OPERATION PACIFIC EAGLE-PHILIPPINES

OPE-P IN BRIEF

The 6th 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 Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in their fight against ISIS affiliates and other terrorist organizations.

ISIS-P Bombs Cathedral pp. 6-7

- On January 27, suicide bombers associated with ISIS-P killed 20 and wounded 102 at a Roman Catholic cathedral on the southern island of Jolo.
- The first bomb went off inside during mass, and the second detonated outside, targeting first responders.
- This was the deadliest ISIS-P attack since the 2017 siege of Marawi.

ISIS-P Remains Fractured, Lacks Unified Leader pp. 8-10

- The DoD estimated ISIS-P’s strength at 300-550 members, the same as last quarter.
- The DoD acknowledged that it had low confidence in these numbers and was uncertain whether ISIS-P recruitment exceeded surrenders and casualties.
- Abu Dar, leader of the Maute Group faction of ISIS-P, was killed in a clash with the AFP on March 14.
- The DoD saw no indication of significant financial or media support from the international ISIS leadership to ISIS-P this quarter.


- The treaty, ratified in 1951, serves as the foundation for all security cooperation between the two countries, including OPE-P.
- Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte expressed doubt about the U.S. commitment to defend Philippine territorial claims in the South China Sea.
- Senior U.S. officials, including Secretary of State Pompeo, reaffirmed the U.S. promise to defend the Philippines from any foreign aggression.

U.S. Personnel Numbers Classified This Quarter pp. 12

The DoD previously provided the DoD OIG publicly releasable numbers of military, contractor, and civilian personnel supporting OPE-P. However, this quarter, it stated that those figures were classified.

USAID Efforts Shift from Crisis Response to Peace and Stability pp. 18-21

Programs will focus on long-term goals, such as good governance, countering violent extremism, and building local economies.

- The number of people displaced by the 2017 Marawi crisis has remained at about 70,000 since July 2018.

Lead IG Agencies Complete 2 OPE-P Oversight Projects pp. 25-26

A DoD OIG evaluation found that the DoD did not provide the required counterterrorism training to the AFP’s conventional forces.

A USAID OIG audit found that USAID’s local solutions initiative in the Philippines lacked metrics for success.