Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution.

This afternoon I went to Walter Reed and I visited some injured

soldiers. One of them was from my congressional district in the State

of Utah; had a number of serious injuries. He has been in intensive

care at Walter Reed for about 3 weeks now. His wife was there with him.

There were pictures of his 2-year old daughter plastered up all over

the wall. His daughter is back in Utah with a set of grandparents.

I wish everyone could have the experience of going and meeting the

soldiers and the families. They inspire me, and they also tell me how

serious this issue is about putting people in harm's way, because the

lives of that family are changed forever based on these severe injuries

that this soldier undertook.

With regard to the situation in Iraq, our military personnel have

done everything we have asked. We can never thank our troops enough,

and we owe them. We have an obligation to them to give them the best

opportunity for success.

The problem is that we have never really stood here and talked about

a strategy for success. A successful strategy has to be comprehensive.

That is what has been needed from the outset of the conflict in Iraq,

and it is still needed today as Iraq descends into civil war.

A strategy for success in Iraq requires more than a military

strategy. We have the most powerful military in the world, without a

doubt. If military might alone could succeed, we would be done by now.

The situation in Iraq has always required a more comprehensive

effort. We need a plan for political and diplomatic and economic

success.

Now, just a couple of months ago, Congress was actually handed just

such a strategy in the report from the bipartisan Iraq Study Group. The

report was put together by some of the greatest statesmen, diplomats

and military minds of our generation. This was a bipartisan group led

by former Secretary of State James Baker and former 9/11 Commission

Chairman Lee Hamilton. These venerable men and women painstakingly

considered all the available options. They talked to military

strategists, generals, Iraqis and each and every type of individual who

might hold the key to a way forward. They acknowledge that each

recommendation of the Iraq Study Group carries its own risk factors.

But in the end, this bipartisan group unanimously endorsed a plan to

move forward. And in doing so, they rejected the overly simplistic

discussion that seemed to dominate the 2006 election season when the

primary options that were discussed were either stay the course or cut

and run. In fact, the Iraq Study Group report provides reasoned

arguments against both of these options.

As for staying the course, the Iraq Study Group states that, and I

quote, ``The longer the United States remains in Iraq without progress,

the more resentment will grow among Iraqis who

believe they are the subjects of a repressive American occupation. As

one U.S. official said to us, `Our leaving would make it worse. The

current approach without modification will not make it better.' ''

As for an immediate withdrawal, the Iraq Study Group states that if

we left tomorrow we would simply leave an immense power vacuum in Iraq.

The results would have devastating effects on the global economy, the

region and the Iraqi people themselves. And specifically, the report

says that ``a premature American departure from Iraq would almost

certainly produce greater sectarian violence and further deterioration

of conditions.''

Now, the resolution we are debating right now addresses the proposal

to increase the number of U.S. troops in Iraq by just over 20,000.

Let's remember that the Iraq Study Group specifically took a hard look

at the surge option. In discussing the merits of a surge the Iraq Study

Group report said that a surge ``might temporarily help limit violence

in a highly localized area. However, past experience indicates that the

violence would simply rekindle as soon as U.S. forces are moved to

another area.''

Furthermore, many generals and other military strategists have

roundly criticized the surge strategy.

Now, I have long believed that the lack of independent, accurate

assessments of our progress has hampered our efforts to secure Iraq and

assist in its reconstruction. I strongly believe that the U.S. cannot

linger in making the important policy and strategic decisions

recommended in the report.

That is why we need to follow the recommendations of the Iraq Study

Group report. U.S. forces should be redeployed from combat missions to

support functions. Our troops should be supplementing the Iraqi Army.

And at the same time, we have to move forward on the economic

development front and the political front and the regional diplomacy

front.

The resolution we are debating today is very simple. We support our

troops and we oppose the surge strategy. I will vote for this

resolution.

As I said before, our troops have done everything we have asked of

them. Their performance is a source of great admiration and pride for

everyone in America. At a minimum, we owe them a new approach and a

thoughtful approach to the situation in Iraq and the pursuit of a

comprehensive strategy for success.