



Afghanistan – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 7 February 2012

Information on current presence and role of American forces in Afghanistan.

A *Council on Foreign Relations* report, in a section titled “Current U.S. Strategy and Policy”, states:

“In Afghanistan, the current U.S. strategy seeks to weaken Taliban insurgents in the field; provide security training and assistance for the Afghan people to defend themselves; and assist the Afghan government in providing basic services to deprive the insurgency of popular support and create conditions for sustainable security when NATO forces leave. President Obama has invested in a military surge with a corollary increase in civilian resources to give this strategy new momentum. For the first time, U.S. forces have targeted the strongholds of the insurgency in southern Afghanistan with major operations, contesting areas where Taliban influence had gone virtually unchallenged for years. To degrade the Taliban, the United States has expanded conventional operations, greatly enhanced Special Forces activities targeting midgrade Taliban leaders, and improved intelligence collection. The U.S. military has committed to strengthening the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) as well as local communitybased defense units through joint operations, training, equipping, mentoring, and partnering. By pressuring the Taliban, it has begun to set conditions for political settlements at the grassroots level by encouraging reintegration of Taliban fighters who give up the insurgency. At the senior levels, it has supported reconciliation with Taliban leaders if they meet necessary conditions.” (Council on Foreign Relations (November 2010) *U.S. Strategy for Pakistan and Afghanistan*, p.10)

A *United States Department of Defense* report, in “Section 1 – Strategy” (paragraph 1.1: U.S. Mission), states:

“The goal of the United States is to disrupt, dismantle, and eventually defeat al Qaeda, and to prevent its return to either Afghanistan or Pakistan. The specific objectives in Afghanistan are to deny safe haven to al Qaeda and to deny the Taliban the ability to overthrow the Afghan Government. To support these objectives, U.S. and coalition forces will continue to degrade the Taliban insurgency in order to provide time and space to increase the capacity of the Afghan National Security Forces and the Afghan Government so they can assume the lead for Afghanistan's security by the end of 2014.” (United States Department Of Defense (27 October 2011) *Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*)

The Executive Summary of this report states:

“Also during the reporting period, President Obama announced that recent security progress and the increasing capacity and capability of the ANSF have allowed for the recovery of U.S. surge forces. Ten thousand U.S. troops will be redeployed by the end of the 2011, and the entire surge force of 33,000 personnel will be recovered by the end of

September 2012. Approximately 68,000 U.S. troops, however, will remain in Afghanistan following the drawdown, and ISAF is currently developing a recommendation for future force levels. Although force levels will gradually decrease, the United States remains committed to the long-term security and stability of Afghanistan, and negotiations are progressing on a long-term strategic partnership between the United States and Afghanistan.” (ibid)

A *NATO Parliamentary Assembly* report, in a section titled “Reviewing The Campaign: Resources And Strategy” (paragraph 12), states:

“As of June 2011, there were approximately 90,000 US Forces and approximately 42,381 international forces in Afghanistan. The 30,000 US personnel increase that arrived in 2010 was comprised of three separate force packages, each built to provide specific capabilities essential to achieving the main goals of the campaign plan, particularly in Regional Command South (RCSouth) and Regional Command East (RC-East). The US force surge was completed in November 2010.” (NATO Parliamentary Assembly (4 November 2011) *Transition in Afghanistan: Assessing the Security Effort*)

A *Congressional Research Service* report, in a section titled “The U.S.-Led Military Effort: 2001-2008”, states:

“To combat the insurgency, in partnership with 49 other countries and the Afghan government and security forces, there were about 99,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan as of the beginning of July 2011—the height of the U.S. troop presence. The vast majority operate under NATO/ISAF command, but about 9,000 are part of the post-September 11 anti-terrorism mission Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). On April 28, 2011, President Obama nominated the top U.S. and NATO commander in Afghanistan, General David Petraeus, to become CIA Director, and Lieutenant General John Allen took over the command in Afghanistan on July 18, 2011. Serving under the top U.S. and NATO/ISAF commander is an ‘Intermediate Joint Command’ focused primarily on day-to-day operations; it is headed since July 2011 by Lieutenant General Curtis Scaparrotti, who succeeded Major General David Rodriguez.” (Congressional Research Service (22 November 2011) *Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy*, p.20)

For additional information on the composition of US and allied forces in Afghanistan see attached document from the International Security Assistance Force website.

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database
United States Department of Defense
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