	1,778	41

NOTE: PROs 9, 10, 11, 13 and NCRPO no PAGs

Source: Philippine National Police, 31 April 2013.

What do all these statistical information tell us?

STATISTICAL CHALLENGES FOR PEACE RESEARCH AND NATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES

Based on official estimates, these statistical information tell us that the strength and firearms of threat groups in the Philippines are continuously declining. The significant decline is attributed to the “tireless” counter-measures implemented by government authorities. These information also give a sense of accomplishment for law enforcements for reducing the strengths and firearms of these threat groups through years of combined police and military efforts.

While the government was able to reduce the strength of threat groups in the country, these groups, however, have not yet disappeared. In fact, threat groups have become very resilient and are able to establish tactical alliances with each other. For example, government statistics do not tell that the NPAs in Mindanao have tactical alliance with Muslim rebels through the formation of a shadowy group called Moro Army

Committee (MAC).¹³ In fact, the NDF has a new front organization in Mindanao coming from a Muslim group called the Moro Resistance and Liberation Organization (MRLO) based in Maguindanao province. The MRLO is considered to be the 16th “allied organization” of the NDF operating in Mindanao.¹⁴ In other words, NPA shares its violent extremist activities with Muslim rebels in the Southern Philippines.

Thus, in terms of their membership, threat groups may have declined. But they have not disappeared because they have the ability to establish network with one another as “force multiplier”. Even among Muslim rebels, the ASG, JI, BIFF have existing networks that they use for joint or coordinated operations. The recent series of bombings in Mindanao are considered to be the result of joint and coordinated activities of these groups. The participation of a new shadowy group called Khilafa Islamiya in these series of bombings complicates the already complex situation in Mindanao. Existing government statistics have not provided adequate data to describe this complexity.

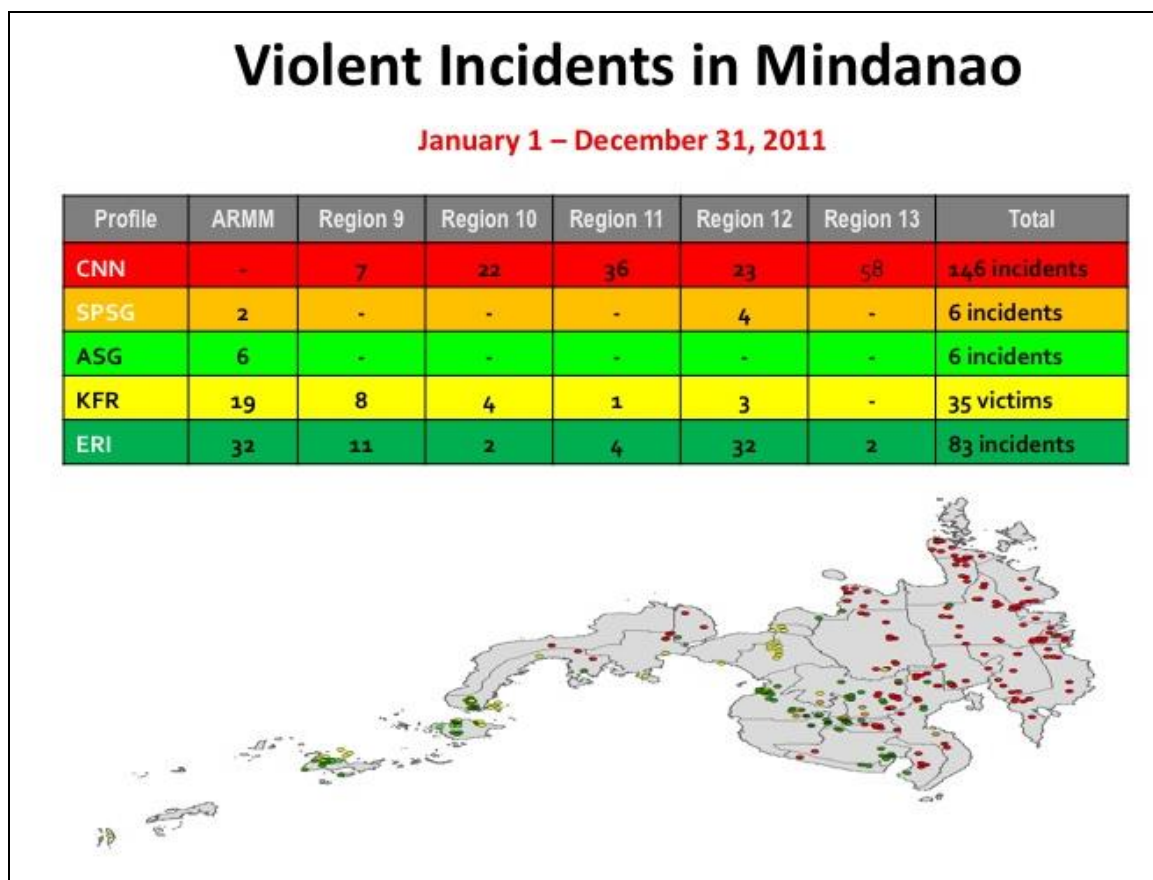
In other words, official statistical data on threat groups do not explain the situation that can give us a better understanding of the wide array of threats in the Philippines. These data are, strictly speaking, mere inventories of numbers that do not really offer explanatory sense of the overall threat environment in the country. These data do not also tell whether the reduction of strengths of these threat groups result in the reduction of threats in the conflict-affected areas.

