Mr. Speaker, traveling to Iraq this past weekend

to see firsthand how the surge is working, I really expected the worst.

Instead, I am very encouraged.

Communities all across Iraq are turning against al Qaeda and working

with Iraqi and coalition forces to take back their cities. Half of

Baghdad is no longer safe for insurgents. Al Qaeda is not down and out

but clearly back on its heels, rejected by the very communities and

religious leaders it claims to fight for.

Now make no mistake, there are still serious challenges, including

high-profile bombings, the need for Iraq's Government to resolve key

issues now, and Iran's continued support for terrorism. But I am

convinced the new strategy is working, and we have impressive leaders

and impressive troops in place to see even more progress.

Mr. Speaker, while Congress has the right to debate this war, it has

the responsibility to help win it as well. That means letting this new

strategy work through the end of the year, or the beginning of the

next, if we are truly serious about a stable Iraq and a safer America.