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

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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 18,000 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 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*.

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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 intended 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 involved in the fall of 2001. At present, the majority of U.S. ground forces come

² CRS has a number of reports on Iraq. The following reports discuss the military aspects of Iraq in great detail: CRS Report RL31763, *Iraq: Summary of U.S. Forces* and CRS Report RL31701, *Iraq: U.S. Military Operations and Costs*.

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* and CRS Report RS22017, *Special Operations Forces (SOF) and CIA Paramilitary Operations: Issues for Congress*.

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

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 will be deployed to train the Afghan National Army (ANA).⁵

Information concerning major unit participation for OEF 7 has not been provided by the Department of Defense (DOD) nor by U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM). It is believed that the headquarters of the Fort Drum, New York-based 10th Mountain Division and the division's 3rd and 4th Brigade Combat Teams (BCT) will deploy to Afghanistan in the spring of 2006 and will constitute the majority of U.S. ground forces in the region. Reports suggest that the Army has completed its 2007 deployment plans, and are working on a 2008 deployment plan and the Marines are also working on deployment plans out to 2008.⁶

Security for Parliamentary Elections. U.S. and Coalition forces have increased force levels and undertaken operations in conjunction with the Afghan National Army (ANA) and National Police to quell insurgent violence in the run up to Afghanistan's September 18, 2005 nation-wide National Assembly and Provincial Council elections. About 700 members of the 82nd Airborne's 1st Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment deployed to Afghanistan at the end of July to assist in security operations.⁷ This deployment is expected to last four months but could be extended if required.⁸ The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) also plans to send approximately 2,000 troops to Afghanistan by September to provide additional security for the elections.⁹ NATO is expected to deploy three additional battalions, a quick reaction force, and an "over-the-horizon" force to augment security — a force package similar to that used in the October 2004 Afghan presidential elections. Although NATO has not provided official details, Romania, France, Spain, and the Netherlands were reportedly expected to provide a battalion each for this effort.¹⁰ In addition, Australia will reportedly deploy about 150 special forces soldiers to Afghanistan prior to the elections, but these soldiers will likely join U.S. special

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

⁶ Christian Lowe, "USMC Planning for Iraq Ops Through 2008," *DefenseNews.com*, August 18, 2005.

⁷ "More U.S. Forces Headed to Afghanistan: Unit to Change Role," Armed Forces Press Service, July 11, 2005.

⁸ Kevin Maurer, "82nd Unit Prepares to Deploy to Afghanistan," *Fayetteville (NC) Observer*, July 9, 2005.

⁹ "Alliance to Deploy Extra Troops for Afghan Elections," NATO Update, June 9, 2005 and Judy Dempsey, "NATO to Add to Afghanistan Troops," *International Herald Tribune*, July 20, 2005.

¹⁰ "NATO May Send More Troops for Afghan Election," *Baltimore Sun*, June 7, 2005.

forces in the effort to destroy insurgent leadership.¹¹ As of August 22, approximately 10,500 NATO troops (including the NATO-led International Security and Assistance Force - ISAF) had reportedly been deployed to Afghanistan to provide security for the elections.¹²

Operational Issues.

Changing Nature of the Conflict? In early 2005, some postulated that the nature of the conflict in Afghanistan was changing. Reports suggest that Afghan warlords are being “co-opted” and that various warlords are peacefully ceding¹³ power to the Afghan government. Efforts to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate the various militia groups controlled by warlords has “helped to disarm more than half of the country’s 60,000 irregular fighters and canton 8,018 tanks, armored personnel carriers and artillery pieces — 95 percent of the heavy weapons estimated to be in the hands of “unofficial” military commanders.”¹⁴ The Afghan government and the U.S. military have long sought to demobilize and reintegrate local militias and curb the influence of regional warlords that were seen by many as a threat to the fledgling Afghan national government.

Another change is improved cooperation with the Pakistani military. U.S. forces are reportedly training Pakistani forces in night flying and helicopter assault techniques that could be useful in military operations in the border region.¹⁵ Pakistani military efforts in the South Waziristan border region in 2004 reportedly resulted in the destruction of at least two insurgent training camps — disrupting the operations of hundreds of foreign militants operating in the region as well as killing or capturing more than 300 insurgents — at the cost of about 200 Pakistani soldiers killed.¹⁶ Pakistan is believed to have 75,000 soldiers deployed along the border conducting offensive operations in the North Waziristan region. Current operations are more discrete — relying on specific target intelligence, than last year’s wide sweeps which resulted in numerous casualties on both sides.¹⁷ Despite Pakistan’s military

¹¹ Janaki Kremmer, “Australia Reassesses Afghan Effort,” *Christian Science Monitor*, July 22, 2005.

¹² “Official: U.S., Afghan Forces Kill 40 Militants,” *MSNBC.com*, August 22, 2005.

¹³ “Neutralized Warlords,” *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, February 7, 2005 and David S. Cloud, “Afghan Warlords Slowly Come in From the Cold,” *Wall Street Journal*, March 14, 2005.

