A review of U.S. strategy in Afghanistan by the Obama administration in April emphasized that success there calls for a regional approach that includes diplomatic, economic and military resources—an assessment American commanders have long articulated.

President Obama announced that the clear and focused goal is “to disrupt, dismantle and defeat al Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan and to prevent their return to either country in the future.”

Central Command Commander GEN David H. Petraeus elaborated on the new policy in testimony before Congress in April. “Afghanistan and Pakistan comprise a single theater that requires comprehensive whole-of-government approaches that are closely coordinated,” he said. Military forces alone are not sufficient, he said. “It is essential that the respective departments, State and USAID [U.S. Agency for International Development] foremost among them, be provided the resources necessary to implement the strategy.”

In April, the commander of NATO’s International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces Afghanistan, GEN David D. McKiernan, told USA Today that the Afghan police are “the critical link” in efforts to suppress insurgents. The new goal is to achieve an Afghan police force of 82,000 and an Afghan army of 134,000 by 2011.

President Obama acknowledged that U.S. commanders in Afghanistan have been requesting additional trainers for years. “Later this spring,” he said, “we will deploy approximately 4,000 U.S. troops to train Afghan security forces.” About 3,300 soldiers from the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, N.C., along with some 700 training and support personnel will deploy to Afghanistan in the spring and summer to aid in the training and development of the Afghan national security forces. The unit was originally slated to deploy to Iraq.

Every American unit sent to Afghanistan will be partnered with an Afghan unit. GEN Petraeus noted that it is vital that forces there “be seen as good guests and partners, not as would-be conquerors or superiors,” and he noted that GEN McKiernan had recently issued counterinsurgency guidelines that explain how forces should operate.

By the end of summer, according to GEN Petraeus, the United States will have more than doubled the number of its forces on the ground in Afghanistan since the end of 2008. He reminded Congress that the fight there is going to get harder before it gets easier. GEN Petraeus has received a request for 10,000 more troops in Afghanistan for 2010, which he forwarded to the Pentagon. A decision does not have to be made on those forces until the fall.

The U.S. military will focus on two main areas in Pakistan. It will expand its partnership with the Pakistani military and provide training, equipment and assistance to help it build counterinsurgency capabilities there, and it will expand exchange programs to build stronger relationships with Pakistani leaders. The U.S. will also promote closer cooperation across the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

The Pentagon is proposing to spend some $3 billion over the next five years to train and equip the Pakistani military to encourage Pakistan’s fight against insurgents there. The Pakistani counterinsurgency capability fund is designed, said GEN Petraeus, “to help the Pakistani forces develop specific … counterinsurgency capabilities.” President Obama, who announced the funding with his new strategy, warned that “we will not, and cannot, provide a blank check. Pakistan must demonstrate its commitment to rooting out … the violent extremists within its borders.”
Linked to the counterterrorism and democracy-building efforts in Pakistan is a plan to provide $7.5 billion in civilian aid over the next five years. “We cannot be just ‘hard’ or just ‘soft’—we must be both,” stressed GEN Petraeus. U.S. security efforts will support those to promote political and economic development.

President Obama’s new Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy emphasizes more bottom-up approaches in governance and development aimed at district and provincial levels, such as pursuing viable agricultural alternatives to poppy growing and helping Afghan farmers get their products to market. Another change in the policy is a commitment to measuring and evaluating progress, and the administration will design benchmarks that must be met.

U.S. Relieves British. Multi-National Division-Center, headquartered by the 10th Mountain Division (Light) from Fort Drum, N.Y., commanded by MG Michael Oates, recently accepted responsibility for Multi-National Division-Southeast from its commander, British Maj. Gen. Andy Salmon, at a ceremony in the port city of Basra. The 34th Infantry Division, out of Minnesota, will replace 10th Mountain in May. The two divisions now form Multi-National Division-South (MND-S), which will support Iraqi security forces operations throughout nine provinces in southern Iraq.

After six years of deployment in southeastern Iraq, the approximately 4,000 remaining British troops will redeploy by the end of the summer; an estimated 2,000 U.S. troops will replace them, bringing the total number of U.S. troops in southern Iraq to about 3,500. The missions of MND-S, also known as Task Force Mountain, include assisting with the training and transitioning of Iraqi security forces and helping with economic development and governance, as well as increasing security.

LTG Trefry Honored. LTG Richard G. Trefry, U.S. Army retired, recently received a lifetime service award named in his honor. Secretary of the Army Pete Geren presented the first LTG Richard G. Trefry Lifetime of Service Award to the former Army Inspector General (IG) for his service in the Army and his accomplishments as a retiree.

LTG Trefry spent 40 years in uniform and more than 25 as a civilian military adviser and contractor. During his six-year tenure as Inspector General of the Army, LTG Trefry identified and corrected system failings and deficiencies, thus transforming the annual IG inspection. He was known as “the conscience of the Army.” At age 85, he is currently the program manager of the Army Forces Management School at Fort Belvoir, Va., and is also a senior fellow with the Association of the U.S. Army’s Institute of Land Warfare.

