Mr. Speaker, I know that Iraq has been on all of our minds

for a long, long time. Many of us here have visited Iraq on multiple

occasions. Many of us have also visited Bethesda Naval Hospital as well

as Walter Reed and tried to comfort our brave and caring servicemen and

women.

Yes, many of us have grieved with the families that have lost a loved

one at a gravesite back in our districts. Mr. Speaker, we had a

breakthrough this week in North Korea. It was a diplomatic success. And

our country led the effort to engage other countries in the region:

Russia, South Korea, Japan and China. The Six Party Talks helped see a

negotiated settlement that made sense and the world today is a better

and safer place. Diplomacy won again.

Now, one of our big problems in Iraq is that we have not pursued the

diplomatic angle like we should have. We have not seen a diplomatic

surge like we ought to. Let's talk about this resolution. The first

finding, of course, is that the Congress and the public will continue

to support and protect those serving in Iraq. That tells me that we are

not going to cut off the aid for the brave folks that are there.

It is almost a daily routine for me when I see a man or woman in

uniform at the airport, the cafeteria, at home, anywhere, Bethesda,

Walter Reed Hospital, I take a moment and thank them for their

sacrifice and their service.

Our troops need all of the equipment to make sure that their safety

can be as secure as it can be. This week I e-mailed a number of our

troops that I have met that are overseas. I talked about this

resolution, including the policy of the surge. And many of them

responded at length. I want to share part of their stories and

responses without using their names.

One of my Army captains said this. ``Bringing in more Americans will

force us into more confrontational roles. This is not the way to win.

More American soldiers on the ground will not win the war, it will only

delay the enemy's reaction. If the people do not believe that their

government can protect them, they will look for one that they believe

will.''

Mr. Speaker, these folks are on the ground. They know what is going

on. The generals on the ground, too, said that more U.S. troops would

be counterproductive and in fact only increase or deepen the threats on

our U.S. troops.

Let's face it, this is a civil war. It is real anarchy. And in fact

the Iraqis do not want us there. Nearly 80 percent of them in Baghdad

say that the American troops provoke more violence than they prevent.

And these same polls show that Iraqis overwhelmingly want U.S. troops

gone within a year.

In fact, we know that a majority on both sides, Shia and Sunni,

believe that it is okay to kill our troops. So much for being a

liberator. In other words, we are viewed as part of the problem, not

the solution.

Mr. Speaker, all of us, all of us support our troops. But there are

many of us that believe that this surge strategy will fail and will

only prolong the day that the Iraqis will finally pick up the baton and

lead their own government.

The Baker-Hamilton unanimous bipartisan report labeled the situation

as grave and deteriorating. It called for regional cooperation and a

new direction. Mr. Speaker, I am one that believes that the vote

authorizing the war was based on evidence that was flat-out wrong.

Let's not continue to ignore the real situation and the mistakes of

the past. It is time, it is time for the Iraqis, not the United States,

to lead after 4 years. We need to send a message to our troops that,

yes, we support them, and, for this administration, a signal for them

to pursue a diplomatic surge involving the region.

For these reasons, I too support the resolution.