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U.S. Military Operations in the Global War on Terrorism: Afghanistan, Africa, the Philippines, and Colombia

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name redacted
Specialist in National Defense
Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division

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Summary

U.S. military operations in Afghanistan, Africa, the Philippines, and Colombia are part of the U.S.-initiated Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). These operations cover a wide variety of combat and non-combat missions ranging from combating insurgents, to civil affairs and reconstruction operations, to training military forces of other nations in counternarcotics, counterterrorism, and counterinsurgency tactics. Numbers of U.S. forces involved in these operations range from 19,000 to just a few hundred. Some have argued that U.S. military operations in these countries are achieving a degree of success and suggest that they may offer some lessons that might be applied in Iraq as well as for future GWOT operations. Potential issues for the second session of the 109th Congress include NATO assumption of responsibility for operations in Afghanistan, counterdrug operations in Afghanistan, a long-term strategy for Africa, and developments in Colombia and the Philippines. This report will not discuss the provision of equipment and weapons to countries where the U.S. military is conducting counterterrorism operations¹ nor will it address Foreign Military Sales (FMS), which are also aspects of the Administration's GWOT military strategy. This report will be updated on a periodic basis.

¹ For additional information see CRS Report RL30982, *U.S. Defense Articles and Services Supplied to Foreign Recipients: Restrictions on Their Use*, by (name redacted).

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U.S. Military Operations and the Global War on Terrorism: Afghanistan, Africa, the Philippines, and Colombia

Overview

U.S. military operations as part of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) began on October 7, 2001, and continue today. The military component is just one aspect in this endeavor, which also involves diplomatic, intelligence, law enforcement, and financial efforts to defeat terrorists around the world. This report focuses on U.S. military operations in four areas — Afghanistan, Africa, the Philippines, and Colombia — although the U.S. military is likely engaged in a variety of activities in other countries or regions that are considered part of the GWOT by the Administration. While some consider military operations in Iraq as part of this war, many do not, and because of the complexity of this issue, Iraq is treated separately and in greater detail in other CRS reports.²

Congress has a wide ranging interest in U.S. military operations in these regions. NATO assumption of responsibility for Afghanistan and its impact on U.S. military operations, counternarcotics operations in Afghanistan, and the apparently emerging long-term military strategy for Africa — raise a variety of issues for potential congressional consideration.³

Afghanistan⁴

Current Operations

There are approximately 19,000 U.S. military personnel in and around Afghanistan. Troops currently in Afghanistan represent the sixth major troop rotation in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) since the United States became

² CRS has a number of reports on Iraq. The following reports discuss the military aspects of Iraq in detail: CRS Report RL31763, *Iraq: Summary of U.S. Forces*, by Linwood B. Carter, and CRS Report RL31701, *Iraq: U.S. Military Operations*, by (name redacted).

³ For additional information on U.S. Special Operations Forces see CRS Report RS21048, *U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF): Background and Issues for Congress*, by (name redacted), and CRS Report RS22017, *Special Operations Forces (SOF) and CIA Paramilitary Operations: Issues for Congress*, by Richard A. Best, Jr. and (name redacted).

⁴ For a more detailed treatment of Afghanistan see CRS Report RL30588, *Afghanistan: Post-War Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy*, by (name redacted) (updated regularly).

involved in the fall of 2001. At present, the majority of U.S. ground forces come from the Army's Italy-based 173rd Airborne Brigade and the 1st Brigade of the Fort Bragg, North Carolina-based 82nd Airborne Division and Marine elements from the Second (II) MEF from Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. U.S. Special Forces are also operating in Afghanistan and are primarily concerned with capturing or killing Taliban and Al Qaeda leaders. In addition, Army units from the Florida National Guard's 53rd Infantry Brigade have been deployed to train the Afghan National Army (ANA).⁵

Drawdown of U.S. Forces in Afghanistan. In December 2004, the Department of Defense (DOD) designated the 3rd and 4th Brigades of the 10th Mountain Division from Ft. Drum New York and Ft. Polk, Louisiana and elements of the division's headquarters as the primary ground forces and command headquarters for OEF 7.⁶ On December 20, 2005, DOD announced that one battalion-sized infantry task force from the 4th Brigade stationed at Ft. Polk would deploy to Afghanistan to assist in the transition of coalition operations in southern Afghanistan in mid-2006 to NATO.⁷ DOD attributes this reduction to NATO's growing presence in Afghanistan as well as continued growth and progress of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police.⁸ DOD's decision to deploy only a portion of the 4th Brigade is expected to bring U.S. troop levels — currently at approximately 19,000 — to approximately 16,500; a reduction of 2,500 troops.⁹

Security for Parliamentary Elections. U.S. and Coalition forces, in conjunction with the Afghan National Army (ANA) and National Police, provided security for Afghanistan's September 18, 2005 nationwide National Assembly and Provincial Council elections. Reports suggest that security efforts were relatively effective, despite a number of insurgent harassing attacks prior to the election, and about 16 of 6,270 elections stations were not opened because of security-related problems.¹⁰ Shortly after the elections, Afghan President Hamid Karzai reportedly questioned the need for further international military operations within Afghanistan, suggesting that instead a "stronger political approach focusing on shutting down guerilla training camps and outside financial support" would be more effective.¹¹ President Karzai also suggested that airstrikes were no longer needed — a view

⁵ Phil Long, "Florida Troops to Help Train Afghans," *Miami Herald*, March 1, 2005.

⁶ Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs News Release, No. 1289-04, "DOD Announces OEF/OIF Rotational Units," December 14, 2004.

⁷ Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs News Release, No. 1309-05, "Operation Enduring Freedom Rotation Adjustment Announced," December 20, 2005.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Carlotta Gall and Somini Sengupta, "Afghan Voters Take Next Step to Democracy," *New York Times*, September 19, 2005; Associated Press, "Afghan Elections Lauded Despite Stunted Turnout," *Washington Post*, September 20, 2005; and "Taliban Vow to Step Up War After Afghan Poll Drama," *New York Times on the Web*, September 21, 2005.

¹¹ N.C. Aizenman, "Karzai Urges Shift in Strategy," *Washington Post*, September 21, 2005.

shared by many as airstrikes have been responsible for the deaths and injury of numerous Afghan civilians and has been a past point of contention between the United States and the Afghan government.

Although insurgents failed to follow through on their vows to disrupt September's elections, U.S. military officials contend that the insurgents have recently reasserted themselves — killing hundreds of civilians, government workers, soldiers and police in bombings and ambushes in southern and eastern Afghanistan.¹² The commander of U.S. troops in Afghanistan, Army Lieutenant General Karl Eikenberry, reportedly suggested that this pattern would continue and that U.S. and coalition forces would continue to stay on the offensive against insurgents.

Operational Issues.

Changing Insurgent Tactics? A number of reports note that in the past months, insurgent tactics have shown an increase in the use of suicide and roadside bombings, not unlike the tactics being used by insurgents in Iraq.¹³ There have been over 20 suicide attacks in Afghanistan since September 2005 including car bomb attacks against U.S. and NATO convoys — resulting in four NATO deaths — as well as individuals with explosives strapped to their bodies throwing themselves at vehicles or detonating their explosives in crowds. Most of these bombings failed to hit their intended targets but instead killed or wounded Afghan civilians. In one of the more successful attacks, on September 28, 2005, an insurgent dressed in an ANA uniform, blew up a motorcycle near Afghan troops boarding transportation outside their base in Kabul, killing 9 soldiers and injuring 28. A top Taliban commander reportedly stated that he had more than 200 insurgents willing to become suicide attackers against U.S. and allied forces but the Afghan government dismissed this claim as “propaganda” suggesting instead that this was an indication of the insurgent's weakening military power.

While U.S. military officials postulate that insurgents no longer have a pool of resources to mount a serious offensive they also acknowledge that insurgent forces are “far from being on the ropes.”¹⁴ The U.S. military asserts that the insurgents are recruiting younger fighters and staging smaller-scale attacks, often times using a hit-

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Information in this section is taken from Carlotta Gall, “Afghan Suicide Bomber Strikes in Town During U.S. Envoy's Visit,” *New York Times*, January 6, 2006; Noor Khan, “Taliban Threatens Suicide Attacks,” *Boston Globe*, December 27, 2005; Associated Press, “Afghanistan: Roadside Bomb Kills American,” *New York Times*, November 23, 2005; Carlotta Gall and Eric Schmitt, “Taliban Step Up Afghan Bombings and Suicide Attacks,” *New York Times*, October 21, 2005; and N.C. Aizenman, “Suicide Blast Kills Nine Afghan Soldiers,” *Washington Post*, September 29, 2005.