¹⁴ Michael Griffin, “Hard Road Ahead for Afghan Leader,” *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, February 1, 2005.

¹⁵ Carlotta Gall, “U.S. Troops Training Pakistani Units Fighting Qaeda,” *New York Times*, April 27, 2005.

¹⁶ Carlotta Gall, “Pakistanis Pursue Qaeda Forces in Offensive on Afghan Border,” *New York Times*, March 7, 2005.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

cooperation, Pakistan is still widely criticized for “accommodating pro-Taliban forces” in the country.¹⁸

Early in 2005, U.S. military officials reportedly noted that attacks and firefights involving U.S. forces had decreased to the point where violent contacts were becoming “rare” and that many areas that were previously insecure were now safe and that Afghans were becoming “increasingly cordial” to Americans.¹⁹ This trend was attributed to Afghan security forces exerting a more forceful presence in violent areas of the country making the environment less hospitable to insurgent forces.²⁰ As a result of the improved security situation, U.S. forces have been able to turn more of its attention to reconstruction operations.²¹ Others suggest that the Taliban’s failure to disrupt last year’s Afghan presidential elections as promised and the Afghan government’s offer of amnesty to many Taliban leaders and their followers have resulted in poor morale within the ranks of the insurgents.²² A Taliban spokesman, however, reportedly attributed its inaction during the winter of 2004 to the weather and promised it would regroup and renew attacks in the spring when the weather improved.²³

Renewed Insurgent Attacks. U.S. forces renewed attempts in April and May 2005 to end the insurgency by operating in the border provinces where the Taliban continue to exert a degree of control. On March 27, a mine exploded under a U.S. military vehicles south of Kabul killing four U.S. soldiers.²⁴ In early April, a U.S. military spokesman acknowledged that “the number and severity of attacks against Afghan and coalition forces have increased compared to winter.”²⁵ On April 12, Afghan forces were ambushed by about 30 to 35 insurgents near Khost — about 90 miles south of Kabul — and U.S. troops and warplanes responded in support, resulting in two U.S. wounded and about 12 insurgents killed.²⁶ U.S. and local Afghan forces came under attack on May 4 in Zabol province, resulting in six U.S.

¹⁸ David Rohde and Somini Sengupta, “Qaeda on the Run? Raids Seem to Belie Pakistani’s Word,” *New York Times*, August 5, 2005.

¹⁹ Carlotta Gall, “Rebel Attacks Down Sharply in Afghanistan, U.S. General Says,” *New York Times*, March 8, 2005.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Thomas Coghlan, “Rocket Man Gives up Rebellion to Put the Taliban on the Road to Peace,” *London Daily Telegraph*, February 22, 2005.

²³ “Taliban Says Their Insurgency is Waiting Out the Bitter Winter,” *New York Times*, February 20, 2005.

²⁴ Stephen Graham, “Afghan Landmine Kills 4 U.S. Soldiers,” *Miami Herald*, March 27, 2005.

²⁵ Gerry J. Gilmore, “Number of Anti-Coalition Attacks Goes Up in Afghanistan,” American Forces Press Service, April 2, 2005.

²⁶ “12 Militants Killed, 2 Americans Wounded in Afghanistan,” *Baltimore Sun*, April 13, 2005.

soldiers wounded and approximately 45 insurgents killed.²⁷ In both the April 12 and May 4 attacks, U.S. fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters were credited with causing the majority of insurgent casualties. Two U.S. Marines were killed battling insurgents in Laghman province on May 8; two U.S. soldiers were killed and eight wounded in a mortar attack at a firebase near the Pakistan border on June 9 ; and one U.S. soldier was killed and three wounded during an insurgent ambush in Paktika province on June 10.²⁸ In late June, U.S. forces began operating in the Khakeran valley in southern Afghanistan — a reported insurgent sanctuary about 130 miles northeast of Kandahar.²⁹ This operation, undertaken in response to renewed insurgent attacks, resulted in as many as 178 insurgents killed — primarily from U.S. military aircraft attacks.

While some believe that the insurgency is in decline, others — citing the scope and intensity of fighting in the spring months of 2005 — suggest otherwise. Some U.S. and Afghan officials reportedly characterize the insurgents as limited in their mobility and unable to seize territory and hold it, but nevertheless a force well equipped with personnel, weapons, and money.³⁰ They note that while the Taliban may be unable to hold ground, they can continue the insurgency “indefinitely, attacking the fledgling Afghan government, scaring away aid groups, and leaving the province ungovernable.” Taliban ranks have reportedly been rapidly replenished by recruits coming in from Pakistan. The insurgents have been operating in groups of 20 or more, using rocket propelled grenades and light machine guns, and have been able to stand and fight for hours, despite taking heavy casualties. Perhaps in a shift of tactics to avoid additional casualties, U.S. and Afghan military officials note that insurgents have recently begun ambushing soldiers with the roadside improvised explosives that have proven successful in Iraq.

