Mr. Speaker, I rise to talk about the rotation of troops

in Iraq that has occurred over the last year or so and the rotation

that is being scheduled for the next year.

There has been a statement by the Kerry campaign, by Senator Kerry,

to the effect that there is a secret plan to call up a lot more troops

and to do some wild thing after the election. That is not the case, Mr.

Speaker. And, in fact, we held a hearing in July in which the

Department of Defense walked through their plan for the next phase or

the next rotation of troops into Iraq. And let me for the record just

go over what has taken place.

The first half of this chart showing Iraq shows the present

configuration of major ground forces in Iraq; and what we had before

this, of course, was the 101st Airborne up north in the northern area.

We had the 4th Infantry Division in the Tikrit area. That is over here.

We had the 1st Armored Division in the heart of Baghdad, and we had out

to the western area, all the way to the Syrian border, the 82nd

Airborne Division. That rotation took place in which those forces were

replaced by the forces that are there right now.

And as a result of that, we have got a striker brigade up north that

took

the place of the 101st Airborne. We have got the 1st Marine Division,

in fact, the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force consisting mainly of the

1st Marine Division and supporting elements in this western area of

operation. That is this big AO that goes all the way to the Syrian

border. Elements of the 1st Armored Division remain in Iraq, did not

move out, while some of them did move back to Germany. And to

supplement that force, the 1st Cavalry Division moved into the Baghdad

area. And, of course, we have the 1st Infantry Division that took over

for the 4th Infantry Division in the Tikrit area.

That is the present state of forces. And the complement of Reserve

forces that mainly supports these active major units is roughly 40

percent of the total force of the 138,000-or-so Americans who serve in

Iraq right now.

We will have what we call OIF-3. That is the next phase of

deployments to Iraq, and that was briefed by the Department of Defense.

It was not a secret, for Senator Kerry's edification. In fact, they

came in and had a hearing with the Committee on Armed Services, with

our committee, and laid out their blueprint; and we had nationally

televised hearings on this rotation. And this rotation reflected this:

that we will be going in the western area of operation, that is this

area that goes west of Baghdad to the Syrian border. The 1st Marine

Expeditionary Force will be replaced by another Marine Expeditionary

Force. To the north we will have another striker brigade. That is the

Mosul area. The 1st Infantry Division will be replaced in the Tikrit

area up north of Baghdad by the 42nd Infantry Division. The 3rd

Infantry Division will move into the Baghdad area, and portions of the

10th Mountain Division will move into the Baghdad area also, displacing

the 1st Cav, which is presently in the Baghdad area, and the 1st

Armored Division.

After Senator Kerry made those remarks, I contacted the Chairman of

the Joint Chiefs, General Myers, and he sent a letter, which I am going

to place in the Record, Mr. Speaker, saying this: ``With regard to the

recent comments concerning our Reserve and National Guard alert

notification process, I can assure you there has never been any

guidance to defer notification until after the Presidential election.''

The clear message in Senator Kerry's remarks was that somehow there

was a secret plan to have a big rotation of troops that would be

announced shortly after the election. Well, every 180 days there is an

announcement of the next rotation of troops, and the reason we do that

is so that the troops will have notification and will be able to tell

their loved ones and get their affairs in order so that they can, in

fact, embark on that particular rotation.

So in the spring, the Department of Defense came and told us about

this next rotation that is called OIF-3 that will take place starting

this fall and moving through the spring. Then in November or December,

they will come in, and they will give notification just like they did

in April and May about the next rotation of forces that will displace

OIF-3 and rotate into Iraq on a regularly scheduled basis.

The Reserve component of this 135,000 to 138,000 troops that is

presently in Iraq will continue to be between 35 and 40 percent of the

total force. So it will remain constant. There is not going to be any

huge spike in the proportion or number of troops from the Reserves that

make this particular force mix.

Let me read the last statement by General Myers when he talked about

this. This is the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, after having

said ``I can assure you there has never been any guidance,'' never been

any guidance, ``to defer notification until after the Presidential

election''; so every 6 months they make an announcement, and they lay

down a blueprint like the blueprint that is front of us here. He says,

``Alert notification is an established and consistent process based on

meeting the needs of the combatant commander while ensuring, to the

maximum extent possible, earliest notification of those units affected.

As in the past, our goal is to alert as early as possible and mobilize

in order to conduct necessary training before deployment.

``Our target for Reserve combat units is 6 months prior to their

deployment given the time required to achieve proficiency at the

company, battalion, and brigade levels of competence. Our target for

our Reserve logistics units is less, currently at 4 months prior to

deployment, since their tasks are typically smaller and less complex

than their combat counterparts.

``The notification date is a balance between early notification and

ensuring units are notified in as complete a package as possible and

not so early that changes in the operational situation may alter the

combatant commander's needs and ultimately the composition of the

deploying force. In the case of the current rotation, we announced our

plan in the spring of 2004, testified before your committee in July,

2004, and deployed the first unit in the fall of 2004. For the next

rotation, we will announce our plan in November, 2004, with the first

unit deploying in May, 2005.''

