I thank my friend from Florida for the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose this resolution because,

unfortunately, it is anything but resolute. In one legislative breath

it offers support for our troops, but then expresses disdain for the

mission they have been asked to carry out. And then, I must admit I am

surprised, after all the tough talk we heard from the other side, this

is a rather toothless 97 words. The resolution does nothing to help win

the war, but it doesn't do anything to help stop it either, which

allows the majority to offer its support and withdraw it too.

Now, the majority has surely studied its constitutional law, and

knows that the most direct way that it can affect current strategy is

to cut off the funds necessary for winning this war. So why are we not

having this week a real vote, a real up-or-down vote on funding our men

and women in harm's way? Actually, the Congress has had one up-or-down

vote, it was up only, when the Senate unanimously confirmed General

David Petraeus as our commanding officer in Iraq. General Petraeus, who

took over just last Saturday, literally wrote the book for the Army on

counterinsurgency strategies. And now, after unanimous Senate approval

and just days into his command, the House is prepared to pull the rug

out from under him. If that is not a mixed message, then what is it,

Mr. Speaker?

Indeed, it is a shame that the majority has brought to the floor such

a narrow, nonbinding resolution that misses the bigger picture, because

this is so much larger than what is going on in any given neighborhood

in Baghdad.

It is easy enough to go back and list all the disappointments we have

had in Iraq; it is easy enough to wring our hands about any one

particular tactic. But it is like focusing on one jungle, on one atoll

on the march to Tokyo over 60 years ago. The very nature of our enemy

requires us to look at the bigger picture. The harsh reality we have

encountered in 5 1/2 years since militants attacked us on American

soil is that its intricate web of terror is utterly global.

Today, al Qaeda operates in over 60 countries, with members in the

hundreds and supporters in the hundreds of thousands and perhaps even

millions. This is the case even after the tangible successes that we

have had.

More than three-quarters of al Qaeda's known pre-9/11 leaders have

been captured or killed, more than 4,000 suspected al Qaeda members

arrested, and more than $140 million of its assets seized from over

1,400 different bank accounts worldwide. And after having accomplished

all that, the majority would have us consider a resolution that puts us

one day closer to handing militant Islamists a safe haven the size of

California. And when ideological militants achieve their objectives,

history tells us that they don't settle, that they only attempt to

expand their reach even further. And that means following us home.

The consequences of failure in Iraq read like a far-fetched war game,

but I assure you they are quite real: the inevitable incursion of

Iranian and Syrian combatants into the country, the threat to peaceful

Arab states, and the further emboldening of Hamas and Hezbollah.

So we have arrived at one of those muddy historical crossroads. Will

we continue to take the fight to the enemy, or will we fall back and

hope that the enemy does not follow us home? That question is one that

we must continue to ask ourselves, even if it is much larger than the

narrow scope of this resolution, this resolution that was born of what

has become an overly politicized debate.

Time was, politics stopped at the water's edge; but no longer, it

seems. A discussion of this nature should be about more than political

labels and single tactical issues. It should be about the consequences

for future generations.

The history of free peoples divides itself as neatly as it can into

generations for a reason: because it aspires to celebrate the

contributions made by that group of people who consciously join

together to vanquish a common enemy. If we do not join together now to

defeat this insidious foe, then it will almost certainly fall to our

posterity do so. And they will have a much larger concern than any one

troop deployment in any one city. They will be tasked with rebuilding

the lasting damage that was done to America's resolve this week. They

will look back upon this discussion and seek to understand what we were

thinking when, with just 97 words, we considered shrinking from this

critical moment.

The poet Robert Frost once wrote that, ``The best way out is always

through.'' We doggedly seek the way through. Success in Iraq, security

for our allies, and everlasting victory for freedom. This week's

discussion should be about the way through, not the way back