Special Operations Helicopter Downing and Ensuing Actions. On June 28th, a U.S. MH-47 Chinook helicopter with the U.S. 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) was shot down by insurgents as they were attempting to reinforce a four-man SEAL (U.S. Navy’s Sea, Air, and Land Special Operations Force) team under attack by insurgent forces north of Asadabad. Eight members of the helicopter’s crew and an eight-man SEAL response force were killed in the crash. In addition, three of the four SEALs that they were trying to reinforce were killed by attacking insurgents. One wounded SEAL survived and was eventually returned to U.S. control after he was given refuge by some local inhabitants. It has been

²⁷ Halima Kazem, “45 Killed in Fighting in Southern Afghanistan,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 5, 2005.

²⁸ See “2 Marines Die in Clash with Afghan Rebels,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 9, 2005; Carlotta Gall, “Two U.S. Soldiers are Killed in Afghanistan” *New York Times*, June 9, 2005; and Daniel Cooney, “Afghan Insurgent Ambush Kills 1 U.S. Soldier; 3 Hurt,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 11, 2005.

²⁹ Thomas Munita, “178 Afghan Rebels Die in Bombings,” *Washington Post*, June 26, 2005 and Thomas Munita, “Troops Root Taliban Out of Afghan Valley,” *Army Times*, June 27, 2005.

³⁰ Information in this section is from Carlotta Gall, “Despite Years of U.S. Pressure, Taliban Fight on in Jagged Hills,” *New York Times*, June 4, 2005, and N.C. Aizenman, “Violence Linked to Taliban Swells in Afghanistan,” *Washington Post*, June 9, 2005.

speculated that the four-man SEAL team was involved in either locating or attempting to capture or kill Taliban leader Ahmad Shaw — a warlord loyal to Mullah Omar and with considerable influence over the Asadabad region.³¹

After the downing, approximately 300 U.S. troops, supported by military aircraft, began hunting the insurgents responsible for the attack.³² Some suggested that while some of the insurgents may have remained in the area, many had fled into Pakistan, and, on July 14, U.S. forces reportedly killed 24 suspected insurgents fleeing into Pakistan.³³ The U.S. military reportedly concluded its operation aimed at insurgents responsible for SEAL ambush and helicopter downing on August 21. A U.S. military spokesman claimed that during the week-long operation, U.S. forces had been in 29 separate engagements and had killed more than 40 insurgents.³⁴ On July 24, six U.S. soldiers were wounded in an ambush in eastern Afghanistan when an improvised explosive device detonated near a convoy and the unit came under small arms fire.³⁵ Some reports suggest that many of these improvised explosives are becoming more sophisticated — often using long-range cordless phones to remotely detonate them under vehicles. Some Afghan military officials have accused the Pakistani military and intelligence service of providing the insurgents with not only bombs, but also other military supplies and equipment.³⁶ On August 4, another U.S. soldier was killed in Paktika province by a roadside bomb and, on August 12, a soldier was killed when his convoy was ambushed by small arms and rocket-propelled grenades.³⁷ According to DOD, from January 1 to August 6, 2005, 39 U.S. service members were killed in action (KIA) and 120 wounded in action (WIA) with another 24 service members dying in accidents or by other causes in Operation Enduring Freedom.³⁸

U.S. Marines and Afghan Special Forces launched a large offensive operation against insurgents in the Korengal Valley near the Pakistan border on August 13.³⁹ On August 18, two U.S. soldiers traveling in a convoy were killed by a roadside

³¹ James Gordon Meek, “Troops Target Most-Wanted Warlord,” *New York Daily News*, August 8, 2005.

³² Amir Shah, “Militants Flee into Afghan Mountains,” *ArmyTimes.com*, July 14, 2005.

³³ Somini Sengupta, “U.S. Forces Kill 24 Militants Fleeing to Pakistan,” *New York Times*, July 16, 2005.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ “U.S. Troops Wounded in Afghanistan,” BBC News, July 25, 2005.

³⁶ Paul Watson, “Pakistan Connection Seen in Taliban’s New Tactics,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 28, 2005.

³⁷ “U.S. Service Member Killed in Afghanistan,” *ArmyTimes.com*, August 4, 2005, and Paul Watson, “U.S. Soldier Slain on Afghan Road Project,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 12, 2005.

³⁸ Global War on Terrorism - Operation Enduring Freedom Casualties by Month - October 7, 2001 through August 6, 2005, Washington Headquarters Services - Directorate for Information Operations and Reports accessed on August 30, 2005.

³⁹ Daniel Cooney, “Biggest Offensive launched Against Rebels,” *Miami Herald*, August 14, 2005.

bomb in Kandahar province.⁴⁰ On August 21, a bomb planted under a wooden bridge detonated as a U.S. convoy was crossing killing four U.S. soldiers.⁴¹

Permanent Presence and Bases in Afghanistan?⁴² There are indications that the United States may seek permanent military bases in Afghanistan. Reportedly, the United States will upgrade U.S. military facilities in Afghanistan — primarily at the airbases of Bagram and Kandahar, which are currently being equipped with new runways. 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 a possibility, but note that there are numerous regional sensitivities to such a plan.

