

THE AMERICAS

Peru gears up to combat resurgent Shining Path

ANDREW WHITE *Jane's Land Reporter*
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The Peruvian Ministry of Defence (MoD) has earmarked USD650 million to modernise its armed forces in order to step up operations against Shining Path guerrillas in the Ayacucho Valley, defence sources have told *Jane's*.

A maximum of USD198 million has been sidelined for the procurement of equipment in 2010 with an overall budget for a three-year period of USD650 million. Sources told *Jane's* that 20 per cent of these projected funds would be made available for training and doctrinal modernisation.

It is understood that US firm Aguius Advanced Tactical Training and Israeli company Global CST are both bidding for an initial contract worth around USD12.3 million to provide an initial 10-month programme aimed at retraining and equipping an entire special forces counter-insurgency (COIN) brigade (comprising 900 operators and 2,100 light-jun-

- Peru is modernising its armed forces in a bid to crack down on Shining Path guerrillas
- Aguius Advanced Tactical Training and Global CST are believed to be bidding for a contract to train and equip an entire COIN brigade

gle infantrymen). A contract is expected to be awarded in February 2010 with an initial deployment of training teams due to be implemented in March.

This 'proof of concept' is likely to provide a template for the transformation of the wider Peruvian military and will focus on C4I and intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance (ISTAR) capabilities.

The news follows the Peruvian government's response to an expanding threat from the Shining Path, also referred to as the Communist Party of Peru, which has formed an alliance with Colombian drug cartels to protect and transport coca

to international shipment points.

Aguius said it was planning to post a total of 77 former US special forces instructors to Peru as part of the contract to conduct air assault, night operation, close air support and temporary landing zone training programmes.

The Peruvian government's shopping list of combat equipment to be procured includes: short- to medium-range tactical unmanned aerial vehicles; 120 mm mortars with precision ammunition; fourth-generation night-vision goggles; weapon sights; Colt M4 assault rifles; MK19 40 mm grenades launchers; body armour; and satellite radios.

Twelve Peruvian Mil Mi-17 'Hip' helicopters will be upgraded with door guns and a forward-looking infra-red (FLIR) system and an unspecified number of Mil Mi-24 'Hind' attack helicopters will also be upgraded with FLIR systems to provide close air support to ground troops. ■

Trident maintains 100% test record

The US Navy (USN) has chalked up the 130th consecutive successful test flight of the Trident II D5 ballistic missile with the launch of an unarmed missile from the submerged ballistic missile submarine USS *Alaska* in the Atlantic Ocean.

Built by Lockheed Martin Space Systems, the D5 missile is carried by USN Ohio-class submarines and UK Royal Navy Vanguard-class boats. The three-stage, solid-propellant, inertial-guided missile can travel a nominal range of 4,000 n miles and carry multiple independently-targeted re-entry vehicles.

The latest test formed part of a DASO (demonstration and shakedown operation) to certify *Alaska* for deployment following a shipyard overhaul period. The missile was converted to test configuration using a kit produced by Lockheed Martin containing range safety devices and flight telemetry instrumentation.

The Trident II D5 was first deployed in 1990. The USN and Lockheed Martin claim the missile's 100 per cent test record over the past 20 years is unmatched by any other large ballistic missile or space launch vehicle.

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US Army to fly upgraded Guardrail soon

The US Army will soon be flying an upgraded version of its workhorse Guardrail signals intelligence (SIGINT) aircraft that will be able to detect the most sophisticated types of enemy communications and electronic signals, payload integrator Northrop Grumman announced on 5 January.

Company officials say that the new version of the Guardrail, designated the RC-12X, consists of the basic Guardrail airframe – a Hawker Beechcraft King Air 200 – equipped with updated SIGINT and electronic intelligence (ELINT) payloads that are smaller and can process more data simultaneously than their predecessors.

Flight tests of the new RC-12X are scheduled to start in February and the first four upgraded aircraft will be fielded



The US Army's RC-12X Guardrail SIGINT/ELINT fleet is being enhanced and expanded

Northrop Grumman: 1305672

to the army in July 2010, officials said.

Under the current plans, Northrop Grumman is scheduled to upgrade 33 (drawn from the existing fleet of RC-12K, N, P and Q aircraft) of the army's 45 Guardrail aircraft to the RC-12X configura-

tion by 2014. The remaining 1970s-era RC-12D and H aircraft are scheduled for retirement.

"There's a misperception on the part of some that, because the Guardrail has been around so long, the technol-

ogy we're putting out there may be antiquated, but that can't be further from the truth," said Trip Carter, director of Northrop Grumman's airborne ISR (intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) mission area.

He said the upgraded RC-12X "will not only address all the signals out there in a timely and accurate manner, but is also highly evolvable to address new signals threats".

One of the key benefits of Guardrail has been its ability to use SIGINT to gather information about the location of an enemy and to allow soldiers to listen in on enemy communications.

The upgraded RC-12X is expected to boost the Guardrail's ability to use SIGINT to direct the army's full motion video assets, which are widely used for ISR in Iraq and Afghanistan.

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