Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 332 provides for consideration of

the conference report for H.R. 1591, making emergency supplemental

appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for

other purposes. The rule waives all points of order against the

conference report and against its consideration. It also provides that

the conference report shall be considered as read.

Mr. Speaker, after 4 years of the administration's relentless

mismanagement of the Iraq war, mismanagement that has needlessly

endangered our soldiers and lost countless Iraqi lives, this new

Democratic Congress is determined to exercise our constitutional duty

and to change the Nation's course in Iraq. We are hardly alone in our

estimation of what must be done there.

A growing chorus of opinion has coalesced around the need for a new

direction. Virtually all of our generals agree that this fight cannot

be won militarily, and General David Petraeus has said that the

American mission in Iraq is 20 percent military and 80 percent

political, economic and diplomatic.

He is joined by the Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, who applauded

this debate, saying it will demonstrate to the Iraqi leadership that

America will no longer tolerate an open-ended commitment without any

benchmarks for success.

James A. Baker and Lee Hamilton of the President's own Iraq Study

Group have called for the American military to focus on training Iraqi

security forces instead of conducting endless security sweeps.

Retired generals have joined in as well. Retired Lieutenant General

William E. Odom, to name just one, has said that the proposed change in

course will, and I quote, ``re-orient U.S. strategy to achieve regional

stability, and win help from many other countries--the only way peace

will eventually be achieved.''

What of the people of the United States of America? It is their sons

and daughters, their husbands and wives, their friends and family who

have fought, have been injured and died in this war by the tens of

thousands.

They, more than anyone else, have demanded that America's mission in

Iraq be changed. This bill is a statement that Congress will no longer

fund the war as it exists today.

With it, Democrats are demanding accountability and requiring that

future support be based on tangible progress being made. We are

refusing to ask our soldiers to continue fighting an open-ended battle

to achieve goals that are constantly being altered. Such a request is

not worthy of their sacrifice.

Let me say also that while the President said that this bill is

nothing more than a political statement, the opposite is the case. Our

bill reconciles hard realities with our most fundamental principles. It

both protects our soldiers and seeks to give them the best chance to

help to produce a secure Iraq. It could not be more sincere, and it

will soon be on the President's desk. If he rejects it, that will be

his political statement and not ours.

Finally, I must add briefly that this legislation also contains $18

billion to be spent on critically needed health care for the veterans

injured in Iraq and Afghanistan, particularly for the traumatic brain

injury victims, for Katrina recovery operations, for the avian flu

vaccines, wildfire prevention, and for health insurance for children,

among many other things. Those things are what supplemental bills have

always been for, not to fund wars.

The President and his allies have chosen to dismiss this spending as

unjustifiable pork. They have asked Congress to deliver a clean bill,

in their words, but I can't think of programs much cleaner and more

worthy of our support than those I just mentioned.

The definition of a great nation is one that has the power to define

its own destiny and that uses its strength wisely to help others in

need. Insurgents who seek to destroy what is left of the Iraq society

are abominable, but they can do far less damage to our country than we

do to ourselves by pursuing flawed policies that deplete our Armed

Forces, undermine our alliances, and lessen our influence and moral

authority around the world.

Why should we do what they cannot?

At the same time, the Iraqi people deserve so much more than the life

of fear they now lead. But America can be true to itself; we must have

the humility and the vision to recognize what is working and what is

not, and to correct our failures when reality demands it.

I believe that we are, indeed, a great Nation, Mr. Speaker. We have

the ability to choose our own way forward. Starting today, starting

here, we can choose to reject a path that is failing our soldiers, our

citizens, and the people of Iraq. And we can set a new course that

offers a real chance for a better future instead of endless,

unfulfilled promises.

This bill is the first step on that new course, and I urge everybody

in this body and in the White House to see it for what it truly is. It

is not an admission of defeat, but it is proof that our country has the

courage and the foresight needed to truly act like the great Nation

that we truly are.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely hard pressed to see how

some people define ``success.''

I read in the New York Times front page that 80 percent of the

marines who died of upper body wounds would have lived if only they had

the proper equipment. I know that soldiers who serve in the National

Guard and Reserve are losing their homes and their jobs, but never mind

about that because the stock market is great. Aren't we doing well? It

hasn't hurt us a bit. We haven't called for any sacrifice at all from

the American people in this.

My heart is broken. I am ashamed and chagrined that this business

About the booming economy could be brought into this debate about life and

death. My worry is about the young people who go over there and don't

get the proper care that they need.

I couldn't believe the testimony of Tillman's brother yesterday and

Jessica Lynch who said the military lied about them. What are we doing

in this country? The country that fought the Second World War to save

this world, we've been reduced to this, that we decide as long as the

stock market is good, the world is good, and let them go over there and

die because we are going to give them some kind of government we don't

even know they want? For heaven sakes, to every man and woman in

country there comes a moment to decide, Mr. Speaker. This is one of

those moments. We either vote for this rule and this bill, and we tell the President

of the United States if he vetoes this, he is absolutely continuing on

a road to absolute failure and that we are not going to be a party to

it. We want to take care of the soldiers. And if he vetoes the money,

it is on his head, not ours. But we will continue until we can get

those soldiers and marines out of that morass.