I thank the gentleman from California.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage everyone to keep in your hearts and minds,

certainly in your prayers, our men and women in uniform and their

families, especially those on the battlefield today; and to reach out

to them and their families, and let them know that you understand and

appreciate the sacrifice and commitment that they make out of the

goodness of their heart.

Our Kansans have done their part to protect our freedom, contributing

heavily to the war efforts since the conflict began. Our State alone

has roughly 1,500 soldiers currently overseas, we have deployed 15,000

since September 11, 2001; 45 of our Kansans have paid the ultimate

price, and 350 more have been seriously wounded. Congress cannot forget

the sacrifice of these men and women. We will continue to support our

Nation's service members and provide them with every resource that they

need.

After listening to President Bush's recent proposal to escalate troop

levels in Iraq, I am even more concerned with his failure to recognize

the severity of this conflict and what it really means.

Recent short-term troop escalation proposals in Iraq have not stopped

the violence from getting worse. President Bush has said nothing to

convince me, or almost no one else, that his latest strategy will

result in success.

Our military forces deserve a policy commensurate with the sacrifices

that they have been asked to make and have made. Regrettably, the

President has not provided that policy or plan. Our leaders need to

think long term and make strong commitments to diplomacy with all of

the other countries in the region and the world community. Our

credibility as a Nation must be restored.

As the Iraq Study Group concluded, this is an international conflict

that cannot be solved by U.S. military strategies alone. Furthermore,

President Bush's proposals will create additional strain on our

military readiness, as well as our military personnel and their

families.

There is already a shortage of military equipment that jeopardizes

the safety of our men and women in uniform. We cannot and should not

send more troops overseas without providing the equipment and support

they

need to safely and effectively accomplish the mission that is charged

to them.

I oppose this escalation, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

God bless the men and women in uniform.