In the future, the award—a medal with LTG Trefry’s image and a large plaque with the recipient’s name engraved on a brass plate that will be permanently displayed at the Pentagon—will be presented to individuals who are current or former members of the Army or current or former Department of the Army civilians.

BRAC 2005 Update. Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) 2005, unlike previous rounds of BRAC, consists of a number of major realignments of personnel as well as some closures. BRAC 2005 will close five headquarters installations, three chemical depots, four ammunition plants, 176 Army Reserve and 211 Army National Guard facilities and create training centers of excellence, centers of excellence, joint technical and research facilities, and
armed forces reserve centers.

The first BRAC 2005 closure, that of an ammunition plant in Parsons, Kan., built to assemble bombs for soldiers fighting in World War II, occurred in March 2008. Realignments of personnel have already begun. Communications-Electronics Command Life Cycle Management Command and Army Team Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) are moving employees and equipment in phases from Fort Monmouth, N.J., while building a state-of-the-art campus at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. More than 350 employees have already made the move from New Jersey; some 800 additional personnel are slated to relocate to Maryland or be hired to work there by the end of this year.

In 2010, employees will begin to move into the $477 million Army C4ISR Campus 1 facility on Aberdeen Proving Ground-North. C4ISR personnel were working in 40 buildings at Fort Monmouth; after the BRAC move is completed, they will work from nine buildings at Aberdeen.

Stephen Colbert to ‘Deploy.’ Actor/coedian Stephen Colbert plans to take his show, Comedy Central’s “The Colbert Report,” to the Persian Gulf as part of a USO/Armed Forces Entertainment tour. Colbert will tape four episodes before an audience of servicemembers, who will receive a behind-the-scenes look at how the show is made. In a shout-out clip on the comedian’s web site, he told viewers that he could not divulge the exact location: “All I will say is that there will be sand and people who wish we would leave.”

The programs will be dedicated to troops stationed around the world and those who have died serving. It will be the first television show in USO history to film multiple episodes in a combat zone and will feature shout-outs from military personnel, an inside look at conditions overseas and four nights of comedy. “The Colbert Report,” named “one of the best television shows of the year” by the New York Times, airs Monday through Thursday at 11:30 P.M. Eastern Standard Time.

Reserve Retirement Guide. The Army recently published the first retirement guide for Army Reserve soldiers and their families. Written specifically to cover the unique circumstances of Army Reserve retirement, the guide was compiled by the Army Reserve Command and the Army G-1 Retirement Services Division, part of the G-1’s Human Resources Policy Directorate. The 26-page Army Reserve Non-regular Retirement Information Guide provides an overview of the reserve component retirement system in chronological order of events in a soldier’s career. The publication breaks down the information into 10 chapters and three enclosures—a table of retiree benefits, Tricare benefits and an example of a death notification memorandum.

The guide is being distributed throughout the Army Reserve. It is available online on the Army G-1 Retirement Services web site at http://www.armyg1.army.mil/rso under the “What’s New” heading and on the Army Knowledge Online site for retirees—https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/559734.

Recruiting Visa Holders. The Department of Defense recently launched a yearlong pilot program to enlist up to 1,000 non-U.S. citizen health-care workers and language and cultural specialists. The initiative is designed to help the Pentagon maintain a base of about 24,000 doctors, dentists and nurses for the military; currently DoD is short almost 1,000 people.

About 29,000 noncitizens currently serve in the military; some 8,000 legal permanent-resident aliens—who hold State Department-issued green cards—enlist every year. The pilot program expands noncitizen eligibility to people who do not hold green cards but have temporary visas and work permits that allow them to legally live and work in the United States. To be eligible, applicants must have lived in the country for two years.

The program will recruit doctors, nurses and other health professionals
Among more than 30 language and cultural backgrounds must listed individuals with special language skills sought are fluency in Dari, Farsi, Pashto and Kurdish.

Applicants will undergo security screenings and must meet the same standards required of all who enter the military. The pilot program offers a way for applicants to accelerate the citizenship process. According to the Pentagon, there are tens of thousands of health professionals in the United States on work visas who are likely interested in obtaining green cards or becoming citizens. DoD will assess the Pentagon, there are tens of thousands of health professionals in the United States on work visas who are likely interested in obtaining green cards or becoming citizens. DoD will assess the Pentagon, there are tens of thousands of health professionals in the United States on work visas who are likely interested in obtaining green cards or becoming citizens. DoD will assess the Pentagon, there are tens of thousands of health professionals in the United States on work visas who are likely interested in obtaining green cards or becoming citizens. DoD will assess the Pentagon, there are tens of thousands of health professionals in the United States on work visas who are likely interested in obtaining green cards or becoming citizens. DoD will assess the Pentagon, there are tens of thousands of health professionals in the United States on work visas who are likely interested in obtaining green cards or becoming citizens. DoD will assess the Pentagon, there are tens of thousands of health professionals in the United States on work visas who are likely interested in obtaining green cards or becoming citizens. DoD will assess the

For more information, visit www.defenselink.mil/news/mavni-factsheet.pdf.