International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF)

ISAF is a NATO-led organization, normally consisting of approximately 8,000 troops from 26 NATO nations, as well as troops from nine partner and two non-aligned countries.⁴³ 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.⁴⁴ ISAF currently does not participate in offensive operations against the Taliban and Al Qaeda — these operations are carried out by the U.S.-led CJTF-180 and forces from 19 other countries⁴⁵ (including some countries that have other forces assigned to ISAF) and the ANA.

Current Situation. On August 4, the Italian Rapid Deployment Corps took over command of ISAF from the Turkish Rapid Deployment Corps, which had been in command of ISAF since February 2005.⁴⁶ The Italian Rapid Deployment Corps will command ISAF until May 2006 and then relinquish command to the British-led

⁴⁰ “Afghan Blast Kills 2 GIs, Wounds 2 Others,” *MSNBC.com*, August 18, 2005.

⁴¹ “Official: U.S., Afghan Forces Kill 40 Militants,” *MSNBC.com*, August 22, 2005.

⁴² “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.

⁴³ “NATO in Afghanistan: Factsheet,” as of August 22, 2005, [<http://www.nato.int/issues/afghanistan/index.html>].

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ See [http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/enduring-freedom_orbat-03.htm] for a listing of these countries as of June 2004.

⁴⁶ Nicholas Fiorenza, “Italy Gears up for ISAF Mantle,” *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, August 3, 2005, p. 7.

Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps (ARCC), which will command ISAF for nine months.⁴⁷ In February, NATO agreed to expand ISAF coverage into western Afghanistan, providing security assistance to an estimated 50 percent of Afghanistan.⁴⁸ As previously noted, NATO plans to temporarily increase ISAF by approximately 2,000 soldiers by September to assist in upcoming Afghan elections.

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.⁴⁹ This merger is expected to occur in late 2006 and essentially involves NATO expansion into southern Afghanistan and other volatile regions of the country such as the Pakistani border region. Some suggest that this action could result in the substantial reduction of U.S. forces in Afghanistan⁵⁰ but details regarding U.S. troop strength have not yet been decided. U.S. troops remaining in Afghanistan would be under NATO control and it is unclear if the United States would keep a separate force under U.S. control in Afghanistan to continue to hunt for senior Al Qaeda and Taliban leadership believed to be hiding in the mountainous Afghan-Pakistani border region.⁵¹ While the NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, reportedly stated that “NATO is committed for the long term” in Afghanistan⁵² 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. In addition, 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. If NATO troop commitments do fall short, it is likely that U.S. forces would be required to make up the difference.

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.⁵³ As of July 2005, there were 22 PRTs

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Robin Hughes and Joris Janssen Lok, “NATO Confirms ISAF Expansion,” *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, February 16, 2005.

⁴⁹ Judy Dempsey, “2 Afghanistan Missions to Merge,” *International Herald Tribune*, February 11, 2005.

⁵⁰ “NATO to Relieve U.S. in Afghanistan Next Year,” Associated Press, August 4, 2005

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Dempsey.

⁵³ Joshua Kuccera, p. 25.

—13 supervised by the Coalition and nine by NATO.⁵⁴ 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. 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.

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.⁵⁵ 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 with U.S. and NATO forces.⁵⁶

In February 2005, the U.S. military doubled the number of tactical trainers that are embedded with ANA units from 300 to 600 soldiers.⁵⁷ 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.⁵⁸ As of February 2005, the Afghan Army reportedly consisted of almost 21,000 officers and soldiers with another 3,000 - 4,000 in training.⁵⁹ 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

⁵⁴ 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.

⁵⁵ Joshua Kucera, “Afghanistan Looks to Army Expansion,” *Jane’s Defense Weekly*, October 13, 2004, p. 6.

⁵⁶ “U.S. Doubles its Troops in the Afghan Army,” *New York Times on the Web*, February 10, 2005.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Amir Shah, “Afghan Army at 20,694 — More on the Way,” *Chicago Tribune*, February 28, 2005.

ANA on its Soviet-era equipment such as artillery and tanks.⁶⁰ In March, U.S. officials began training six ANA battalions simultaneously — up from 4 battalions per training rotation, and it is hoped that the ANA will reach its mandated strength of 70,000 by the end of 2006 — a full year earlier than previously planned.⁶¹ 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.⁶² The ANA has also fielded a tank battalion, equipped primarily with T-62, T-55, and T-54 Soviet-era tanks, and will eventually also field a mechanized infantry battalion equipped with U.S.-made M-113 armored personnel carriers.⁶³

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.⁶⁴ 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.⁶⁵ The Afghans would also like for the United States to assist in creating and training commando, engineer, and intelligence units for the ANA.⁶⁶

The War on Drugs⁶⁷

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).⁶⁸ 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.⁶⁹ According to a United Nation's (U.N.) report, Afghanistan's poppy harvest rose by 64 percent in 2004 — making Afghanistan the world's leading source for opium and

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Joshua Kucera, "Afghan Army Development Speeded Up," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, March 16, 2005, p. 7.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Stephen Graham, "Afghan Defense Chief Outlines Critical Needs for Growing Force," *Associated Press*, February 15, 2005.

