Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr.

Lantos) for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, on Sunday Iraq held democratic elections to nominate

legislators to write Iraq's constitution, and I want to congratulate

the courageous Iraqi people who voted in the election. My congressional

district, Marin and Sonoma Counties, north of San Francisco, across the

Golden Gate Bridge, had an 89 1/2 percent voter turnout in the United

States the last election, 89 1/2. Believe me, we know the importance

that elections play in our democracy.

And now with Iraq's elections completed, we in the United States must

ensure that the people of Iraq control their own affairs as Iraq

transitions towards democracy. In fact, Sunday's election gives the

United States yet another opportunity to get back on course in Iraq. We

can do this by supporting the Iraqi people, not through our military

but through international cooperation to help rebuild Iraq's economic

and physical infrastructure. There are four components to my plan on

how to do this. H. Con. Res. 35, which is co-sponsored by over two

dozen other Members of the House, this plan secures Iraq for the

future. It ensures that America's role in Iraq gives Iraq back to the

Iraqis and actually makes America safer.

First, we need to develop and implement a plan to begin the immediate

withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq. Second, we must develop and

implement a plan for the reconstruction of Iraq's civil and economic

infrastructure. Third, we need to convene an emergency meeting of

Iraq's leadership and the international community to replace U.S.

military forces in Iraq with an international peacekeeping force and

Iraqi police and national guard forces. Finally, we need to take all

steps to provide that the Iraqi people receive the opportunity they

deserve to control their own internal affairs.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly salute the Iraqi people for their

courage in participating in last Sunday's elections. But if we are to

succeed in Iraq, we must utilize this moment as a means to bring our

troops home and a means to return power to the Iraqi people.