

The Challenges in Joint Interagency Task Force operations in a *Predatory State*

by Mark D. Natale

The theory of a joint interagency task force (JIATF) operating in a predatory state or disparaging regime is perhaps the largest practical and contemporary challenge that military and interagency officers face in the field today. Utilizing the doctrinal terms and globalization theories studied thus far, this article attempts to examine the theory of a “predatory state” and apply it to the real-world case study of the Joint Special Operations Task Force–Philippines (JSOTF-P) operating from 2012 to 2015 under a corrupt regime. Trying to conduct humanitarian aid, counterterrorism, and foreign internal defense (FID) missions in a region affected by a predatory regime is extremely difficult. The political policies and international relations between the U.S. and the Philippines were affected by the tactical actions of troops on the ground. JSOTF-P’s actions were critical to maintaining a military partnership in order to fight Islamic extremists in the region, but the question remains, does a JIATF have the capability and capacity to succeed while operating under a predatory state?

The term “predatory state” or a “predatory regime” refers to the social model in which a host nation’s governmental apparatus takes advantage of the economic resources and social influence of the people in order to give them a marked advantage, at the expense of the populace. In his article “When is a State Predatory?” James A. Robinson, states that predatory behavior of an oppressive regime occurs:

when “large endowments of natural resources tends to induce elites to be predatory and would be associated empirically with poor policy”; when “having resource endowments with a lot of assets which are complementary to public investment (in the sense that they increase its marginal productivity), such as human capital, tends to induce good policy”; when “political regimes that are intrinsically unstable, perhaps because they are illegitimate, or because

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society is highly mobilized politically, will tend to have bad policy”; and, finally, when “large benefits from political power leads to bad policy in exactly these three sets of circumstances: when a country is, (1) heavily endowed with natural resources, (2) when it is poor in assets complementary to public investment and, (3) when regimes are intrinsically unstable.”¹

Utilizing Robinson’s criteria in forecasting where and when predatory states will emerge and overlaying that data with the regions in which the U.S. military will operate—future conflict zones and areas of instability—provides a clear correlation. The U.S. will be forced to operate in regions with a higher probability of predatory states and instability in future conflicts. This ethical concern of operating an interagency task force in a predatory regime is not new and will increase in future conflicts. J. Patrice McSherry, author of the book, *Predatory States: Operation Condor and Covert War in Latin America*, illustrates U.S. task force ethical concerns about enabling and cooperating with the morally corrupt elements of an oppressive regime. In McSherry’s example, military and government forces of Chile abducted university students and conducted tortuous interrogation for over 30 days in 1974. The predatory government, assisted by the U.S. military, targeted social activists and university scholars for anti-regime and subversive actions.² This partner task force was called “Operation Condor,” and the U.S. was a key element in supporting the regime: “Acting as an unofficial partner, or secret sponsor, of the Condor system, the United States greatly expanded Condor’s lethal reach via the continental communications system.”³

Operation Condor is an example of how U.S. interests can be supported by a regime in a predatory state. This task force was able to operate in this oppressive regime because the administration in power was key to U.S. democratic influence in the region. As a result,

the U.S. ignored the human rights violations of the citizens in Chile because it was divergent from the American national interests. Upsetting this balance of power in Chile would have opened the country up to communist influence, potentially destabilizing South America. In the previous example, the ethical dilemma of the U.S. taking advantage of the situation by supporting a predatory regime for national goals in South America circumvents the legitimacy of the task force in the international community. James Galbraith examines this idea of predatory states being leveraged to enact U.S. foreign

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policy on behalf of the national interests. In previous examples, the use of military power was critical to influence and control; however, there is a shift to adopt economic, diplomatic, and social tools to allow an interagency task force to succeed in an oppressed environment. Galbraith writes in the *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* that changing from using unilateral military power to collective security authority is key to success in contemporary interagency endeavors. Galbraith aims at replacing the current global economic system “based on military power, financed through the dollar system” with “a system of collective international security, domestic full employment, infrastructure renewal, and technological leadership.”⁴

