Mr. Speaker, like many of my House colleagues, I

traveled with a Congressional delegation to Iraq during the August

recess, and I

rise now to speak about the successes that I saw and experienced

firsthand while in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, the members of our armed services are working tirelessly

each day and night in Iraq to rebuild this country and to ensure our

national security. While in Iraq, I had an opportunity in Fallujah to

meet with marines from Colorado Springs who were upbeat about the

progress in Iraq and were certain that their accomplishments during the

surge had produced a truly positive result. They were also equally

concerned that people at home in the United States did not understand

how successful they have been.

After my visit to Iraq, I am pleased to say that I am even more sure

than ever that their mission has not been in vain. They truly are

making a difference for the Iraqi people and for the communities in

which these people live.

During our visit, we met with GEN David Petraeus who had many

positive things to say about the progress that has been made since the

surge began. For instance, he mentioned the elimination of safe havens

for militia forces and al Qaeda, continued progress in Anbar province,

progress in the operation and training of the Iraqi Army and

encouraging signs of tactical successes in Baghdad. I look forward,

like my colleagues here who've just spoken, to reading General

Petraeus' report on the surge with great scrutiny when it is released

this month.

I'm also delighted to hear that some of my Democratic colleagues have

realized and acknowledged that the surge is working. I plan to continue

to work with all of my colleagues, as well as the military and the

administration, to ensure that the sacrifice our brave men and women

are making in Iraq is not abandoned before the mission is completed.