



CRS Report for Congress

U.S. Forces in Afghanistan

JoAnne O'Bryant and Michael Waterhouse
Information Research Specialists
Knowledge Services Group

Summary

As interest in troop level deployments continue, recently, President Bush announced in a February 15, 2007 speech, the administration's plans for an increase in U.S. forces in Afghanistan, including a planned gradual increase of 3,200 U.S. troops on the ground in the coming several months. The total troop deployment in this region is expected to reach 70,000 by 2008. Varying media estimates of military forces in Afghanistan have raised concerns about the actual number of U.S. troops currently deployed in the NATO and U.S. missions under Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in that country. This report provides official Department of Defense (DOD) statistical information on U.S. forces now serving in Afghanistan with comparisons to earlier force levels. It also provides brief official information on the military units extended or scheduled for the next rotation of duty into Afghanistan. As of March 1, 2007, according to DOD, the United States had 24,845 troops stationed in Afghanistan — 21,581 active component and 3,264 National Guard or Reserves. For security reasons, DOD does not routinely report the composition, size, or specific destination of military forces deployed to the Persian Gulf. This report will be updated upon receipt of new DOD data. For additional information on U.S. forces, see CRS Report RL33503, *U.S. and Coalition Military Operations in Afghanistan: Issues for Congress*, by Andrew Feickert.

Force Levels

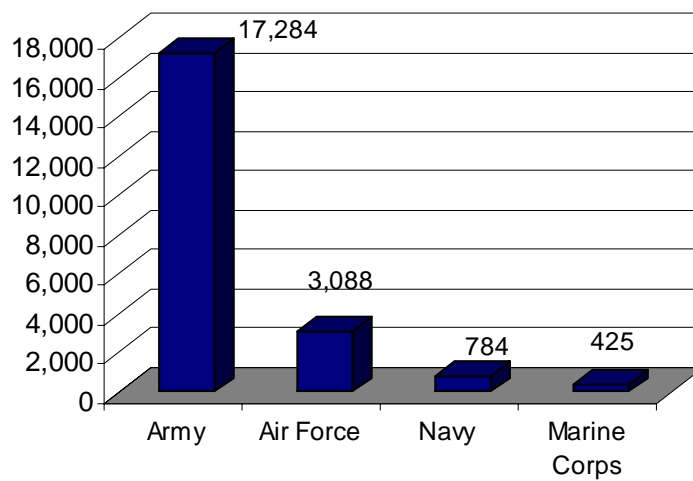
As of March 1, 2007, according to Department of Defense (DOD), the United States had 24,845 military personnel deployed in Afghanistan. Of these, 21,581 were active component personnel and 3,264 were National Guard and Reserves. **Figures 1 and 2** provide the distribution by armed service of active component personnel. These totals do not include 12,000 military support personnel in Kuwait, nor naval personnel aboard ships patrolling through the Persian Gulf.¹

¹ DOD Fact Sheet, *Global Commitments*, Jan. 9, 2007.

Amid concerns about U.S. troop levels in Iraq, in a February 15, 2007 speech, President Bush announced an extension of deployment for more than 3,200 U.S. troops in Afghanistan over the next several months as part of a new initiative in ongoing efforts to stabilize the security situation and to confront a resurgent Taliban. The total troop deployment in this region is expected to reach 70,000 by 2008. These forces are to be added to the personnel stationed in Afghanistan as reported by DOD on March 1, 2007. Additional deployment information is available from DOD’s Directorate for Information Operations, which posts quarterly reports on casualties and worldwide active duty military personnel deployments by region and country.

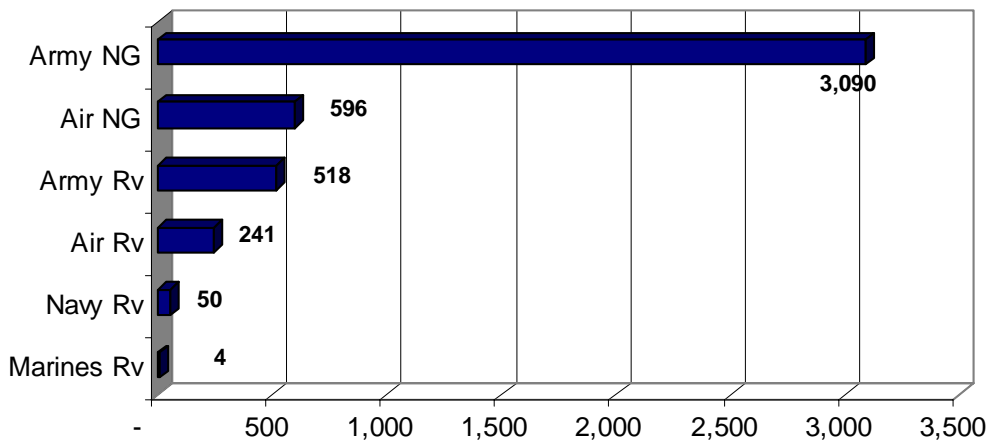
[<http://siadapp.dior.whs.mil/personnel/MILITARY/Miltop.htm>]

Figure 1. Active Component Personnel in Afghanistan (as of March 1, 2007)



Source: Department of Defense, Office of Joints Chiefs of Staff, “Boots on Ground” data.