To further define the predatory state, Galbraith explains that the entire structure and apparatus of the system is designed to give advantage to the regime over the citizens. “The predator state is a system where entire sectors have been built up to feast upon public systems

built originally for public purposes.”⁵⁵ These “built up systems” that the regime uses to control the population and profit from external assistance from foreign governments is a tool that masks the true intention of the regime and allows for ambiguity in rendering aid. When an interagency task force or U.S. government group aligns with the regime, the citizenry of that country is already at a disadvantage because the U.S. national objectives are more closely convergent with the host nation regime and not necessarily with its citizens. This alignment also means that

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trying to engage in humanitarian aid or stability operations will be difficult for joint staff and commanders to plan for, because the regime will benefit from the U.S. involvement, and the end state of the mission may never be reached. In his work, *The Philippines: Predatory Regime, Growing Authoritarian Features*, Nathan G. Quimpo argues that the violence, political corruption, and government fraud used against the average citizen has left the Filipino people cynical and leery of outside involvement and critical of the bureaucracy of their government.

Unequivocally, “predatory states” are on the rise; therefore, U.S. involvement in these areas will become more common to secure its influence. This is exactly what occurred in the Philippines. Historically, the U.S. had strategic objectives in the Asia-Pacific Theater; therefore, gaining influence, in the Philippines was critical. Examples of this struggle to exert influence can be traced prior to the Filipino-American war and continue to the present day. Quimpo argues that U.S. foreign policy with the Philippines not only satisfied the U.S. government’s objectives in Asia, but

also enabled the regime to stay entrenched in its political power system and become an economic powerhouse in the region. “The institutional innovations during the American period brought about the transformation of the Filipino elite into a powerful political-economic elite.”⁵⁶ This is not the only historical context of the U.S. using JIATFs to bridge the gap between regime politics and U.S. government objectives. Similar examples can be seen in Afghanistan, South America, and Africa, such as the Joint Interagency Task Force-West, which focused on narcoterrorism and drug trade interdiction and the use of Joint Interagency Task Force-South in providing humanitarian aid to citizens of predatory and unstable regions.

These examples illustrate the point that conducting operations in a JIATF can simultaneously achieve U.S. national goals while aiding civilians; however, the risk of enabling predatory regimes remains a risk to the ethical legitimacy of the task force. James McLay of the U.S. Naval War College, states that JIATFs “represent a contemporary, whole-of-government approach to national issues by aligning authorities and capabilities of disparate agencies under one operational commander with a focused mission...”⁵⁷ This unique trans-agency and military organization allows commanders to utilize assets and capabilities not easily accessible within the Department of Defense (DoD) and rely on other national assets. This whole of government approach creates an economic use of resources against a certain problem set. What happens, however, when that “problem set” is either created or enforced by the very regime the JIATF sets out to support? What ethical and political dilemmas exist? For example, should the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) share dossiers of known political activists with a regime that will undoubtedly use that information to unlawfully detain these individuals? Should the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) push a media campaign

that overlooks the human rights violations perpetrated by a political candidate that is pro-U.S.? Should U.S. Special Forces, as part of a JSOTF, partner with militaries that utilize child soldiers in order to combat terrorism that threatens U.S. interests in the region? These are some of the ethical dilemmas and issues that face task forces operating in a predatory state.

The scale or continuum of acceptable regime oppression is dictated by the social norms and customs of the international community, compared to the regime and the domain in which the oppression occurs. If a classical definition of a “predatory state” similar to the theory that James K. Galbraith puts forward in his book, *The Predator State: How Conservatives Abandoned The Free Market and Why Liberals Should Too*, is used, it can be determined that a state utilizing subtle predatory mechanisms to oppress its citizens is far more acceptable in supporting than a regime that overtly and violently oppresses its people. The U.S. can support a JIATF working with a country that has moderate levels of individual freedoms and is considered relatively free but has economic systems in place that prey on lower class systems and take advantage of the common wealth of the people. In this case, the people are not being violently oppressed, but the mere infrastructure of their economic system inherently oppresses people. In this instance, the U.S. would technically be engaged with a predatory state; however, the national strategic objectives outweigh the economic oppression of the regime. An example of an acceptable predatory state that has questionable economic policies, but a higher rating in human rights is the Czech Republic.