Based the official record of violent incidents perpetuated by threat groups in Mindanao in 2011, the reduction of strengths of these threat groups during that year did not entail the reduction of violent incidents in their areas of operations (Figure 7). Correlating threat reduction with the reduction of strengths of threats groups is a major statistical challenge.

¹³The existence of a Moro Army Committee (MAC) was classified secret by the Philippine National Police. But the existence of MAC was first discussed in the public domain in January 2011 in the context of the Makati bus bombing on 25 January 2011. See Alcuin Papa, “Bus Attack: A Failure of Intelligence”, *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (30 January 2011).

¹⁴Ryan Rosauero, “Reds Forming Group to Recruit Moros”, *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (16 July 2005).

Figure 7
Violent Incident in Mindanao, Feb-Dec 2011








Source: Philippine National Police, 2012.

On peace and security, the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) published in its website relevant statistical information on how Philippine government authorities are able to promote and sustain internal stability and to uphold the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state (Figure 7). Statistics contain baseline data and targets necessary for accomplishing the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2011-2016. Chapter 9 of the PDP provides the goals, objectives and specific strategies of the Philippine government on how to promote peace and security in the country. This particular chapter upholds the view that “Peace and security shall be achieved in support to national development”.

But Figure 8 maybe viewed as just plain numbers that do not adequately describe peace and security situation in the country. While Figure 8 describes the number of crime incidents, crime solution efficiency, number of private armed groups and other threat groups, resolution rate of immigration fraud cases and resolution rate of deportation cases, numbers presented do not really tell whether the Philippines has become more peaceful and secure through various counter-measures of the government. Providing the necessary indicators to measure “peace” and “security” in the country is another statistical challenge.

Figure 8
Statistical Indicators on Peace and Security

PDP TARGET OUTCOME	PDP CRITICAL INDICATOR	BASELINE DATA	LATEST DATA		PDP TARGET	PROBABILITY OF ACHIEVING THE PDP TARGET	DATA SOURCE AGENCY
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)		(5)	(6)	(7)
Internal stability promoted and sustained	Number of crime incidents	296,059 2010	246,958 2011		207,241 2016		DILG-PNP
	Crime solution efficiency (in percent)	18.9 a/ 2010	29.0 2011		28.5 2016		DILG-PNP
	Number of private armed groups (PAGs) and other threat groups	86 2010	41 2011	41 2012	43 2016		DILG-PNP
Full capacity to uphold the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state assured	Resolution rate of immigration fraud cases	83.0 2010		50.6 2012	95.0 2016		DOJ-BI
	Resolution rate of deportation cases	41.2 a/ 2010	47.7 2011	74.3 2012	100.0 2016		DOJ-BI

Source: National Statistical Coordination Board, 2013.

