

How many and where?

In May 2010, President Obama announced a plan to deploy 1200 federally-funded National Guard troops to the Southwest border. These troops began deployment to their postings on August 1, 2010 and were scheduled to withdraw by June 30, 2011. However, on June 17, 2011 the Obama administration announced they were extending the deployment of the National Guard through September 30, 2011.¹ The troops are maintained at the following target levels across the U.S.-Mexico border, but actual deployments fluctuate, with the number of troops exceeding the target level at times:²

- 524 to Arizona
- 250 to Texas
- 224 to California
- 72 to New Mexico
- 130 in “command and control” and other support positions³

Furthermore, 340 additional troops are also stationed on the Southwest border, working on the State Counter-Drug Program,⁴ in which approximately 2,500 National Guard troops assist state agencies around the country with drug demand reduction, information sharing, and training.⁵

Who pays for the National Guard and what are the costs?

When the President orders the National Guard to deploy, as in this case, the troops are funded by the federal government, through the Department of Defense. A state governor has independent authority to deploy troops from his or her own state, a cost that is covered by the state budget. Both Former Governor Richardson (New Mexico) and Former Governor Schwarzenegger (California) deployed a small number of state National Guard troops to the border.⁶

The original year-long deployment of the Guard cost taxpayers an estimated **\$110 million**, with **\$34 million** being spent on Arizona alone.⁷ The three-month extension into September 2011 is estimated to cost the Department of Defense an additional **\$35 million**.⁸ During the past year’s deployment each soldier cost taxpayers an estimated **\$96,000** per year, including facilities, supplies, and other expenses.⁹

What is the mission and what are the rules of engagement?

National Guard troops support the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and are only armed for self-protection.¹⁰ However, unlike prior National Guard border missions, such as

¹ <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/jun/17/nation/la-na-border-20110618>

² <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/26/us/26border.html?scp=1&sq=border%20national%20guard&st=cse>

³ <http://www.ng.mil/news/archives/2010/09/091710-National.aspx>

⁴ http://www.dhs.gov/ynews/releases/pr_1279557825445.shtm

⁵ <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=127220258>

⁶ <http://www.army.mil/standto/archive/2009/03/09/>

⁷ <http://www.cnn.com/2010/US/07/16/california.national.guard/index.html>;

⁸ <http://www.azcentral.com/news/articles/2010/03/31/20100331new-mexico-orders-guard-to-border.html>

⁹ <http://www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/news/articles/2011/03/16/20110316national-guard-leaving-border-in-june.html>

¹⁰ http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/43445684/ns/local_news-phoenix_az/t/feds-extend-national-guards-border-stay-through-sept/

¹¹ http://articles.boston.com/2011-06-01/news/29609321_1_troop-deployment-border-patrol-customs-and-border-protection

¹² http://www.laindependent.com/news/national_world/National-Guard-Border-Troops-98786734.html

Operation Jump Start in 2006 in which Guard troops built roads and fences, the most clearly identified task in the current operation is monitoring the border for illicit crossings. General Craig McKinley, commander of the National Guard, said the Guard troops at the border work on “Entry Identification Teams (EITs),” i.e. surveillance on the border, as well as on criminal and intelligence analysis.¹¹ Although they do not have authority to make arrests, General McKinley stated that Guard troops “play a variety of roles, depending on the situation” to assist the DHS Border Patrol in monitoring illegal border crossings and smugglings, as well as in intelligence gathering.

Guard troops are under the command and control of state governors and state adjutants general. However, although Guard troops are nominally accountable to the state, DHS Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Commissioner Alan Bersin described their work as fundamentally a CBP function. “They work with Border Patrol agents in this case to provide additional eyes and ears on the border so that they are at predetermined places along the border to be able to assist in identifying attempted entries and communicating to Border Patrol agents that would then take efforts at apprehension.”¹² DHS Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Director John Morton added: “The criminal intelligence analysts are the individuals who will be assisting ICE, and that's with investigations of the criminal networks that are bringing people across the border.”¹³

What other border enforcement is underway?

Currently there are 21,370 Border Patrol agents operating between ports of entry and 21,186 CBP officers at ports of entry – both all-time highs. CBP is also continuing to invest in additional resources to monitor border activity.¹⁴ CBP daily deploys 1,419 canine enforcement teams, 21,863 automobiles, 225 marine vessels and 280 equestrian patrols.¹⁵ CBP has requested over \$11.8 billion for the upcoming fiscal year, an increase of over \$300 million from the previous year.¹⁶

The decision to extend the National Guard deployment, in addition to the deployment of a [record amount of border security resources](#), comes at a time when illegal entries have dipped to record low levels. From 2000 to 2010, apprehensions of illegal entrants have decreased by over two-thirds from 1.6 million to 448,000, rendering additional border security measures superfluous. The Los Angeles Times in April of 2011 described Border Patrol agents on duty in Arizona as so idle they are bored, disinterested, and sleepy “watching the fence rust.”¹⁷

In this context, the need for U.S. taxpayers to pick up the tab for an additional deployment of the National Guard is questionable at best.

¹¹ <http://www.globalsecurity.org/security/library/news/2010/07/sec-100719-dodo2.htm>

¹² <http://www.globalsecurity.org/security/library/news/2010/07/sec-100719-dodo2.htm>

¹³ <http://www.globalsecurity.org/security/library/news/2010/07/sec-100719-dodo2.htm>

¹⁴ http://www.dhs.gov/ynews/releases/pr_1297696999494.shtm

¹⁵ <http://www.immigrationforum.org/images/uploads/2011/FederalAgentsontheBorder.pdf>

¹⁶ <http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/budget-bib-fy2012.pdf>

¹⁷ <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/apr/21/local/la-me-border-boredom-20110421>