The Czech Republic has an economic system that relies heavily on exports and takes advantage of service industries, which some could argue exploit their lower-class citizens, and some of its socialist models for welfare and wealth are based on an oppressive, former soviet model.⁸ However, on the social freedom scale, the Czech

Republic is ranked very high in Europe and the world. The Freedom House group developed a points system, where the higher the number, the more often those traits were present in the government/society. Freedom House rates the Czech Republic in the top 10 percent of free nations in Europe. Czech Republic was graded as a 38 out of 40 for political rights application, 12 out of 12 for election process integrity, 15 out of 16 for political inclusion, and a 57 out of 60 for the application of civil liberties.⁹ Although the Czech Republic’s economic model is based on exploiting resources, exports, and labor services, technically being classified as a predatory economic state, this is overcome by the extremely high rankings related to social freedoms. This is why U.S. JIATFs can partner with a semi-predatory state in order to achieve U.S. objectives in Europe and at the Russian border, because the JIATF can do so without fear that the Czech government will unfairly oppress its people. This is a more politically acceptable option than partnering with a regime that openly participates in human rights violations and genocides.

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Galbraith’s definition that mainly focuses on economic oppression is not the only criteria in determining if a regime is predatory. In fact, these additional criteria have more relevance and limit a JIATF more than other considerations. A substantial challenge for a JIATF or JSOTF is partnering with an element of the regime (military, police, or even a warlord) that regularly engages in human rights violations in order to accomplish a specific objective. In the Philippines, U.S. forces from JSOTF-P were

responsible for providing support and training to the Filipino military in order to defeat the Moro-Islamic Liberation Front, Abu Sayyaf Group, and Jemaah Islamiyah who inhabited the island. This seemed straight forward, until some of the training provided by U.S. Special Operations Forces to the Filipino military was used against different targets and in a different manner than what was expected by JSOTF-P. Filipino Army units that were engaged in the counterterrorism fight in the southern archipelago against Moro-Islamic Liberation Front insurgents soon moved to start a counter-narcotic fight in the urban areas of Manila against the citizens of the Philippines, under the direction of President Rodrigo Duterte.

This political stress of supporting a predatory regime, specifically the Duterte administration, forced the JSOTF-P to reevaluate its role in the region and limit the training of special purpose forces by U.S. Special Forces. In this example, the predatory actions of the regime resulted in acquiring training and support from the U.S. under the guise of combating Islamic terrorism

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and resulted in the Filipino military using the training it acquired to combat its citizens in Duterte's war on drugs. JSOTF-P's mission of combating terrorism in the Philippines joint operations area on behalf of the U.S. government to secure its interests in the region was circumvented by the Filipino military's use of U.S.-provided training in a manner inconsistent with the ethical norms of the U.S. military. This strained the task force and put military leaders at odds with their agency counterparts. Members of the FBI, Central Intelligence Agency, State Department, and USAID all had different

concerns in the interactions of the U.S. military with its Filipino counterparts.

The Philippines is not just a predatory state when it comes to the application of the military and police forces against its citizenry, it is also a predatory system established by the powerful legislators in the political sphere. In 2008, Nathan Quimpo wrote a political commentary piece, "Philippines: The Return of the Predatory Regime." In the commentary, Quimpo describes how the return of the political elite ensured that the Philippines remain a predatory state because of the control of the government by a few, powerful, corrupt officials:

It is unlikely that the Philippines in the near future will significantly turn away from predatory or clientelist politics. Predatory and clientelist elements are much too strong and the forces for democratic reform are much too weak. The patrimonialistic parties of the elite control the upper house of Congress fully and hold an overwhelming majority in the lower house.