¹⁴ Information in this section is taken from Gregg Zoroya, “Afghanistan Insurgents Extremely Resolute and Fought to the Last Man,” *USA Today*, November 17, 2005; Scott Baldauf, “Small U.S. Units Lure Taliban into Losing Battles,” *Christian Science Monitor*, October 31, 2005; Steve Gutterman, “Afghan Rebels Changing Tactics,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 27, 2005; and Mitchell Prothero, “Taliban Regroups to Fight U.S. Troops,” *Washington Times*, September 3, 2005.

and-run approach as opposed to the major combat operations of the past. According to an unnamed Afghan source with supposed ties to Taliban insurgents, the Taliban have divided up into groups of 18 to 20 fighters and in each unit there is an Al Qaeda member from Pakistan or an “Arab” who teaches the group tactics developed in Iraq. According to this source, “rogue” elements from Pakistan’s Intelligence Service help to further refine these tactics as well provide these groups sanctuary and training in Pakistan, provided these groups return to Afghanistan to fight U.S. and allied forces.

In instances where U.S. forces have engaged insurgents, they noted that insurgents were “extremely resolute and fought to the last man.” Insurgents were also characterized as well-organized and reacted well to battlefield situations. Despite this perceived proficiency, the U.S. Army claims to have killed more than 1,200 insurgents in 2005 — including a number of senior commanders. U.S. forces have reportedly used small U.S. formations such as platoons (16 to 50 soldiers) to draw out insurgent forces, who will often “swarm” into larger formations to overwhelm the smaller U.S. unit. The smaller U.S. unit then engages the insurgent forces to “fix” it, while other infantry units and U.S. airpower engage and destroy it.

Combat Operations Against Insurgents. U.S. and coalition forces continue combat operations, primarily in the border provinces where the Taliban continue to exert a degree of control. On August 31, 2005, U.S. and ANA forces, backed by attack helicopters, raided a Taliban camp in the mountains of southern Afghanistan, killing nine suspected insurgents.¹⁵ This camp was believed to have sheltered 80 insurgents using it as a base camp to launch attacks in Uruzgan province.¹⁶ On September 4 and 5, U.S. and Afghan forces conducted raids in Zabol and Kandahar provinces, killing 25 suspected Taliban and capturing dozens more.¹⁷

Pakistani Involvement. Prior to Afghanistan’s September 18 parliamentary elections, Pakistan reportedly deployed thousands of reinforcements to its borders to help prevent insurgent attacks.¹⁸ According to Pakistani defense officials, about 5,000 additional troops were sent to the Northwest Frontier Province and approximately 4,500 additional troops were sent to Baluchistan.¹⁹ On September 13, Pakistan conducted an operation with thousands of troops and helicopter gunship support in North Waziristan, reportedly destroying a “major Al Qaeda hideout” and arresting 21 suspected militants.²⁰ On September 29, Pakistan began a series of attacks in North Waziristan region and reportedly encountered considerable resistance from insurgents, resulting in the deaths of at least five Pakistani soldiers and an unknown

¹⁵ Associated Press, “Afghan and U.S. Forces Raid Taliban Hideout,” *New York Times on the Web*, September 1, 2005.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Paul Watson, “U.S. and Afghan Forces Kill 25 Suspected Taliban in Two Raids,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 6, 2005.

¹⁸ “Pakistan Builds Its Forces in Border,” *New York Times*, September 6, 2005.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Riaz Khan, “Pakistan Says it Struck an Al Qaeda Hideout,” *Boston Globe*, September 14, 2005.

number of insurgents.²¹ Despite the significant presence of the Pakistani Army in Pakistan's Tribal Zone bordering Afghanistan, the Taliban and Al Qaeda are said to be rallying in the Waziristan region.²² According to reports, there appears to be evidence that Arab, Uzbek, and Chechen fighters linked to Al Qaeda are operating in that area and openly recruiting local tribesmen to fight in their "jihad" against the Pakistani Army and U.S. forces in Afghanistan.²³ This has supposedly resulted in fighting between local tribesmen that have aligned themselves with the Pakistani Army and those siding with the insurgent.²⁴

Renewed Fighting. U.S. and Afghan forces continued offensive operations against insurgents after Afghan parliamentary elections and on September 23 coalition ground forces, backed by helicopter gunships, killed 14 suspected Taliban fighters in Uruzgan province.²⁵ On September 24, a U.S. Army CH-47 Chinook helicopter was shot down by insurgents in southern Zabul province, killing all five crew members.²⁶ On October 8, a U.S. soldier patrolling in Helmand province stepped on a land mine and became the 200th U.S. service member killed in Afghanistan since the U.S. invaded in 2001.²⁷ On October 11 in Helmand province, insurgents ambushed a convoy of 150 Afghan police officers, killing 19 officers.²⁸

U.S. Desecration of Taliban Dead. In mid-October, allegations that U.S. soldiers had burned the bodies of two dead Taliban fighters and then used their corpses for propaganda purposes against the insurgents emerged after the event was broadcasted on Australian television.²⁹ According to reports, U.S. soldiers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade burned the two bodies — supposedly for hygiene reasons as none of the local inhabitants would claim the bodies and afford them a Muslim burial — and then U.S. Psychological Operations soldiers used the bodies to taunt insurgent

²¹ Times Wire Service, "Pakistan Attacks Tribal Area to Drive Out Militants," *Los Angeles Times*, October 2, 2005.

²² Gretchen Peters, "Violence Grows in Pakistan's Tribal Zone, Despite Army Presence," *Christian Science Monitor*, December 12, 2005.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Amir Shah, "U.S., Afghan Forces Kill 14 in Renewed Fighting," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 24, 2005.

²⁶ "U.S. Helicopter Crashes in Afghanistan, Killing 5," *New York Times on the Web*, September 25, 2005 and "Deadly Crash Called Act of Hostile Fire," *Washington Post*, October 9, 2005.

²⁷ Daniel Cooney, "Land Mine Kills U.S. Soldier in Afghanistan," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 9, 2005.

²⁸ "19 Afghan Policemen Killed in Ambush," *Los Angeles Times*, October 11, 2005.

²⁹ Eric Schmitt, "Army Examining an Account of Abuse of 2 Dead Taliban," *New York Times*, October 20, 2005; Bradley Graham, "Alleged Desecration of Bodies Investigated," *Washington Post*, October 21, 2005; Sultan M. Munadi, "Karzai Condemns Burning of Afghan Bodies by U.S. Troops," *New York Times*, October 22, 2005; Sean D. Naylor, "Tactical Psyops Stopped in Afghanistan, for Now," *Army Times.com*, October 28, 2005; and Sean D. Naylor, "Training Ordered," *Army Times*, November 7, 2005.

fighters believed to be in the area. Cremation is prohibited by the Muslim faith and respect for the body of the dead is also a central tenet of the religion. This act was strongly condemned by Afghan President Karzai and raised fears that such an act would further damage the United State's image to Muslims, given the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse scandal as well as other allegations of prisoner abuse in both Afghanistan and Iraq. U.S. CENTCOM, which commands operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, quickly condemned the actions of the U.S. troops involved, reportedly stating that "desecration, abuse or inappropriate treatment of enemy combatants were never condoned and that these actions violated U.S. policy and the Geneva Convention." U.S. Army Major General Jason Kamiya, the commander of Joint Task Force 76, the U.S.-led force that operates in eastern and southern Afghanistan, reportedly halted all tactical psychological operations the day after he was informed of the incident and ordered an immediate investigation. It is not known if those soldiers involved were punished for the incident, but extensive training was ordered to deal with what U.S. military officials described as an "emerging gap" between Afghanistan's Islamic culture and what is permissible under the Geneva Convention.

