Madam Speaker, I believe that the American people

welcome this debate on Iraq, certainly one of the most important issues

facing the

American people, and I believe we will all benefit from open,

constructive, and sincere debate.

It goes without saying that no one Member of Congress or political

party has a clear-cut solution to the complex problems our Nation faces

in Iraq.

I expect that every Member of Congress will share their thoughts on

whether we should approve or disapprove this 100-word resolution; and

like every other Member of Congress, I offer and convey my respect,

gratitude and thanks for the exemplary service and heart-rendering

sacrifice made by our young men and women in the military. As so many

have said, they have performed in an exemplary way, and they have

accomplished every task we have asked them to do.

I have had the great privilege of representing Ft. Campbell, home of

the 101st Airborne Division and the 5th Special Forces group who have

served many times in Iraq.

Throughout this debate many speakers have quoted generals and other

experts who have disagreed emphatically with many aspects of the

military decisions and strategic decisions about Iraq. We know there

have been and continue to be strong disagreements among those who have

been intimately involved in this issue.

We have as a Nation endured so much. As has been said, over 3,000

American soldiers have died, and 23,417 have been wounded during the

past 4 years in Iraq.

While I understand the arguments of those who support this

resolution, I would like to briefly explain why I believe we should

vote against this resolution.

Neither President Bush, Speaker Pelosi or any Member of Congress will

have as much opportunity to maximize the possibility of success in Iraq

as our new military commander in Iraq, General David Petraeus. He is

responsible, with the men and women serving, for implementing the

increased security for Baghdad. He was confirmed for this new

responsibility by a vote of 81-0 in the U.S. Senate on January 26,

2007, a mere 20 days ago.

At his confirmation hearing, among other statements, General Petraeus

said, ``Some of the members of this committee have observed that there

is no military solution to the problem of Iraq.'' And he said, ``They

are correct.''

Ultimate success in Iraq will be determined by actions in the Iraqi

political and economic arenas on central issues as governance, the

amount of power devolved to the provinces, the distribution of oil

revenue, national reconciliation, and resolution of sectarian

differences.

And then he went on to say, and this is key, It is, however,

exceedingly difficult for the Iraqi Government to come to grips with

the tough issues it must resolve while mere survival is the primary

concern of so many in Iraq's capital.

For this reason, military action to improve security, while not

wholly sufficient to solve Iraq's problems, is certainly necessary, and

that is why additional U.S. and Iraqi forces are needed in Baghdad.

They do have a role.

General Petraeus and our military have been asked to implement this

additional security. He was confirmed to do this, as I said, just 20

days ago. Are we going to turn our backs and abandon General Petraeus

and his soldiers this early? Are we going to say ``no'' without an

adequate opportunity for the new strategy to work?

In truth, no one can predict the impact of a failed Iraqi state on

regional stability, the international economy, the global war on

terror, American security, stability in the Middle East and the lives

of the Iraqi people. Twenty days is simply not enough time.

I would also like to remind the Members that on page 23 of the Iraq

Study Group it says quite clearly, ``We could support a short-term

redeployment or surge of American combat forces to stabilize Baghdad,''

and that is what we are trying to do.

In my view, it is premature to vote ``yes'' on this resolution, only

20 days after confirming a new general to go to Iraq to provide

additional security in Baghdad so that the Iraqi Government will have a

reasonable opportunity to succeed