Madam Speaker, more than 8 years after the September 11

attacks, our country is still fighting against terrorism. The attempted

attack on Christmas Day has renewed the discussion of how to keep our

country and its citizens safe and our Nation's interests protected. Our

military is fighting every day to protect the world from these

extremists.

Arkansans have proudly served to defend our country since the global

war on terror began. Most recently, last week, 50 members of the 188th

Fighter Wing, based in Fort Smith, Arkansas, left for a 120-day

deployment in Afghanistan. These men and women are continuing the

Arkansas tradition of service to our Nation. In the coming months, an

additional 250 members of the 188th will deploy to provide close air

support for ground troops in Afghanistan. This is an important mission

that I am confident these men and women will accomplish successfully.

I ask my colleagues to keep the members of the 188th and their

families and friends in their thoughts and prayers during this time.