In fact, many official statistical information on peace and security do not present statistical data on the collateral damages of government's counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism measures. Government statistics also fail to present the unintended negative consequences of these counter-measures on the ordinary lives of affected communities in conflict-affected areas, particularly in Muslim Mindanao. In fact, one study lamented that statistical information on peace and security issues in Mindanao failed to take "into explicit account the damages to the personal welfare of residents—human losses, destruction of their surroundings, pain and suffering, increased uncertainty, etc."¹⁵ If some statistical information are available, they are not adequate to really measure the cost of conflict in Mindanao.¹⁶

Thus far, the most authoritative source that provides statistical data that approximate the cost of conflict in Mindanao is the Philippine Human Development Report 2005. This Report states that in terms of Human Development Index (HDI), the Muslim-dominated and conflict-affected provinces of Maguindanao, Sulu, Lanao del Sur, Basilan and Tawi-Tawi have the least access to education, health, electricity,

¹⁵ Salvatore Schiavo-Campo and Mary Judd, "The Mindanao Conflict in the Philippines: Roots, Costs, and Potential Peace Dividend", *Social Development Papers: Conflict Prevention & Reconstruction*, Paper No. 24 (February 2005), p. 5.

¹⁶ Ibid.

transportation, and water and sanitation services.¹⁷ These provinces also have the highest number of armed encounters between the government and rebel forces. These conflict-affected provinces of Mindanao are also considered to be the poorest among the 77 Philippine provinces and are found to have the highest levels of dissatisfaction with government services.¹⁸

The Philippine Human Development Report 2012/2013 lists once again most of the conflict-affected areas of Mindanao in the bottom provinces in terms of HDI (See Figure 9). These provinces are the operational areas of threat groups. These provinces are also where police and military deployments are known to be heavy.

One very useful statistical information on peace and security is the Global Peace Index (GPI) published by the Institute for Economics and Peace. In 2012, the GPI regards the Philippines as among the Top 5 “Most Improved Countries” for the current government’s efforts to promote a negotiated political settlement with the MILF. In 2012, the Philippine government recorded no incident of armed skirmish with the MILF. In the survey conducted by the Pulse Asia between March and May 2012, 50% of Filipinos “Approve the Aquino Administration’s work in the area of promoting peace”. The Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) even published an Infographic to depict the “peace and security accomplishments” of the Aquino government (Figure 10).

¹⁷*Philippine Human Development Report 2005: Peace, Human Security and Human Development in the Philippines* (Manila: Human Development Network, 2005).

¹⁸The World Bank, *Social Assessment of Conflict-Affected Areas in Mindanao* (Manila: The World Bank Philippines Post Conflict Series Number 1, 2003), pp. 9-10.