Quimpo illustrates the point that the political reforms required to turn the Philippines into a genuine democracy are far too weak to be effective. As long as the U.S. government, through organizations like JSOTF-P, supports the incumbent regime, the perception of the average citizen will not change. The perception is that the U.S. will support the regime over the people because of the strategic goals the U.S. has in the region. Quimpo continues:

The predatory regime has made a comeback in present-day Philippines. Over the past decade, and especially over the past few years, the levels of political corruption, fraud and violence have reached such alarming levels that many Filipinos have grown despondent, even cynical, about their country's political system.¹⁰

The question remains, how does JSOTF-P

respond? Does the task force remove support to the military and regime in total? Can the Special Forces community tailor its training to reduce the chances for misuse? Can anything be done without jeopardizing the U.S. national strategic objectives in the Philippines and Asia? These were the concerns that JSOTF-P faced, which eventually lead to a Phase V draw down of U.S. forces in 2015. JSOTF-P became an issue for President Duterte's administration, and he called for the potential removal of U.S. forces from the region. Duterte was interested in aligning with other military powers in Asia-Pacific that were able to provide support similar to that of JSOTF-P, without the regulations or restrictions. Powers like China and Russia were seen as possible replacements for JSOTF-P. The U.S. PACOM commander rebutted these claims that JSOTF-P fell victim to political pressure by saying that the closure of JSOTF-P was nested in the Philippine strategy:

We're not going to walk away from our support of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, but we'd like to broaden it in a way that is consistent with the way forward that the Armed Forces of the Philippines sees it...we don't necessarily need a 600-man train-and-assist mission down there to try to teach them how to do something that they now know how to do.¹¹

As Duterte took power and reevaluated the U.S.-Philippine military agreements, the training mission of JSOTF-P tapered off and quietly ended; however, the equipping phase of the Task Force continued:

According to the U.S. Embassy in Manila, 300 M4 carbines, 200 Glock 21 pistols, 4 M134D Gatling-style machine guns, and 100 M203 grenade launchers were delivered May 18–22 to Clark Air Base, while 25 new Combat Rubber Raiding Craft (CRRC) with outboard motors were delivered on May 30 to PMC (Philippine Marine Corps)

Headquarters. The deliveries were just the latest in a series that have continued even after Duterte took office. In January, JUSMAG (Joint United States Military Assistance Group) representatives delivered new military equipment to the Philippine Army and Marine Corps, including over 400 M203 grenade launchers, 85 M40A5 sniper rifles, and a RQ-11B Raven unmanned aerial vehicle system consisting of three drones for exclusive use and ownership by the Armed Forces of the Philippines.¹²

Does an interagency task force, operating under the oppressive Duterte regime, bear some moral or ethical responsibility on how the government of the Philippines employs this training and weapons?

These military systems and weapons were delivered to the Republic of the Philippines even when political negotiations began for the withdrawal and removal of JSOTF-P and the U.S. military contingent from Zamboanga City. Filipino military units misusing training from U.S. Special Forces was now a minor concern compared to the possible influx of U.S. military-grade weapons that flooded the region. Does an interagency task force, operating under the oppressive Duterte regime, bear some moral or ethical responsibility on how the government of the Philippines employs this training and weapons? This concern is especially important when there is a history of questionable actions taken by the regime. U.S. government regulation and legislation were created to control this misuse of military assistance by predatory states.

The Leahy Laws are regulations that prohibit the DoD from providing military assistance to foreign forces that violate human rights or conduct gross violations of the Geneva

Convention.¹³ This restriction of military training, aid, and equipment flowing from the U.S. to predatory states limited the actions JSOTF-P could take during the Phase V drawdown and transition. The Philippine government and military using the training and equipment meant to combat terrorism for drug enforcement and policing was interpreted as a violation of the Leahy Laws. This affected JSOTF-P by limiting training and equipment for Filipino ground forces; however, other parts of the military and government were unaffected, especially components of the Philippine naval force and air force. Daniel Mahanty demonstrates that the Leahy Law provides a guideline for U.S. forces in dealing with predatory states; however, he concedes that even in the cases of known Leahy Law violations, it does not fully end all assistance: “Little prevents the U.S. from legally providing massive amounts of military assistance to countries with highly problematic records of conduct like Egypt and the Philippines.”¹⁴ There is an apparatus that vets these units; however, JSOTF-P was unable to keep arms and training that was already supplied from being misused by the regime.

