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New live fire at Makua feared

Video: Makua Valley

Advertiser Staff

Hawaiian cultural practitioners yesterday said they worry that a long-awaited environmental analysis for Makua Valley could lead to a resumption of live-fire exercises and increased pressure on the Wai'anae Coast Valley.

David Henkin, an attorney for Earthjustice who represents Malama Makua, 'Ilio'ulaokalani Coalition and Na Imi Pono, said the Army has refused to address the groups' questions about allowing a Stryker Brigade to train on sacred sites and how it will effect endangered species at Makua Military Reservation.

"The issue is the Army's refusal, its failure to answer the community's question about what are the effects of bringing a Stryker Brigade on Makua Valley," Henkin said at a news conference yesterday on the grounds of 'Iolani Palace. "Under the law, under what is right, they must be forthcoming and they must tell us what are all of the effects of stationing a brigade here, including the effects on Makua. ... If you bring the Stryker Brigade, have you condemned these lands to destruction? This is a question the Army refused to answer."

Henkin expects the Army's environmental analysis will come out within two weeks.

Col. Wayne Shanks, a spokesman for U.S. Army Pacific at Fort Shafter, yesterday said Hawai'i is the "preferred" location for the Stryker Brigade but that a final decision has not been made. Therefore, Shanks said, he could not comment on the groups' claim that Makua may face additional pressures

"The Army's decision right now is whether or not to base the Strykers here, Alaska or Colorado," Shanks said. "I think we really do a good job of protecting everything that we have assigned to us, the land, the resources. If you just drive down the road, you can look at our land and see that we take good care of it."

Henkin said there is no doubt "there will be a military presence here. The question is not whether the Army will be here, but what kind of an Army is appropriate for these fragile lands, for these sacred places. What type of training can be carried out in way consistent with the public trust resources that are at Makua?"



Earthjustice attorney David Henkin, during a press conference on the grounds of 'Iolani Palace yesterday, said the Army has refused to address impacts of allowing a Stryker Brigade to train at Makua Military Reservation.

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