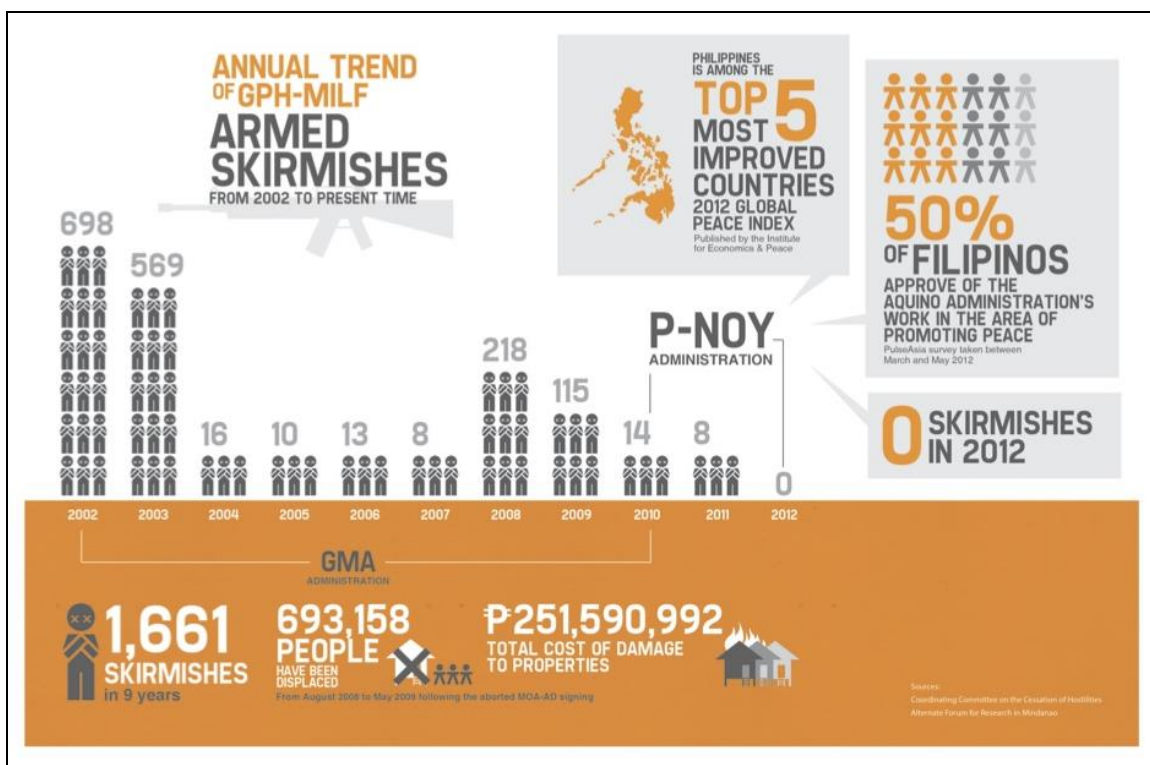
Figure 9
HDI Top and Botton Provinces
(2009)

HDI rank		Province	HDI	Life expectancy index	Education index	Income index
1997	2009					
Top provinces						
3	1	Benguet	0.849	0.867	0.988	0.714
1	2	Batanes	0.789	0.711	1.000	0.690
2	3	Rizal	0.734	0.836	0.917	0.516
5	4	Cavite	0.709	0.883	0.901	0.449
8	5	Bulacan	0.699	0.864	0.884	0.446
7	6	Bataan	0.698	0.795	0.900	0.476
4	7	Laguna	0.695	0.793	0.895	0.474
14	8	Nueva Vizcaya	0.678	0.750	0.881	0.472
11	9	Ilocos Norte	0.641	0.864	0.882	0.345
9	10	Pampanga	0.634	0.840	0.871	0.348
Bottom provinces						
66	70	Lanao del Sur	0.416	0.628	0.782	0.146
77	71	Masbate	0.406	0.745	0.754	0.119
43	72	Zamboanga del Norte	0.384	0.837	0.717	0.094
72	73	Sarangani	0.371	0.812	0.655	0.096
56	74	Davao Oriental	0.356	0.812	0.689	0.081
73	75	Agusan del Sur	0.354	0.725	0.765	0.080
22	76	Zamboanga Sibugay	0.353	0.780	0.775	0.073
36	77	Tawi-Tawi	0.310	0.532	0.716	0.078
69	78	Maguindanao	0.300	0.610	0.667	0.066
79	79	Sulu	0.266	0.582	0.601	0.054

Source: Philippine Human Development Report 2012/2013.

But based on Global Peace Index 2013, the Philippines has been placed on the list of “least peaceful countries” in Asia. The Global Peace Index 2013 ranked the Philippines in the 129th position out of 162 countries in terms of peacefulness. Though the Philippines was among the Top 5 “Most Improved Countries” in terms of peacefulness in 2012, the country remained one of the “least peaceful countries” in Asia based on 2013 Global Peace Index report. Explaining this issue needs no number. It needs qualitative reflection, political analysis and social interpretation.

Figure 10



Source: Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, 2013.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES: LESSONS LEARNED FROM EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

From the foregoing discussions, the use of peace and security statistics in the Philippines maybe considered to be problematic and contested because of the lack of commonly acceptable indicators to measure “peace” and “security” in the country. Though the NSCB has published statistics on peace, security, public order, safety and justice, those statistics failed to really describe if the Philippines became safer, more peaceful or more secure.