⁶⁵ Marc Selinger, "U.S. Exploring Afghanistan's Military Aircraft Needs," *Aerospace Daily & Defense Report*, May 23, 2005.

⁶⁶ Graham.

⁶⁷ For a detailed treatment of both military and non-military aspects of this issue see CRS Report RL32686, Afghanistan: Narcotics and U.S. Policy, December 7, 2004.

⁶⁸ 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.

⁶⁹ "U.S. Set to Battle Afghan Drug Trade," *New York Times on the Web*, August 11, 2004.

heroin.⁷⁰ This situation has caused some to draw comparisons between present-day Afghanistan and Colombia of the 1990s when that country became the leading source of the world's cocaine supply and was ostensibly controlled by large, well-financed, and heavily-armed narcotics cartels. Because terrorists and insurgents finance their activities primarily through drug revenues, many now consider the Afghan drug trade the most significant threat to the Afghan national government.⁷¹

In early 2005, DOD substantially increased its counternarcotics role in Afghanistan. The U.S. military in Afghanistan now supports 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.⁷² The U.S. Army has provided training to DEA agents deploying to Afghanistan on weapons, night vision devices, and how to spot landmines. To fund efforts to combat the drug trade in Afghanistan, DOD requested \$257 million⁷³ and Congress approved \$242 million (P.L. 109-13, 119 Stat. 240) to fund facilities, equipment, communications, and training, and to lease and refurbish helicopters for the Afghan government.⁷⁴ These funds are in addition to the \$15.4 million in DOD's FY2005 Defense Budget for counternarcotics assistance to the Afghan government.

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.⁷⁵ 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. Largely facilitated by Congress, Colombia — which has just resumed diplomatic relations with Afghanistan — is preparing to assist Afghanistan by providing its counternarcotics expertise to Afghan police and military forces.⁷⁶ Raids by Afghan police and Coalition forces have enjoyed mixed results, with large amounts of narcotics being seized but often times drug producers

⁷⁰ Thom Shanker, "Pentagon Sees Antidrug Effort in Afghanistan," *New York Times*, March 25, 2005.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² 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.

⁷³ Department of Defense FY 2005 Supplemental Request for Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), and Operation Unified Assistance, February 2005, p. 81.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Information in this section is from Christina Lamb, "British Troops to Target Afghan Opium Trade," *London Sunday Times*, April 24, 2005.

⁷⁶ Rowan Scarborough, "Colombia Helps Afghanistan Wage Drug War," *Washington Times*, August 25, 2005.

and traffickers have eluded capture — sometimes fleeing across the border to Pakistan.⁷⁷

Africa⁷⁸

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,”⁷⁹ and reports suggest that Al Qaeda has opened recruiting bases in Nigeria, Somalia, Tanzania, and Uganda.⁸⁰ One report suggests that there is evidence of 17 training centers in Kenya, possibly set up by groups related to Al Qaeda.⁸¹ 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 planning and bomb making, could be used against their respective governments.⁸² 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.⁸³

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.”⁸⁴ CJTF-HOA is headquartered at Camp Lemonier in Djibouti and consists of approximately 2,000 personnel including U.S. military and Special Operations

⁷⁷ 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.

⁷⁸ For additional information see CRS Report RL31247, *Africa and the War on Terrorism*, January 17, 2002.

⁷⁹ Chris Tomlinson, “Somalia Called Lawless “Haven” for Terrorists,” *Miami Herald*, May 14, 2005.

⁸⁰ “Al Qaeda has Bases in Africa, UN Says,” *Detroit Free Press*, February 16, 2005.

⁸¹ Tom Walker and Dipesh Gadhher, “British Terror Trail Leads Back to Africa’s Horn of Anarchy,” *London Sunday Times*, July 31, 2005.

⁸² Eric Schmitt, “As Africans Join Iraqi Insurgency, U.S. Counters with Military Training in Their Lands,” *New York Times*, June 10, 2005.

⁸³ Todd Pitman, “U.S. Eyes West Africa’s Coastline, Oil,” *Washington Times*, August 11, 2005.

⁸⁴ News Transcript - DOD Briefing - Joint Task Force Horn of Africa Briefing, January 10, 2003.

