I thank my friend for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, as I have watched this healthy debate over the last 2

days, I keep thinking about an e-mail that I received from a lady in

Springfield, Tennessee. You would never accuse this woman of not

supporting the troops because her husband was a soldier serving in

Iraq. He was a month from returning home to his wife and his two

daughters, but he was ordered to stay in Iraq for another 6 months

because our troops are spread so thin. He hasn't been home since

October of 2005. These are the words that she wrote to me: ``Mr.

Gordon, we need to help other countries, but there are already 3,000

families in America whose lives will never be the same. I want, need,

and would love to see my husband again.''

Mr. Speaker, this lady supports the troops. I support the troops in

Iraq, and I believe everyone in this Chamber supports our troops. They

perform their missions with bravery and honor, and I commend them for

the job they are doing. But I am unconvinced that deploying more troops

and spending more money is the right strategy. And I am not the only

one. General Colin Powell said in December: ``I am not persuaded that

another surge of troops into Baghdad for purposes of suppressing this

civil war will work.''

General George Casey, the former commander of U.S. forces in Iraq,

said last month: ``It's always been my view that a heavy and sustained

American military presence was not going to solve the problem in Iraq .

. . ''

In December it was reported that the Joint Chiefs of Staff

unanimously disagreed with the concept of troop escalation.

General Colin Powell, General George Casey, and the Joint Chiefs of

Staff, these are men who support the troops. Yet these American

generals, the Iraqi Study Group, and the Iraqi Prime Minister have all

opposed this troop surge.

We have had four other surges since we first went to Iraq. None

produced a lasting change on the ground. In October more combat troops

were sent into Baghdad to fight the growing violence there.

Unfortunately, the sectarian violence has only grown worse. Many have

endured great sacrifices in the 4 years this war has been waged. More

than 3,000 Americans have lost their lives; 23,000 more have been

wounded. We have spent more than $350 billion with many billions more

to go. We have been in Iraq longer than we were involved in World War

II. And there is no end in sight.

For 1,300 years Sunnis have been fighting Shias. Now is the time for

the Iraqis to take more responsibility for securing the peace in their

own nation. No one has offered any evidence that 20,000 more American

troops would change the direction of a 4-year-old war or 1,300 years of

history.