To “provide a forum for statisticians working in the areas of defense, military research, national security, homeland security, and counterterrorism,” the American Statistical Association (ASA) established a Section on Statistics on Defense and National Security.¹⁹ This Section aims to assist its members:

....in the advancement of knowledge in defense and national security by fostering wider and more effective use of statistical techniques, promoting the statistical profession and statistical best practices within the defense and national security governmental and affiliated organizations,

¹⁹ American Statistical Association, “Section on Statistics on Defense and National Security”, <http://www.amstat.org/sections/sdns/> <accessed on 15 August 2013>.

encouraging professional review of statistical methods and statistical activities carried out in support of national security, particularly statistical research that is not available for public review, and disseminating information and providing training opportunities for individuals involved in the production and use of defense and national security data and statistics.²⁰

The Philippines can learn important lessons from the exemplary practice of ASA. Though American statisticians have different statistical needs and objectives compared to Filipino statisticians, how American statisticians cooperate and exchange knowledge on statistical research in peace and security can provide useful ideas for Filipino statisticians working in these areas. The NSCB or the Philippine Statistical Association (PSA) can establish contact with ASA to learn lessons from them on the use of statistics in defense and security.

Aside from ASA, the National Institute of Statistical Sciences (NISS) based in North Carolina has also developed the Quantitative Methods in Defense and National Security (QMDNS).²¹ One important quantitative method that has tremendous bearing on the Philippine security situation is the use of Social Network Analysis (SNA) for National Security". The SNA is particularly developed for counter-insurgency (COIN) operations, to wit:

COIN operations require assessing the political and social architecture of the operational environment, from both friendly and enemy perspectives. SNA can help commanders understand how an insurgent organization operates. Insurgent networks often do not behave like normal social networks. However, SNA can help commanders determine what kind of social network an insurgent organization is. That knowledge helps commanders understand what the network looks like, how it is connected, and how to best defeat it.²²

The SNA is applicable in the examination of social networks of threat groups in the Philippines like the NPA, ASG, BIFF, JI, lawless MILF and rouge MNLF. The SNA can help provide quantitative and qualitative information on the types of connections of threat groups with their social, political and cultural communities in which they find themselves. In her book, *10 Days, Ten Years: From Bin Laden to Facebook*, Maria Ressa demonstrated the value of SNA in examining Al-Qaeda networks in the Philippines using complex network metrics and sociograms.²³ Filipino statisticians may find the use of SNA in developing a socially-relevant peace and security statistics. Figure 11 is an example of the use of SNA to describe the network of personalities responsible for the bombing of twin-towers on September 11, 2001.

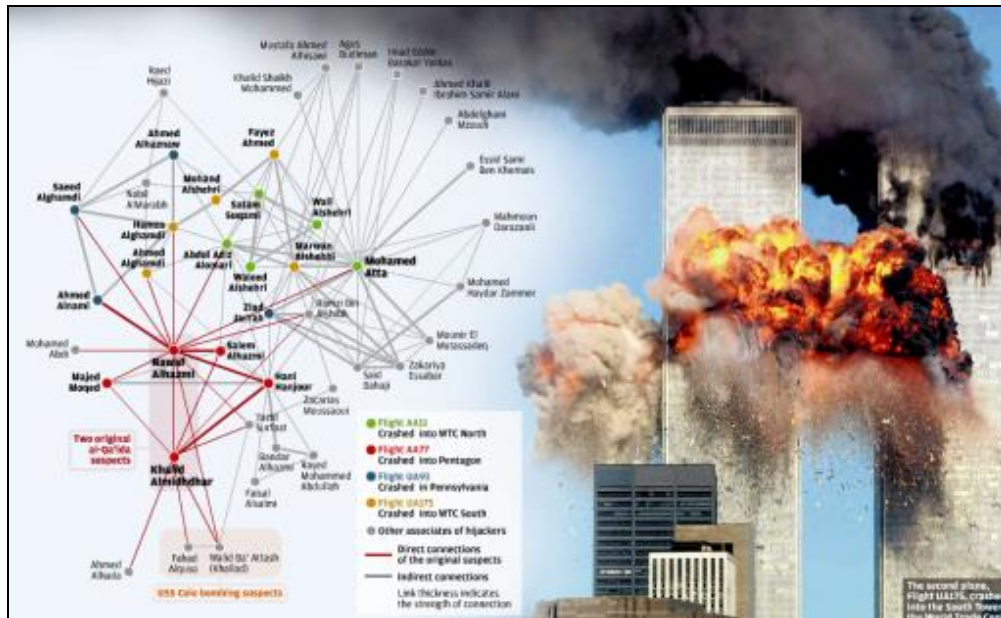
²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ National Institute of Statistical Sciences (NISS), "Quantitative Methods in Defense and National Security (QMDNS)", <http://www.niss.org/event/quantitative-methods-defense-and-national-security-qmdns> <accessed on 15 August 2013>.

