Mr. Speaker, I will always support our troops, and I

thank them and honor them for their bravery and valor during the

difficult task of fighting the insurgents in Iraq. I also commend and

admire the people of Iraq for their determination and bravery in the

historic elections this week. The turnout was impressive--it was a

testament to the spirit of the people and it will hopefully lead to a

strong democracy.

I hope and pray that we are successful in Iraq--that the violence

ends, that the country is stabilized and that our soldiers come home

safe, sound and soon. Unfortunately, more than 150,000 of our best and

bravest remain in Iraq having been given no real plan to win the peace

and no defined terms of victory. Indeed, they were sent to Iraq by an

administration that was unaware of the circumstance in Iraq and

unprepared to win the peace.

I plan to vote ``present'' on this resolution because it calls for

``complete victory'' without actually defining victory. The

administration has set tangible dates for elections and for the

creation of a government, but why is it always vague about the terms of

``victory''? We have trained 100,000 Iraqi troops, will ``victory'' be

achieved only after we train 100,000 more? Can victory only be won

after our troops remain in Iraq in full force for another ten years?

Longer than that?

Our military is the best in history, and it can achieve victory in

any situation, as long as it is told what victory entails.

Elections are important milestones, but they are not magic pills. In

1967, there was an historic vote in South Vietnam, similar to the

elections Iraq is holding now. As we all know, hostilities in Vietnam

would continue for 7 years after those elections, with 50,000 more

Americans losing their lives.

We continue to wait for the Iraqi forces to be capable of securing

Iraq themselves, but the vagueness of our goals and the vagueness of

``victory'' in this war gives them little incentive to take over from

our military. We badly need a timetable, but, ``When they stand up,

we'll stand down,'' is hardly adequate.