Mr. Speaker, this last weekend I was

grateful to visit our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I saw firsthand the growing success in Baghdad during a visit with

Major General Joseph Fil, commander of forces in Baghdad, to a

neighborhood joint security site. We saw shops open, normal traffic,

and civilians unafraid. This evidence of success was repeated in a

visit to Ramadi, where enthusiastic American and Iraqi troops have

deposed the al Qaeda terrorists.

In Kabul, I was briefed on training of Afghan police by the 218th

Brigade of the South Carolina Army National Guard led by General Bob

Livingston. As a 28-year veteran of the 218th, I know the competence

and resolve of our troops. Additionally, in Jalalabad, American and

Afghani provincial reconstruction teams are promoting security,

governance, and economic development.

With eight visits to Iraq and four to Afghanistan, I am more

convinced than ever that to protect the American families we must stop

the terrorists overseas. Our dedicated troops deserve our support of

this vital mission.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget

September the 11th.