Continued Offensive Operations Against Insurgents. On October 16, U.S. forces - mainly U.S. Marines from the 3rd Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, from Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii - conducted a seven day battalion-level (800 Marines) offensive operation with about 300 ANA soldiers and U.S. Army forces and U.S. air support.³⁰ Dubbed Operation Pil (the Dari word for "elephant") this operation was aimed at disrupting enemy activities and sanctuaries in Afghanistan's Kunar province. No U.S. troops were killed during the operation and there were no estimates of the number of enemy killed. On October 29, a U.S. and British soldier were killed - the American during a patrol in Khost province and the British soldier while on patrol in the city of Mazar-e Sharif.³¹ On October 30, two U.S. soldiers with the Alabama National Guard's 926th Engineers were reportedly charged with assaulting two Afghan prisoners and both soldiers — still serving in Afghanistan — could face court-martial.³² On December 5, two U.S. CH-47 Chinook helicopters were hit by enemy fire - one in Kandahar province and one in Uruzgan province - and made emergency landings, resulting in minor injuries to their occupants.³³ On December 6, U.S. and Afghan forces reportedly killed nine Taliban insurgents in Uruzgan province and 13 insurgents were killed in joint operations in Kandahar province on December 7.³⁴ On December 15, one U.S. soldier was killed during a firefight in Kandahar province and another was killed on December 28 by a roadside

³⁰ Steve Mraz, "Operation Pil Targets Taliban in Kunar Province," *Mideast Stars and Stripes*, October 24, 2005.

³¹ Associated Press, "U.S. and British Soldiers Killed in Afghanistan," *Washington Post*, October 30, 2005.

³² Carlotta Gall, "2 U.S. Soldiers are Charged with Assaulting Afghan Prisoners," *New York Times*, October 31, 2005.

³³ "U.S. Helicopters in Afghanistan Hit by Enemy Fire," *Wall Street Journal*, December 5, 2005.

³⁴ "U.S. Says 22 Taliban Killed in Afghanistan," *New York Times on the Web*, December 7, 2005.

bomb while another was killed in a vehicle accident.³⁵ According to reports, 2005 was the deadliest year for the U.S. military in Afghanistan with 91 service members killed as of December 29, 2005 by fighting and accidents.³⁶

Predator Strike in Pakistan. On January 13, 2006, an armed CIA Predator unmanned aircraft reportedly launched an airstrike on the Pakistani village of Damadola near the Afghan border, possibly killing four top Al Qaeda leaders but also killing 13 Pakistani villagers — sparking angry, nation-wide protests in Pakistan.³⁷ The target of the raid, Al Qaeda's alleged second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahri, apparently escaped or was not present at the insurgent's meeting. Those four Al Qaeda leaders believed to have been killed in the raid included a supposed chemical weapons expert, a public relations and recruitment chief, and Al Qaeda's operations chief responsible for planning attacks on U.S. and coalition forces on the Afghan border. If these reports are true, some experts believe that this could be a significant blow to Al Qaeda as these men were considered very experienced leaders who will be difficult to replace.

Permanent Presence and Bases in Afghanistan?³⁸ There are indications that the United States may seek permanent military bases in Afghanistan. The United States is upgrading military facilities in Afghanistan — primarily at the airbases of Bagram and Kandahar, which are currently being equipped with new runways. At Bagram airbase, the United States hopes to have a new 11,800-foot runway built by March 2006, along with a hospital, and facilities to accommodate 1,000 service members.³⁹ At Kandahar airbase, U.S. forces are expanding and widening the damaged 7,900-foot runway for both military and civilian air traffic.⁴⁰ Afghan leaders are said to be seeking a “long-term strategic partnership” with the United States and other friendly countries to avoid a strategic disengagement by the international community like the West's 1990s disengagement that helped to bring the Taliban to power. Senior U.S. military and government officials have acknowledged that bases, and perhaps pre-positioned U.S. military equipment, are

³⁵ Carlotta Gall, “G.I. Killed in Afghanistan; 47 Combatants are Freed in Amnesty,” *New York Times*, December 16, 2005 and Reuters, “Two Americans Killed in Afghan Incidents,” *Washington Post*, December 29, 2005.

³⁶ Daniel Cooney, “Soldier Killed, Four Injured in Afghanistan,” *Army Times.com*, December 29, 2005.

³⁷ Information in this section is from Mubashir Zaidi and Paul Watson, “Pakistan Attack Killed at Least Four Terrorism Suspects, U.S. Says,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 18, 2006; Carlotta Gall and Douglas Jehl, “U.S. Raid Killed Qaeda Leaders, Pakistan Says,” *New York Times*, January 19, 2006; and “Four Deaths a Setback to Al-Qaida in Afghanistan,” *Baltimore Sun*, January 20, 2006.

³⁸ “Military Upgrading Its Afghan Airbases,” *Baltimore Sun*, March 29, 2005 and Victoria Burnett and Peter Spiegel, “Defense Minister Indicates Permanent U.S. Military Presence in Afghanistan,” *London Financial Times*, April 6, 2005.

³⁹ Bradley Graham, “Iraq, Afghan Commitments Fuel U.S. Airbase Construction,” *Washington Post*, September 17, 2005 and Eric Schmitt, “Pentagon Construction Boom Beefs Up Mideast Airbases,” *New York Times*, September 18, 2005.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

a possibility, but note that there are numerous regional sensitivities to such a plan. Some believe that the importance of these bases in Afghanistan was emphasized when Uzbekistan evicted the U.S. military from a key airbase in July 2005 — a base that had been used to ship troops, equipment, and supplies to forces to Afghanistan.⁴¹

International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF)

ISAF is a NATO-led organization, consisting of approximately 9,000 troops from 26 NATO nations, as well as troops from nine partner and two non-aligned countries.⁴² The United States has approximately 200 troops assigned to ISAF, but these troops serve primarily in staff and support roles. ISAF operates under a series of U.N. mandates and conducts security patrols in Kabul and surrounding districts and runs several Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) located throughout Afghanistan. In addition, ISAF coordinates Civil Military Cooperation projects throughout the area of operations.⁴³ ISAF currently does not participate in offensive operations against the Taliban and Al Qaeda — these operations are carried out by the U.S.-led Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF)-180 and forces from 19 other countries⁴⁴ (including some countries that have other forces assigned to ISAF) and the ANA.

Current Situation. The Italian Rapid Deployment Corps will command ISAF until May 2006 and then relinquish command to the British-led multi-national Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC), which will command ISAF for nine months.⁴⁵ In February 2005, NATO agreed to expand ISAF coverage into southern Afghanistan, providing security assistance to an estimated 50 percent of Afghanistan.⁴⁶ On September 28, the German Parliament voted in favor of extending Germany's mandate in Afghanistan until October 2006 and will expand its forces assigned to ISAF from 2,250 to 3,000 troops.⁴⁷ France reportedly announced on December 18 that it would send an additional 450 troops by mid-2006 to support the 600 French troops that are currently part of ISAF.⁴⁸ France also has about 200

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² “NATO to Head South in Afghanistan,” as of January 9, 2006, [<http://www.nato.int/docu/update/2005/12-december/31208a.htm>].

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ See [http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/enduring-freedom_orbat-03.htm] for a listing of these countries as of June 2004.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Robin Hughes and Joris Janssen Lok, “NATO Confirms ISAF Expansion,” *Jane's Defence Weekly*, February 16, 2005.

⁴⁷ Hugh Williamson, “Germany Increases Afghanistan Troops,” *London Financial Times*, September 29, 2005.

⁴⁸ “France Will Bolster NATO Troops in Afghanistan,” *New York Times*, December 19, 2005.

special forces troops deployed in southern Afghanistan.⁴⁹ Despite these commitments of additional troops, there continues to be a great deal of concern amongst certain U.S. allies about ISAF working more closely with the U.S. counterterrorism effort in Afghanistan. France, Germany, and Spain do not want ISAF leadership to also take over leadership of counterterror operations - a position supported by the United States and Great Britain.⁵⁰ Reportedly, discussions were underway to find a way whereby France and Germany would permit NATO to command both ISAF and counterterror operations but not participate directly in these operations.⁵¹

On November 14, Taliban insurgents killed a German ISAF member and wounded two others in a suicide car attack in Kabul.⁵² This attack, along with other recent incidents, have raised security concerns amongst NATO nations. The Netherlands, one of a reported thirteen nations that will lead NATO's expansion in 2006, has raised questions publically about the sufficiency of planned NATO forces to handle serious trouble.⁵³ The Dutch plan to deploy about 1,000 to 1,400 troops to southern Afghanistan, and Britain and Canada are also expected to send additional forces to the region; non-NATO members New Zealand and Australia might also provide forces for the expansion.⁵⁴ On January 10, 2006, the Australian Defense Minister reportedly announced that Australia would send an additional 110 special forces soldiers and two helicopters in support of 190 Australian troops already in Afghanistan.⁵⁵ By adding an additional 6,000 troops to the 9,000 already a part of ISAF, the United States may be able to decrease the number of forces it has in Afghanistan.

