

# EXHIBIT E

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## Your Military

# 26,000 US troops total in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria, DoD reports

Tara Copp

📅 November 27, 2017

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President Donald Trump prepares to address the troops at Joint Base Andrews, Md., Sept. 15. (Senior Airman Delano Scott/Air Force)

The U.S. has almost 26,000 troops deployed total in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria, according to a new DoD report, far exceeding the Pentagon’s previously acknowledged troop levels overseas.

The U.S. has 8,892 forces in Iraq, 15,298 troops in Afghanistan and 1,720 in Syria, for a total of 25,910 troops serving in the three war zones as of Sept. 30, according to DoD. The figures were released to the public Nov. 17 as part of DoD's quarterly count of active duty, Reserve, Guard and civilian personnel assigned by country by the Defense Manpower Data Center.

However, DoD has not historically included some special operations forces or temporary personnel rotating into or out of the country in that official figure, so the actual number could be even higher.

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis pledged to bring more transparency to the actual number of forces on the ground as he assumed leadership of the Pentagon earlier this year under President Donald Trump.

DoD's previous official response to queries about the number of forces had been to provide the "force management level" — a cap set by the previous administration under former President Barack Obama. Using that figure, the Pentagon had only previously said there were 5,262 troops in Iraq.

However, the Defense Manpower Data Center, which tracks actual numbers and not policy-driven force management levels, was reporting that there were 6,812 U.S. forces in Iraq in December 2016, the last report completed under Obama's presidency.

The actual number of forces in Syria is also substantially higher than the previously acknowledged figure, according to the database. The Pentagon had previously provided the force management level number — 503 troops — when queried. The actual number is 1,720, plus three DoD civilians, according to the database.

Afghanistan also has many more U.S. troops on the ground that previously acknowledged, according to the database. As of Sept. 30 there were 15,298 U.S. military forces and 1,202 DoD

civilians, for a total reported U.S. footprint in Afghanistan of 16,500.

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*Tara Copp is the Pentagon Bureau Chief for Military Times and author of the award-winning military nonfiction "The Warbird: Three Heroes. Two Wars. One Story."*

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