



U.S. Military Dispositions: Fact Sheet

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Summary

The United States maintains a global military presence to support foreign policy and military strategy. Representation ranges from one Marine in Sierra Leone to an Army Corps in Germany, and is found in 144 nations. In some countries, presence is maintained continuously and service members are assigned tours of one to three years. In other countries, there may be short term deployments of units or teams in response to emergencies or training opportunities. This report describes the worldwide distribution of U.S. military personnel and related concerns of Congress. It will be updated quarterly.

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The table below is a snapshot of active duty military distribution compiled by the Department of Defense (DOD) for June 30, 2006. These statistics are normally published quarterly—on any given day exact numbers differ. Rotation of replacement personnel and units occurs regularly at traditional overseas bases, while one-time spikes can occur anywhere the United States may be involved in a crisis situation. In 1996, for example, there were 15,000 U.S. soldiers deployed in Bosnia—but today there are 256. On any day, also, many military personnel are afloat on ships. On this day, there were 126,613 men and women at sea or in temporary ports, included and distributed throughout the territorial waters of the United States and the several regions shown in the table.

Table 1. Geographic Distribution of U.S. Military Personnel (AD)^a

Total Number on Active Duty	1,381,401
United States and Territories ^b	1,092,586
Europe and Former Soviet Union ^b	97,658
East Asia and Pacific ^b	78,369
Africa, Near East, and South Asia ^b	8,254
Western Hemisphere (excluding USA)	2,112
Undistributed ^b	102,422

Source: DOD, Worldwide Manpower Distribution by Geographical Area, June 30, 2006

- a. Comparable data not available for Reserve Components; however, on Jan.24, 2007, there were 91,344 RC personnel called to Active Duty (OASD-RA).
- b. Included are those assigned AD troops now deployed with the 203,700 AD, Reserve, and National Guard members of *Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom* in Iraq, Kuwait, and Afghanistan who are undistributed or accounted for in the United States, Germany, Italy, Japan, South Korea, and United Kingdom.

Forward Presence. Forward presence remains an important component of U.S. military strategy; in the Cold War it supported containment, but now it primarily supports regional stability and the Global War on Terrorism. Advantages derived: assures friends and allies of U.S. commitments; deters potential regional aggressors; places forces closer to crisis response sites; and, provides a physical and human infrastructure for global military response capabilities. Disadvantages: additional costs to maintain forces overseas (personnel and operating costs 10-20% above Continental U.S.); may make it easier to act or be expected to act as “world policeman”; adds to “over commitment” of downsized forces; and, potential to attract political or environmental complaints.

Trends. After the Cold War ended, overall size of the U.S. Armed Forces declined while operating tempo increased. The number of forces permanently stationed overseas declined—especially in Europe. Whereas 33% of the Army was stationed overseas in 1989, the figure is now 16% (not including deployments – now 24% in Iraq, Kuwait, and Afghanistan). The Clinton

Administration decided to stabilize U.S. presence in Europe at about 100,000 troops, down from 300,000 in the past. Presence in the Pacific region was also stabilized at about 100,000 focused in volatile Northeast Asia, where some 30,000 troops are in South Korea and 34,000 in Japan. (The Bush Administration is in the process of changing the global stationing posture.) While such presence stationing is normal and expected by individual uniformed personnel, temporary deployments for humanitarian or peacekeeping purposes, joint and combined training, and actual conflicts increased after the Cold War and remain high. Units for these missions come from both overseas and stateside bases. Today, U.S. activities include land, water, and air operations in and around Iraq, former Yugoslavia, Korea, Afghanistan, and other areas critical to the War on Terrorism.

Costs and Burdensharing. Overseas presence and engagement commitments raise questions about costs. Broad questions involve how much the nation should devote to maintaining influence abroad and world-power capabilities and whether there are cheaper ways to do so. The United States has already shifted emphasis from forward presence to power projection. Cost savings from bringing forces home may be reduced by the need to compensate with greater airlift, sealift, and pre-positioning. Because U.S. presence is normally in the interest of both the host nation and the United States, there has often been pressure to have hosts pay more of the costs. For analysis of these complicated issues, see CRS Report 95-726, *Defense Budget: Alternative Measures of Costs of Military Commitments Abroad*, and CRS Report 94-515, *Defense Burdensharing: Is Japan's Host Nation Support a Model for Other Allies?*, both by (name redacted).

Congressional Actions. Since late in the Cold War, Congress has set ceilings on U.S. forward presence primarily by limiting the numbers of troops ashore allowed in Europe—currently 100,000. In the defense authorization act for FY1999 (P.L. 105-261), Congress again directed the President to seek increased burdensharing by each nation that has cooperative military relations with the United States. Congress authorized, but did not require, several measures that the President could use to encourage nations to increase such efforts. For FY2001 (H.R. 4205), Congress directed GAO to study costs and benefits for U.S. military activities in Europe—see reports GAO-02-174 and GAO-02-99. Congress established an Overseas Basing Commission to study the Bush Administration's rebasing plans; it reported in May 2005 (see <http://fido.gov/obc/default.asp>). Temporary deployments by the President may be reported to Congress under provisions of the War Powers Act.

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