

Charge U.S. Role in Philippine Terror Raid

by Mike Billington

March 7—There is increasing evidence that the U.S. planned, directed, supported, and possibly even participated in a raid by Philippine Special Action Force (SAF) police, which targeted and killed an al-Qaeda-linked terrorist in Mindanao on Jan. 25, but which then precipitated a battle with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) resulting in the slaughter of 44 Philippine police and an uncertain number of MILF soldiers and civilians.

Should these charges be confirmed, they have the potential to do significant damage to the already embattled presidencies of both Philippine President Benigno Aquino and U.S. President Barack Obama. Both would be exposed as having blood on their hands for embarking on a reckless military operation of dubious legality.

The Mindanao Operation

U.S. Special Forces and CIA officers have been in Mindanao since 2002, on highly questionable legal grounds—the Philippine Constitution forbids foreign military bases on its soil—but recent Philippine governments have circumvented that clause by claiming that the U.S. military and intelligence forces were merely “guests,” and were only involved in training Philippine troops. Nonetheless, it was understood that they could not participate in military actions within the country. It is now clear that they went far beyond that limit—yet another case of the Obama Administration ignoring both U.S. and foreign nations’ laws in conducting military operations at will around the world.

President “Noynoy” Aquino, who has served as a loyal servant to the Obama Administration, last year opened up all Philippine military bases to U.S. air, land, and naval military forces, despite the Constitutional restrictions against it. This treasonous move places his country at the center of the Obama Administration plan for a first-strike assault on China, a plan known as Air-Sea Battle.

As a result of the Jan. 25 debacle, Aquino is now considered by many to be unfit to remain in office. He was reportedly in personal charge of the operation, and



U.S. State Department

Presidents Obama and Aquino have questions to answer about the U.S. role in the deaths of nearly four dozen Philippine police in an anti-terrorist raid in which U.S. forces participated. Here, the two presidents in Manila last April.

is accused by some of responsibility for telling the army forces nearby to “stand down,” rather than deploying to save the ambushed police. The fact that Aquino has been trying to implement an autonomy agreement with the same MILF which has now murdered 44 Philippine security forces makes his position even more tenuous.

SAF Commander Director Getulio Napanas, whom Aquino dismissed from his command, attempting to hold him responsible for the fiasco, testified to the Philippine Senate in a closed session on Feb. 16, admitting (according to leaks to the press) that the U.S. military and intelligence forces in Mindanao provided the intelligence on the location of the terrorist (a Malaysian known as Marwan, who was part of the al-Qaeda-linked Jemaah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia), trained the police forces for the operation, and deployed drones or other aircraft to monitor the operation as it was taking place. The U.S. had also offered a \$6 million reward for Marwan, and \$3 million for his Filipino cohort Usman.

More damning is an interview published Feb. 15 in the *Philippines Inquirer*, with an unnamed member of the SAF, who detailed the U.S. role in training the SAF forces at a resort in Zamboanga City in Mindanao, hiring two members of the MILF as guides, providing logistical support, and bringing Commander Napanas into U.S. quarters to watch the unfolding operation on video.

While this is evidence enough of incompetent and criminal actions by both Aquino and Obama, there are credible reports from those with direct knowledge of the people in the region, that two U.S. soldiers were directly involved in the military action—a direct breach of Philippine law—and that one was killed. It was publicly acknowledged, with videos shown in television reports, that a U.S. helicopter and crew were called in to help evacuate the dead. However, the sources claim that this unusual U.S. military participation was actually a cover for evacuating the Americans before their role in the combat operation became known.

Father Jun Mercado, former president of Notre Dame University in Mindanao, and a leading activist in efforts to create peaceful cooperation and dialogue between Catholics and Muslims, has reported that some of the extremist factions of the Moro armed forces have affiliated themselves with the

ISIS terrorists in the Arab world.

Will Aquino Be Deposed?

Church officials and political figures have founded an organization called the National Transition Council, which is demanding that Aquino step down immediately. One member, former Sen. Kit Tatad, issued a statement titled “We must now start thinking post-Aquino.” He said that the call for Aquino’s resignation “has taken hold of our people’s consciousness, and is now sweeping the nation.” Cardinal Ricardo Vidal, speaking at a meeting of the Council, said, with reference to the call for Aquino to step down, “We, the Bishops of the Catholic and other Christian Churches, have often been asked if there is a moral basis to this growing demand. Recent developments have made this call even more urgent and imperative.” He then quoted Pope Francis, who, during his recent meeting with President Aquino in Manila, referred to the “scandalous social inequalities” in the country. Aquino’s response to the Pope was to attack the Bishops for criticizing him!

While Aquino may be forced to step down, it should be clear that the “perpetual war” policies perpetrated by the Obama Administration, in the Philippines and around the globe, and Obama’s drive for war against Russia and China, will not end until he is forced by constitutional means to leave the White House.