Forces (SOF), U.S. civilian, and coalition force members.⁸⁵ 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.⁸⁶

Flintlock 2005

In June 2005, about 700 U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) personnel and support troops conducted training for selected troops from Algeria, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tunisia in a three week exercise in Africa dubbed “Flintlock 2005.”⁸⁷ The training was primarily conducted by the 10th Special Forces Group stationed both at Fort Carson, Colorado and Stuttgart, Germany, and by members of the Army National Guard’s 20th Special Forces Group, headquartered in Alabama.⁸⁸ Normally, the 10th Special Forces Group is regionally aligned with Europe and the 20th with South America, but the 3rd Special Forces Group, stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, which has African language and cultural skills, is currently deployed in Iraq. U.S. forces trained the approximately 3,000 African troops on a variety of skills including small unit tactics, parachute operations, marksmanship, and land navigation, and a command post operation was conducted to help promote regional military cooperation.⁸⁹ Exercises such as Flintlock 2005 are designed to produce more effective counterterror forces to help combat what the United States views as a growing terrorist threat in the region. As of July 31, 2005, U.S. EUCOM had conducted 18 military-to-military exercises in Africa, including exercises focused on military medicine, intelligence officer training, and small-unit reconnaissance patrolling.⁹⁰

The Gulf of Guinea Guard Initiative

In February 2005, U.S. EUCOM launched the Gulf of Guinea Guard Initiative, intended to aid regional governments by improving their maritime security off the western coast of Africa.⁹¹ Under U.S. Naval Forces Europe (U.S. NAVEUR), the

⁸⁵ Abraham McLaughlin, “U.S. Engages Africa in Terror Fight,” *Christian Science Monitor*, September 17, 2004, p. 2.

⁸⁶ Navy News Stand - Eye on the Fleet [http://www.navy.mil/view_single.asp?id=13996] accessed on January 18, 2005

⁸⁷ Andrew Koch, “U.S. and African Partners Pledge Terrorism Purge,” *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, June 29, 2005, p. 16.

⁸⁸ Ann Scott Tyson, “U.S. Pushes Anti-Terrorism in Africa,” *Washington Post*, July 26, 2005.

⁸⁹ Andrew Koch, “U.S. and African Partners Pledge Terrorism Purge.”

⁹⁰ Sandra Jontz, “Naval Mission Aims to Boost African Security,” *Mideast Stars and Stripes*, July 31, 2005.

⁹¹ See Andrew Koch, “U.S. Seeks Security in African Waters,” *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, (continued...)

initiative intends to help ten West African nations⁹² over the course of the next ten years to either develop or improve their maritime security. While some suggest that the initiative is intended to protect the region's oil—Nigeria, for example, reportedly has as much as \$1 billion in oil stolen each year from its coastal pipelines—U.S. EUCOM maintains that the Guinea Initiative will also help African nations combat drug, weapons, and people smuggling, illegal fishing, and piracy. Initially, the initiative will focus on African port security and will later expand to coastal regions inside the countries' territorial waters. According to a U.S. government official, the initiative will focus on and near land as opposed to the high seas, since most of the vessels that terrorists use need shore-based support and most of the African nations in question do not have ocean-going forces.

The Philippines⁹³

The government of the Philippines, a long-time and 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.⁹⁴ 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 Administration's counterterror efforts in the region.⁹⁵ 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.⁹⁶ 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.⁹⁷

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.⁹⁸

⁹¹ (...continued)

February 16, 2005, p. 17 and Sandra Jontz, "Naval Mission Aims to Boost African Security," *Mideast Stars and Stripes*, July 31, 2005.

⁹² Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, Sao Tome and Principe, and Togo.

⁹³ 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*.

⁹⁴ "Philippines," Center for Defense Information (CDI), October 28, 2004, p. 1.

⁹⁵ U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM) Fact Sheet, "Abu Sayyaf History," March 5, 2002.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

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

⁹⁸ "Terror Threats," *Manila Business World*, March 24, 2004 and "Malaysia Holds Six (continued...)

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 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 exercises.⁹⁹ In February 2005, over 300 U.S. soldiers and 650 Filipino troops participated in Balikatan 05 in Quezon Province, focusing on humanitarian operations.¹⁰⁰ From June 25 to July 18, 2005, U.S. Marines from Okinawa and about 400 Filipino Marines conducted small unit field training exercises designed to improve interoperability.¹⁰¹ In July 2005, U.S. and Filipino forces reportedly launched a joint operation on Mindanao in pursuit of the leader of Abu Sayyaf, Khaddafy Janjalani.¹⁰² While an Abu Sayyaf spokesman claimed that U.S. forces were engaged in direct combat, a U.S. military official stated that U.S. forces were only supplying communications and intelligence support and acknowledged that U.S. Army Special Forces and Navy SEALs were working in the area with Filipino forces. U.S. Navy P3 Orion aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles were also reportedly involved in intelligence support for this operation. The United States has been accused on a number of occasions by villagers and human rights officials of participating in combat operations — including participation by former U.S. soldiers working as DOD contractors — but the Pentagon has repeatedly denied these allegations, and none of the reports have been confirmed by independent sources.