²² Michael Last, "Social Network Analysis for National Security", <http://www.niss.org/sites/default/files/Social%20Network%20Analysis%20for%20National%20Security.ppt> <accessed on 12 August 2013>.

²³ Maria Ressa, *10 Days, Ten Years: From Bin Laden to Facebook* (Mandaluyong City: Anvil Publishing, Inc., 2012), pp. 130-140.

Figure 11
Social Network Analysis of 9/11 Bombers



Source: Inventor Spot at <http://f00.inventorspot.com/images/September%2011%20Social%20Network%20Analysis.png>

Another exemplary practice on the use of statistics in defense and security is the work of Scott Evans, Ken Kleinman, and Marcello Pagano of Harvard University. They used statistical methods to examine the threat of bioterrorism in the United States.²⁴ The authors use time-series analysis in biosurveillance. They argue that biological attacks in recent years “have motivated an increase in bioterrorism-related research, and this evolving research area is creating new challenges, responsibilities, and opportunities for statisticians.”²⁵

While there is no doubt that the use of statistics is essential for public policy because of the empirical evidences that statistics can present, there is a need to emphasize that statistics should be complimented by critical social and political interpretation that is normally done qualitatively rather than quantitatively. In fact, what we know in the empirical world is just an interpretation or a mirror of what we think we see.

Thus, statistical information need critical reflections and comprehensive interpretations to understand the context of the problem and the players involved in the situation because numbers do not always count. As one scholar underscores, “Although numbers are important in the treatment of qualitative data, qualitative researchers should

²⁴ Scott Evans, Ken Kleinman, and Marcello Pagano, “Statistics in Defense and National Security: Bioterrorism and Biosurveillance”, <http://www.amstat.org/sections/sdns/amstat4.pdf> <accessed on 12 August 2013>.

²⁵Ibid.

avoid the counting pitfalls of verbal counting, overcounting, misleading counting, and acontextual counting.”²⁶ Numbers can count if contextualized and humanized. Reflection and interpretation can contextualize and humanize the numbers presented in statistics

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Statistical data in peace and security in the Philippines is problematic and contested because they often present numbers that do not adequately measure the “state of peacefulness and security” in the country. Numbers available pertain largely on the strengths of threat groups and the number of firearms that these groups possess. The method on how authorities get these numbers can even be challenged. Even data on index and non-index crimes are open for constructive criticisms.

Though the NSCB publishes statistical data on peace and security, they are inadequate to really describe, if not explain, the “state of peacefulness and security” in the country. Though the NSCB has human development index and good governance index to measure government performance on these areas, there is no peace and security index that can measure government performance in these fields.

In the United States, there is a serious attempt to incorporate statistics in defense and national security. The Philippines can learn lessons from the exemplary practices in the US to overcome the statistical challenges in peace research and national security studies in the Philippines.

But there is a need to emphasize that numbers presented in statistics do not always count. Statistics should be complimented by critical social and political interpretation to contextualize and humanize the numbers. Statisticians involved in peace research and national security studies must also be informed by the need to pursue critical reflection, discourse and interpretation in order to formulate a socially responsible policy for peace-building, conflict resolution, and national security management.

²⁶M. Sandelowski, “Real Qualitative Researchers Do Not Count: The Use of Numbers in Qualitative Research”, *Res Nurs Health*, 2001 Jun;24(3):230-40.