He goes on: ``As of September 15, 2004, 800 individual ready Reserve

members have been activated. The intent is to fill 5,600 slots by

December, 2004, with the potential to go higher if required. The skill

sets that are in the highest demand are transportation, logisticians,

mechanics, military police, and engineers.'' And that figure is

consistent with what DOD told us several months ago, referring to the

5,600 people.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is a blueprint of the deployment that has taken

place and a blueprint of the deployment that is to come; and every 6

months, without regard to politics, without regard to elections, and

simply with regard to the men and women who wear the uniform of the

United States and their families, the Department of Defense will

continue to give advance notice on about a 180-day basis. So, Mr.

Speaker, I wanted to lay that out.

A letter from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff follows:

I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. Gingrey) and allow him to

make a few remarks on the subject of Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I would like to just

follow my colleague's comments for a second and then yield to the fine

gentleman from Utah (Mr. Bishop), also a member of the committee.

I am reminded that the gentleman has a military base in his area that

is close to his hometown, Fort Benning, Georgia, the home of the United

States Infantry.

Just thinking about Fort Benning, I am reminded of the great troops

who are produced by Fort Benning over the many, many years, of people

who fought in very difficult wars and who acquitted themselves in such

an admirable fashion.

I am reminded of the attempts in recent years, especially in Vietnam,

by members of the media and some Members of Congress, including Senator

Kerry, to demean those people.

I remember Senator Kerry's statements when he came back in April of

1971 and appeared before a Senate committee and stated that America

``had murdered 200,000 Vietnamese.'' He said at one point that 60 to 80

percent of our GI's were stoned 24 hours a day. He made outrageous

statements.

It was that type of stereotyping and characterization that led to a

mindset among some in this country that Vietnam veterans, that the GIs,

the great products of the Infantry School at Fort Benning and many

other GIs, were somehow misfits.

I can remember when we had a mass murder that happened at a

McDonald's restaurant in San Diego during the '70's and one of the

anchor persons asking, was it a Vietnam veteran that did it, as if

``Vietnam veteran'' and ``misfit'' went hand-in-hand.

That image was, to some degree, perpetrated by Senator Kerry and

those like him who came back telling these outrageous lies about the

people who carried the flag for the United States. He did not just

speak against the war, which was fine; he demeaned his fellow troops.

I am reminded of another movie that was made about those great

infantrymen who came from Fort Benning, and that is the movie that

chronicled Hal Moore, who was a major who took on a huge number of

North Vietnamese forces in the battle for LZ X-Ray early the war when

he commanded the First Cavalry unit, the unit of the same First Cav in

Iraq today.

This movie for the first time, in which Mel Gibson starred and I

think

did a great job, characterized the true spirit of the American fighting

man. It was the first movie that had been done for 20 years that was

not shot through the eyes of a drug-crazed hippie in Hollywood, but was

in fact directed and produced through the eyes of an infantryman, in

this case Hal Moore.

I thought one of the most moving parts of that movie was not only the

fact that here was an Infantry leader that prayed with his troops,

which Hal Moore did, but it also reflected the greatness of these

military wives who were waiting back at Fort Benning as the battle for

LZ X-Ray took place and casualty counts were coming in.

They dreaded that knock on the door by a Western Union telegram man

saying that your husband was KIA in this battle for LZ X-Ray, which was

an intense battle with a lot of casualties on the U.S. side and

enormous casualties on the side of the North Vietnamese.

The wife of Hal Moore, having the telegram man come to her door and

she thought this is it, Hal has been shot, he came in and said he was

actually looking for another address up the street and she realized her

good friend was going to get the bad news in a few minutes. She said,

``Wait a minute, I will deliver that telegram,'' and Hal Moore's wife

then went door-to-door delivering these telegrams and consoling the

women whose husbands had been lost.

That movie, for the first time in 20 years, overcame the image, the

wrongful image, that people like Senator Kerry had produced, that was

largely consumed by the American public. When he appeared before that

Senate committee and said that American GIs were cutting off limbs and

raping and robbing, I think he used the term in a manner like Genghis

Khan, he said Genghis Kahn instead of Genghis Khan, that put together

an image, a false image, that was not shaken for almost 20 years in

this country.

So I just want to thank the gentleman for representing that great

piece of America that is truly the home of the Infantry.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much. I am

reminded, when the gentleman talks about the goodness of American GIs,

that our country is good, and those GIs are good because they come from

families where giving and helping other people is part of their

character and part of their values.

I myself have a chief of staff who, with another member of the staff,

have formed a group called Rescue Task Force, and even shortly after we

had taken Iraq, this chief of staff Wendall Cutting, who himself had

cancer for a long period of time, moved into Iraq with the help of

other international organizations and built medical facilities for the

people of Iraq. And when we were operating in Kosovo, and Albania was

an area in which we had many refugee camps, Mr. Cutting and another

staff member, Gary Becks, were the first people into those refugee

camps with 40,000 of what they call ``love boxes'' from the people of

the United States. And those were little shoe boxes that would hold

scissors, combs, some medical things. It would help people, maybe a

pair of socks, things that people who had to leave their house

immediately, as a lot of the people who were forced out of Kosovo had

to do, would need.

