Madam Speaker, this debate is about whether or not

America is a great Nation that will lead in the face of difficulty. We

have come up short. This resolution falls short. It is small and not

worthy of this House. Why small? Let me begin with a threat that some

either don't understand or refuse to acknowledge.

This resolution does not address the fact that the current threat is

not just the single front in Iraq, but rather the larger threat of

militant Islamic jihadists who hate us enough to want to kill. These

militant Islamic jihadists are a fringe element of Islam who have very

specific ideas and goals about how to revive Islam, return Muslims to

world power, and how to deal with their enemies.

They are committed to a violent overthrow of existing international

systems and to their replacement by an all-encompassing Islamic state

called the caliphate. In explaining his approach to creating the

caliphate, centered in Iraq, al-Qaeda's number two leader, Zawahari,

outlined a four-stage plan:

Stage 1, expel the Americans from Iraq in defeat.

Stage 2, create an Islamic religious government in Iraq, developing

and supporting it until it achieves a level of a caliphate.

Stage 3, extend the jihad wave to secular countries neighboring Iraq.

Stage 4, clash with Israel, because Israel was established only to

challenge any new Islamic entity.

I think you get the picture.

Let me also be clear. This jihad is about them, their God, and their

religion, it is not about us. These militant jihadists believe that the

modern world has forsaken the pure religious life and that only with a

caliphate can they return to ``pure life.''

It is this narrow ideology that poses the direct and real threat to

us. It is this ideology that threatens not only us, but also includes

the belief that killing other Muslims is justified to achieve their

radical goals. Here is the true threat to America and the world, this

militant Islamic jihad, a jihad that attacks around the globe,

including the United States and Iraq. The resolution we debate today

does not address this global problem, this threat to peace and

stability. Iraq is not the problem, it is only one front in this larger

war.

The second point. This resolution omits specifically all of the men

and women of the Armed forces who are defending our freedoms in other

theaters

such as Kuwait, Afghanistan and Bosnia. It says, by not saying, that

this Congress may not support troops who will be sent to Iraq.

Is this intentional? Is this part of the plan to choke off funding

for our troops? I also take great umbrage that this resolution omits

and completely slights the incredible contributions to this Nation's

security of our dedicated men and women in the Intelligence Community,

many serving in Iraq, who provide our combat troops with the

information vital to their security.

Is this the first step in cutting off their funding, too, returning

to the Clinton administration's policies of the 1990s that decimated

our intelligence capabilities?

Finally, Madam Speaker, I need to address the issue of the

consequences of failure. What happens if Iraq collapses due to a sudden

withdrawal of U.S. troops? Our enemies have made it clear that they

will fill the void. Surely America is wary of the conflict in Iraq, but

the difficulty of this conflict does not justify giving into their

strategy; yes, their strategy. They believe that they are winning by

wearing America down. Will we quit? Do we understand the consequences?

Make no mistake, this resolution is a dangerous and naive first step

to cutting funding to our troops in an unwise withdrawal from the

region. Iraq is not a faraway place where the United States has no

interest and where we can pull our troops out of without paying a price

in the global war against militant Islam.

This debate is not about Iraq, it is about us, us as a Nation of

people who will do the right thing. The fundamental question is, Do we

have the resolve that will be necessary to defeat radical militant

Islamic jihadists that contain bad actors such as Iran, and will we

stand and fight for the future of our kids and their kids?

We have faced similar threats before. In 1945 my parents were

liberated by Canadians and American troops in the Netherlands. They

never forgot the sacrifices that were made by brave soldiers and by a

great Nation, a Nation on a great mission.

America did it for them, but it also did it for itself. America

recognized that the threat was a direct threat to America and the

world. We then led a global effort to victory. Today we face a very

different but, again, a very real threat: radical militant Islam. The

challenge to this Congress is to rise to the occasion, to help lead

America and to help lead the world to victory.

This petty resolution falls far short of that noble and worthy

calling. Vote ``no.'' We can and we must do better.