

What's new in the strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan



Photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Brian Naranjo

From left, Lance Cpl. Shanna Yerby, Sgt. Jesse Blash, Petty Officer Glenn Kalae Paoa and Sgt. Angelica Cendales pose for a photo at Headquarters International Security Assistance Force in Kabul, Afghanistan, March 10, just before departing for a driving mission.

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An attainable objective

On March 27, the President announced a comprehensive, new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan that is the culmination of a careful 60-day, interagency strategic review. During the review process, we consulted with the Afghan and Pakistani governments, partners and NATO allies, other donors, international organizations and members of Congress. The strategy starts with a clear, concise, attainable goal: disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda and its safe havens. The President's new approach will be flexible and adoptive, and include frequent evaluations of the progress being made.

A regional approach

For the first time the President will treat Afghanistan and Pakistan as two countries but one challenge. Our strategy focuses more intensively on Pakistan than in the past, calling for more significant increases in U.S. and international support, both economic and military, linked to Pakistani performance against terror. We will pursue intensive regional diplomacy involving all key players in South Asia and engage both countries in a new trilateral framework at the highest levels.

Together in this trilateral format, we will work to enhance intelligence sharing and military cooperation along the border and address

common issues like trade, energy and economic development.

Building capacity and more training

For three years, the resources that our commanders need for training have been denied because of the war in Iraq. Now, this will change. The 17,000 additional troops the President decided in February to deploy have already increased our training capacity. Later this spring we will deploy approximately 4,000 more U.S. troops to train the Afghan National Security Forces so they can increasingly take responsibility for the security of the Afghan people. In the President's strategy, for the first time we will fully resource our effort to train and support the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police. Every American unit in Afghanistan will be partnered with an Afghan unit, and we will seek additional trainers from our NATO allies to ensure every Afghan unit has a coalition partner.

Using all elements of national power

As the President said, a "campaign against extremism will not succeed with bullets or bombs alone." As a part of this strategy, we will devote significantly more resources to the civilian efforts in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. The President will submit a budget that includes indispensable investments in our State Department and foreign assistance programs. These investments relieve the burden on our troops and

contribute directly to our safety and security. The Administration consulted with the Congress during our review and is committed to working closely together to provide the resources needed to carry out the strategy. The President supports the bipartisan bill co-sponsored by Senators Kerry and Lugar to authorize \$1.5 billion a year in direct support to the Pakistani people over the next five years. He also calls on Congress to pass the bipartisan bill creating Reconstruction Opportunity Zones in Afghanistan and the border regions of Pakistan to develop the economy and bring hope to places plagued by violence.

Bringing new international elements

The President believes we need to provide more resources for the civilian aspects of the mission, working with the Afghan Government and all of our partners in NATO and the United Nations. As America does more, we will ask others to do join us in doing their part. Together with the United Nations, the Administration will forge a new Contact Group for Afghanistan and Pakistan that brings together all who should have a stake in the security of the region - our NATO allies and other partners, the Central Asian states, Gulf nations, Iran, Russia, India and China. All have a stake in the promise of lasting peace and security and development in the region.



Photo by Chief Warrant Officer Philippe E. Chasse

U.S. Marines from Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force-Afghanistan and members of the Afghan National Army pose for a photograph March 7, during a meeting in Delram, a town in Farah, Afghanistan, to discuss ways to help Afghanis. SPMAGTF-A and ANA are partnering to provide security for people in Southern Afghanistan.



Photo by Chief Warrant Officer Philippe E. Chasse

Commanding Officer 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment Lt. Col. David L. Odom, and Abdul Majid, an Afghan National Police officer, discuss increased security measures being put in place in Delaram, Farah, Afghanistan, March 23.



Photo by Chief Warrant Officer Philippe E. Chasse

Lt. Col. David L. Odom, commanding officer, 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, and Afghan National Police chief Col. Abdul Qadoss, commander of the Delaram district in Farah, Afghanistan, discuss several issues March 23, in Delaram.

U.S. Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Ben Budzek, with Company I, 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, maintains security during a patrol in Farah province, Afghanistan, Feb. 7. The unit conducts security patrols in its area of operations in order to prevent enemy freedom of movement. The 3rd Battalion is the ground combat element of Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force - Afghanistan.



