



## **Escalation of Iraq War Leaves Missourians Vulnerable**

**President Bush's Plan Strains Missouri Troops to  
Breaking Point**

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## **READY OR NOT... THERE THEY GO!**

*President Bush's plan to escalate the war in Iraq has spurred widespread opposition. In the Iraq Study Group Report and National Intelligence Estimate, top military and intelligence experts warned the president against escalating the war and expressed deep skepticism about the odds of success from such a strategy.*

*Escalation of the war in Iraq has put an unprecedented and dangerous strain on our troops and National Guard. Last week, a special Commission on the National Guard and Reserves released a report that found 90% of our National Guard units are not ready to go to Iraq. The commission concluded that the readiness of the Guard is "unacceptable" and is the lowest it has been in 35 years. Even after receiving this news, President Bush decided to increase the escalation further adding an 8,200 more troops on top of his original plan to escalate by 21,500. The escalation would put an even greater strain on the Missouri National Guard which do not have enough equipment to deploy its soldiers and airmen.*

### **U.S. NATIONAL GUARD READINESS AT 35 YEAR LOW**

The National Guard and Reservists of the United States are not properly equipped or trained to go into a war zone. In fact, the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves reported in March 2007 that nearly 90 percent of National Guard units are not ready to respond to crises at home and abroad.<sup>i</sup> The lack of readiness is largely attributed to a lack of necessary equipment.<sup>ii</sup> The Commission on the National Guard and Reserves is an independent body charged with making recommendations to Congress regarding needed changes in law and policy to ensure that the Guard and Reserves are organized, trained, equipped, compensated, and supported to most effectively protect the national security of the United States.

In another indication of the dire state of our nation's vulnerability to crises, Lt. General Blum who coordinates National Guard activities between the states and the Pentagon reported that Guard readiness hasn't been so low in 35 Years. In February 2007, Lt General Blum reported that 88 percent of the forces in the United States' Army National Guard are very poorly equipped. He continued, "Worse still, less than 45 percent of the Air National Guard's units have the equipment they need to deploy, the first time such a shortfall in equipment readiness has occurred in the past 35 years, Blum said."<sup>iii</sup>

### **EQUIPMENT SHORTAGES LEAVE U.S. VULNERABLE**

The lack of equipment has reached an unacceptable level and jeopardizes the safety of U.S. troops in a war zone. The equipment and training shortages also makes the nation vulnerable at home, leaving the National Guard having a decreased ability to respond to natural disasters and terrorist attacks. The Commission reported that "sufficient and ready equipment" is a problem for both Active and Reserve units. In particular the commission noted that, "equipment readiness of the Army National Guard is unacceptable and has reduced the capability of the United States to respond to current and additional major contingencies, foreign and domestic." Early this month, the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves released a report that stated, "The lack of sufficient and ready equipment is a problem common to active and reserve components. In particular, the equipment readiness of the Army National Guard is unacceptable and has reduced the capability of the United States to respond to current and additional major contingencies, foreign and domestic."<sup>iv</sup>

### **LACK OF READINESS WILL COST LIVES**

In January 2007, Lt. General Steven Blum reported that the extremely low readiness of the United States National Guard and Reserves will lead to American casualties. "I am not as comfortable as some others seem to be in accepting the low readiness levels here at home," Blum said. "It creates a problem. It will cost us time and time will translate into lives."<sup>v</sup>

## **IRAQ ESCALATION PUTS STRAIN ON MISSOURI'S GUARD AND HOMEFRONT READINESS**

*The escalation of troops to Iraq would place even more strain on the Missouri National Guard. The state has already committed an enormous amount of funding and soldiers to the war in Iraq. An escalation would place an even greater strain on those units.*

### **MISSOURIANS SENT INTO IRAQ WITHOUT NEEDED EQUIPMENT**

A government study showed that National Guard equipment shortages are affecting readiness and training. The lack of equipment not only has negative affects on readiness and training, but it also makes it more difficult for those National Guardsman to respond to potential natural disasters and terrorist attacks. The Missouri National Guard only has 28 percent of the medium trucks required by military standards. It was also reported that Missouri only has 37 percent of the night-vision devices required.<sup>vi</sup>

Former Senator Talent said the lack of equipment for Missouri's National Guard "puts us further out on the margin of risk than we need to be."<sup>vii</sup>

#### **BY THE NUMBERS**

\$378 Billion: Spent on Iraq to date

\$5.8 Billion: Cost To MO taxpayers

135,000: # of troops serving

3,153: # of troops killed

18,260: # of MO troops (incl. Afghanistan)

55: # of MO troops killed

27,796: # of National Guard serving

9,276: # of MO Guard and Reservists

\$5.6 Billion: Cost of Iraq Escalation

### **THE HIGH COST TO MISSOURIANS**

The cost to the state and the nation as a whole has been significant, both in terms of dollars and in terms of lives lost. Thus far, \$378 billion has been spent on the war in Iraq. Missouri tax payers have contributed \$5.8 billion to the war effort. There are 135,000 troops serving in Iraq, 18,260 troops have served in Iraq or Afghanistan from Missouri. Missouri has lost 55 troops to the Iraq war. There are 9,276 Missouri National Guard and Reservists that have served in the Iraq war. The estimated cost to escalate the war in Iraq is \$5.6 billion. The escalation would force Missouri to invest even more funding into the war.<sup>viii</sup>

## **MISSOURI'S TROOPS STRETCHED TOO THIN**

The war in Iraq has left the U.S. Military stretched too thin. A report by the Center for American Progress concluded that, "the active Army today is recklessly stretched far beyond recommended use, ultimately hurting our troops and dangerously depriving our country of the strategic reserves necessary to respond to true crises."<sup>xix</sup> Since the beginning of the war every combat brigade division of the Army has served at least one tour of duty in Iraq or Afghanistan. Many of the brigades have served multiple tours. Thirty-One Brigades have served 2 or more tours in Iraq and 11 Brigades have served three or more tours.