NATO Assumption of Overall Afghan Security

In February 2005, NATO and the United States agreed to merge ISAF and the U.S.-led Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) under NATO command.⁵⁶ This merger is expected to occur in mid to late 2006 and essentially involves NATO expansion into southern Afghanistan and other volatile regions of the country such as the Pakistani border region. Command arrangements for this merger and peacekeeping versus counterterror roles quickly became points of contention for many NATO countries who felt that placing both missions under a single NATO commander

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Tony Skinner, "UK Pushes ISAF to Work with the U.S.," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, November 9, 2005, p. 5.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² "Bombing Kills German Peacekeeper Near Kabul," *Washington Post*, November 15, 2005.

⁵³ "NATO Tries to Allay Afghan Security Fears," *New York Times on the Web*, November 25, 2005.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ "110 More Soldiers Set for Afghanistan," *Arizona Daily Star (Tucson)*, January 10, 2006.

⁵⁶ Judy Dempsey, "2 Afghanistan Missions to Merge," *International Herald Tribune*, February 11, 2005.

would be counterproductive and that having NATO troops keeping the peace and at the same time conducting combat operations against insurgents would result in widespread Afghan resentment and overall mission failure. On November 14, NATO agreed to a plan where there would be a single chain of command for all operations under an ISAF commander, but a deputy commander would be made responsible for counterinsurgency operations.⁵⁷ Under this plan, NATO agreed that British, Dutch, and Canadian troops would spearhead NATO's move into southern Afghanistan while Germany would take over the north, and Italy and Spain would retain responsibility for western Afghanistan.⁵⁸

Dutch Concerns Over Deploying to Southern Afghanistan. The Netherlands currently has approximately 625 troops currently serving in Afghanistan and under NATO's expansion plan, are due to provide an additional 1,000 to 1,400 troops to serve in Urzuzgan province in the south.⁵⁹ The Dutch government, based on a Dutch intelligence service report, are concerned that their forces may be operating in a particularly dangerous area and have sought assurances that additional military support would be available in the event of significant levels of violence in the region.⁶⁰ The Dutch government has given Parliament - who are reportedly deeply divided over the issue — the authority to approve or reject the deployment and a vote on the issue is scheduled for February 2.⁶¹ This situation is causing difficulty amongst other NATO members, the majority of whom suggest that they would be “hard-pressed” to make up for the Dutch shortfall should the Dutch Parliament vote “No” to sending forces to the southern region.⁶² In this event, the United States, already operating in the region, might be required to make up for the shortfall of forces, possibly affecting recently announced plans to decrease force levels by 2,500 troops. NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, a former Dutch defense minister, is reportedly putting pressure on the Dutch government to honor its troop commitment and former U.S. Ambassador to the Netherlands, Paul Bremer, reportedly suggested that the U.S. Congress might act against Dutch economic interests if Dutch troops are not deployed as planned.⁶³

⁵⁷ Mark John, “NATO Military Backs Command Deal for Afghanistan,” *DefenseNews.com*, November 14, 2005.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Michael Smith, “Afghan Posting “Too Dangerous” for Dutch Army,” *London Sunday Times*, November 20, 2005.

⁶⁰ Arthur Max, “U.S. Assures Dutch of Military Support in Afghan Deployment,” *San Diego Union-Tribune*, December 1, 2005.

⁶¹ Judy Dempsey, “Dutch Leave NATO Hanging on Afghan Force,” *International Herald Tribune*, December 23, 2005.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ “NATO Nudges Dutch on Afghan Mission,” *International Herald Tribune*, January 10, 2006.

While NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, stated that “NATO is committed for the long term” in Afghanistan⁶⁴ some believe that a substantial U.S. military presence will be required throughout the duration of the NATO-led mission to insure long-term NATO commitment. There are no treaty requirements for NATO members to contribute troops to Afghanistan and NATO has had difficulties in the past trying to muster sufficient troops and military resources for operations using this “pass the hat” approach. Some question how effective NATO will be in its new role, particularly when many of its members are unwilling to place their troops in potentially hostile situations and only a few member nations are willing to commit their forces to counterterror and counterinsurgency operations. If only a few NATO’s 26 members are willing to engage in counterterror and counterinsurgency operations, then NATO’s ability to sustain these operations over an extended period — against an insurgency that has shown a great deal of resiliency and has shown no signs relenting their attacks against coalition forces — could be called into question.

Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)

PRTs are small, civil-military teams originally designed to extend the authority of the Afghan central government beyond Kabul and to facilitate aid and reconstruction projects. PRTs have enabled coalition forces to extend a degree of security to outlying regions and have also permitted U.S. forces to establish personal relationships with local Afghan leaders which some believe has helped to diminish insurgent influence in a number of regions.⁶⁵ As of July 2005, there were 22 PRTs — 13 supervised by the Coalition and nine by NATO.⁶⁶ The 13 PRTs run by the Coalition are located in the south and east — generally considered to be moderate to high threat areas. Twelve of the PRTs are U.S. and one is run by New Zealand. The nine PRTs administered by NATO are located in the north and west in low to moderate threat areas and cover approximately 50 percent of Afghanistan.

Efficacy of PRTs. While overall, the PRTs have been described as successful in accomplishing their main missions and have played an important supporting role in other endeavors such as training, counter narcotics, and election support, some NATO PRTs have been described as “risk averse” and overly controlled by their nation’s political-military leadership. If all PRTs eventually transition to NATO control, some question if they can perform as well as PRTs run by the United States and the United Kingdom.

One senior U.S. defense official, acknowledging the record of success of PRTs, suggests that PRTs operate in a “muddled” fashion which has prevented them from

⁶⁴ Judy Dempsey, “2 Afghanistan Missions to Merge,” *International Herald Tribune*, February 11, 2005.

⁶⁵ Joshua Kuccera, p. 25.

⁶⁶ Information in this section is taken from a briefing paper by Dr. Joseph J. Collins of the National Defense University (NDU) titled “Provincial Reconstruction Teams: Past, Present, and Future,” July 2005.

having a much greater effect on Afghanistan's future.⁶⁷ He attributes this lack of efficacy to four basic factors: inconsistent mission statements; unclear roles and responsibilities; ad hoc preparation; and — most importantly — limited resources both human, equipment and financial.⁶⁸ In order for PRTs to achieve their full potential the Defense official suggests the following improvements:

- Either create more PRTs or extend the operational reach of the current 22 PRTs with mini-PRTs into key districts throughout Afghanistan;
- Each PRT should be equipped the best communications possible, additional transportation assets, and receive substantially more funding for a diverse array of projects;
- PRTs need a broad range of development and civilian governance expertise and civilians with the PRTs must have both the authority and resources to play a leadership role;
- The civil-military coordination on PRTs must improve significantly;
- PRTs need to improve their ability to measure the effectiveness of their activities. PRTs must determine what activities have the greatest impact on the locals by employing a more rigorous cause and effect analysis; and
- PRTs should place greater emphasis on capacity-building programs that improve local governance and help to link local officials and institutions to the Afghan central government.⁶⁹

Training the Afghan National Army (ANA)

Training of the ANA commenced shortly after U.S. and coalition forces defeated Taliban forces in early 2002. The Bonn II Conference on rebuilding Afghanistan in December 2002 mandated a 70,000 strong Afghan National Army.⁷⁰ Although the Afghan National Army initially experienced difficulties in terms of morale and desertion at its inception, most analysts agree that the multi-ethnic ANA has developed into a credible fighting force and eight of the ANA's most experienced battalions have been deployed to bases in the provinces where they routinely work

⁶⁷ Michael J. McNerney, "Stabilization and Reconstruction in Afghanistan: Are PRTs a Model or a Muddle," *Parameters: U.S. Army War College Quarterly*, Winter 2005-2006, pp.32-46. Mr. McNerney is the Director of International Policy and Capabilities in the Office of the Deputy Secretary of Defense for Stability Operations.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

⁷⁰ Joshua Kucera, "Afghanistan Looks to Army Expansion," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, October 13, 2004, p. 6.

with U.S. and NATO forces.⁷¹ While ANA soldiers are described as “fearless fighters who learn very quickly,” there have been some difficulties to overcome.⁷² U.S. military officials assert that Afghanistan’s lack of a professional army for the past 13 years, a 20 percent literacy rate amongst recruits, no barracks or modern equipment, plus an inadequate logistics system have hampered the growth of the ANA.⁷³

