

New Year To Mark Intensification Of West's War In Afghanistan And Pakistan

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Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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No stranger to armed conflicts over the past 70 years, the United States has completed its first decade of continuous warfare: 2001-2010.

On January 1 the U.S. and its allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization will enter not only a new year but a second decade of war in Afghanistan.

The air and cruise missile attacks that commenced on October 7, 2001 and the insertion of U.S. and British ground troops that followed have been succeeded by a 48-nation, 152,000-troop occupation and counterinsurgency campaign that is also conducting almost daily deadly drone missile strikes and helicopter gunship raids into neighboring Pakistan.

The U.S. Defense Department announced that on September 1 American troop strength in Iraq was decreased to under 50,000 as the occupation was transitioned to so-called Operation New Dawn. Troops from approximately 40 other nations assigned to Multi-National Force - Iraq, most of them new NATO members and NATO candidates from Eastern Europe and former Soviet republics in the South Caucasus and Central Asia, were withdrawn from 2006-2008. Rather not withdrawn, but transferred to Afghanistan, leaving behind only the remnants of a once 160,000-strong American contingent and the NATO Training Mission-Iraq.

There are now over three times as many foreign troops in Afghanistan as there are in Iraq, from 48 official NATO Troop Contributing Nations. Also deployed in theater or pledged for that purpose are troops from several other countries in Asia, Africa, South America and the Middle East, among them Bahrain, Colombia, Egypt and Kazakhstan.

The microcosm of a U.S. and NATO rapidly deployable, interoperable global expeditionary military force melded in combat. Killing and dying together on a common battlefield, the blood of thirty nations spilled in one country.

711 foreign troops were killed in Afghanistan in 2010, a nearly forty percent increase over 2009. By comparison, 60 foreign soldiers were killed in Iraq in 2010, all of them American. Almost 500 U.S. and 213 non-U.S. troops lost their lives in Afghanistan in 2010.

Over 800 Afghan government soldiers were killed in the same period and 2,400 civilians were killed in the first ten months of the year.

A Pentagon official in the Afghan capital estimated that 18,000 attacks were conducted against U.S. and NATO forces in 2010, twice as many as in the preceding year. [1]

Far from any prospect of a decrease in the death toll in the war-ravaged country during the new year, the spokesman for the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force, Germany's Brigadier General Josef Blotz, this week stated that the Afghan war will only intensify in 2011, that "There is no end to the fighting season; we need to keep pressure on the Taliban all over the country." [2]

As though to confirm Blotz's claim, on December 30 two rockets landed in the main U.S. military base at the Bagram Airfield.

Fighting has increased in the north of Afghanistan where the bulk of 5,000 German troops assigned to NATO are stationed, an area hitherto comparatively peaceful. Bundeswehr forces are engaged in ground combat operations for the first time since the Second World War. Berlin has lost 46 soldiers in the conflict.

Germany recently ordered the latest of 473 Eagle reconnaissance vehicles under a \$165 million contract with the U.S. military contractor General Dynamics. The first armored vehicles were delivered to the German armed forces in 2009 and deployed to Afghanistan.

On the day before Christmas NATO troops raided the compound of a private security firm in Kabul, killing two Afghan nationals. Afterward, Afghan Interior Ministry spokesman Zemarai Bashary announced his government has determined that "NATO is in violation of a security agreement in Kabul and is suspending an Afghan police general who helped the U.S.-led coalition carry out a raid in the capital that killed two private security guards." [3]

On the same day New Zealand special forces serving under NATO launched a night raid in a factory in Kabul and slew two more security guards.

To indicate in the aftermath of the NATO summit in Portugal in November that the West is intensifying its concentration on the Afghanistan-Pakistan war front, since the summit ended on November 20 several major officials from NATO countries have visited Afghanistan: U.S. President Barack Obama and Defense Secretary Robert Gates, British Prime Minister David Cameron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Defense Minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg, Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero and First Deputy Prime Minister Alfredo Perez Rubalcaba, Romanian President Traian Basescu and Defense Minister Gabriel Oprea, French Defence Minister Alain Juppe, Canadian Governor General David Johnston and U.S. Secretary of the Navy Raymond Mabus.

Chancellor Merkel told German troops in Kunduz province: "What we have here is not just a warlike situation. You are involved in combat as in war." [4]

Afghanistan is the cynosure of the Western military bloc's worldwide military strategy, which now has expanded to include Pakistan.

2010 was the deadliest year of the over nine-year war in regard to U.S. unmanned aerial vehicle (drone) missile attacks in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas, where over 120 strikes killed 1,000 people. In 2009 the Central Intelligence Agency directed less than half that amount - 53 - of lethal operations in Pakistan. December was among the most deadly months of the year, with at least 123 people killed in twelve missile attacks. [5]

The intensity and ferocity of the strikes compelled Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani to warn that "drone attacks were affecting efforts to end terrorism in the country, therefore we

condemn it and we are against it.” [6]

On Christmas Day General David Petraeus, commander of all U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan, was in the war zone and stated, “there will be more coordinated military operations on either side of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.”

He insisted on more “hammer and anvil operations” after revealing that “there had already been coordinated operations on both sides of the border, with Pakistani forces on one side and NATO and Afghan troops on the other.” [7]

Two NATO helicopter gunships staged the latest violation of Pakistani air space shortly after Petraeus spoke, entering the Landi Kotal area of Khyber Agency in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. NATO intrusions into Pakistan have been mounting since last September and on the 30th of that month a NATO helicopter attack killed three Pakistani soldiers.

The U.S. and NATO are slated to deploy troops to a Pakistani military base in Quetta, the capital of Balochistan province, which borders Iran and where the Pentagon and CIA have operated out of the Shamsi air base, southwest of the capital, for years. NATO helicopters have also entered the airspace of Balochistan, marking an expansion of operations from the tribal areas into the heart of Pakistan.

In recent weeks reports have disclosed that the U.S. will supplement CIA drone missile strikes and NATO helicopter gunship raids in Pakistan’s tribal areas with special forces operations.

A Russian analyst commented on that development in ominous tones:

“Till now US troops have invaded Pakistan only sporadically. The launch of an operation against the Taliban in Pakistan may create new problems for Washington and may lead to the expansion of the Afghan threat.” [8]

It is in fact the latest escalation of the Afghan war into Pakistan. One that will increase combat operations, deaths and destruction on both sides of the border in the new year beyond the record levels of the last.

Notes

1) Voice of Russia, December 27, 2010

<http://english.ruvr.ru/2010/12/27/37888169.html>

2) Deutsche Presse-Agentur, December 27, 2010

3) Associated Press, December 26, 2010

4) Agence France-Press, December 19, 2010

5) America’s Undeclared War: Deadly Drone Attacks In Pakistan Reach Record High
Stop NATO, September 26, 2010

<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2010/09/26/americas-undeclared-war-deadly-drone-attacks-in-pakistan-reach-record-high>

6) Trend News Agency, December 30, 2010

7) Associated Press, December 26, 2010

8) Yevgeny Kryshkin, NATO’s Afghan campaign goes off course
Voice of Russia, December 27, 2010

<http://english.ruvr.ru/2010/12/27/37888169.html>

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