The United States has frequently conducted lower-level training exercises with specialized Filipino counterterrorism and counterinsurgency forces.¹⁰³ 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

⁹⁸ (...continued)

Indonesian Islamist Militants,” *Reuters News Agency*, March 6, 2004.

⁹⁹ 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.

¹⁰⁰ Jaime Laude and Benji Villa, “RP-U.S. Wargames On,” *Philippine Star*, February 22, 2005.

¹⁰¹ Jamie Laude, “U.S. Soldiers Due for War Exercises,” *Philippine Star*, June 26, 2005.

¹⁰² Information in this section is from Raymond Bonner and Carlos H. Conde, “U.S. and Philippines Join Forces to Pursue Terrorist Leader,” *New York Times*, July 23, 2005.

¹⁰³ 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.

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.¹⁰⁴

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.¹⁰⁵ 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 2003.¹⁰⁶ 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.¹⁰⁷ While some note the relative success of joint U.S.-Filipino training 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.”¹⁰⁸ 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.”¹⁰⁹

Colombia¹¹⁰

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

¹⁰⁴ “RP-US Troops Start Anti-Narcoterrorism Exercise,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, August 31, 2004.

¹⁰⁵ For additional information see CRS Report RL32259, *Terrorism in South Asia*, December 13, 2004.

¹⁰⁶ 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 JP’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.

¹⁰⁷ Anthony Davis, “Philippines Fears New Wave of Attacks by Abu Sayyaf Group,” *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, May 2005, p. 10.

¹⁰⁸ Robert Nolan, “Terror in the Philippines,” *Foreign Policy Association Newsletter*, March 6, 2003.

¹⁰⁹ 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.

¹¹⁰ For additional information see CRS Report RL32250, *Colombia: Issues for Congress*.

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.¹¹¹ 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.¹¹² All three groups allegedly fund their activities through drug revenues¹¹³ and are on the Administration's official list of terrorist organizations.¹¹⁴ These groups also currently hold a number of Colombian and foreign hostages whom they use as negotiating leverage — these include three U.S. defense contractors who were taken by the FARC in February 2003 when their plane was shot down.¹¹⁵

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. The National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2005 (P.L. 108-375) raised the personnel cap in Colombia to 800 military and 600 civilian contractors¹¹⁶ but reports suggest that as of May 2005, only about 500 U.S. troops were deployed to Colombia — up from 320 troops in 2004.¹¹⁷ Some suggest that a shortage of U.S. Special Forces soldiers, due to their deployment elsewhere, has limited the number of troops that can be deployed to train Colombian forces.¹¹⁸ 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,

¹¹¹ 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.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ U.S. State Department - Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations, April 30, 2001, [<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/pgtrpt/2000/2450.htm>].

¹¹⁵ Rachel Van Dongen, “U.S. ‘Private Army’ Grows,” *Christian Science Monitor*, September 3, 2003.

¹¹⁶ See Section 1052, P.L. 108-375 (S. 2400), The National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2005.

¹¹⁷ John Otis, “Uncertainty, Costs Weigh on U.S. in Colombia,” *Houston Chronicle*, May 15, 2005.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

and the destruction of numerous drug labs.¹¹⁹ While the U.S. military has enjoyed a degree of success, the arrest by Colombian officials of five U.S. soldiers in March 2005 for cocaine smuggling and the arrest of two U.S. soldiers in May 2005 for arms trafficking and their return to the U.S. to face military charges, has somewhat tarnished the U.S. military's image in Colombia.¹²⁰

On July 9, 2005, the AUC stated that 4,000 of its members would demobilize as part of peace talks between the Colombian government and the AUC.¹²¹ Approximately 5,000 of the AUC's 20,000 members have demobilized and the commanders of about 7,000 more members have stated that their forces are ready to disband. Some in the U.S. government have criticized Colombia's demobilization plan as being "too lenient" and others suggest that these efforts will go a long ways toward ending Colombia's civil war.¹²²

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.¹²³ 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 killed by the FARC and 732 soldiers have been killed since January 2004 – with more than a third of them killed by land mines and explosive devices. In June, the FARC offered to swap three kidnaped U.S. defense contractors for two FARC leaders that were captured by Colombia and extradited to the United States to face drug charges, but the U.S. government reportedly rejected the proposal.¹²⁴ According to U.S. Ambassador Wood, even though it is U.S. policy not to negotiate with

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Steven Dudley, "Put U.S. Soldiers on Trial in Colombia, Some Urge," *Miami Herald*, May 25, 2005.

¹²¹ "4 Paramilitary Leaders Agree to Disband Forces," *Los Angeles Times*, July 9, 2005.

¹²² Pablo Bachelet, "Controversial Bill gains U.S. Support," *Miami Herald*, July 21, 2005.

¹²³ 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.

