Mr. Speaker, I am troubled and disappointed that this

particular resolution concerning Iraq is before the House today. It is

intentionally divisive, and unnecessarily so.

Yesterday, the Iraqi people engaged in the most basic civic activity

of a true democracy; they voted. I congratulate the millions of Iraqi

citizens who bravely went to the polls to elect their parliament. I am

greatly encouraged by this significant accomplishment, and I am proud

to strongly support the Iraqi people as they struggle to build their

own democracy.

I also strongly support our troops on the ground in Iraq. I recognize

and honor their service and tremendous sacrifice. I also honor the

sacrifices that have been made by their family members over the past 4

years. They have served bravely and skillfully, even when they have not

been given the equipment and strategic support they require. As they

come home, their Government must live up to its promise and provide the

long term support they will need.

Every member of the House would support a resolution celebrating and

honoring the Iraqi people and successful elections that occurred

yesterday.

Every member of the House would also support a resolution honoring

the sacrifice and commitment of our service members who are serving in

Iraq.

The ranking minority member of the International Relations Committee

introduced a resolution that would have done those things.

Unfortunately, the majority has chosen to play politics with our

troops and to use the historic Iraqi elections as an opportunity to try

to split us apart.

The resolution before us today fails on two fronts. First it fails

for what it is not: Not a strategy for success, no change of course,

and nothing to communicate to the American People or our troops that we

recognize the facts on the ground and have learned from our past

mistakes.

It also fails for what it is: an empty, self-congratulatory statement

that the current policy is working, without regard for the facts. There

is enough good to recognize--the Iraqi elections, the service of our

soldiers--that we should not be waving around our own statements of

self-appreciation and manufactured on imaginary good news.

Let us discuss real, solid evidence and real, substantive plans. How

do we move towards a more stable, functional Iraq?

It is worth discussing, for a moment, the meaning of victory. I would

have hoped that the President and Majority would have learned 3 years

ago that saying ``Mission Accomplished'' does not make it so. Giving

wishful speeches in front of signs that says ``Victory'' does not make

it so. And using the word ``victory'' in the titles of

counterproductive resolutions like this brings us no closer to a stable

and functional Iraq.

Now that the Iraqi people have a framework for a constitution and

have elected a parliament, it is time for the United States to bring

our troops home. This will do more to erode support for the insurgency

than a continued U.S. military occupation can ever hope to accomplish.

As my colleges know, Congressman John Murtha, a respected defense

expert and a decorated Marine veteran, recently introduced H.J. Res.

73, which would bring our troops home from Iraq and bring an end to an

occupation that does not serve the interests of the Iraqis or America.

This resolution recognizes the ground truth in Iraq and will help to

end the insurgency, I am proud to support it, and not this one.

Also, publicly stating that we will not seek to build permanent bases

in the country would help to reassure the population of Iraq that we

mean what we say when we tell them we have no designs of occupation.

That is why I have cosponsored the Iraq Sovereignty Promotion Act, H.R.

3142, which calls for America to make such a public pledge.

Unfortunately, today we are not discussing either of these bills, or

any of the many other pieces of legislation that have been introduced

by my colleagues on what to do in Iraq. Instead, we have wasted an

opportunity to have a substantive debate in favor of yet another

divisive hollow resolution.