Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize our troops

and to support our continuing efforts in Iraq.

It is important that we recognize and honor our troops who are

serving in the Middle East. While progress is being made there are

still obstacles in the path toward a free and independent Iraqi state.

The effort in Iraq is moving along steadily, and our forces are working

in conjunction with Iraqi forces toward success in many different

areas. American troops are fighting to secure and rebuild cities and to

extinguish the insurgency. Our men and women in uniform are doing an

exemplary job, and it is essential for us to salute their efforts as

they work to ensure stability in a historically unstable region.

Politically, Iraqis have embraced the charter constitution, and the

Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq reports that 78 percent of

voters were in support of its passage. This was a major step in their

pursuit of a democratic government and citizens' rights through

political reconstruction.

Additionally, American forces are reconstructing the services and

infrastructure to move Iraq forward. Electricity, water, education, and

sanitation services are being established. Water treatment plants are

being built throughout the country, bringing clean water to tens of

thousands of homes. Power plants are being restored and refurbished,

improvements on transportation infrastructure are being made, and the

completion of school renovation and construction projects will

facilitate education for Iraqi children.

The war on terror is progressing as well. Our troops are successfully

breaking up Al Qaeda by detaining known terrorists and seizing weapons

caches. Between the 15th and 18th of October, a known Al Qaeda military

leader was killed during Coalition raids and forces from the 172nd

Infantry Brigade uncovered 10 weapons caches and detained 16 suspected

terrorists in northern Iraq. Continued efforts like these are what it

will take to eradicate the threat of terror.

Our soldiers are overseas creating these successes and they deserve

our continued support. These brave men and women are risking their

lives in order to protect our Nation, our ideals, and our safety. They

are fighting for each and everyone of us, fighting for all that we hold

dear not just in America, but also worldwide. I want to take this

opportunity to thank our Armed Forces for all that they have done and

to offer my unrelenting support for their hard work and sacrifice as

they continue to work toward the establishment of a free Iraq.