Mr. Speaker, I didn't come down here, my colleagues, to

talk about General MacArthur, but I guess I knew of him better than

anyone in this room.

General MacArthur was called out of Korea. He was the commander of

the entire Armed Forces there, and left us in the Second Infantry

Division completely surrounded by the Chinese in November of 1950. The

last I remember, he was called back by the Commander in Chief, Harry

Truman, for defying his direction. So with all due respect to the great

late general, this is hardly a time to talk about what soldiers have to

do when they defy authority.

I want to thank those who have given us an opportunity today to

express ourselves under question of life and death. Very few people

have this responsibility, yet those here in this House, you didn't get

elected to do this, but today you have to decide whether or not you

want this war to continue and how many people have to die before it is

stopped.

You here talk about me supporting a draft, but I challenge anyone to

tell me that their feelings about this war in Iraq would not be

different if they thought that their loved ones, their family, their

community, would be placed in harm's way.

Whether you are for or against the war, or no matter how you voted,

when you see the casualties mounting up, when you visit the hospitals

and see young dedicated people without their skulls, their faces, their

legs, their arms, you don't have to know any of these kids to start

crying. But if you have children and grandchildren, and your

imagination allows you to believe that they would be included in the

21,000, and no matter how many times they go, there has to be a feeling

that maybe this is the last chance I have, you have to have a different

feeling if you are not dealing with someone else's children.

Now, people would say these kids want to fight. I mean, they are

different from most kids. They volunteered. They want to do it.

It is strange how most of them sought the $40,000, $30,000, $20,000

bonus or sought educational benefits, or don't come from families that

are affluent in this country. It is strange that you never heard the

President of the United States or the Secretary of Defense ever make a

plea to the patriotism of America to say, Give me your young, your able

body, give me your patriots, we have a war to fight. You have never

heard that.

Oh, no, we applaud those who enlisted, but there has never been a

plea out there for America to make sacrifices. A country at war, and

the President doesn't ask people to sacrifice anything.

Well, my son in the Marines got out of the Persian Gulf. He is out,

and he too enjoyed the GI Bill. But recently I attended a funeral in my

district of a young man who died in Iraq, and I have gone to others,

and the family was outside, and they pled with me, please, Congressman,

tell them our son was a hero. Please, Congressman Rangel, we thank you

that you are here, salute my son, please.

I have gone to these funerals before. Most of these young men and

women were marines. So I was so used to seeing this blue uniform with

the red stripe. The family actually walked me to the coffin, and my

knees buckled. Why? Because as sensitive and as passionate I am about

the loss of life, instead of seeing a brown-skinned Dominican in a

marine outfit, I saw a soldier about 20 years old. I saw a soldier of

about 20 years old in an Army uniform, not a Marine uniform. Guess

what, he looked just like me.

I ask my colleagues to try to figure, if you were involved as an

individual, as a kid, or your family was involved, that this great

country and this great Constitution has given you the right, right in

your hand, to determine who lives and who dies. You cannot make a

mistake in supporting this resolution, it is not going to hurt our

beloved warriors, it is going to help our country, it is going to help

them, and it is going to make us proud one day to be able to say, when

asked, What did you do when this was going on in the world, and your

Congress was asked?

You would be able to say, There was a resolution. It may not have

been a profile in courage, but I supported it, and I am proud that I

did