In February 2005, the U.S. military doubled the number of tactical trainers that are embedded with ANA units from 300 to 600 soldiers.⁷⁴ The majority of these U.S. trainers come from the U.S. Army National Guard and about 16 of these trainers are assigned to each new ANA battalion and assist the battalion as it undergoes its 14-week basic training course and then remain with the battalion, serving as leadership mentors when the battalion deploys for operations.⁷⁵ As of December 20, 2005, the Afghan Army reportedly consisted of almost 27,000 officers and soldiers supported by about 55,000 members of the Afghan National Police.⁷⁶ While the U.S. military trains the soldiers for the ANA, France also assists in training senior officers; Britain trains the non-commissioned officers; and other countries such as Romania and Mongolia train the ANA on its Soviet-era equipment such as artillery and tanks.⁷⁷ On October 9, Russia reportedly announced that it will supply the ANA with \$30 million worth of equipment - including four helicopters, dozens of vehicles, and communications equipment.⁷⁸ In March 2005, U.S. officials began training six ANA battalions simultaneously — up from 4 battalions per training rotation, and they hope that the ANA will reach its mandated strength of 70,000 by the end of 2006 — a full year earlier than previously planned.⁷⁹ In addition to infantry units, the ANA has fielded two combat support battalions with a 122 mm towed D-30 artillery battery and 82 mm mortars.⁸⁰ The ANA has also fielded a tank battalion, equipped primarily with T-62, T-55, and T-54 Soviet-era tanks, and is to eventually also field a

⁷¹ “U.S. Doubles its Troops in the Afghan Army,” *New York Times on the Web*, February 10, 2005.

⁷² Eric Schmitt, “Building an Afghan Army and Learning a Lesson in Patience,” *New York Times*, September 25, 2005.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ “U.S. Doubles its Troops in the Afghan Army,” *New York Times on the Web*, February 10, 2005.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs News Release, No. 1309-05, “Operation Enduring Freedom Rotation Adjustment Announced,” December 20, 2005.

⁷⁷ Amir Shah, “Afghan Army at 20,694 — More on the Way,” *Chicago Tribune*, February 28, 2005.

⁷⁸ “Russia to Supply Afghan Army,” *Washington Post*, October 10, 2005.

⁷⁹ Amir Shah.

⁸⁰ Joshua Kucera, “Afghan Army Development Speeded Up,” *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, March 16, 2005, p. 7.

mechanized infantry battalion equipped with U.S.-made M-113 armored personnel carriers.⁸¹

The Afghan government reportedly seeks to equip its military with high-tech weaponry and develop specialized units. Afghan officials would like to acquire U.S. Apache helicopters, A-10 ground attack aircraft, as well as transport aircraft and armored vehicles.⁸² According to U.S. military officials, the United States and Afghanistan are discussing the possibility of providing the Afghan military with transport aircraft and helicopters.⁸³ The Afghans would also like for the United States to assist in creating and training commando, engineer, and intelligence units for the ANA.⁸⁴

The War on Drugs⁸⁵

Afghanistan's opium industry is estimated to employ directly or indirectly anywhere between 20 to 30 percent of the Afghan population and provides for almost 60 percent of Afghanistan's gross domestic product (GDP).⁸⁶ The cultivation of poppies — used in making opium for heroin — which was regulated and taxed under Taliban rule, flourished after the elimination of the Taliban regime.⁸⁷ According to a United Nations (U.N.) report, Afghanistan's poppy harvest rose by 64 percent in 2004 — making Afghanistan the world's leading source for opium and heroin.⁸⁸ In August 2005, the U.N. reported that opium production had decreased by 21 percent from its 2004 level but, even with this decrease, Afghanistan still ranks as the world's largest opium supplier, accounting for 87 percent of the world's supply, according to the U.N.⁸⁹ There is reportedly evidence that the Taliban are ordering increased poppy production from Afghan farmers in remote regions beyond the government's control as a means to make money to finance their operations and

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Stephen Graham, "Afghan Defense Chief Outlines Critical Needs for Growing Force," *Associated Press*, February 15, 2005.

⁸³ Marc Selinger, "U.S. Exploring Afghanistan's Military Aircraft Needs," *Aerospace Daily & Defense Report*, May 23, 2005.

⁸⁴ Graham.

⁸⁵ For a detailed treatment of both military and non-military aspects of this issue see CRS Report RL32686, *Afghanistan: Narcotics and U.S. Policy*.

⁸⁶ Ted Galen Carpenter, "How the Drug War in Afghanistan Undermines America's War on Terror," CATO Institute - Foreign Policy Briefing No. 84, November 10, 2004 and "Fear of Fighting and Economic Ruin Hold Back Bid to Stamp Out Opium," *London Financial Times*, January 4, 2005, p. 7.

⁸⁷ "U.S. Set to Battle Afghan Drug Trade," *New York Times on the Web*, August 11, 2004.

⁸⁸ Thom Shanker, "Pentagon Sees Antidrug Effort in Afghanistan," *New York Times*, March 25, 2005.

⁸⁹ "The Opium Situation in Afghanistan as of 29 August 2005," Report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, August 29, 2005.

also to weaken the Afghan central government.⁹⁰ NATO's Supreme Commander, U.S. Marine General James L. Jones, has reportedly stated that drugs are a greater threat to Afghan security than a resurgent Taliban.⁹¹

In 2005, DOD increased its counternarcotics role in Afghanistan. The U.S. military in Afghanistan supported efforts by Afghan and U.S. agencies such as the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) by providing helicopter and cargo aircraft transport and planning and intelligence assistance.⁹² The U.S. Army has reportedly provided training to DEA agents deploying to Afghanistan on weapons, night vision devices, and how to spot landmines.

Britain is in command of the Coalition's military counternarcotics efforts in Afghanistan. Reports suggest that Britain will step up military efforts next year when the ARRC takes over command of ISAF and Britain deploys additional forces to Afghanistan.⁹³ British troops will supposedly deploy to southern provinces as well as Helmand province in the southwest — an insurgent stronghold as well as the center of the country's opium trade. As part of this counternarcotics emphasis, Britain is reportedly establishing a joint intelligence fusion center with the United States to focus on drug-related intelligence and British military officials are trying to gain a better understanding of the "Afghan narco-economy and its links to terrorism."⁹⁴ Largely facilitated by Congress, Colombia — which has resumed diplomatic relations with Afghanistan — is preparing to assist Afghanistan by providing its counternarcotics expertise to Afghan police and military forces.⁹⁵ Raids by Afghan police and Coalition forces have enjoyed mixed success, with large amounts of narcotics being seized but often times drug producers and traffickers have eluded capture — sometimes fleeing across the border to Pakistan.⁹⁶

The U.S. military has only played a supporting role in counternarcotics operations in Afghanistan, despite recognition by some U.S. military officials that drugs are currently Afghanistan's primary security problem. With Britain supposedly

⁹⁰ Philip Shishkin and David Crawford, "In Afghanistan, Heroin Trade Soars Despite U.S. Aid," *Wall Street Journal*, January 18, 2006 and Declan Walsh, "In Afghanistan, Taliban Turning to the Drug Trade," *Boston Globe*, December 18, 2005.

⁹¹ "Drugs Main Threat in Afghanistan, General Says," *Los Angeles Times*, December 16, 2005.

⁹² Information in this section is from Thom Shanker, "Pentagon Sees Antidrug Effort in Afghanistan," *New York Times*, March 25, 2005 and James Gordon Meek, "DEA Team to Fight Afghani Opium Trade," *New York Daily News*, April 3, 2005.

⁹³ Information in this section is from Christina Lamb, "British Troops to Target Afghan Opium Trade," *London Sunday Times*, April 24, 2005.

⁹⁴ Tim Ripley, "UK Aims for New Afghan Mission," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, August 24, 2005.

⁹⁵ Rowan Scarborough, "Colombia Helps Afghanistan Wage Drug War," *Washington Times*, August 25, 2005.

⁹⁶ See "Police, Troops Seize Drugs," *Washington Times*, April 24, 2005, Daniel Cooney, "Afghan Raid Nets Huge Opium Cache," *Chicago Tribune*, May 24, 2005, and Daniel Cooney, "Drug Smugglers Escape Big Afghan Raid," *Miami Herald*, June 1, 2005.

taking a more active role in counterdrug operations and a decrease of U.S. military presence in southern Afghanistan, some assert that the United States has all but ceded its counternarcotics responsibilities to NATO and the Afghan central government.⁹⁷

NATO's Supreme Commander has reportedly stated that NATO does not have sufficient funds to address Afghanistan's drug trafficking and the Afghan government has been reportedly less than satisfied with the international community's efforts, particularly in providing alternatives for farmers who grow poppies.⁹⁸ Some suggest that a more aggressive policy towards the Afghan opium problem might be more effective in limiting insurgent activities by taking away a significant means of their financial support.

