Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the resolution, and I

hope that its adoption by the House will send yet another powerful

message that a change in the direction of our Iraq policy is required.

Sending an additional 21,000 troops into Baghdad only serves to put

more American forces in harm's way. The troop increase will not bring

long-term stability, it will not halt the sectarian strife which has

plunged Iraq into a civil war, it will do nothing to speed the day when

U.S. forces can hand over the mission to the Iraqis and come home. But

there is a better way.

Our Virginia colleague Frank Wolf originated the formation of the

commission that was chaired by former Secretary of State James Baker

and by Lee Hamilton, who for years, with distinction, chaired the

Foreign Relations Committee in this House. I commend Congressman Wolf

for his foresight and for the public service that he provided to our

Nation when he originated the formation of the Baker-Hamilton

Commission. That commission was bipartisan. It was composed of our most

experienced foreign policy experts, spanning administrations of both

Republican and Democratic Presidencies. Its recommendations were

unanimously presented by the members of the Commission. They embody the

collective wisdom of these highly experienced Americans for the best

course that our Nation can take for a new and more promising direction

in Iraq.

At the core of their proposals was a bold recommendation: that the

United States begin a dialogue with Iraq's neighboring countries about

a way to achieve regional stability and, most particularly, stability

in Iraq.

Iran, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia all have influence with the various

warring factions in Iraq. Iran and Syria in particular have a strong

interest in a more normal relationship with the United States. All of

these countries have a long-term interest in a stable Iraq. The Baker-

Hamilton Commission's direction for a U.S.-led negotiation among these

nations is the only real option we have left in order to achieve under

United States guidance a peaceful Iraq. President Bush has rejected

this recommendation. He has acted, in my view, very unwisely.

More United States troops are not the answer. Blind faith in the

Iraqi Prime Minister with his ties to the Shia militia leader, al-Sadr,

is not the answer. A military solution standing alone is not the

answer. The only path to success lies in diplomacy and accepting the

wise counsel of the Baker-Hamilton Commission.

Finally, the administration decided to try real diplomacy in North

Korea, and it is working. It is also the only hope we have for

stability in Iraq.