

Appendix E

The US Military Counterterrorism Campaign in 2002: A Summary

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US military forces and allies continued their campaign to oust al-Qaida and the Taliban from Afghanistan into 2002 by completing an exhaustive search of the Tora Bora cave complex in eastern Afghanistan. Although senior al-Qaida operatives were captured in the operation, high-priority targets such as Mullah Omar and Usama Bin Ladin remained at large.

After visiting Kabul on 18 January, Secretary of State Colin Powell facilitated international efforts to rebuild Afghanistan by meeting in Tokyo with representatives from 60 nations and development organizations. Of the \$4.5 billion contributed, the United States provided \$297 million for 2002, the largest single pledge by any government.

Relations with Kabul's nascent government were further bolstered by the visit of interim Afghan president Hamid Karzai to Washington in late January. US forces continued to rout Taliban and al-Qaida operatives in Afghanistan as Karzai reopened his nation's embassy, met with President Bush in the oval office, and called upon State Department and Congressional officials. The abduction on 23 January, and eventual execution, of journalist Daniel Pearl in Pakistan illustrated the continued hazard to US personnel in the region.

In response to internal security concerns, Karzai's government called for additional personnel to support international peacekeeping efforts in Afghanistan. Washington renewed its commitment to train an indigenous Afghan national army (ANA), which now comprises two brigades and will eventually grow to 18 battalions. In the regions, Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) were formed and deployed in Gardez, Bamiyan, and Konduz, beginning in December 2002. The teams will work to stabilize the regions by coordinating the reconstruction efforts of the Coalition military forces, aid organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the Afghan Government. Ten PRTs are planned for major regional cities in Afghanistan.

On 2 March, US-led allied forces initiated Operation Anaconda to seize the Taliban and al-Qaida-infested Shai-i-Kot valley in eastern Afghanistan. Resistance ceased after 11 days of the heaviest fighting yet seen in the campaign. Although Taliban and al-Qaida fighters were pushed out of their defensive positions during the operation, critics suggested that premature US and Canadian withdrawal from the Shai-i-Kot region on 20 March allowed many to escape through the loosely guarded Pakistani border.

Following the late March announcement by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld that training for the ANA would begin in April, US troops—in conjunction with British and Canadian allies—redeployed to seal the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan and remove the remaining Taliban and al-Qaida strongholds in the region. Operations along the Pakistani border with Afghanistan continued despite renewed tension and the possibility of war between Pakistan and India in May and June.

As Hamid Karzai was officially sworn in as president of the Transitional State of Afghanistan (TISA) in Kabul on 19 June, US officials predicted it would take up to a year to secure Afghanistan against loyalist Taliban and al-Qaida remnants. Although grateful for the additional security provided by US forces, Afghan officials were highly

critical of an incident on 1 July in which nearly 40 civilians attending a wedding celebration were reportedly killed by an AC-130 gunship responding to antiaircraft fire. Karzai's government was dealt another blow a week later in Kabul with the assassination of Vice President Abdul Qadir, who had been valued as one of the few ethnic Pashtuns in the new Afghan Government. A thwarted car-bombing attempt in Kabul the following week, as well as an assassination attempt against President Karzai in late August, dramatically illustrated the existence of continued security threats in Afghanistan.

Through the final months of 2002, efforts to destroy weapons caches and capture Taliban and al-Qaida fighters met with slow but steady success. In early November, Gen. Richard Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated that military operations in Afghanistan would be gradually replaced by reconstruction efforts. With the Taliban and al-Qaida presence all but removed by the end of 2002, focus shifted to implementing humanitarian development and reconstruction in Afghanistan, with cost estimates ranging from \$10–15 billion over the next decade.

US counterterrorism efforts also expanded beyond the borders of Afghanistan in 2002, with operations in the Philippines, Georgia, and Yemen. Early in the year, 1,200 advisors were dispatched to the Philippines to train soldiers fighting members of the radical Islamist group Abu Sayyaf. An attempt by Philippine commandos to rescue three US citizens held by Abu Sayyaf in June resulted in the unfortunate deaths of two of the hostages. Following the conclusion of training in July, several hundred US soldiers remained in the Philippines to assist with infrastructure projects.

Washington initiated a similar, though more limited effort in the former Soviet republic of Georgia. Beginning in May, US military personnel trained 1,500 indigenous troops to clear Georgia's Pankisi Gorge region of foreign fighters that possibly included al-Qaida and Chechen separatist groups among their numbers.