Africa⁹⁹

The United States is deeply concerned about the potential for Africa to become a breeding ground for terrorists — citing its vast ungoverned spaces and unprotected borders. Somalia has been referred to as a “lawless haven for terrorists,”¹⁰⁰ and reports suggest that Al Qaeda has opened recruiting bases in Nigeria, Somalia, Tanzania, and Uganda.¹⁰¹ One report suggests that there is evidence of 17 training centers in Kenya, possibly set up by groups related to Al Qaeda.¹⁰² Others, however, disagree and contend that the region is not the terrorist zone that some U.S. officials assert.¹⁰³ These critics suggest that there are some groups with ties to Al Qaeda in the region but no actual Al Qaeda groups or even franchise groups and that U.S. military and financial support to some of the region's military forces could actually “fuel radicalism where it scarcely exists.”¹⁰⁴

The U.S. European Command (U.S. EUCOM), which oversees military operations in most of Africa, has reported that nearly 400 foreign fighters captured in Iraq have come from Africa and that some of these veterans of Iraq are returning to places like Morocco and Algeria where their acquired skills, such as operational

⁹⁷ Griff Witte, “U.S. Cedes Duties in Rebuilding Afghanistan,” *Washington Post*, January 3, 2006.

⁹⁸ “NATO Says There is No Cash to Fight Drug Wars,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 21, 2005 and Daniel Cooney, “Afghan Officials See Slow Response to Drug Boom,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 3, 2006.

⁹⁹ For additional information see CRS Report RL31247, *Africa and the War on Terrorism*.

¹⁰⁰ Chris Tomlinson, “Somalia Called Lawless ‘Haven’ for Terrorists,” *Miami Herald*, May 14, 2005.

¹⁰¹ “Al Qaeda has Bases in Africa, UN Says,” *Detroit Free Press*, February 16, 2005.

¹⁰² Tom Walker and Dipesh Gadhur, “British Terror Trail Leads Back to Africa's Horn of Anarchy,” *London Sunday Times*, July 31, 2005.

¹⁰³ Jason Motlagh, “U.S. Seeks to Secure Sahara Desert,” *Washington Times*, November 17, 2005 and James Brandon, “To Fight Al Qaeda, U.S. Troops in Africa Build Schools Instead,” *Christian Science Monitor*, January 9, 2006.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

planning and bomb making, could be used against their respective governments.¹⁰⁵ While terrorism is cited as the primary reason for U.S. military operations in Africa, access to Africa's oil — which presently accounts for 15 percent of the U.S. oil supply and could reach 25 percent by 2015 — is also considered a primary factor for growing U.S. military involvement in the region.¹⁰⁶

In October 2002, the United States established Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) Horn of Africa (HOA) to combat terrorism in the region. For the purpose of this operation, the Horn of Africa is defined as “the total airspace and land areas out to the high-water mark of Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Yemen.”¹⁰⁷ CJTF-HOA is headquartered at Camp Lemonier in Djibouti and consists of approximately 1,400 personnel including U.S. military and Special Operations Forces (SOF), U.S. civilian, and coalition force members.¹⁰⁸ In addition to CJTF-HOA, Combined Task Force (CTF)150 is a naval task force consisting of ships from Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Pakistan, New Zealand, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States, and has the task of monitoring, inspecting, boarding, and stopping suspect shipping not only in the Horn of Africa region, but also in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.¹⁰⁹ Originally, the reported mission of CJTF-HOA was to conduct raids on Al Qaeda targets in the region - particularly Somalia - but due to a lack of targets, the mission has instead evolved into gathering intelligence, military training for some of the region's military forces, and building infrastructure and goodwill to create an environment hostile to terrorist organizations.¹¹⁰

Command Issues

A New Regional Command? DOD is reportedly considering putting Africa — currently the responsibility of both U.S. European Command and U.S. Central Command — under a single, unified command.¹¹¹ U.S. EUCOM, based in Stuttgart, Germany, is responsible for more than 90 countries, with 42 of these countries in Africa, while U.S. CENTCOM - primarily responsible for Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and other Persian Gulf countries — is responsible for Egypt, Sudan,

¹⁰⁵ Eric Schmitt, “As Africans Join Iraqi Insurgency, U.S. Counters with Military Training in Their Lands,” *New York Times*, June 10, 2005.

¹⁰⁶ Todd Pitman, “U.S. Eyes West Africa's Coastline, Oil,” *Washington Times*, August 11, 2005.

¹⁰⁷ News Transcript - DOD Briefing - Joint Task Force Horn of Africa Briefing, January 10, 2003.

¹⁰⁸ News Transcript - DOD Briefing - Joint Task Force Horn of Africa Briefing, September 21, 2005.

¹⁰⁹ Navy News Stand - Eye on the Fleet [http://www.navy.mil/view_single.asp?id=13996] accessed on January 18, 2005

¹¹⁰ Joshua Kucera, “Djibouti: U.S. Foothold in Africa,” *Jane's Defense Weekly*, October 26, 2005.

¹¹¹ Unless otherwise noted, information in this section is from Gordon Lubold, “Officials Look to Put Africa Under One Watchful Eye,” *Army Times*, January 23, 2006.

Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, and Djibouti. U.S. CENTCOM, which is focused on wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, supposedly has little in terms of manpower and resources to devote to Africa and officials suggest that while such a proposal has been discussed for many years, that “the time has arrived to do something.” One suggestion would involve expanding the area that CJTF- HOA is responsible for, taking advantage of the command structure presently in Djibouti. Some say this suggestion has merit as one official noted that “competing resources leave little room for new staffs and command elements.” While CJTF-HOA might form the basis for a new regional “U.S. Africa Command,” analysts suggest that, at present, the command is under-resourced and low on DOD’s priority list — noting that the command has only three CH-53 transport helicopters and one C-130 transport at its disposal and the troops that are assigned to CJTF-HOA arrive on very short 4 to 6 month rotations.¹¹² While CJTF- HOA and Camp Lemonier may provide a basis for such a command, most agree that additional personnel augmentation and resources would be required.

CJTF-HOA Change of Command. In 2006 the U.S. Navy will take over command of CJTF-HOA and assume responsibility for its mission from the U.S. Marines Corps, in part to free up Marine forces currently stretched by operations in Afghanistan and Iraq,¹¹³ and the creation of a 2,500 Marine Special Operations Command. In addition, the United States has reportedly expressed an interest in expanding activities into Uganda, Tanzania, and possibly Eritrea as well as bringing in troops from foreign nations into CJTF-HOA, which has 15 officers from various nations serving on its staff but no foreign troops under its command. DOD is also reportedly looking for alternative sites for CJTF-HOA headquarters, as Djibouti has reportedly doubled its yearly rent for the facilities at Camp Lemonier to \$ 30 million U.S. dollars. Candidates for new headquarters locations include Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda but each location has its own political sensitivities. U.S. officials note that CJTF-HOA could be headquartered on a U.S. Navy command ship at sea, such as the USS Mount Whitney, as it was when CJTF-HOA was first formed in 2002.

The Philippines¹¹⁴

The government of the Philippines, a long-time major non-NATO ally of the United States, faces an insurgency threat from four primary groups — three Islamic groups who seek an independent state in Mindanao and one Communist group which seeks a Marxist state.¹¹⁵ One group in particular, the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), has reported financial and training links to Al Qaeda and has become the focus of the

¹¹² Joshua Kucera, “Djibouti: U.S. Foothold in Africa,” *Jane’s Defense Weekly*, October 26, 2005.

¹¹³ Information in this section is from Joshua Kucera, “U.S. Navy to Take Over Horn of Africa Mission,” *Jane’s Defense Weekly*, September 28, 2005 and Joshua Kucera, “Djibouti: U.S. Foothold in Africa,” *Jane’s Defense Weekly*, October 26, 2005.

¹¹⁴ For additional information see CRS Report RL31265, *Abu Sayyaf: Target of Philippine-U.S. Anti-Terrorism Cooperation* and CRS Report RL31672, *Terrorism in Southeast Asia*.

¹¹⁵ “Philippines,” Center for Defense Information (CDI), October 28, 2004, p. 1.

