

OPE-P IN BRIEF

The 5th quarterly report submitted by the Lead Inspector General for Operation Pacific Eagle-Philippines (OPE-P) summarizes the quarter's key events and oversight of the U.S. mission to support the Philippine government in its fight against ISIS affiliates and other terrorist organizations. Due to the partial government shutdown, this report does not contain a section on Humanitarian Assistance and Recovery, which is typically provided by the USAID OIG.

ISIS-P is Weakened but Still Active

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- ISIS-P consists of **300-550 fighters** split between at least **4 factions**.
- Attacks were limited to clashes with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and opportunistic terrorist attacks.
 - A **bombing** at a shopping mall, which **killed 2 and wounded 34**, was attributed to ISIS-P.
- Relations with **international ISIS** affiliates remain **fractured**.
- ISIS **financial and media support** previously directed to the Philippines appears to have stopped.
- A **general weakening of global ISIS** may also be limiting the group's ability to support ISIS-P.
- ISIS-P has been **without a formally recognized leader** since October 2017.

Lead IG Completes First OPE-P Oversight Project

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- An evaluation of DoD oversight of logistical support to the Philippine government found **inadequate assurance** that **76 of 77 transactions** (valued at **\$13 million**) were accurate and properly reimbursed.
- The DoD concurred with the DoD OIG's 4 recommendations to improve the tracking of transactions and training for responsible personnel.

Philippine Peace Process Moves Ahead Despite Martial Law

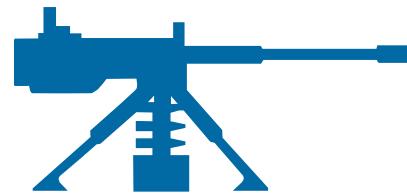
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- Preparations and campaigning for a **referendum** on **enhanced autonomy** for Muslim-populated areas of the southern Philippines took place.
- The **AFP Chief of Staff** was welcomed in a visit to a camp of **former militants**, where he spoke in support of the peace process.
- The Philippine Congress voted to **extend martial law** on Mindanao, which has been in place since 2017, through the **end of 2019**.

OPE-P: Counterterrorism Support with a Small Footprint

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- **271 U.S. troops, 1 DoD civilian, 80 U.S. contractors, and 458 local contractors** support the OPE-P mission.
- **Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR)** support is the most significant component of U.S. assistance to the AFP under OPE-P.
- Outside of OPE-P, the DoD provided other support to the AFP to enhance its fighting capacity:
 - **2,253 machine guns, 109 used cargo trucks**, a 10-day **training** exercise, and upgrades to a **Philippine Coast Guard station**
- Questions remain about how the DoD determines which activities fall within the **scope of OPE-P**.



DoD Budgets \$108.2 Million for OPE-P in 2019

pp. 11-12

- Most of this funding is for **ISR** support to the AFP, including **\$50.1 million** in contracted ISR and **\$11.8 million** for U.S. Army ISR.
- Other costs include **communications, technology, transportation**, and contracted **recovery** services for U.S. personnel.
- FY 2019 funding is an **increase** from the **\$99.3 million** spent on OPE-P in FY 2018.

AFP Struggles to Employ ISR Despite U.S. Assistance

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- Due to institutional and infrastructure shortcomings, the AFP is **unable to collect and process intelligence** independently.
- The DoD has provided **assets and subject matter experts**, which have improved AFP utilization of ISR, but an assessment of this progress was not available this quarter.