Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose H. Res. 691. My

position is consistent with my opposition to our invasion of Iraq and

my belief that any congratulations we extend to the interim government

are muted by the reality of ongoing death and mayhem that occur daily

in Iraq.

Additionally, I want to express my condolences to all of the victims

of our invasion into Iraq. My heart is heavy for the Iraqi families

that have suffered permanent losses as a result of the war and

continuing insurgency efforts. Furthermore, I mourn for the families of

U.S. and foreign military personnel; valiant soldiers, men and women,

who have sacrificed their lives to promote the reality of freedom for

Iraqis.

However, Mr. Speaker, I disagree with many of the notions put forward

in the resolution because I believe some of them are simplistic, naive

and wrong. While it is true that Iraqis have participated in elections,

widespread antagonisms persist and violent behavior continues to be

directed at our forces. Our soldiers are imperiled because of how and

why they entered Iraq, in addition to their continued presence in Iraq.

Second, the notion that Iraq is more secure now than before is also

wrong. While it is true that the government of Saddam Hussein was

toppled, Iraq continues to be a besieged nation. Violence is prevalent,

and the victims of the bombings and assassinations are largely innocent

Iraqis.

I appreciate the spirit in which the Resolution was drafted, but I

strongly disagree with the underlying premise that we are celebrating

the Iraqi freedom. Iraqis will not be free until they are capable of

installing a representative government devoid of foreign intervention.

Iraqis will not be free until they overcome the challenges of

enfranchising diverse segments of its diverse population of Kurds,

Sunnis and Shiites into a form of democracy that suits their needs and

not the designs of the United States.

Finally, while June 30, 2004 is a monumental date for the people of

Iraq. We should not delude ourselves, nor mislead the people of Iraq

that in the near term, democracy will bear the fruit of liberty and

peace that they have been promised. As a mother and grandmother who

worries about the future of our Nation and the world, I am ruled by my

conscience, and my conscience dictates that I cast a ``no'' vote on H.

Res. 691.