Mr. Speaker, the debate taking place here in the House

this week is long overdue. We are approaching our fifth year of this

war. This is the first time Congress is debating the strategy President

Bush wants to implement in Iraq. Congress can no longer stand on the

sidelines, and the President has to know that to escalate the war in

Iraq is not acceptable.

The President hopes this troop escalation plan will help secure

Baghdad and reduce the sectarian violence that is ripping the country

apart. But there is no evidence to support those hopes. In fact, on

four different occasions, the President increased troop levels in Iraq,

and every time these plans failed to calm the violence in Iraq.

Additional troops are not going to make a difference because there

simply is not a military solution to the war in Iraq. The devastating

sectarian violence is going to continue. But our troops should no

longer be asked to serve as referees in a battle between religious

sects that have been fighting for centuries.