This shift from counterterrorism to police enforcement concerned the interagency partners of JSOTF-P...

Mahanty also references the “extrajudicial killings by police in the Philippines”¹⁵ as a part of the Duterte regime’s war on drugs as a reason for the U.S. to modify the training mission of JSOTF-P. This shift from counterterrorism to police enforcement concerned the interagency partners of JSOTF-P, specifically the FBI and State Department elements within the task force. The Phase V transition of U.S. troops was preplanned since 2010; however, this shift in mission focus and several other events

generated a need for an earlier withdrawal. Two events—the siege of Zamboanga and 2013 typhoon—specifically affected the training and equipping mission of JSOTF-P. A report from the RAND Corporation cited these two events as the impetus for the transition of JSOTF-P being delayed:

In 2013, two major, unexpected events slowed progress toward the transition. The Zamboanga siege in September involved an insurgent assault and a prolonged hostage crisis in one of the Philippines’ largest and densest urban littoral environments. Two months later, a devastating typhoon hit the southern Philippines and pressed the small JSOTF-P into emergency relief assistance activities as the only nearby U.S. force with desperately needed knowledge, medical and CA (Civil Affairs) expertise, equipment, and transport.¹⁶

During this time, the authorities granted to JSOTF-P and the cooperation agreements made with the Philippine government and U.S. Embassy Chief of Mission were in a state of change and instability. The invasion of Zamboanga City by guerrilla fighters and Muslim extremists gave JSOTF-P and interagency partners an immediate tactical focus beyond training Filipino forces in FID and changed the policy negotiations from concerns about the misuse of U.S. training to kinetic military operations.

Again, the ethical considerations and dilemma for JSOTF-P was how should a task force respond? Multiple news sources and watch groups, including Human Rights Watch, reported that human rights violations had been documented as occurring on both sides. Multiple witnesses during the Zamboanga siege said that the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and Misuari forces had taken hostages and used them as human shields: “The Philippine government claimed that the Moro National Liberation

Front were using civilian hostages as human shields. MNLF commanders claimed that they were using the civilians as guides, as they are not familiar of the area.”¹⁷ JSOTF-P was unable to independently verify if civilians had been targeted by the extremists. Furthermore, counter accusations from the fighters had claimed that the Armed Forces of the Philippines and police had engaged in human rights abuses, including beatings of suspects, burning of homes, and summary executions. These claims appeared to come from multiple sources and were partially verified, which meant the U.S. had trained and supported a regime that was fighting a strong domestic counterinsurgency while impeding the rights of its citizens. JSOTF-P had few options and maintained the role of advising, assisting, reporting, and defensive operations to protect American service members in the Philippine joint operating area.

The argument could be made that the Philippines had been acting as a predatory state in this instance as a mechanism of survival. A violent insurgency had crept from the southern islands to the urban center of Manila, and many of its citizens were pushing for a stronger military presence in order to combat the revolt. Military and police units were corrupt, inefficient, and poorly armed and trained. JSOTF-P’s training mission helped immensely, even with the restrictions and limitations placed on it from the Leahy Laws, the U.S. ambassador, and interagency political boundaries. The RAND Corporation released in its report, “U.S. Special Operations Forces in the Philippines, 2001–2014,” that even with these limitations and restrictions, the greatest victory for JSOTF-P was the success of the interagency cooperation efforts made over a 14-year period, spanning dozens of U.S., foreign military, civilian organizations, and regional partners. The report cited that these mixed groups, working in concert for a unified effort, was the single greatest achievement in civil-military relations in the Asia-Pacific area

of responsibility. According to the report:

JSOTF-P achieved a high level of coordination with the U.S. embassy country team over the 14 years of OEF-P. U.S. SOF and civilian officials disagreed at times over particular issues, but the strong leadership of four successive career ambassadors forged an effective civil–military partnership in this endeavor.

