Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a profound debt of

gratitude for our men and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Our brave soldiers are remarkable. They find themselves in a foreign

land with regional conflicts that date back over a thousand years.

However, they don't run and hide. They fight. They risk their lives

helping to encourage and teach the Iraqis to take over their own

destiny.

Our Nation's sons and daughters deserve nothing short of

unconditional gratitude and support from their government and the

American people. As long as I am in Congress, our soldiers will have an

ally.

As a veteran, and a father, I will always fight to protect those who

defend their country. I will fight for equipment and supplies. I will

fight for their safety and protection. I will make sure they return

home to their loved ones as quickly as possible. And I pledge they will

NOT be forgotten once they return home.

But I will not support sending over 20,000 more young men and women

into a fight without a plan to win and get them home. We cannot send

more Americans into harm's way to instill a peace that the Iraqis are

not willing to seek for themselves.

The solutions now are political not military. The Iraq Study Group

urged the president to pursue a diplomatic solution alongside our

military efforts.

But this president has decided to ignore the diplomatic side of the

equation. This administration has squandered their credibility by

losing billions in reconstruction funds, failing to adequately equip

our troops, and failing to develop a clear plan for reconstruction in

Iraq.

It is time for the Iraqi people to stand up and for the United States

to begin a phased redeployment to protect American interests and take

our troops out of the direct line of fire.

In closing, this war has created a new generation of veterans with

new disabilities not seen in past wars. Adding insult to injury, the

president's recent budget proposal lacks adequate funding for our

veterans returning home. Researching post-traumatic stress disorder,

improving suicide prevention, and providing adequate funding for

prosthetics are crucial budget needs to serve our new veterans.

On a recent trip to the Walter Reed Army Medical Center, I met with

several of our wounded soldiers. I pledge to them--and to all our men

and women in uniform--that your country will take care of you. And I

urge my colleagues to support this resolution.