Photo by Cpl. Pete Thibodeau



Photo by Chief Warrant Officer Philippe E. Chasse

Marines from 2nd Squad, 2nd Platoon, Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment conduct a patrol from a local forward operating base to Golestan, a town in Farah, Afghanistan, March 9. The Marines are part of Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force-Afghanistan, which is providing security for the people of Southern Afghanistan.

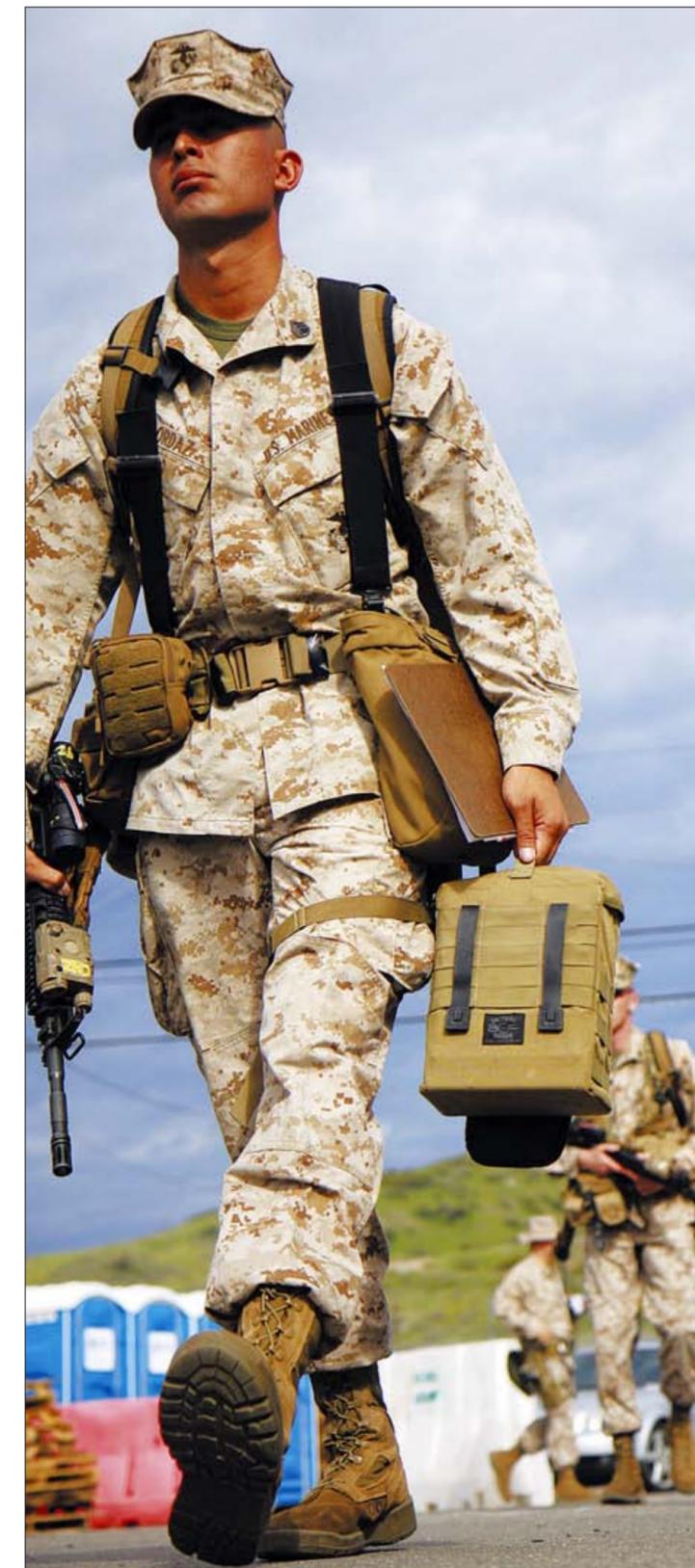


Photo by Lance Cpl. Jeremy Harris

A Marine with 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment walks toward the bus area on Camp Pendleton, Calif., March 2, in preparation for Mojave Viper. Mojave Viper is a combined training exercise at U.S. Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif., which prepares Marines for upcoming deployments to Afghanistan.