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The report further praises tools and working groups inside JSOTF-P that were able to leverage influence outside the Philippine regime in order to partner with civilian organizations that were neutral and could ensure a fair application of aid. This was a critical component of effectively operating in a predatory environment. The report further states that:

In addition, the creation of structures such as the Mindanao Working Group provided enduring mechanisms for achieving whole-of-government synergy... JSOTF-P’s relationship with USAID grew and strengthened over the years. The placement of a JSOTF-P LNO [liaison officer] at USAID’s Manila office and a USAID LNO at JSOTF-P permitted increased collaboration in later years to reduce redundancy, increase effectiveness, and provide USAID a secure location in Mindanao.¹⁸

These working groups and systems gave JSOTF-P the ability to leverage different aspects of the U.S.’s elements of national power. In some instances, where military power was inappropriate, restricted, or fully outlawed, the task force was able to leverage economic and

diplomatic elements of power to affect the region without directly engaging with and supporting a predatory regime. Nongovernmental organizations and third-party working groups acted as vetted, impartial agents able to operate in public spheres where the military, CIA, and FBI could not.

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For a JIATF to operate and navigate among an authoritative regime, religious extremists, and an oppressed people living in a predatory state, a level of nuanced political savvy and education is needed. Dr. Imtiyaz Yusuf of the Graduate School of Philosophy and Religion, Assumption University in Bangkok, Thailand, has a quite unique view of the relationship between the predatory nature of the Philippines and its cultural and religious makeup. The connections and correlations that Dr. Imtiyaz makes between Islam in Asia leans upon some of Asef Bayat's observations of the Muslim religion and Arabic culture under the oppressed and predatory regimes found in the middle east. Imtiyaz states:

The Philippines is guided by Catholic values.... Muslims in the Philippines are in the minority. Islam is one of the officially recognized religions however, they are facing ethno-religious insurgent movements based on an ideology that views Islam from an ethnic perspective, laying stress on kinship, language and culture. In the post-Suharto era and after 9/11, jihadist extremism surfaced in the region. Indonesia and Malaysia have been largely successful in combating terrorism. But [in the Philippines] at the popular level, the stress of economic development, and the confrontation with materialistic

modernity and consumerist globalization, is driving many Southeast Asian Muslims to seek refuge in orthodox and puritanical interpretations of Islamic theology.¹⁹

Understanding that the complexity of Islam in Asia is not an isolated occurrence and does not necessarily prescribe to the fallacy of Middle Eastern Islamic exceptionalism. Appreciating the fact that Islam in Asia is a complex, growing, and influential system is key to operating in the region. It does not mean that predatory regimes in Asia predetermine the destiny of oppressed people nor does it guarantee that the citizens will not rise up against the administration. Truthfully, the influence of Islam in Asia provides choices for the oppressed, not a guaranteed, predetermined membership in a violent extremist group. Understanding that people living under a predatory state may turn to Islam as a way to join a reputable orthodox Islamic group, a secular political party, or religious-based humanitarian rights group may be the noblest way to combat the power of the regime. Understanding the religious, cultural, and social implications of Catholic and Islamic groups under a predatory state gives an interagency task force, such as JSOTF-P, the ability to transcend governments and organizations and leverage groups that would normally not assist the military. This was evident in JSOTF-P's partnership with the Philippine Red Cross, Philippine Red Crescent, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Disaster Law Programme during the 2013 typhoon that killed over 10,000 people.²⁰ JSOTF-P was able to react extremely well in providing humanitarian aid after the disaster, mainly due to the experience, equipment, and airborne assets prepositioned as part of JSOTF-P's training mission. These assets were able to be quickly re-tasked and utilized in support of the new mission.

This undertaking was an excellent example of JSOTF-P's capability and flexibility in

conducting operations, other than military training and assistance. In doing so, many of the obstacles and limitations placed on the task force was removed in order to assist and support the people of the region. From firsthand accounts, the speed and cooperation of the task force was unmatched during this time. As compared to the slower and often bureaucratic process in training and equipping foreign militaries, the humanitarian aid mission was met with overwhelming support, and many restrictions were immediately lifted. The removal of restricted fly zones, troop capacity caps, and interagency/interservice transportation and funding rules were either waived or rescinded. This is perhaps the best-case scenario and optimal mission set for an interagency task force operating under a predatory regime.

