Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me the

time and also for her leadership on this issue. She and I both have

bills to make U.S. policy that there be no permanent military bases in

Iraq; and that is what we are, an amendment to that effect is here

today. It reads that none of the funds made available under this act

may be used by the government of the United States to enter into a

basing rights agreement between the United States and Iraq.

It is true that the administration is unclear on this. Secretary

Rumsfeld has said we have no plans or no discussions under way to have

permanent bases in that country. But I just got off the phone with a

reporter from Maine who said his son served there and those aren't

temporary bases that we have there.

General Casey has said that we should gradually reduce the visibility

of coalition forces across Iraq because that would take away one of the

elements that fuels the insurgency.

What we have learned in a very painful way is that the opinions of

other people matter. The opinions of the Iraqis matter. They believe we

came there to take their oil, and they believe that we are going to

stay there permanently. We have to make an official U.S. policy that we

will not stay in Iraq on a permanent basis, that we are going to

withdraw our troops, that we will not have military bases there; and

that will help diminish somewhat the insurgency that is raging there

today.

Just last week General Abizaid testified that the United States may

still wish to maintain a long-term presence in the region. It is that

kind of confusion, those kinds of mixed signals that we need to clear

up with this amendment today.

The Zogby poll recently indicated that 70 percent of American troops

believe we should be out of Iraq within the year. Our troops deserve to

be told that we are not going to stay. The Iraqis need to be assured

that we are not going to say, and this amendment is the path to that

result.