Administration's counterterror efforts in the region.¹¹⁶ Estimates vary on the size of Abu Sayyaf — ranging from one thousand to a couple of hundred fighters — and their activities were largely aimed at the Philippine government until 2001 when allegations emerged that Abu Sayyaf had been involved in planning the assassination of the Pope during a planned visit to the Philippines and also had plans to hijack and destroy 12 U.S. airliners.¹¹⁷ Philippine authorities reportedly suspect that Abu Sayyaf had a role in the October 2002 bombing near a Philippine military base, which killed three Filipinos and one U.S. Army Special Forces soldier.¹¹⁸

Another group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), with an estimated 10,000 fighters, is presently involved in negotiations with the Philippine government, but there is reported evidence that the MILF provides training facilities to the Al Qaeda affiliate Jemaah Islamiyah — an Islamic group based largely in Indonesia.¹¹⁹

Operations

U.S. military operations in the Philippines are limited by the Philippine constitution (foreign military forces are not permitted to participate in combat operations on Filipino territory) to conducting training in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism tactics, advising Filipino units, and participating in civil-military operations. The focus of civil-military operations is to limit the influence of insurgents with the local population, particularly in the southern region where most Abu Sayyaf and other Islamic insurgent group activity is focused.

The United States has been conducting large joint training exercises with the Philippines since 1981 called the Balikatan exercises¹²⁰ as well as a variety of other training exercises. On October 22, 2005 the U.S. Navy's Forward Deployed Amphibious Readiness Group and the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) arrived in the Philippines to begin Amphibious Landing Exercise (PHIBLEX) 06.¹²¹ In addition to amphibious operations, U.S. and Filipino military personnel also planned to conduct community service projects at a number of Filipino elementary schools and medical civil action programs during the exercise. On January 16, about 30 U.S. Army special forces soldiers from the Ft. Lewis, Washington-based 1st Special Forces Group and about 250 Filipino soldiers began small unit tactics, marksmanship, and combat lifesaver training about 560 miles southeast of Manila in an area known to

¹¹⁶ U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM) Fact Sheet, "Abu Sayyaf History," March 5, 2002.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ "5 Bomb Suspects Nabbed In Philippines," *CBSNEWS.com*, October 23, 2002.

¹¹⁹ "Terror Threats," *Manila Business World*, March 24, 2004 and "Malaysia Holds Six Indonesian Islamist Militants," *Reuters News Agency*, March 6, 2004.

¹²⁰ C.H. Briscoe, "Balikatan Exercise Spearheaded ARSOF Operations in the Philippines," *Special Warfare, The Professional Bulletin of the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School*, September 2004, pp. 16 -25.

¹²¹ "Forward Deployed Sailors, Marines Begin PHIBLEX 06," Navy News Stand, U.S. Navy Public Affairs, October 24, 2005.

be frequented by Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah.¹²² The U.S. special forces units also planned to conduct medical missions in the local communities in an effort to win over the local Muslim populations.¹²³ The United States has frequently conducted lower-level training exercises with specialized Filipino counterterrorism and counterinsurgency forces.¹²⁴ This training, typically involving no more than 100 U.S. Special Forces troops at one time, focuses on the training of individuals and small units on planning, tactics, and techniques and also on specialized counterterrorism equipment provided to the Philippine Armed Forces. Reportedly, the United States has also begun counter-drug training with the Philippines, which is considered a major drug transshipment center and a major regional producer of marijuana.¹²⁵

The Balikatan exercise for 2006 is scheduled to start on February 20 and run for two weeks, involving more than 5,000 U.S. military personnel.¹²⁶ In addition to ground, air, and naval exercises, U.S. and Filipino forces plan to conduct humanitarian, medical, and engineering operations on Jolo island — an area where Islamic insurgents are particularly active.¹²⁷

A Second Front for the War on Terrorism?

Some suggest that U.S. involvement in the Philippines is part of a greater U.S. strategy to combat Islamic terrorism throughout Southeast Asia.¹²⁸ Some U.S. officials reportedly believe that Abu Sayyaf and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front have established connections with Jemaah Islamiyah, an Al Qaeda affiliate operating across Indonesia and the Philippines, who are believed to be responsible for a string of bombings including Bali in 2002 and the Davao bombings in 2003.¹²⁹ A May 2005 report suggests that Abu Sayyaf has developed a “training relationship and operational alliance” with Jemaah Islamiyah that could lead to new capabilities for Abu Sayyaf.¹³⁰ While some note the relative success of joint U.S.-Filipino training

¹²² Teresa Cerojano, “U.S., Philippine Troops Conduct Annual War Games,” *Army Times*, January 17, 2006.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ Information in this paragraph is from C.H. Briscoe, “Balikatan Exercise Spearheaded ARSOF Operations in the Philippines,” *Special Warfare, The Professional Bulletin of the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School*, September 2004, pp. 16 - 25.

¹²⁵ “RP-US Troops Start Anti-Narcoterrorism Exercise,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, August 31, 2004.

¹²⁶ Jim Gomez, “U.S., Philippines to Drill Together,” *ArmyTimes.com*, January 4, 2006.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ For additional information see CRS Report RL32259, *Terrorism in South Asia*, by K. Alan Konstadt and Bruce Vaughn.

¹²⁹ See Eric Schmitt, “U.S. Combat Force of 1,700 is Headed to the Philippines,” *New York Times*, February 22, 2003; Anthony Davis, “Southeast Asia Awaits JI’s Next Move,” *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, September 2004, pp. 27 - 29 and Marc Erikson, “Philippines the Second Front in the War on Terror?” *Asia Times*, October 27, 2001.

¹³⁰ Anthony Davis, “Philippines Fears New Wave of Attacks by Abu Sayyaf Group,” *Jane’s* (continued...)

exercises in combating Abu Sayyaf, others warn that increasing U.S. involvement could “complicate” the Philippine’s insurgency dilemma and also possibly fuel anti-American sentiment in the region, which could form the basis “of a new pan-Islamic solidarity in the region.”¹³¹ Some experts contend that not all militant Muslim groups operating in Southeast Asia are aligned with Al Qaeda, and it is important that U.S. counterterror efforts in the region “do not motivate these potential affiliates to join the Al Qaeda cause.”¹³²

Colombia¹³³

Colombia occupies a unique position in the Administration’s global war on terror in that its targeted terrorist groups are Marxist as opposed to Islamic-based and have no reported links to Al Qaeda or other Islamic groups. U.S. military involvement began in 2000 under “Plan Colombia” and was limited to training Colombian counternarcotics units, although U.S. forces now train the Colombian military in counterinsurgency operations. Colombia has been involved for almost forty years in what some describe as a civil war and others describe as a counterinsurgency campaign against three major groups. The first two groups, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN) started in the 1950s as Marxist revolutionary groups but reportedly have lost most of their ideological support and have transformed into violent criminal organizations.¹³⁴ The other group, the rightist United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) is a conglomerate of illegal self-defense groups formed in rural areas where the Colombian government did not exert a strong presence.¹³⁵ All three groups allegedly fund their activities through drug revenues¹³⁶ and are on the Administration’s official list of terrorist organizations.¹³⁷ These groups also currently hold a number of Colombian and foreign hostages whom they use as negotiating leverage — including three U.S. defense contractors who were taken by the FARC

¹³⁰ (...continued)

Intelligence Review, May 2005, p. 10.

¹³¹ Robert Nolan, “Terror in the Philippines,” *Foreign Policy Association Newsletter*, March 6, 2003.

¹³² Gaye Christoffersen, “The War on Terrorism in Southeast Asia: Searching for Partners, Delimiting Targets,” Center for Contemporary Conflict, U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, March 2002, p. 6.

¹³³ For additional information see CRS Report RL32250, *Colombia: Issues for Congress*.