Predatory states may not be predatory in every instance, such as when they require humanitarian aid or are participating in an allied-partner military exercise. The primary example of regimes exhibiting predatory behavior comes from fighting internal insurgencies and rebel groups. The military defines the training and assistance it gives to nation-states fighting an internal insurgency as foreign internal defense (FID). Joint Publication 3-22, Foreign Internal Defense states:

Foreign internal defense (FID) is the participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization, to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to their security. The focus of U.S. FID efforts is to support the host nation's (HN's) internal defense and development (IDAD)²¹

The application of the FID model does not account for the host nation's proclivity for oppression and if the state is defined as

predatory. In these instances, a JIATF or JSOTF should evaluate the state using a predatory and corruption scale in order to determine the amount and quantity of the assistance that will be provided by the U.S. Several social, economic, and political models were used to determine the regime's position on a predatory scale, specifically the Philippines rating of corruption, economics, and predatory behaviors from 2008 to 2017.

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James A. Robinson's predatory model shows the relationship between two different social groups: P (the social elite) and N (the group out of power) and compares this inverse relationship to the economic factors in the state. The economic factors are represented by K (capital), R (natural resources) and G (investment in the public good). The output from this equation results in: $A(G)K+R$, which provides an indicator in the investment quotient of the state. Investing in the public good, times the government's access to capital, plus the quantity and availability of natural resources results in a metric, which can be mapped on a scale.²² Using this model as a reference, the Philippines has an imbalance in the percentage of P (the elite in power) and N (citizens without any power). The model also does not differentiate in the definition of N, those considered not to wield any substantial social or political power. In order to compensate for the broad definition of N, a sub category should include the insurgency groups and social activists that use violence and military power. This violent subset in the Philippines is far more influential than the average oppressed citizen. Revolutionary groups (v) are a force multiplier that should be added to the calculation as a group capable of countering the predatory regime. $P-N(v)$ is a more accurate indicator of the power of the regime. $P-N(v)/A(G)K+R$

indicates that the power of the elite, minus the influence of citizens, multiplied by revolutionary forces, divided by capital and resources. This model shows that the Philippines is considered a predatory regime, with a small social and economic elite clashing with its people over resources. As a result, the state is at a higher risk for an insurgency and would require greater assistance and FID support from the U.S.

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Robinson's model does not account for rogue actors or the power of social revolutions as a means of overthrowing the regime; however, this model provides compelling data, which supports the definition of the Philippines being labeled as a predatory state. This model not only supports the social definition of a predatory state, but also validates the regime as an economic predator. Trading Economics and Transparency International provided empirical data on the health of the economy, to include the state's propensity and susceptibility for corruption, economic disparity, and destructive monetary trade practices.²³ Out of 180 countries measured, the Republic of the Philippines ranked at number 141 on the corruption rank scale in 2008 and has trended down to number 111 in 2017. Ethiopia, Columbia, and China have been consistently ranked above the Philippines as being less corrupt regimes. The Philippines also received a 34 out of 100 in the perceived corruption index for 2017, putting the regime in the bottom of countries in Asia and the world.²⁴ The Philippines economy is mainly based on agriculture and natural resources exports, which is a system that lends itself to being exploited by those in power. Arvind Ganesan and Alex Vines theorized that the fight over natural resources is

one of the primary reasons why rebel groups start insurgencies and fight against the regime. "The availability of portable, high-value resources is an important reason that rebel groups form and civil wars break out, and that to end the abuses, one needs to target rebel group financing."²⁵ This theory works in some instances where resource-rich nations fight a civil war over oil, land, or minerals. However, this theory does not fully account for the unique system of finance that narco-terrorist organizations utilize with the drug commodity in Columbia, or the pirating ransoms used in Somalia, or the kidnappings used by the Islamic fighters in the jungles of the Philippines. These considerations must be planned for by the JIATF operating under the regime, and a training/assistance model must be developed to target the social, political, economic, and military risks.

