Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend for

yielding.

Mr. Speaker, the co-Chairs of the Iraq Study Group, former Secretary

of State James Baker and former House Foreign Affairs Chairman Lee

Hamilton, wrote late last year: ``There is no magic formula to solve

the problems of Iraq. However, there are actions that can be taken to

improve the situation and protect American interests.

``Many Americans are dissatisfied,'' they go on to say, ``not just

with the situation in Iraq but with the state of our political debate

regarding Iraq. Our political leaders must build a bipartisan approach

to bring a responsible conclusion to what is now a lengthy and costly

war. Our country deserves a debate that prizes substance over rhetoric

and a policy that is adequately funded and sustainable. The President

and Congress,'' Baker and Hamilton go on to say, ``must work

together.''

``The President and Congress must work together.'' ``Our country

deserves a debate that prizes substance over rhetoric.'' Good advice,

especially when we are in the middle of a war to

help a suffering people living in a tortured land striving to

matriculate from dictatorship to democracy.

Like many Americans, Mr. Speaker, I too have serious questions about

this war, especially its cost in human life. I too am impatient and

want our men and women brought safely home as quickly as possible.

But with so many Americans and Iraqis and coalition forces at risk,

it is important to ask what message a nonbinding surge disapproval

resolution with no force of law might have on a troop surge already

under way and what message do we send to our troops, our allies, and

our enemies. Will it demoralize even a little, maybe a lot, those brave

Americans who have put their lives on the line so that others may be

free? Will it undermine the resolve, commitment, and solidarity of

those nations that have stood with us against the hate and murder of

the extremists? And how will our enemies regard passage of this

resolution? With celebration? Will they step up their already far too

robust campaign of terrorism, murder, and suicide bombing?

If the Democratic leadership wants to stop the surge or the war

itself, bring a measure to the floor to defund it. The debate on

defunding the war and, most certainly, the vote would have predictable

clear-cut consequences. The President can't spend money on a war he

doesn't first get from Congress. But by offering what is essentially a

sense of the House resolution, the weakest, least effective way of

driving home a point because it compels nothing, I am concerned that

the House this week may, unwittingly, significantly hurt the morale of

our warfighters while empowering the hate mongers. Surely no one in

this Chamber wants that.