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# Instead of going home, British troops headed to Iranian border: Report

Nick Juliano

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As tensions between the United States and Iran increases, military action along the Iran-Iraq border intensifies.

The latest moves comes from America's primary ally in its invasion of Iraq: Britain.

Ostensibly to guard against importation of Iranian weapons and fighters targeting Western troops in Iraq, the UK is sending up to 350 troops to the Iranian border instead of bringing them home, [The Independent](#) of London reports Wednesday.



The troop move was requested by US commanders, the paper says, and it will delay -- perhaps indefinitely -- the homecoming of 250 British troops who were told just days ago that they would be returning to the UK as part of a drawdown of forces in Iraq.

Newly elected Prime Minister Gordon Brown initiated the drawdown, and about 500 British troops [completed their withdrawal from Basra Palace](#), their last remaining base in the city, to an airport on the city's outskirts. The move was expected to be the final stage in Britain's complete extraction from Iraq.

Wednesday's report follows on the heels of news that US troops would be [establishing a base](#) on the border to guard against Iranian-imported weapons.

Tensions between the US and Iran have gone from bad to dismal in recent years, with some fearing all-out war will erupt between the two countries, and the top US commander in Iraq has refused to rule out that possibility.

US Army Gen. David Petraeus [demurred](#) Tuesday when he was asked by Sen. Joseph Lieberman whether the war should be expanded "in Iranian territory." And Petraeus "strongly implied" that action against Iran would be necessary soon, *The Independent* reported.

"There is a pretty hard look ongoing at that particular situation," he told the paper in an interview after Congressional testimony Monday in which he often invoked the threat American troops face from Iran's intervention.

Petraeus and his diplomatic counterpart Ambassador Ryan Crocker told lawmakers that Iran was providing weapons and training to Shiite militias in Iraq, although he never overtly suggested an expansion of the war effort.

**RAW STORY** has previously [reported](#) that the Bush administration has shifted its focus from Iran's alleged nuclear ambitions to its meddling in Iraq as a possible justification for war with that country, and the US has the capability to launch a "massive" military strike against the country without warning.

Along with British and US troops, Georgia recently [sent](#) about 1,200 extra troops to Iraq to patrol the border with Iran.

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