Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for yielding

me this time.

I truly wish democracy for the people of Iraq, and I commend the

people of Iraq on yesterday's election. However, to claim success is

really premature. Our soldiers are still at great risk. The insurgents

are just as dangerous today as they were the day before the election.

This resolution quotes the President saying, ``When the Iraqis stand

up, we will stand down.'' Under those terms, our soldiers could be in

Iraq indefinitely.

This resolution is merely more rhetoric about how many Iraqi soldiers

have been trained. In February 2004, Secretary Rumsfeld claimed there

were more than 210,000 Iraqis serving in the security forces. Just 7

months later, Secretary Rumsfeld said 95,000 trained Iraqi troops were

taking part in security operations. According to the figures in the

President's November 29 speech, there appears to be between 84,000 and

96,000 Iraqis trained.

However, independent experts in a November 30 Christian Science

Monitor article said that they believed the President's numbers were

much too high. Instead, they said 30,000 was a more accurate figure.

Mr. Speaker, not only are the number of Iraqi soldiers uncertain,

their readiness is also in doubt. In September, General George Casey

told Congress that the number of Iraqi battalions rated at the highest

level of readiness had dropped from three to one, which means the

Iraqis have about 800 soldiers which are at the highest level of

readiness.

If the President's criteria for concluding our involvement in Iraq is

the Iraqi army standing up, it appears we are nowhere near achieving

this goal.

Mr. Speaker, nearly everything this administration has said about the

war has turned out to be false. There were no weapons of mass

destruction. Iraq did not attempt to purchase uranium yellow cake from

Niger. There was no relationship between Saddam Hussein and Osama bin

Ladin or other al Qaeda leaders. We were not greeted as liberators.

Iraq's oil revenues have not paid for reconstruction costs. In fact, it

has cost U.S. taxpayers $251 billion so far. The insurgency is not in

its last throes. And the war has not made us safer. It has provided an

opportunity for al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations to recruit

new members, and it has also diverted hundreds of billions of dollars

away from efforts to secure our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H. Res. 612. I

congratulate the Iraqis for the election, and I agree with Barbara Lee:

it is time to bring our troops home, and there should be no permanent

bases in Iraq.