Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the resolution. I

congratulate the Iraqi people on the completion of their parliamentary

election and I request an open debate on Iraq.

The parliamentary election concluded yesterday in Iraq is a towering

achievement and if this resolution spoke to that achievement I would be

happy to vote for it.

But the votes have not even been counted and we cannot yet know

whether this parliamentary election will produce elected members

proportionately from the many ethnic and religious groups that make up

the Iraqi people. That is necessary for the give and take and political

compromises that occur in a healthy and mature democracy, to lead to a

stable and unified Iraqi nation. I think every member of this House

hopes this parliamentary election will lead to a stable free and

democratic Iraq for the sake of the Iraqi people and especially the

courageous Americans who have died or are now serving in Iraq.

What we do know is the constitution under which this parliamentary

election has been held has major flaws. Under the constitution the

central government powers are exercised through a weak and perilously

divided executive; provisions remain that will further fracture Iraq

into smaller regions drawn along religious, ethnic, and tribal lines;

and incredibly, the huge revenues from oil, the greatest Iraqi natural

and national resource, are reserved solely for the use of the region

where the oil is produced. These factors bode extremely poorly for the

establishment of a stable, free unified Iraq and the constitution will

surely have to be greatly modified.

Given those problems it is at the very least premature to be

trumpeting victory in Iraq whatever that victory may ultimately look

like. Over a 15 year period America has engaged in two wars in Iraq.

President Herbert Walker Bush, with the full support of the United

Nations and a broad coalition of participating nations, followed his

military commanders' advice by deploying 500,000 troops to liberate

Kuwait from the Iraqi invasion. Saddam Hussein was driven out of Kuwait

with only 19 American soldiers losing their lives.

In contrast, President George W. Bush, without U.N. support and only

a small coalition of the so called ``willing,'' rejected his highest

military commanders' advice and deployed only 140,000 troops to

overthrow Saddam Hussein, occupy Iraq, and establish a free and stable

Iraq. Establishing a free and stable Iraq is a noble goal. Yet after

two and a half years of war, occupation, and insurgency, our casualties

in this ill-conceived and incompetently managed war in Iraq have now

passed 2,155 American soldiers killed.

More than 2,000 of those deaths have occurred since the President

George W. Bush declared ``Mission Accomplished'' 30 months ago.

I fervently hope that this resolution, a year from now, will not show

this House with as much egg on its face as that ``Mission

Accomplished'' declaration produced.