Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The question is, where are we today? We are looking at this conflict

today and the consequences that it has upon tomorrow and tomorrow's

military readiness.

I spoke about the lack of readiness last summer. Others did as well.

We had a hearing on it a good number of months ago, our committee

responded, and we thank the gentleman from California for helping in

that massive effort to re-equip our Army as was necessary, and

hopefully we will be able to do more in the future.

But where are we today? Yesterday regarding the issue of readiness of

our Army, the Army Chief of Staff, General Schoomaker, said that the

increase of 17,500 Army combat troops in Iraq represents only the tip

of the iceberg and will potentially require thousands of additional

support troops and trainers as well as equipment, further eroding the

Army's readiness to respond to other world contingencies.

In the last 30 years, there have been 12 military engagements, some

large, some small, that our country has engaged in. The Pentagon says

they would only need some 2,500 support troops for the 20,000-plus

combat troops. The Congressional Budget Office says there is going to

be a necessary 13,000 in additional support troops. But the issue of

readiness is real, it is there today because of additional combat

troops, and that is what we are debating today. That is exactly the

issue today. The readiness of tomorrow is contingent upon what happens

today.

I yield, Mr. Speaker, 5 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr.

Stupak).

The gentleman my friend, Mr. McKeon, raised a very

interesting issue about who is really involved in this war in this

country. My opinion is those in uniform and their families.

All one has to do is to go to Walter Reed and the Bethesda hospitals,

go to visitation or a funeral, and those are the ones, and the saying

good-bye to the National Guard and Reserve units, the active duty

units, the farewells and the welcome homes, those and their families

are those that are involved.

And I am afraid the gentleman is correct, that they are the only ones

that are actually involved with this war.

Reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman. He reiterates

what I have been saying, that it seems like the members in uniform and

their families are the ones truly involved in this war.

Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 2 of House Resolution 157, and as

the designee of the majority leader, I request that the time for debate

be enlarged by 1 hour, equally divided and controlled by the leaders or

their designees.

Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to share this body and

this floor with the remarkable gentleman from Texas. I applaud him for

his patriotism, his courage, and commitment to America.

Madam Speaker, we have had a long debate on this resolution. I have

listened to critics, and I find it quite interesting that the criticism

is focused almost exclusively on what this resolution doesn't say,

rather than what it does.

Let me review, if I may. The resolution says two simple things: We

support the troops completely, wholeheartedly, now and in the future;

and we disapprove of the White House's plan to deploy more than 20,000

additional combat troops to Iraq.

That is what we are voting on today, and nothing said on this floor

or in this Chamber will change the fact that that is what is before us.

I oppose the President's plan because it will embroil our troops even

more deeply in a sectarian conflict. Some call this conflict a civil

war, some call this more complicated than a civil war, and, either way,

it is a conflict we cannot resolve and which ultimately cannot be

resolved militarily.

The President's plan to deploy more troops is simply not the answer.

It cannot fix the three irretrievable mistakes made in 2003 when the

administration insisted on de-Baathification, dissolving the Iraqi

army, and shutting down the state-run industries, throwing hundreds of

thousands of Iraqis out of work and creating untold numbers of

insurgents.

The President's plan hastily put together is insufficient in a number

of ways:

It is insufficient in the requirements for progress it places on the

Iraqi political system, the true center of gravity in this whole

conflict.

It is insufficient in the support it provides to our combat forces

both in terms of equipment as well as support forces.

And it is insufficient in the amount of training time it allows for

deploying units.

As a result, under the President's plan, U.S. military forces will be

less ready to go into during and after this troop increase; and, sadly,

they could be stretched to the point of breaking. To the point of

breaking.

Now, finally, I oppose the White House's plan because it will

heighten the already unacceptable level of strategic risk currently

facing our Nation,

strategic risk that exists because our military is overcommited in Iraq

and is ill-equipped and ill-positioned to respond to emerging crises

elsewhere in the world. And this worries me, it worries me deeply.

I have been privileged to serve here in Congress slightly over 30

years, and over that time 12 significant military contingencies have

occurred in which our military have been involved. Each of them

occurred in an unexpected place and at an unexpected time. It will

happen again. Right now, we are not prepared as we should be for an

unforeseen military threat. That worries me.

Unfortunately, it is the magnificent, wonderful, courageous men and

women of our military who will pay the price for that failure.

Madam Speaker, we must send the White House a message that cannot be

ignored; and that is why we are here today. I urge that we pass the

Skelton-Lantos-Jones resolution.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.