Thus far, the qualitative data from Robinson's model, the RAND report on JSOTF-P, and Quimpo's regional case studies have shown that the Philippines is a social, political, and economic predator that used military aid and training received by the U.S. to conduct an internal "war on drugs," which ultimately contributed to the rise of an Islamic insurgency. Major James T. McCabe of the Naval Postgraduate School summarized the mission of the JSOTF-P, as a subset of the Global War on Terrorism, may have been a successful application of FID in the short-term. However, the insurgency in the Philippines remains, and McCabe begs the question:

Has the impact of persistent engagement (operations) and building partner capacity (relationships) set the conditions for a peaceful future of the southern islands in the Philippines? Although the official determination of success has led to the completion of OEF-P [Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines], McCabe's thesis shows it is possible that operations did not remove the root causes of threats from violent extremist organizations.²⁶

So, what does this mean to JSOTF-P and other joint, multinational, and interagency task forces charged with building relationships and training foreign partners in a predatory environment? The answer can be simplified to cooperation, collaboration, and understanding the strategic end state. In her article, “The SOF Experience in the Philippines and the Implications for Future Defense Strategy,” Linda Robinson credits the success of JSOTF-P to the interagency cooperation, the creation of working groups and cells, and the diplomatic expertise of the joint staff:

Increased emphasis was placed on creating fusion cells at higher echelons of command in Mindanao to foster intelligence sharing and police-military operational coordination. Finally, institutional development of forces and support to national military planning was also a focus of the later years of the campaign. Interagency cooperation is often stated as an objective and achieved to varying degrees. In the OEF-P campaign, the JSOTF-P benefited from the fact that four career ambassadors led the U.S. country team for the duration.²⁷

What does this mean to future JIATFs that must operate under a predatory state? As evidenced, diplomacy works, and the military is the best organization to conduct FID, but it must be a long-term commitment to yield meaningful results, engagements with the host nation must be constant, and the investment in human capital, equipment, and training must be substantial. This is a huge demand for a relatively small staff of military and interagency partners. The goals and objectives of the task force must support and augment the national policy. The problem occurs when national leaders leave office or national strategy shifts while the task force is in the middle of the training mission. This phenomenon is not solely relegated to American politics, even in the Philippines the media was critical of

President Duterte changing its national strategy. That shift in policy is what critics say sparked the Islamic movement in the Philippines. For example, “Several media outlets have argued that the Islamic State’s encroachment into the Philippines is a result of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte’s negligence toward countering extremism because of his focus on persecuting a violent drug war.”²⁸

Succeeding in the Philippines is not a “fire and forget” proposal... Instead it is a long-term commitment that relies on all the elements of national power...

Succeeding in the Philippines is not a “fire and forget” proposal like issuing a drone strike or firing a cruise missile. Instead it is a long-term commitment that relies on all the elements of national power to include diplomacy, military, and economic means. The success of this type of mission is about people on the ground working with their counterparts. The tactical-level trainers are the ones making partnerships work and executing national policy one Soldier at a time. The JIATF may be the right organization for this type of demanding mission. The Filipinos have a proverb, “*Bagong hari, bagong ugali.*” It means, “new king, new character.” The people of the Philippines see their future as an opportunity. New leadership brings new priorities and efforts for their national strategy. The predatory nature of the current government does not mean that it will perpetually be an oppressive environment. JSOTF-P had challenges from the strategic, national level to the tactical, small-team level, to include political, ethical, and social dilemmas, which limited its ability to conduct a counterinsurgency operation. The theory that a JIATF operating in a predatory state is extremely complicated has been hypothesized by multiple sociopolitical scholars, verified by

firsthand accounts and experiences, and proven by the deployed military members of JSOTF-P. The conclusion to be made is that operating under an authoritative regime requires teamwork, interagency corporation, understanding of strategic intent, and the unique ability to be both a diplomat and a Soldier when required. Furthermore, high standards of the Geneva Convention must be maintained when protecting rights and advising the host nation in the application of military force. This is the most difficult task that military officers and diplomats can undertake, and with the increase in global instability and emerging threats in multiple domains, this is a requirement that will not go away. If anything, the future of warfare will require a mandate for JIATFs to operate in areas between the near-peer threat and the asymmetric conflict. That is where the predatory state resides. **IAJ**

NOTES

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