I thank the gentlewoman from California for allowing me

to participate in the Out of Iraq Caucus. I do formally request

membership in such caucus at this moment and anxiously await being a

full-fledged member of the Out of Iraq Caucus.

Mr. Speaker and Members, I rise today really in the mindset of this

coming weekend, which is Martin Luther King's birthday celebration.

Martin Luther King, we all know, was a valiant defender of civil and

human rights, also stood up strongly for the poor, but in this day and

time must be recognized as one of the clearest voices for peace that

this country has ever known.

As I stand before you asking this country to join this Out of Iraq

Caucus of the Congress, the whole United States should rise up, one and

all, and join the caucus. And I just want to mention that it is

important now to remember that those voices of peace, of which Martin

Luther King was a key voice, need to be listened to, need our

attention.

Today, it is important to point out, as we walk toward the Martin

Luther King holiday, that it was he who spoke up for peace, and he

didn't do it in a way that was easy. Martin Luther King was arrested

over 30 times as he was talking about peace. In 1967, and it is

important to remember this, in 1967 he gave a speech in which he said

that silence could continue no more. And then on April 4 of 1967, 1

year before his death, he said that we have got to get out of Vietnam.

And he didn't just say that Vietnam was the issue. He said Vietnam

was critical, and Vietnam was what he was talking about at that time,

but he actually projected a greater vision than

just Vietnam. He talked about a worldwide fellowship that lifts

neighborly concern beyond one's tribe, race, class, and nation. In

fact, what he talked about was a generosity of spirit, a politics of

spirit in which we all could live in peace with each other.

We need to say, no escalation, get out of Iraq now, but America needs

to adopt as its guiding principle, America needs to say the thing that

guides us the most is peace. It is not living in superiority to the

nations of the world, but living in brotherhood and sisterhood with the

nations of the world. We need to talk about a peace of generosity, a

peace of inclusion, and a peace that will allow us to look our

constituents in the face and say we will not send your brothers, your

sisters, your children, your parents into a war zone to be one of

20,000 more targets.

We are going to stand up with courage, just like Martin Luther King

did. We will withstand the criticism of those detractors who just don't

get it. We will stand with the people who need peace, which is our

constituents, and with the soldiers. Today, my colleagues, we are

actually protecting our soldiers, as they protect us, by calling for no

escalation. Withdraw from Iraq. Peace now.