

five years.

- The Afghan National Police lag behind the army, but here, too, progress is being made. There are nearly 80,000 police assigned today. Our main challenge is increasing the competence and reliability of the force, and that requires large numbers of mentors and trainers. So far we have been unable to fill most of what is required. Nonetheless, an innovative program called Focused District Development is helping build police forces capable of serving local Afghan communities.

Before addressing the increase in violence, let me mention other problem areas:

- Despite increased NATO contributions, we are still short in several areas. More maneuver forces are required, as well as aviation assets, Provincial Reconstruction Teams, and mentors for the Afghan army. Where Allies cannot provide more troops and equipment, they need to provide other types of support to build Afghan capacity.
- There remain questions about the efficacy of having two lines of command – one for a contingent of U.S. troops training and equipping Afghan forces as part of Operation Enduring Freedom, and one for the ISAF mission, which also includes nearly 14,000 American troops.
- Coordination between PRTs and ISAF needs to be improved. Civilians in PRTs report to their respective capitals – which makes it difficult to synchronize PRT activities with military actions. We are working with Allies and partners to stand up a civil-military planning cell in the south to help coordinate PRTs in a more holistic fashion – both locally and regionally.
- Afghanistan's government must improve its delivery of essential services and extend its reach by reducing corruption and promoting faster development and a stronger economy. Here we do run up against some hard realities: Afghanistan has always been a diffuse, tribal nation with few natural resources and little infrastructure. To give you some idea, total annual revenue for the government is approximately \$700 million versus tens of billions in Iraq.

The persistent and increasing violence resulting from an organized insurgency is, of course, our greatest concern. With the flexibility provided by success in Iraq, the President has decided to send more troops to Afghanistan in response to resurgent extremism and violence reflecting greater ambition, sophistication, and coordination.

We did not get to this point overnight, so some historical context is useful. The mission in Afghanistan has evolved over the years – in both positive and negative ways. Reported insurgent activities and attacks have grown over the past 2 ½ years. In some cases, this is a result of safe havens in Pakistan and reduced military pressure on that side of the border. In others, it is the result of more international and Afghan troops on the battlefield – troops that are increasingly in contact with the enemy.

In response to increased violence and insurgent activity in 2006, in January of last year we extended the deployment of an Army brigade and added another brigade. This last spring, the United States deployed 3,500 Marines. In all, the number of American troops in the country increased from less than 21,000 two years ago to more than 31,000 today.

At the NATO Summit in Bucharest in April, ISAF Allies and Partners restated their commitment to Afghanistan. France added 700 troops in Eastern Afghanistan. This fall, Germany will seek to increase its troop ceiling from 3,500 to 4,500. Poland is also increasing its forces by 400 troops.

The number of Coalition troops – including NATO troops – increased from about 20,000 to nearly 31,000. It appears that this trend will continue – as other allies, such as the United Kingdom, add more