

Appendix E

Summary of the US Military Counterterrorism Campaign, 2003

Operation Iraqi Freedom

On 19 March 2003, US and Coalition forces launched Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Along with freeing the Iraqi people of a vicious dictator, OIF also shut down the Salman Pak training camp, where members of al-Qaida had trained, and disrupted the Abu Musab al-Zarqawi network, which had established a poison and explosives training camp in northeastern Iraq. OIF removed the prospective threat to the international community posed by the combination of an aggressive Iraqi regime, weapons of mass destruction capabilities, and terrorists. Iraq is now the central front for the global war on terrorism.

Since the end of major combat operations, Coalition forces from 33 nations have been engaged in stability operations in Iraq, primarily against regime loyalists, remnants of Ansar al-Islam, and a number of foreign terrorists. This resistance has been responsible for such acts as the bombing of the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad on 19 August, the attack of 12 November on the Italian military police at Nasiriyah, and the coordinated attack on Bulgarian and Thai troops at Karbala on 27 December. Former regime loyalists and foreign terrorists have proved adept at adjusting their tactics to maintain attacks on Coalition forces, particularly with the use of vehicle-borne, improvised explosive devices. Coalition forces continue offensive action against these forces and, on 13 December, captured the former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein in Operation Red Dawn. By the end of 2003, Coalition forces had killed, captured, or taken into custody 42 of the 55 most-wanted members of the former regime of Saddam Hussein.

Coalition forces in Iraq also are training and equipping the new components of Iraq's security services, which include police, the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps, border police, the Iraqi Facility Protection Service, and a new Iraqi army. The Coalition's goal is to build the Iraqi security services to approximately 225,000 members. With the transfer of governing authority from the Coalition Provisional Authority to the Iraqi Transitional National Assembly in 2004, Iraqi security services will play an increasing role in creating a stable and united Iraq, as well as preventing foreign terrorists from establishing operations in Iraq.

Operation Enduring Freedom

US military forces continued to operate in the mountains of southern Afghanistan against al-Qaida terrorists, anti-Coalition militias, and Taliban insurgents throughout 2003. Anti-government activity targeting Afghan security forces, civic leaders, and international aid workers continues to destabilize the southern regions of the country. These attacks resulted in the United Nations suspending operations in the southern provinces of Helmand, Oruzgan, Khandahar, and Zabol in 2003. The frequency of attacks rose steadily throughout the year, reaching peaks in September and early November and tapering off with the onset of winter.

Nevertheless, Afghanistan continued to make slow but steady progress back from 25 years of civil war and Taliban misrule. A Grand Assembly, or Loya Jirga, was formed of 502 members from around the country—including 100 women—to debate the proposed new national constitution in December. Despite efforts by anti-government forces to disrupt the proceedings, the event was successful, paving the way for UN-mandated elections in June 2004.

President Hamid Karzai worked throughout the year to replace unresponsive provincial governors and security chiefs and to centralize collection of customs revenues and taxes. Aid continued to flow into Afghanistan from around the world in 2003, funding the completion of hundreds of clinics and schools and hundreds of kilometers of irrigation projects. The United States will probably provide more than \$2 billion in aid in fiscal year 2004, the largest single pledge by any government.

NATO formally assumed command of the International Security Assistance Force in August 2003, and the number of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) planned or fielded rose to 13, including new teams to begin work in early 2004. A large German PRT took over operations in Konduz, and Great Britain and New Zealand led PRTs in Mazar-i-Sharif and Bamian, respectively. The PRTs are effective catalysts for reconstruction activity and regional security. Afghan police training is picking up speed, but efforts to build a new Afghan National Army have been hampered by problems with recruiting and retention. Approximately 5,600 men were ready for duty in the Afghan National Army at the end of 2003, including a battalion of T-62 tanks.

Afghanistan remains a security challenge. Relying on the Pashtun-dominated and largely autonomous Federally Administered Tribal Area in Pakistan as a refuge, the Taliban regrouped in 2003 and conducted a classic insurgency in the remote rural areas of the southern Pashtun tribes, using clan and family ties, propaganda, violence, and intimidation to maintain a foothold in several districts of Zabol and Oruzgan Provinces. Militant Islamic political parties openly supportive of the Taliban won landslide victories in legislative elections in 2003 in Pakistan's Baluchistan and Northwest Frontier provinces bordering Afghanistan, signaling a protracted counterinsurgency to eliminate the Taliban and other antigovernment elements.