Figure 2. Reserve Component Personnel in Afghanistan (as of March 1, 2007)

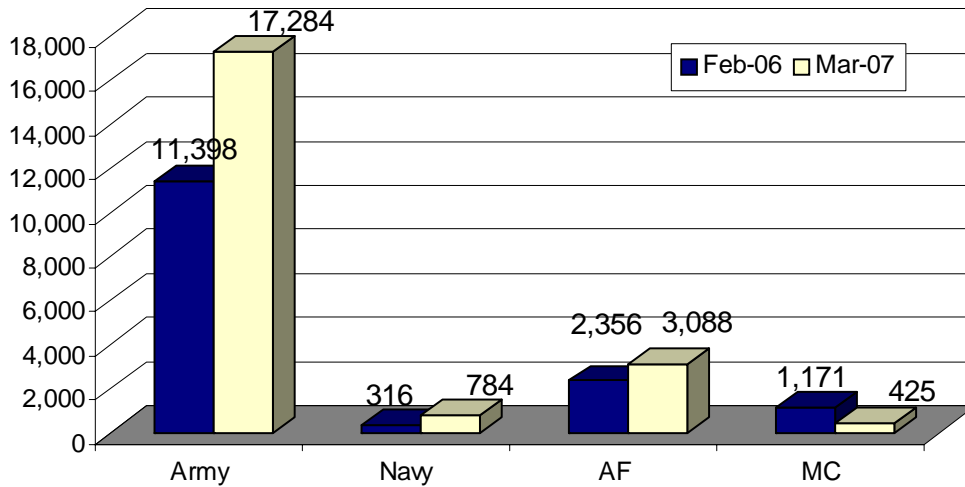


Source: Department of Defense, Office of Joints Chiefs of Staff, “Boots on Ground” data.

Comparative Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) U.S. Force Levels.

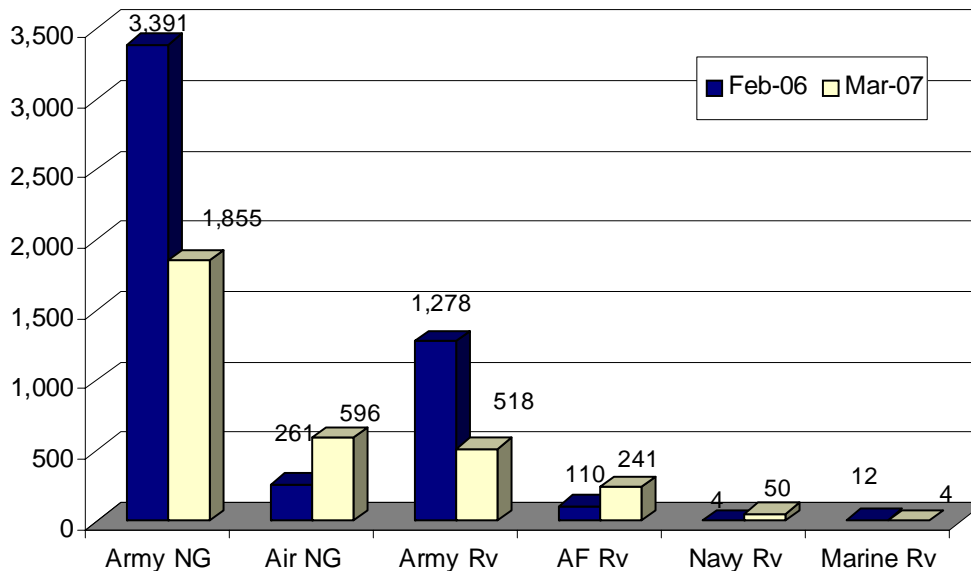
Overall U.S. force levels in Afghanistan have been increasing since 2006, in both active duty and the reserve component. Based on DOD statistics, **Figures 3, 4, and 5** provide comparative data on both active and reserve component force levels. DOD officials have declined to project the timing or size of future force reductions, noting these will depend upon the security situation within Iraq.

