Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 63.

I rise today to acknowledge and honor the service and sacrifice made

by military and civilian personnel who have served and who are serving

today in Iraq, Afghanistan, on the Horn of Africa, and elsewhere around

the world in defense of the national security of the United States.

These individuals, and their families who support them from home, are

to be commended for their dedication to our country.

I represent the island of Guam. Sons and daughters of Guam, and those

from our neighboring islands in the Commonwealth of the Northern

Mariana Islands, Micronesia, Palau, and the Marshalls, serve proudly in

the United States Armed Forces. These individuals serve at a critical

point in our country's history and we are grateful for their dedication

to their mission and their commitment to ensuring our freedom.

I have been able to visit on eight occasions with our service members

deployed in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Horn of Africa to see first hand

their living conditions, learn about their missions, and gain a better

understanding of the challenges that confront them. All of us on Guam

are immensely proud of our men and women from Guam who serve our

Nation. I have heard their stories and have been humbled by their

struggles, their heartbreaking loss, and their inspiring instances of

achievement. I have come away from each of these visits with profound

gratitude for their sacrifices and their professionalism.

Serving in defense of the United States does not come without

heartache and sacrifice. Eighteen service members from Guam and our

neighboring islands in the Pacific, Saipan, Pohnpei, and Palau, are

among the more than 3,000 reported by the Department of Defense to have

made the ultimate sacrifice in the Global War on Terror. Our island

communities united to mourn the passing of each one of our sons and

daughters, as we mourn the loss of all servicemembers. We will continue

to provide support to grieving families who suffer the burden of these

losses. Every American owes a debt of gratitude--albeit an un-payable

one--to our fallen and injured service members and their families.

The year 2007 also will be witness to more tours of duty in Iraq,

Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa for our active duty, Guard and

Reserve servicemen and women. For some it will be their second, third,

and fourth tours of duty in those theaters of operations. This is a lot

to ask even of the world's finest fighting men and women. They serve

proudly and their morale remains high and their fighting spirits remain

strong. God bless their families and friends who remain behind

supportive and proud of their loved ones.

We owe our service members and their families our best efforts toward

helping our Armed Forces achieve an expeditious and honorable

completion to Operation Iraqi Freedom. This should be a primary goal

for all of us. But the situation in Iraq will not yield a solution

easily. Nevertheless, the President, in consultation with this

Congress, must endeavor to find one. And it is for this reason that I

introduced H.R. 744, the Iraq Policy Revitalization and Congressional

Oversight Enhancement Act. H.R. 744 also would aim to revitalize U.S.-

Iraq policy; would require the President to provide to Congress a plan

that addresses the whole of the challenge in Iraq; would improve

congressional oversight of Operation Iraqi Freedom and events in Iraq;

would seek to increase the commitment made by the international

community to the stability and security of Iraq; and would ultimately,

help bring our troops home in an honorable, expeditious manner without

sacrificing their mission.

The Iraq Study Group, co-chaired by former Secretary of State James

Baker and former Congressman Lee Hamilton, concluded that many of the

challenges in Iraq are of an international nature, and they become more

so--not less so--as each day passes. As a result, it is becoming

increasingly important to view United States policy toward Iraq as a

part of and not isolated from United States policy toward the region as

a whole. It also is becoming increasingly important for countries in

the region and the international community to become more fully engaged

in the effort to stabilize Iraq. The Iraq Study Group recommended that

we support efforts to promote a multilateral agreement between the

United States, Coalition countries, regional states, and multilateral

organizations. A multilateral agreement will help bring renewed focus

to and enhanced international cooperation toward resolving Iraq's

problems. A multilateral agreement will help reaffirm the existence of

a united front against elements that seek to destabilize Iraq, and thus

bring added pressure to bear on those actors. Lastly, a multilateral

agreement would provide for the formation of a forum in which current

and future regional security, political, and economic issues regarding

Iraq's continued development can be discussed and addressed. The

establishment and maintenance of conciliatory relations between Iraq,

its neighbors, regional states and the international community is

essential to stabilizing Iraq internally.

As the debate today on H. Con. Res. 63 continues, I take this

opportunity to call attention to H.R. 744 and the various other

legislative proposals that have been brought forth by members of this

body to help us bring Operation Iraqi Freedom to a conclusion. In the

weeks ahead I hope that this body will seriously consider these

measures. It is very difficult to consider the merits of the

President's decision to deploy additional troops to Iraq at this time

without having received from the Administration a comprehensive plan

that clearly communicates to the Congress and the American people

exactly what is necessary to complete the mission of Operation Iraqi

Freedom.