

Eshoo, Honda, and Miller Respond to Extended Troop Deployment

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Washington, D.C. -- Reps. Anna G. Eshoo, Mike Honda and George Miller released the following statement on the Secretary of Defense's decision to extend troop deployments in Iraq:

"This week's decision by the Secretary of Defense to extend the deployment duration of selected military units in Iraq affects hundreds of soldiers from the Bay Area and their loved ones on the home front.

"As Bay Area legislators, we applaud the 160 Army Reserve soldiers in Iraq serving with the 341st Military Police Company and the 235 Army Reserve soldiers serving with the 211th Cargo Transfer Company in Kuwait. The courage and commitment of these men and women are a credit to our nation, and to the families eagerly awaiting their safe return home. We are also glad to see the safe return of the 870th Military Police Company, based in Pittsburg, after their year of hard work in Iraq.

"We must continue to support our armed forces. If our military commanders determine they need more troops, we must deploy the forces necessary to win the peace in Iraq.

"But words of support for the men and women in the armed forces are not enough. We must give our troops the equipment they require to face the enemy in live battle combat situations.

"With regard to both the 341st MP Company and the 211th CT Company facing deployment extension, our offices have remained in regular communication with Pentagon officials. Army officials assure us that properly equipping soldiers is their top priority. The Army says it is maximizing production of flak jackets, which will be reissued to extended Reservists. We have expressed such concerns about equipment and training for the Guard and Reserve from the outset of military operations, when many Guard and Reserve troops received less training and inferior equipment than regular Army units.

"Despite the promise of a 12-month limit, 21,000 men and women who wear the uniform have had to delay their anticipated return home. Amidst this increasing commitment of armed forces, we are extremely concerned that President Bush has yet to lay out a real plan for securing peace in Iraq.

"The Bush Administration has developed no political strategy for the creation of an Iraqi governing entity that has legitimacy and popular support. Instead, the President is relying on an artificially created June 30 deadline for the transfer of power.

"We are proud of our troops, and want to provide them every bit of support available. We also want President Bush to share with the nation his plan for realizing a peaceful Iraq so we can better assess the advisability of future deployment extensions."

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