Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the dialogue, and I thank the

gentleman from California. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I also could benefit from the wisdom of the gentleman from Maryland.

In defense of my neighbor from New Mexico, she articulately pointed out

that the resolution also talks about the fact that the flawed language

in this resolution, and I quote, says that Congress disapproves of

deploying more than 20,000 additional United States combat troops to

Iraq.

Certainly you do not disapprove of the several thousand troops that

will be sent to al-Anbar province. I mean, after all, that is where we

are engaging al Qaeda, the folks who attacked us. I mean, after all,

that is where the generals are asking for those several thousand

troops.

So you throw out a number of 20,000 troops. Not all of them are going

to downtown Baghdad. Many of them are going to al-Anbar. A funny thing

about al-Anbar province and Fallujah. The tribal authorities in that

area who were with al Qaeda have now turned against al Qaeda. They are

looking to join the American forces. They are looking to take advantage

of this new enthusiasm, this new troop deployment.

Certainly when you put down 20,000 troops, you don't mean the 4,000

or 5,000 going to fight al Qaeda that attacked us. Do you? Because that

portion of the resolution is flawed.

I was recently in Iraq and had the honor of meeting Major General

Moore. Major General Moore reminded me, ``Al Qaeda is a hyena waiting

in the dark, ready to rip apart innocent Americans. And they are

coming. We need to be lions, fiercely defending our people, ferocious

in the face of enemy.''

You know, unfortunately, this nonbinding resolution is a political

whimper rather than a roar of support for our troops. The language

undermines our battlefield plans, it fails to offer any alternatives,

it offers no hope, encourages no victory, and contains no solutions.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution is a cruel message to our brave soldiers

on the front lines and it undermines their fighting spirit and their

morale. It pushes for an abrupt exit to Iraq, sidesteps the dire

consequences of leaving Iraq, not just of the country but of the

people.

On a recent trip to Baghdad I was stunned by the honorable Iraqi

families who live in the Sunni-Shia fault line neighborhoods, families

who have lived together despite ethnic differences and religious

differences. These are neighborhoods that are a model for religious

tolerance. Can you imagine enduring religious bigotry and living

peacefully alongside a different Muslim sect, and yet in exchange for

your moderation and understanding your family is hunted, you are forced

to move by armed militia at gunpoint, and these are the same radicals

that pursue and round up your husbands and your sons and torture them

and kill them?

And then you are left as a single mother in downtown Baghdad with

children, and all you have to hold on to is a fledgling government and

American soldiers, these same American soldiers that are already

deployed and being sent and are already on their way to Baghdad to

protect your home and your children's future. And yet this morning you

awake in Baghdad, you await the news of politicians in Washington

arguing about taking away this little bit of security that you have.

And if you can't imagine that, and a lot us have traveled together

who have been to the Iran-Iraq border, go with me to al-Kut, where we

are developing evidence of Iran's active engagement in exporting

weapons and money and support for radical Islamists. Could the news be

true that the Americans are talking about leaving the border, about

leaving the several hundred El Salvadoran and multinational forces that

are serving there with us? Those are the El Salvadorans from our own

hemisphere. These are the El Salvadorans that survived death squads in

their own country. These are the El Salvadorans who will return home.

And what will they say about America? Did we leave too soon? Did we

leave that border unguarded? Did we turn it over to the Iranians? Did

we allow that little city called al-Kut to revert back to the city

named ``Little Teheran''?

The State Department has warned us that a retreat of American

military forces at this time could trigger ethnic cleansing. The

resulting humanitarian crisis could be one of the worst in the region,

and genocide could trigger a refugee exodus into Jordan and Syria and

the surrounding regions.

My friends, should we lose our resolve, it is likely death squads

will roam and will become immediately more emboldened and more

murderous, and what is now referred to as violence in Baghdad will

quickly regress into mass killings.

Mr. Speaker, genocide is what caused our involvement in the Clinton

administration to put us into Bosnia. Eventually the cry from mass

slaughter of innocent civilians in Baghdad could cause us to reenter

Iraq. We need to take responsibility, all of us, for our words and our

actions. We need to understand the effect this flawed resolution has on

the morale of our soldiers overseas, and the effect it will have on the

desires of our allies to team with us in the future.

Finally, we need to take responsibility, all of us, for the

encouragement this resolution gives to our enemies.

I was up in Bilad recently with General McCrystal. After a long

briefing and discussion, we were ready to depart the region and General

McCrystal said to me, You know, tell the folks back home that I am

going to stay and fight until somebody makes me leave.

General McCrystal, today we are trying to stop that from happening

until your work is done.

Mr. Speaker, the American people must demand that the authors of this

resolution tell us what their better plan is for al Anbar province.

Tell us what your better plan is for the tribal authorities who have

just joined us in the fight against al Qaeda in our national interests.

Tell us, my colleagues, explain to me the consequences of withdrawing

from downtown Baghdad and the slaughter that that could have on the

tens of thousands of innocent families.

Tell me what we say to the Salvadorans serving with us on the Iraq-

Iranian border if we are about to leave that border unguarded. Please

explain to me how this measure of discouragement, this flawed

resolution, doesn't affect the performance and the morale of our

troops. Please tell me how this political debate doesn't weaken the

resolve of our country to win, to endure, and to prevail.