The exhaustion has been so severe that the Administration has violated commitments made to the troops. The Army has violated its own policy that recommends that once a soldier has been deployed for 12 months in a war zone, they should return home for 24 months. This guideline was developed to protect the troops, ensuring ample time for recuperation and retraining before returning to combat.<sup>x</sup>

In order to execute his escalation plan, the President is now sending troops back to Iraq who were so badly injured during previous deployments that they cannot wear body armor. The Army's 3rd Infantry Division at Fort Benning, Ga., is deploying troops with serious injuries and other medical problems, including troops who have been declared medically unfit for battle. Some too injured to wear their body armor, according to medical records.<sup>xi</sup>

## **MISSOURIANS VOICE CONCERN ABOUT THE WAR**

Legislation has been proposed in the Missouri state Senate. The resolution proposed by Senator Justus urges the Federal government to refrain from escalating the troop level in Iraq. The resolution continues by forcing the President to seek approval from Congress to be able to send troops to Iraq. It continues by encouraging Congress to pass legislation prohibiting the President from using tax dollars to pay for the escalation in Iraq without prior approval from Congress.<sup>xii</sup>

Congressman Carnahan spoke out against the escalation in Iraq. He stated that President Bush was not taking the war into the direction that is best for our country. "The Bush Escalation plan flies in the face of military experts, the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, Democratic and Republican leaders in Congress and the American public. Our plan is for de-escalation of the war, and the redeployment of troops to stabilize the region not referee a sectarian civil war, and to use our considerable diplomatic might to reach a political solution for stability."<sup>xiii</sup>

Senator McCaskill opposed the escalation of troops in Iraq. Shortly after a vote where she opposed troop escalation, McCaskill said in a press release, "I'm proud to have voted with a bi-partisan majority of my colleagues to oppose the President's troop escalation plan. Today we sent a loud message to the White House. The Senate joined the House of Representatives in going on the record to say we need a new direction in Iraq. Those who voted against today's measure are trying to provide political cover for the President. I'm more interested in protecting our troops than playing politics with their lives."<sup>xiv</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

Escalation of the war in Iraq has put an unprecedented and dangerous strain on our troops and left Missouri vulnerable to natural disasters and crises. To uphold the national security of the United States and assure the safety and security of the state of Missouri, the escalation of the Iraq war must be stopped and mandatory protections for our troops must be signed into law.

President Bush ignored warnings from state officials, the Commission on the National Guard and Reserve, the Iraq Study Group and the National Intelligence Estimate and expanded his plan to escalate the war in Iraq.

The onus now lies with the United States Congress to stop the escalation that is plunging the state of Missouri and the entire nation into dire straits. President Bush has made clear that he will not take action to secure our homeland and protect our troops, so it falls to Congress to reverse the dangerous course in Iraq.

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<sup>i</sup> Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, Second Report to Congress, 3/1/07

<sup>ii</sup> Washington Post, 3/2/07

<sup>iii</sup> Lexington Herald Leader, 2/1/07.

<sup>iv</sup> Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, Second Report to Congress, 3/1/07

<sup>v</sup> The Commercial Appeal, 1/25/07

<sup>vi</sup> St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 11/3/05

<sup>vii</sup> St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 11/3/05

<sup>viii</sup> National Priorities Project, [http://nationalpriorities.org/auxiliary/maps\\_files/IraqJan07/OH.pdf](http://nationalpriorities.org/auxiliary/maps_files/IraqJan07/OH.pdf); CTS Deployment File as on January 31,2007; Iraq Coalition Casualty Count, <http://www.icasualties.org/oif/Statecity.aspx>

<sup>ix</sup> “Beyond the Call of Duty, A Comprehensive Review of the Overuse of the Army in the Administration's War of Choice in Iraq,” Center for American Progress, [3/6/07](http://www.americanprogress.org)

<sup>x</sup> Center For American Progress Report, *Beyond The Call Of Duty*

<sup>xi</sup> *Salon.com*, [3/11/07](http://www.salon.com)

<sup>xii</sup> Missouri State Senate, SCR 13, 3/7/2007 - Voted Do Not Pass S Rules, Joint Rules, Resolutions & Ethics Committee

<sup>xiii</sup> Congressman Carnahan Congressional Press Release, 1/23/07,

[http://www.house.gov/list/press/mo03\\_carnahan/SOTUResponse\\_pr\\_01\\_23\\_07.html](http://www.house.gov/list/press/mo03_carnahan/SOTUResponse_pr_01_23_07.html)

<sup>xiv</sup> Senator McCaskill Press Release, 2/17/07, <http://mccaskill.senate.gov/record.cfm?id=269496>