

Kuhl responds to report on Iraq

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WASHINGTON, D.C. | Based on the reports by Gen. David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker, progress is being made in Iraq, said U.S. Rep. John R. "Randy" Kuhl Jr., R-Hammondspport.

Kuhl listened to Petraeus and Crocker's reports before Congress Wednesday.

"They went through the various reasons for success, including the increased numbers of the coalition and Iraqi forces," Kuhl said Thursday during his weekly press



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conference. "There were 100,000 new soldiers in place from Iraq. The instances of violence have fallen to a level not seen since early to mid-2005. Sectarian deaths have fallen."

Perhaps more important than the military gains made in Iraq were the economic and societal gains, Kuhl said.

"Thousands upon thousands of jobs had been created,

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which was really the important part as far as economic development," Kuhl said. "Ambassador Crocker talked about one area of Baghdad that a year ago had no markets and now there were over 1,000 shops in that particular area."

Kuhl also echoed Crocker's sentiment that any gains

made in Iraq were "fragile". At the time of the press conference, President George W. Bush had not yet announced he was indefinitely halting the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq after July.

Kuhl did say Petraeus and Crocker's reports to Congress proved wrong those who were against the surge in troops last year.

"There were those who said

the surge wouldn't work," Kuhl said. "There were those in Congress who said the war was lost. That's not the accurate reporting that's coming from our generals on the ground. That political determination appears meant to spread fear amongst people who do not have the availability of information that would lead them to believe otherwise."