Washington, DC -- Rep. Peter Welch will travel to Iraq and Afghanistan with several congressional colleagues in early April.

The purpose of the trip is to examine the political and military situation in the region, assess the U.S. reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and express personal gratitude to the service men and women deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Welch plans to meet with Vermont soldiers deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan.

"I am looking forward to the opportunity to assess with my own eyes the situation on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan. I also want to personally thank the soldiers, particularly our Vermont service men and women, for their brave service to this country," said Welch.

Welch will also travel to Kuwait, Jordan, and Turkey.

Welch first spoke of the trip this morning on the "Charlie and Ernie Show" on WVMT.