¹²⁴ "Colombia Rebels Offer Swap of Captives; U.S. Declines," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 28, 2005.

terrorists, the Colombian government would include the U.S. hostages in any prisoner exchange deal with the FARC.¹²⁵

FARC Operations Outside of Colombia.¹²⁶ Reports suggest that the FARC has established cells in Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama in what U.S. intelligence officials believe is an effort to expand its arms and drug trafficking operations. In addition, the FARC has reported links to Brazil, Mexico, Ecuador, Peru, and Argentina, not only for the purposes of arms and drug trade but also to establish refuges in selected countries. Brazil and Ecuador are claimed to have become important supply lines for the FARC where their jungled borders serve as trans shipment points for drugs and arms as well as rest and recreation areas for FARC guerillas. While some view this as the FARC “extending its operations and influence throughout Latin America,” others suggest that military operations by Colombia have forced the FARC to seek refuge elsewhere as well as new sources of revenue as FARC drug income has reportedly suffered due to Colombian counterdrug efforts. Reports suggest that Venezuela may be providing the FARC with weapons. According to Colombian and U.S. officials, Venezuela has become the FARC’s principal route for trafficking drugs in exchange for weapons. Venezuela has also been accused of providing political support to the FARC, but Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez reportedly stated that he is “neutral” regarding the FARC.¹²⁷

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?;
- What will be the U.S. military role in the NATO command structure?;
- Will this change of command require additional U.S. troops or will it result in a reduction of U.S. forces in Afghanistan;

¹²⁵ Remarks by Ambassador William Wood at the Woodrow Wilson Center on June 14, 2005 and “Government Rejects “Arrogant” FARC Response,” *Latinnews Daily*, August 4, 2005.

¹²⁶ Information in this section is from Kelly Hearn, “FARC Funds Tied to Lula,” *Washington Times*, March 22, 2005; Jerry Seper, “Colombia’s FARC Spreads in Central America,” *Washington Times*, March 26, 2005; and Steven Dudley, “Colombian Rebels Widening Reach,” *Miami Herald*, July 17, 2005.

¹²⁷ Information in this section is from Steven Dudley, “Colombian Rebels Widening Reach,” *Miami Herald*, July 17, 2005 and George Gelda, “Venezuela Giving Guns to FARC, Official Says,” *Miami Herald*, August 4, 2005.

- 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 “override” 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?; 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 significant threat, the formation, training, and performance of the ANA, the demobilization and assimilation of warlords and their militias, 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.”¹²⁸ While the United States has gone from a “no participation” policy to a supporting role, critics suggest that a more active role is now possible as the Administration has hinted at reducing troop levels in Afghanistan and Iraq in the near future.¹²⁹ Given the possibility of these reductions, Congress might opt to examine the potential impact of dedicating a relatively small force of U.S. troops to actively conducting counterdrug operations with Afghan and NATO allies. Proponents of this course of action argue that U.S. military experience in counterdrug operations and the addition of a brigade or less of U.S. soldiers could significantly benefit future counterdrug efforts and perhaps place a strain on the insurgent’s drug revenues —

¹²⁸ Rowan Scarborough, “Military Resists Ant-Drug Role,” *Washington Times*, October 26, 2004.

¹²⁹ Peter Spiegel, “U.S. General Sees Significant Withdrawal in Iraq,” *Financial Times*, August 24, 2005.

ultimately impacting their anti-government and anti-Coalition military and terrorist operations.

Africa and Long-Term Strategy

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 and the Gulf of Guinea Guard Initiative has been described as a "ten year program," little is publicly known about these long-term commitments to the region in terms of overall strategy and what resources—both military and financial—will be required to implement such a strategy.

There are indications that if a strategy does not currently exist, one is being developed by the Pentagon. According to a report, U.S. CENTCOM is planning for a "long war" on terrorism and is looking beyond Iraq and Afghanistan, to "a growing threat of a loosely-affiliated network of extremists" that is "not fundamentally state-based or state-sponsored."¹³⁰ CENTCOM notes that the focus of this strategy is to insure that Al Qaeda and its affiliates "do not find a safe haven once they are forced out of their current bases."¹³¹ One concern is that once Iraq is stabilized leaders such as Abu Musab al-Zarqawi might move their base of operation to Africa. Given these concerns, Congress might review the Pentagon's emerging long-term military strategy in the region as well as how other U.S. agencies, their resources, and programs might fit into such a plan.

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 our 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 Operating Outside of Colombia

Congress may decide to examine the ramifications of the expansion of FARC narcotics and arms activities into other countries. While most agree that these activities are preliminary at best and may be a symptom of the success of the U.S. trained Colombian Armed Forces against the FARC, others see the potential for

¹³⁰ "Pentagon Plans for "Long War" on Terror," *London Financial Times*, August 25, 2005.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

greater regional involvement by the U.S. military. Still others suggest that this expansion has little to do with the Global War on Terror and that these activities are criminal in nature and best dealt with by law enforcement. Further study of this expansion could be helpful in determining if expanded operations should be addressed in the U.S. military's war on terror strategy or by law enforcement programs and activities.