Mr. Speaker, failure in Iraq is not an option. We

enjoy our freedom today only because we have been willing to fight for

it in the past. We must win the war on terror that has been thrust upon

us.

Before going any further, let me first clearly state that I do not

believe we should have an open-ended commitment in Iraq. I believe a

new strategy is needed. America has a proud history of promoting and

fighting for democracy around the globe. I don't believe now is the

time to abandon that commitment.

While a new strategy is needed, the resolution that we are debating

does not present us with any new policy options. Instead, we are voting

on a nonbinding status quo resolution which will not do anything to

change the situation in Iraq. It smacks of political posturing.

Americans expect more of the world's greatest legislative body.

Let us not debase the honor and tradition of the great men and women

who have served before us. We are duty bound to serve the public and

engage in serious lawmaking, not political pandering. This resolution

does nothing. Worse, it endorses the status quo of the violence and

bloodshed. Maintaining the status quo is what ultimately resulted in

the situation we find ourselves in today.

The debate before is more consequential than the question of should

we engage in a troop surge or not. None of us want to see Americans

unnecessarily be put in harm's way. The debate before us is about the

global threats facing the United States and how we choose to respond to

them. Failure to forcibly respond to previous acts of terrorism has

undermined America's credibility around the world and projected us as

weak to our enemies.

Some examples of these attacks include: the World Trade Center in

1993; U.S. troops in the barracks in Saudi Arabia; sailors on the USS

Cole; and

the bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

Unfortunately, Americans were too quick to forget these terrible acts.

Like many Members of Congress, I believe there should be strategic

benchmarks that are designed to hold both the administration and the

Iraqi Government accountable for success in Iraq. These benchmarks

should measure whether sufficient progress is being made.

Unfortunately, under the restrictive rules imposed upon this debate, we

will not have an opportunity to vote on other proposals which would

institute benchmarks for success.

I am compelled to vote against this status quo resolution. Americans

deserve a real debate with multiple options for success in Iraq, not

closed proceedings that are intended to be a political ploy.

I would rather America fight the terrorists on the streets of

Baghdad, instead of allowing the terrorists to attack our homeland.

I am concerned that the resolution we are debating this week is a

precursor to cutting off funds for our troops. The Democrats have even

called it a first step. I have heard it several times tonight. Our

troops must have all the resources they need to accomplish their

mission. I support our troops in the field. Therefore, I will vote

``no'' on this resolution.

General Petraeus has indicated that reinforcements will hasten the

end of the Iraq battle, allowing us to direct our efforts elsewhere in

this greater war on radical Islamic terrorists.

The national commander of the VFW, the Nation's largest organizations

of combat veterans, issued a statement earlier this week which says,

``We need to send a message to our troops that America wants them to

succeed in Iraq by giving the buildup a chance to succeed.''

As a Member of Congress, I will always do whatever possible to

support our brave men and women in uniform. As such, I will actively

oppose efforts to cut off funding to our troops.

I cannot support this resolution, but I am committed to working with

the President and my colleagues in Congress to ensure that the actions

taken in the war accomplish the following: Moves Iraq closer to a

peaceful and stable democracy; improves America's security; ensures the

utmost safety and best equipment for our soldiers; and provides the

shortest feasible time frame for their return to their families.

Failure in Iraq will lead to Iraq becoming a training and staging

ground for terrorist groups intent on destabilizing the entire Middle

East and destroying the United States and our allies.

In closing, I thank and offer my prayers for all our troops,

including those brave men and women in the Ninth Congressional District

and throughout the State of Florida who have answered their Nation's

call to duty.

God bless our troops, and keep them safe.