

# Letters to the Editor

*We urge that you send us your comments preferably via email, to [aspjspanish@maxwell.af.mil](mailto:aspjspanish@maxwell.af.mil) or to [cadreaspj@aol.com](mailto:cadreaspj@aol.com). You may also forward your comments by regular mail to: Editor, Air & Space Power Journal Spanish Edition, 155 N. Twining St., Bldg 693, Maxwell AFB, Montgomery, AL 36112-6026; Fax (334) 953-1626. We reserve the right to edit the material in its entirety.*

## SHINING PATH

The Shining Path (Resurgimiento del Sendero Luminoso, Segundo Trimestre 2010) is no longer an ideological movement. Now it is worse, it is a criminal, drug trafficking organization. Its presence today is centered on transforming Shining Path into a more dangerous organization that seeks to neutralize the vulnerability of the "old shining path" with regards to its relation with the farmer population. The old Shining Path lost, among other reasons, because it failed to establish an alliance with the farmers. Now, putting into practice the Maoist ideology, it has established an alliance with the farmers of certain areas and with the coca movement. This article allows us to better understand the danger of what is happening in the Peruvian region between de Valley of the Apurimac and Ene Rivers (VRAE), where the Armed Forces are confronting narcoterrorism.

**Lieutenant General (Retired) Arnaldo Velarde Ramírez**  
**Ex-Chief of Staff, Peruvian Air Force**  
*Lima, Perú*

## COLOMBIA CAN TEACH AFGHANISTAN (AND THE UNITED STATES) HOW TO WIN

Just wanted to congratulate you and your staff for moving toward the right direction with this magazine. I have worked with Latin American forces and they are always eager to learn from our operations. I also believe it is important to us to see how we can learn from them just as much (example - Colombia le Puede Enseñar a Afganistán (y a Estados Unidos) Cómo Ganar, Primer Trimestre 2010). Articles like this will have a great impact in our strategy if exposed at the right levels. I feel that for many years, we (AF) have neglected Latin American relations and it is time to begin looking at how we can improve democracy in places closer to home. Thanks for all of your hard work.

**Capitan (USAF) Pedro E. González**

*Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ*

I have read with great interest the article "Colombia can Teach Afghanistan (and the United States) How to Win", Primer Trimestre 2010, but I cannot help but notice that the similarities end there. Colombia is a democracy and they feel they are a nation. On the other hand, there is no central power in Afghanistan, the leadership is more tribal than central and they possess autonomy and aspirations that have nothing to do with the central government. This translates into the fact that power in the Afghan government is limited to a few cities, in the rest of the country alliances change constantly. We also have to take into account that in Colombia, despite everything, they have a western way of thinking, but in Afghanistan their way of thinking is very different from our western idiosyncrasies. Unfortunately, the situation will continue to slowly deteriorate as NATO and US forces leave the country, just like when the Soviets left. Marcos Daniel Funes, Argentina

**Marcos Daniel Funes**  
*Buenos Aires, Argentina*

The Author responds:

"Mr. Funes points out some notable differences between Colombia and Afghanistan. I agree that there are significant cultural and historical differences between the two countries, which I noted in my essay. We should also take note of the similarities between the two insurgencies, which I also discussed.

Mr. Funes makes note of the more tribal and decentralized nature of Afghan society. I believe these characteristics support the argument for employing a Colombia-type approach to counterinsurgency in Afghanistan. Colombia's home-guard platoon program would seem appropriate for the decentralized nature of Afghanistan, and is an approach now increasingly popular with the ISAF staff. Afghanistan's apparent cultural resistance to a strong central government is an argument against ISAF's current plan to establish a large general-purpose national army and national police force. Better to again follow Colombia's example and build a smaller but elite and specialized helicopter-mobile army.

Finally, we should recall how chaotic Colombia was in the 1990s. Colombia still has security challenges, but is much improved from those dark days. This shows that wise policies and good leadership can make a difference, hopefully even in Afghanistan."

**Robert Haddick**

## THE ENLISTED FORCE

Thank you very much for publishing CMSgt Malcolm McVicar's article "The Enlisted Force: Backbone of the Air Force" (Tercer Trimestre 2005), which mentioned the heroic efforts of A1C William Pitsenbarger during the Vietnam War. Like all members of the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service (ARRS), he served so "That Others May Live" (the ARRS motto). I was the last person to talk to Bill, a pararescueman stationed at Bien Hoa Air Base (AB) in Vietnam, before he went on the mission that cost him his life. I had come there from Binh Thuy AB, down in the Mekong Delta, for some special tools we needed to repair a helicopter. Bill and I were having a Coke when the call came in to evacuate casualties from an area close to Saigon. I remember telling Bill to have a safe trip and that I would see him the next time we came to Bien Hoa. He thanked me, flashing one of the greatest smiles I have ever seen. As your article makes clear, Bill was a very hard working, dedicated, and courageous man who acted heroically during that rescue mission, without regard for his own safety. All of us in the ARRS miss Bill and were gratified to learn that the Air Force Cross, awarded to him posthumously for bravery, was upgraded to the Medal of Honor. I thank you again for this account of an exemplary Airman.

**MSgt Eugene H. Doucett, USAF, Retired**  
*Apple valley, California*