And along with those boxes containing immediate convenience items,

they brought in ultimately millions of dollars worth of medical

equipment and food to those refugee camps. And the first camp they went

into, they mentioned that every child in the camp was ill because they

did not have a good water supply.

I am reminded that, when I talked about helping them to raise money

for this organization, my chief of staff Wendall Cutting, who himself

has cancer, said, that will be great, because we have about $1 million

worth of supplies ready to go in to the people who suffered from the

hurricanes in the southeast. And even as we talk, they are moving to

take those supplies to those very needy people.

So, Mr. Speaker, Americans are good, and the American people are

good. And they have infused and embedded those values and that virtue

in their sons and daughters who right now are serving in Iraq. And that

is a message that I think is not lost on the world.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of the noise that we hear in the world is

something that is manufactured. It is not genuine. A lot of the

criticism of the United States is not genuine. I am reminded of the

time that my mother and father were in the Philippines, visiting the

Philippines. And they were near the embassy in Manila, and there was a

long line of people waiting to get visas at that embassy, as there are

every day I might add. And they had at the same time an anti-American

demonstration in the town square there next to the embassy in Manila.

And the demonstrators had big, well-made signs that said: ``America out

of the Philippines''; ``Uncle Sam, go home''; ``America, get lost.''

And interestingly, the organizers of the demonstration against America

were going over to the visa line where Filipinos were waiting to get

visas to come into the United States, and they were hiring people out

of the visa line to come hold these demonstration placards that said,

``We hate America.'' So it is very clear that many of the anti-American

demonstrations around the world are not genuine.

The people in almost every country know the goodness of Americans. It

is interesting, a friend of mine remarked today that with all of the

talk about what we can do to make the Muslim world understand the

goodness of America, I was reminded that the last several wars that we

have fought have been on behalf of Muslim nations. That is, we freed

Kuwait from the occupation of Saddam Hussein, and we saved Saudi

Arabia, because Saddam Hussein's tanks were in third gear at the moment

that we stopped his armored divisions dead still with the insertion of

American combat troops. And we saved people in Bosnia who were being

brutalized. And we have helped Muslim people around the world.

The message of America is that goodness prevails, and our people are

good. Our GIs are great ambassadors of that goodwill, and all of the

projects that the gentleman from Georgia and the gentleman from Utah

talked about

that are being undertaken in Iraq are real projects. They really help

people. Those inoculations really do save babies, and it is something

that we can be very proud of.

I would like to yield to the gentleman from Michigan, Mr. McCotter.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his very eloquent

remarks.

Mr. Speaker, before I wrap up here, I would like to go over the

rotation of U.S. forces in Iraq because, once again, the presidential

candidate Senator Kerry has alleged that there is some secret plan to

bring up a lot more people after the November elections, and I have a

letter from the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Myers, that says

that there is no secret plan.

He states that there has been no deferences of any notices of the

rotations in Iraq as a function of pressure from anybody. Once more,

let me go over the units that have moved in on the last rotation and

the units that will move in on the next rotation.

We had the First Airborne Division or the 101st Airborne Division in

Northern Iraq, that has been replaced now by the First Striker Brigade

up in the Mosul area. We had the Fourth Infantry Division in eastern

Iraq centered in the Tikrit area. And that Fourth Infantry Division has

been replaced by the First Infantry Division.

We had the 82nd Airborne in the western area of operations that goes

all the way to the Syrian border. That has been replaced by the First

Marine Expeditionary Force, made up primarily of the First Marine

Division.

We had the First Armored Division in Baghdad. Part of its elements

have been replaced by the First Cavalry Division. And we are going to

be going to a new rotation that was briefed to us in July with plenty

of time, plenty of advance notice and plenty of publicity to the world.

I do not know if Senator Kerry saw it, but it certainly was not secret.

It was on national television, and that rotation is manifested in the

second chart.

That shows the Striker Brigade that is in northern Iraq presently

being replaced by another Striker brigade. It shows the First Infantry

Division in the eastern sector being replaced by the 42nd Infantry

Division. It shows the First Cav and the First Armored Division being

replaced by the Third Infantry Division, and the Tenth Mountain

Brigade, and it shows the First Armored Division moving out and the

First Cavalry Division moving out.

So that is the rotation with respect to Reserves. The ratio of

Reserves to active forces will remain in the 35 to 40 percent range,

and there are 5,600 members of the individual ready reserve. That

number has already been laid out by the Pentagon and those people are

in particular specialties, 800 of them have been called up. More will

be called up as time goes on. And in November or December there will be

another blue print because there is a blueprint laid down every 180

days, and it will maintain approximately the same number of people,

135,000 to 140,000 personnel in Iraq. And it will maintain

approximately the same Reserve to active duty proportion.

So that is the game plan that has been laid out in front of the

entire Nation by DOD. There has not been any attempt to hide it, to

delay it, to wait for the election before they laid it out. And in

another 4 or 5 months they will lay out the next 180-day plan, and 180

days from then they will lay out the next plan.

That is the means of notifying the country so that units and

individual families and personnel in the armed services can have plenty

of notice.