

News  
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CONGRESSMAN

# Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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## REP. RAHALL INSPECTS U.S. FORCES IN PERSIAN GULF

In order to obtain first hand knowledge on the situation in the Persian Gulf, Rep. Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.) conducted an on-site inspection of U.S. military forces deployed in that volatile and dangerous region of the world. His brief inspection tour included meeting with U.S. Naval personnel aboard three ships - the U.S.S. LaSalle, Guadalcanal and Jarrett.

The LaSalle is the command ship for the entire Mid-East operation; the Guadalcanal is the lead mine sweeping ship and helicopter base; and the Jarrett is a sister ship to the U.S.S. Stark and the day before was involved in heading off an Iranian frigate that came too close to the U.S. led convoy. Rahall, at that time, was aboard the LaSalle in consultation with the mission command.

Rahall traveled by helicopter to the ships conducting operations in the Persian Gulf, and held extensive discussions with navy personnel ranging from the commanding officers to sailors working in the 118 degree boiler room on the U.S.S. Guadalcanal.

Naval personnel briefed the Congressman that the three major threats to U.S. ships in the area are mines, suicide attacks by Iranian Revolutionary Guards and Iranian Silkworm missiles. The naval officers aboard all three vessels expressed a very high level of confidence that the U.S. military could successfully defend themselves against any of those potential threats and also against other potential threats such as an air or terrorist attack.

"My main concern from the beginning and my reason for being in favor of delaying the reflagging had been the question of whether or not U.S. forces were being prematurely committed to a mission in which they could not adequately defend themselves. Those fears have been significantly alleviated as a result of my discussions with U.S. military personnel who are conducting the actual operations." Rahall said. "U.S. forces are doing a magnificent job under very adverse circumstances, including extremely hot temperatures, constant alert status and the tension of potential attack."

Rahall reported that countries in the region are steadily increasing their level of support for America's efforts. This support ranged from significant outright assistance in the case of Bahrain, to behind the scenes help from other countries who, for their own domestic political reasons, are keeping their support low key. The six-term Congressman also expressed his satisfaction that Great Britain and France are making commitments to help protect freedom of the seas in the Persian Gulf.

Rahall traveled at the invitation of Rep. John Murtha (D-Pa.), a member of the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. In summing up his mission Rahall said he found the trip highly beneficial in understanding the complexities of the region as well as providing a tremendous boost to American servicemen standing tall for the United States.

Rahall was extremely proud to have met three servicemen from Southern West Virginia aboard the ships: residents of Eleanor, Milton and Daniels, West Virginia.