Mr. Speaker, once again this House has passed a

resolution celebrating the manner in which the war in Iraq has been

fought, and the burgeoning democracy it has ostensibly established. In

reality, H. Res. 691 speaks to the profound failure of the Bush

Administration's Iraq policies and the lack of an appropriate rationale

for invading another country: The war was fought because President

Bush's desire to take down Saddam Hussein, not out of a desire to fight

global terror; it was about a highly ideological plan to extend

America's reach in the Middle East, not about ridding the world of

nuclear weapons. In short, the war was about the Bush Administration's

priorities--not Iraq's.

This resolution also expresses unequivocal support for our Armed

Forces. We must be sure to honor the brave men and women who put

themselves in harm's way; already 833 American soldiers who have died

during the course of this conflict. Accordingly, I hope we will honor

future veterans when they return home, as thousands of them will

require prosthetic arms and legs, physical therapy, and years of health

care for injuries incurred during the war.

H. Res. 691 is not without its merits. This resolution contains

important language expressing condolences to the families of the

innocent Iraqis who have been killed or wounded during the conflict. In

fact, an estimated 12,000-14,000 unarmed, innocent Iraqi civilians have

died since the United States invaded the country last year.

However, while I support many parts of this resolution, I am

disappointed that the House Republican leadership has once again pushed

for passage of a resolution the contents of which are either inaccurate

or downright wrong.

An entire clause of this resolution is devoted to the claim that Iraq

has been transformed ``into a safe secure, stable, sovereign,

democratic state that serves the interests of the Iraqi people.''

Secure? Stable? Sovereign? Iraq is none of these things, and it still

won't be any of these things when the United States transfers authority

back to the Iraqi people on June 30th. The Bush Administration needs to

realize and admit to the American people that Iraq is neither secure

nor stable, and will not be either of these things for a great many

years. The Administration's policies in Iraq have been a colossal

failure.

The fact is, President Bush and his Administration want to have it

both ways. They want to appear to have finished up work in Iraq in time

for the November elections, while at the same time maintaining over

100,000 soldiers there to ensure they maintain a high degree of control

over the country's fate. Not to mention the new American Embassy

overseen by the controversial John Negroponte will be the largest in

the world.

Instead of continuing to pass resolutions of inaction, Congress

should be pressing the administration to truly engage the international

community to stabilize an insecure Iraq--particularly in light of the

recent resolution endorsing the turnover of power back to the Iraqi

people that was passed unanimously by the U.N. Security Council. We've

already entered into a fight that has diverted resources from the real

fight against terrorism and from important domestic programs. Now is

the time for taking measures so that we do not repeat our mistakes. Now

is the time we must invest in an international coalition before the

international will to endorse our efforts in Iraq runs dry.