

Bush preparing to send more troops to Iraq

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Incoming Secretary of Defense Robert Gates is expected to approve sending 3,500 U.S. troops to Kuwait after the holidays, CBS News reported Friday.

The troops are from the 82nd Airborne Division, based at Fort Bragg, N.C. Once in Kuwait. They would be available should President George W. Bush order a surge of troops into Iraq, CBS said.

The report comes one day after the U.S. Army's top general said the active-duty Army will break under the strain of current war-zone rotations unless it is significantly expanded.

Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker said Thursday the Army needs to add at least 7,000 soldiers a year, and the Pentagon needs to lift restrictions on involuntary call-ups of Army National Guard and Army Reserve troops.

In testimony on Capitol Hill, Schoomaker said the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have taken such a toll that the Army is incapable of generating and sustaining the required forces to wage the global war on terror ... without its components — active, Guard and reserve — surging together.

Schoomaker said the Army began the Iraq war with a \$56 billion equipment shortage and 500,000 fewer soldiers than during the 1991 Persian Gulf War, the Post reported.

At this pace, without recurrent access to the reserve components, through remobilization, we will break the active component, he said.

Schoomaker expressed skepticism about sending more U.S. ground troops to Iraq.

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