

Oregon Gov. strongly opposes more troops in Iraq

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Governor Kulongoski urges President to consult with governors on strategy In a letter sent Wednesday, Governor Ted Kulongoski expressed his "strong" opposition to the President's proposal to increase troop levels in Iraq as part of his revised strategy. The Governor highlighted that any increase in troops could ultimately impact Oregon's National Guard troops here at home who have already served and the length of deployment for those currently serving overseas. Governor Kulongoski and Colonel Mike Caldwell talk with national guardsmen at the Deployment Ceremony for the 641st Medical Battalion in 2003. "Even if the Guard is not included in the initial deployment, more would likely be needed later this year to sustain the greater number of troops," the Governor wrote to the President. "Further, Guardsmen and women already in Iraq could be there for an extended period of time." The Governor reiterated his pride in the Oregon National Guard stating that, "I could not be prouder of our men and women in the Oregon National Guard for the role they play in protecting Americans at home and abroad. Their sacrifices -â€" and those of their families -â€" demand our deep gratitude, respect and admiration." But he went on to raise his concerns for the strategy in Iraq to continue to rely heavily upon the National Guard when they have duties at home, including work and their families. "Already, hundreds of thousands of National Guard troops have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, leaving states with fewer resources -â€" soldiers and equipment -â€" to respond to domestic emergencies," the Governor's letter continued. "Furthermore, consider the difficult position of Oregon employers of National Guardsmen and women, who play a critical role in Oregon's overall economy. I am concerned it will create economic challenges for employers to continue to be as supportive as they have been of their employee's participation in guard activities if there are increased deployments." The Governor concluded by urging the President to consult with all governors and members of Congress before moving forward with a new strategy in Iraq. For a full text of the Governor's letter, go to: <http://governor.oregon.gov/Gov/pdf/PB011007.pdf>

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