¹³⁴ Lieutenant Colonel Kevin W. Buckley, “U.S. Support to Plan Colombia: A Heading Check,” U.S. Army War College Strategy Research Project, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, March 19, 2004, p. 1.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ U.S. State Department - Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations, April 30, 2001, [<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/pgtrpt/2000/2450.htm>].

in February 2003 when their plane was shot down.¹³⁸ On December 12, 2005, the Colombian government said that it would withdraw its forces from a contested area if the FARC would agree to talks intended to exchanged jailed rebels for 59 hostages being held by the FARC — including the three U.S. defense contractors.¹³⁹

Current Situation

The majority of U.S. military personnel in Colombia are from the U.S. Army's 7th Special Forces Group stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. About 200 special forces soldiers are currently serving as trainers, where they are limited to training in garrison and planning support at headquarters, and another 200 troops provide "information support" providing intelligence, leadership, and planning support.¹⁴⁰ U.S. forces reportedly do not accompany or serve as advisors to Colombian units conducting combat operations.¹⁴¹ While some have criticized the military contribution made by U.S. trainers as "small," U.S. forces in Colombia claim that the training that they have provided to the Colombian military has resulted in killing or capturing more than 600 insurgents, the confiscation of huge amounts of arms and ammunition, and the destruction of numerous drug labs.¹⁴² On December 13, 2005, a U.S. Navy SH-60B Seahawk helicopter crashed shortly after taking off from the frigate USS DeWert, killing its three-person crew.¹⁴³ The USS DeWert was reportedly involved in counterdrug operations at the time of the helicopter's crash.¹⁴⁴

Paramilitary Demobilization

On December 12, after extensive negotiations, 1,923 members of the United Self Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) demobilized, also surrendering a large arsenal of weapons and equipment, including two helicopters.¹⁴⁵ Reportedly, the demobilized fighters will receive a \$168 per month stipend from the Colombian government, as well as housing, healthcare, schooling, and new identities to reintegrate them back into Colombian society.¹⁴⁶ Approximately 8,000 AUC paramilitaries remain to be demobilized.¹⁴⁷ On December 16, the National Liberation

¹³⁸ Rachel Van Dongen, "U.S. 'Private Army' Grows," *Christian Science Monitor*, September 3, 2003.

¹³⁹ "Colombia Open to Hostage Talk," *CNN.com*, December 14, 2005.

¹⁴⁰ Kathleen T. Rhem, "U.S. Military Helping Colombian Military Cope With Drug War's Legacy," American Forces Information Service, November 2005.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² John Otis, "Uncertainty, Costs Weigh on U.S. in Colombia," *Houston Chronicle*, May 15, 2005.

¹⁴³ "Militaries to Search for U.S. Copter," *Miami Herald*, December 16, 2005.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Chris Kraul, "1,923 Paramilitaries Surrender," *Los Angeles Times*, December 13, 2005.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

Army (ELN) and the Colombian government announced that talks had been convened in Havana, Cuba to begin a formal peace process.¹⁴⁸ The ELN is believed to have about 4,000 members and peace talks held in 2003 failed, reportedly due to an inability to agree to a framework for negotiations.¹⁴⁹

A Resurgent FARC

The FARC, after having spent the last two years on the defensive as a result of the Colombian government's "Plan Patriota" to recapture FARC-held territory, have launched an aggressive country-wide campaign against the Colombian government, likely aimed to influence Colombia's 2006 presidential elections.¹⁵⁰ According to reports, the FARC has restructured from a larger "front" (about 100 or so guerillas) to companies of 54 and squads of 12 to avoid casualties inflicted by Colombian air force bombings directed by U.S. intelligence sources. The FARC has also increased the use of improvised explosive devices, landmines, and snipers, particularly in areas where force ratios do not favor FARC offensive actions against government forces. Since February 2005, more than 100 members of the Colombian military have been reported killed by the FARC and 732 soldiers have been reported killed since January 2004 — with more than a third of them killed by land mines and explosive devices. On December 27, 2005 the FARC reportedly killed 24 Colombian soldiers who were protecting coca-eradication workers near the Town of Vista Hermosa in southern Colombia.¹⁵¹ This attack was preceded 10 days earlier by an attack that killed eight Colombian police officers and some suggest that these attacks will continue during the run up to Colombia's presidential primary in March 2006 and continue through the national election in May.¹⁵²

Issues for Congress

NATO Command in Afghanistan

Congress may opt to examine a number of issues concerning NATO's assumption of command of ISAF and Operation Enduring Freedom in 2006. Some possible issues include:

- Is there a formal transition plan for the transfer of command to NATO?;

¹⁴⁸ "Colombia ELN Rebels Set for Talks," BBC News, December 16, 2005.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Information in this section is from Jeremy McDermott, "Colombian Insurgency Escalates as Guerillas go Back on Offensive," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, July 2005, pp. 26-30 and Juan Forero, "Increase in Guerilla Attacks Tests Colombia's Popular President," *New York Times*, July 3, 2005.

¹⁵¹ "Colombia Rebels Kill 24 Soldiers," BBC News, December 27, 2005 and Chris Kaul, "24 Colombian Troops Slain by Guerillas," *Los Angeles Times*, December 28, 2005.

¹⁵² Ibid.

- What will be the U.S. military role in the NATO command structure?;
- How much say will NATO have in security and stability operations and offensive operations designed to destroy the Taliban/Al Qaeda insurgency? Will NATO be able to “overrule” the United States or change existing policies? Will NATO assumption of command lead to a less vigorous pursuit of insurgents?;
- What are NATO’s long-term plans to provide adequate forces for security and stability and offensive operations? Has NATO secured commitments from NATO members for troops and military resources for at least the next ten years or will NATO continue to “pass the hat” to obtain forces needed for Afghanistan?;
- Does NATO have a comprehensive and effective counternarcotics plan for Afghanistan?; and
- Does NATO have a long-term strategy to transition all security and offensive military operations to the Afghan government and its armed forces and police?

Counternarcotics Operations in Afghanistan

Congress might act to review current Administration and DOD policy concerning the U.S. military role in Afghan counternarcotics operations. While the insurgency remains a threat, the performance of the ANA and the progress made toward governance, suggest that the Afghan national government and Coalition are successfully meeting these challenges. Some suggest that, despite the progress made to date, Afghanistan’s burgeoning drug trade has the potential to undermine the Afghan government and provide the Taliban with the financial resources needed to perpetuate the insurgency indefinitely.

The current U.S. military role in counternarcotics operations is limited to training, planning support, and the transport of police and troops. The rationale provided in the past for limited U.S. military involvement in Afghan counterdrug operations was that active involvement “was not achievable given U.S. force levels in Afghanistan” and that it could “significantly undermine its counterinsurgency campaign.”¹⁵³ While the United States has gone from a “no participation” policy to a supporting role, critics suggest that a more active role is now essential. Some suggest that U.S. strategy in this regard is contradictory — senior U.S. military leadership describes the Afghan drug trade as the most significant security problem facing Afghanistan yet it appears that some believe that the U.S. is ceding its responsibilities in counternarcotics operations at a time that such efforts should be intensified.

¹⁵³ Rowan Scarborough, “Military Resists Ant-Drug Role,” *Washington Times*, October 26, 2004.

Africa Long-Term Strategy and Command Arrangements

It is possible that Congress may explore in greater detail how Africa not only fits into the Administration's long term strategy for the war on terror but also what the Administration's specific strategy is for Africa, if such a strategy exists. While Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) has been in existence for almost three years, little is publicly known about these long-term commitments to the region in terms of overall strategy and what resources — both military and financial — would be required to implement such a strategy, particularly if the Administration intends to expand operations to other African nations.

Congress may also choose to review with DOD, the prospects for establishing a separate regional command for Africa. While there appears to be a number of arguments favoring such a course of action, there are also political and resource issues that might be examined in great detail. Security for such a headquarters, if it is placed in Africa, could also be a significant issue for discussion, given the volatile nature of the region. Removing Africa from U.S. CENTCOM's and U.S. EUCOM's responsibility could also have political and resource implications.

Abu Sayaaf and Jemaah Islamiyah

Reports that Abu Sayaaf and Jemaah Islamiyah are developing a training relationship and operational alliance suggest to some the potential for an increase in terrorist activities throughout Southeast Asia. While the majority of these activities would likely be against regional governments, the potential exists for attacks against U.S. concerns and citizens in the region. U.S. military presence and ongoing operations in the region are considered by some as modest at best and might do little to deter attacks or assist U.S. regional allies in pursuing those responsible. Given this possibility, Congress might act to review the adequacy of U.S. military forces in the region as well as their current mandate in terms of training and advising regional military forces.

FARC Operations

Congress may decide to examine the progress being made against the FARC by the U.S.-trained Colombian military. While reports of demobilization and peace talks by the other insurgent groups are considered promising by some, others note that the FARC continues its campaign against the Colombian government, adopting some of the tactics employed successfully by insurgents in Afghanistan and Iraq. Some reports also suggest that while Colombian military operations against the FARC have enjoyed a degree of success, that joint U.S.-Colombian counternarcotics operations have done little to stem the supply of cocaine.¹⁵⁴ Critics note that profits from drug operations finance the FARC and suggest that drastically reducing narcotics-related profits would have a significant impact on the FARC's ability to sustain operations against the Colombian military.

¹⁵⁴ Henry Chu, "Plan Colombia Fails to Stem Cocaine Supply," *Los Angeles Times*, September 18, 2005 and Steven Dudley, "FARC is on the Run - For Now," *Miami Herald*, September 26, 2005.

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