Figure 3. Comparative OEF Active Component Force Levels (Feb 2006/Mar 2007)



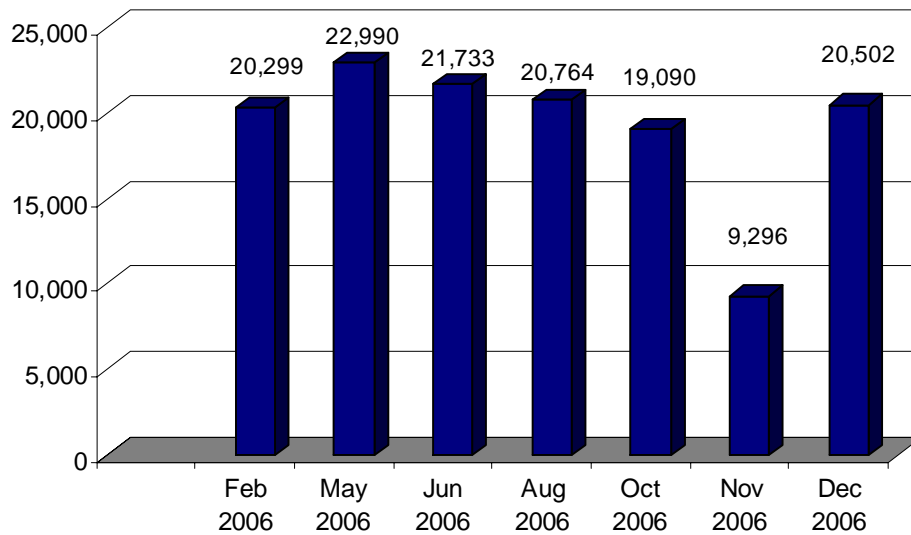
Source: Department of Defense, Office of Joints Chiefs of Staff, “Boots on Ground” data.

Figure 4. Comparative OEF Reserve Component Force Levels (Feb 2006/Mar 2007)



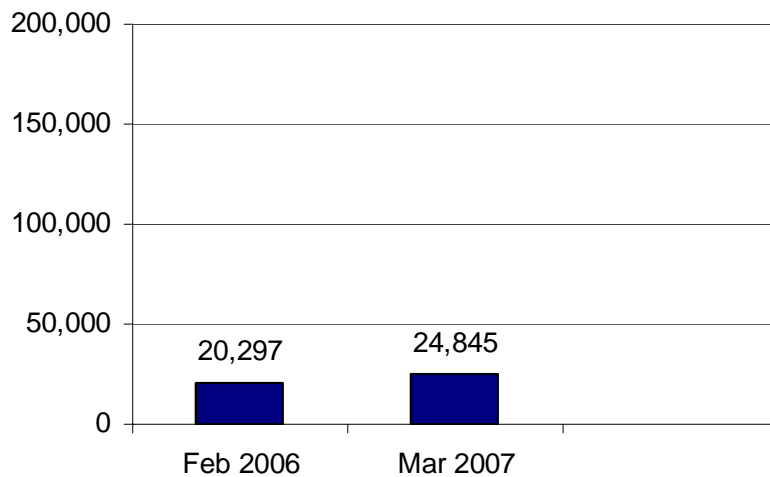
Source: Department of Defense, Office of Joints Chiefs of Staff, “Boots on Ground” data.

Figure 5. Comparative U.S. Force Levels in Afghanistan (Feb 2006-Dec 2006)



Source: Department of Defense, Office of Joints Chiefs of Staff, “Boots on Ground” data, November 1, 2005 through January 1, 2007.

Figure 6. Comparative U.S. Force Levels in Afghanistan (Years 2006 and 2007)



Source: Department of Defense, Office of Joints Chiefs of Staff, “Boots on Ground” data.

Operation Enduring Freedom Troop Rotations. On January 25 and February 14, 2007, DOD announced its latest scheduled troop deployment adjustments and schedule for rotations to Afghanistan in conjunction with OEF. The initial 2007 schedule for the affected Army units is summarized in **Table 1** below. Rotations for Army units

normally last for one year; however, there is currently a 120 day deployment extension for one unit as listed in the table below.

Table 1. Operation Enduring Freedom Rotational Units

Military Unit	Home Military Base	2007 Transitions
Army		
4 th Brigade Combat Team, 82 nd Airborne Division	Fort Bragg, North Carolina	March, 2007 to Afghanistan
3 rd Brigade, 10 th Mountain Division	Fort Drum, New York	120-day extension of deployment in Afghanistan
173 rd Airborne Brigade	Vicenza, Italy	Spring, 2007 to Afghanistan