Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank my friend

and classmate, Mr. Jones of North Carolina, for yielding me the time,

and also for his leadership on this issue, and had the President

followed his very respectful letter of January 10, we would not be

having this debate on this resolution drafted by the Democratic

leadership.

Mr. Speaker, like most Americans, I desperately want us to succeed in

Iraq, and I was heartened by the Iraq Study Group report, and I was

heartened when the President of the United States said we were going to

take a fresh approach in Iraq. I fear, however, that this is not a

fresh approach, that this is more of the same. I also fear that our

course of ``more of the same'' could lead to the deaths of more

Americans.

I know that the President believes in his heart that the surge will

succeed. I like and respect the President of the United States, but we

tried last year a surge of about 12,000 troops in Operation Together

Forward. The result has been an escalation of sectarian violence and

attacks on our troops that has been unprecedented and unrelenting.

If I thought that the presence of 21,500 additional American troops

in Iraq would quell sectarian violence and stop the killing and

aggression towards Americans in Iraq, I would support it. If I thought

that the presence of 21,500 new American troops would cause the Maliki

government to get their house in order and their country in order and

make the Iraqis step up and do their duty to protect their country, I

would support it.

Instead, we find ourselves with an Iraqi security force that has more

time in training than the young people that we are sending from our

country to defend theirs, yet they cannot get the job done. It is time

to ratchet up diplomacy, make the Iraqis accountable for their own

security, and kick off the training wheels that we have tethered them

to.

Even the Pentagon has warned that an escalation of troops in Baghdad

could fuel the jihadists, cause an uptick in attacks and embolden al

Qaeda even more. What shakes me to the core, however, is that we plan

to send these additional troops into harm's way without adequate

equipment and vehicles. General Speakes, the Army's Deputy Chief of

Staff for Force Development, recently laid out a bleak scenario, a

surge without enough armor kits and without enough up-armored trucks.

Others within the military add there won't be enough up-armored

Humvees, which even as fortified as they are offer no match for the

destruction and the power of the IEDs that are used against our troops.

One senior Army official speculated that the only way, the only way,

there will be enough Humvees for this surge is if five brigades of up-

armored Humvees fall out of the sky.

This prognostication takes me back to what I thought was one of the

most insensitive remarks uttered by a public official during the course

of this war, the former Secretary of Defense in 2004, who indicated you

go to war with the Army you have, not the Army you want.

Mr. Speaker, I can't believe that 26 months later we are going into a

surge with what we have got instead of what we need. It is not fair to

the men and women already in Iraq, nor those on the way, and the costs

are too high, both in American lives and also the toll on the American

spirit. Make no mistake, like all Americans I support our troops and am

eternally grateful for their courage and their sacrifice, and I hope

and I pray that we succeed in Iraq.

Some of the troops that will be part of the surge are already in

Iraq. I wish our President had chosen a different path, but he did not.

I wish my Democratic colleagues had chosen a different approach and

allowed my party to offer alternative language, but they did not. It is

what it is, but that does not change my resolve that this surge is not

in the best interests of this Nation.

May God bless our country, our troops in the field, and the President

of the United States.