Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the

resolution. I honor and support the troops in Iraq and ask that we have

an honest, open debate on the Iraq war on the House floor.

I rise in opposition to this resolution H. Res. 612. I share in the

celebration for the successful parliamentary elections that took place

in Iraq yesterday. It is my sincere hope that the event marks an

important step toward establishing the long-term political stability in

the country and the political legitimacy of its government.

However, this resolution goes beyond congratulating the Iraqi people

for their bravery and success in yesterday's election. It pays more

homage to the Bush Administration's prosecution of the war in Iraq than

it devotes to the bravery of the Iraqi voters. Frankly, I have opposed

this Administration's decision to go to war from the beginning and

voted against extending the President the authorization to use military

force against Iraq. I did so because the war aims of this

administration seemed confused and I thought we should allow the U.N.

weapons inspection team to complete its mission before embarking on a

war footing.

What I resent most about this resolution is that there was no attempt

by the majority to work with Members on this side of the aisle to

arrive at a consensus resolution that we can all support. I can only

conclude that it is interested only in gaining political one upmanship

than it is in reaching bipartisan agreement on congratulating the Iraqi

people for their progress toward democracy.

Additionally, this resolution sends the message that anyone

advocating a drawdown of U.S. forces 6 days or 6 hours earlier than

the president does is imposing an ``artificial deadline'' and proposing

a cut-and-run strategy. I reject that characterization. What I want to

see from this administration is a timetable for training a viable Iraqi

security force that would allow for an orderly draw down of our troops.

After reading this resolution and listening to series of statements by

the President on our Iraq strategy, I am truly concerned that we have

no orderly way out of our predicament. It is my conclusion that our

current course only continues our open-ended obligation.