



Sgt. Joshua Prescott of the Texas National Guard provides security at a police station in Afghanistan on April 29, 2013. The SFAT team is responsible for mentoring Afghan police officers and providing security for coalition enablers. (Photo by Sgt. Jessi Ann McCormick)

# Army says no extended tours for Soldiers in Afghanistan

*Army News Service*

**L**ast month, the Army's senior-most officer told lawmakers budget cuts could result in a decrease in training readiness for follow-on forces to Afghanistan that could result in extended tours for Soldiers already there. That is no longer the case.

During testimony on Capitol Hill April 23, Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Ray Odierno told members of the Senate Armed Services Committee that "difficult decisions" with regard to the Army budget have eliminated the possibility that Soldiers who are in Afghanistan now might need to stay longer due to the training-related delays of follow-on forces.

Chief among those difficult decisions are the 14 days of civilian furloughs the Army will implement later this year to help reduce costs. The savings there will help the Army train, Odierno said.

"That's allowing us to have enough money to invest in the training of the units that will be placed in Afghanistan, so we will not have to increase tour length," he said. "We've had to make some very difficult decisions here in fiscal year 2013 in order to ensure we do not extend those tour lengths. So they were tough, difficult decisions; but we believe tour lengths will remain the same and we will be able to train the forces that follow up those units." ■

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