Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much for the

time. I appreciate being part of this discussion today.

Mr. Speaker, I couldn't help but be somewhat taken by Mr. Rangel's

comments about the lack of urgency and the lack of sacrifice in our

country because of what is going on with our troops in Iraq and

Afghanistan, and I can say to you, whoever is listening or watching,

wherever you are, when I go through my communities, my towns, I sense

the same thing. Where is the sense of urgency and where is the sense of

sacrifice?

I will tell you where it is. When you go to see the troops off, to

see their families, to see them, then you know where the sacrifice is.

Then you know where the urgency is, to be there when they go back the

second or third time, and, as some have said, the fourth.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution, a

resolution in support of our troops who are serving with distinction in

Iraq, and opposing the President's call for escalating the troop levels

in Iraq.

As a two-tour combat veteran of the Vietnam conflict, as Ike said, as

an assault helicopter pilot, I, like many others in this body, know

firsthand of the

everyday sacrifices made by our men and women in uniform serving in

Iraq. And, I might add, if I could, I know the sacrifices of their

spouses and children. Branded on me always will be the reminder of my

children when I had to leave, and they wondered if their dad would come

back. You can't forget that. And it is happening to our troops

repeatedly. More than 3,100 have given the supreme sacrifice. Over

20,000 have been injured, many of them very severely.

This resolution recognizes our brave men and women for performing

their mission to the best of their ability. All Members of this body,

all Members of this body stand foursquare behind their efforts.

As one Member of Congress who voted in support of the Iraq war

resolution in 2002, I recognize the pretext for going to war was based

on faulty, misleading, misinformation. I cannot reverse that vote, but

I can no longer acquiesce to a failed and tragic military exercise in

Iraq.

Two months ago, Generals Casey and Abizaid stated they did not

support the increase in U.S. troop levels in Iraq, and recently

President Bush maintained that that military policy with regard to Iraq

would be determined by our military leaders. However, last month,

President Bush ignored his top military advisers and called for a

20,000-plus increase in U.S. troops in Iraq.

I and others have been pressing the administration to level with the

American people on the status of the Iraqi Security Forces being

trained and ready to defend their Nation. If the Iraqis are trained and

ready, reportedly over 300,000, as we have been told, it is time to

begin now a planned phased withdrawal of U.S. troops. Sending more U.S.

troops to Iraq does nothing to enhance the Iraqis' training. It only

places more U.S. forces into harm's way to become additional targets of

the Iraqi civil war. This failed policy must stop. We can support our

troops in the field and oppose this escalation of U.S. forces.

The sectarian civil war violence in Iraq is increasing, and U.S.

troops are becoming an increasing target of the various tribes and

factions. We cannot continue to place ourselves in the middle of this

civil war. It is time to insist that the Iraqis resolve their own civil

war. We must insist and allow the Iraqis to defend their own Nation.

The Bush administration stated that Iraq Security Forces are trained

and ready in sufficient numbers to do the job. Again, they stated over

300,000 trained and equipped.

Therefore, I believe now is the time to oppose any further escalation

of U.S. troop levels and now begin the planned, phased withdrawal of

U.S. forces. I regret today's resolution is nonbinding. We need to

begin addressing this matter in real substantive legislation. I urge

all of my colleagues to support this resolution and to work in unison

to bring our troops home.

Mr. Speaker, you know what we do best? You know what we do best? I

will bet everybody who is paying attention intends to file their income

tax April 15. We do best when we are under pressure to get it done.

I think it is time to say to Mr. Maliki, you know what? You have got

your government in place. You have got your chance for democracy. It

has been given to you. We went in there and Saddam is gone. He is

history. You have got your chance. It is up to you. Now, you have got

your problems, but you have got your government and it is in place. You

have your problems, but you have to work them out. We cannot come in

there and settle a civil war. And that is exactly what is going on.

We were, like you were there and I was with you in the White House,

14 months ago when they said to the President, the Vice President,

Secretary Rumsfeld, Secretary Rice and General Pace, if you have got at

that time, 14 months ago, if you have got over 200,000 troops trained,

equipped and in field, then what is your plan to bring our troops home?

And just like now, silence fell in the room.

Now, the claim is over 300,000 trained and equipped in the field and

we are not bringing ours home. So we should say to Mr. Maliki, you have

got to do it, pick something, whether it is oil fields or pick

something and say starting next week or the week after you are

responsible for their security because we are going to bring our troops

out and bring them home and we are going to take them to Baghdad, put

them on airplanes and fly them home. You have got to do it. It is yours

to do and we hold you responsible to do it.