Mr. Speaker, yesterday General Richard Myers, Chairman

of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, announced that 142,000 members of the

Iraqi security forces have been fully trained. That statement leads me

to wonder, if the number of trained Iraqi security personnel equals the

number of United States troops in Iraq, why have we not begun to bring

our troops home?

If the Iraqi people are trained to protect their country, as General

Myers claims, then why has the Bush administration left our troops to

be sitting ducks in Iraq for the foreseeable future? Why are not the

Iraqis relying on these 142,000 security personnel for the heavy burden

of keeping Iraq secure?

Sadly, the Bush administration wants the American people to ignore

the fact that together 150,000 American troops and 142,000 Iraqi troops

have not been able to secure the country.

That is because by invading Iraq the Bush administration has created

a whole new generation of terrorist recruits whose common tie is their

hatred for the United States occupation.

This immoral, ill-conceived and unjust war against a country that

never provoked us and never posed a threat to the United States has

made Americans, and Iraqis alike, much less safe.

Most of the 1,500 U.S. troops who have been killed in Iraq died after

President Bush made those now infamous remarks about the end of major

combat operations in May of 2003, with the banner Mission Accomplished

prominently displayed in the background. Mr. Speaker, the way to honor

our brave troops is by preventing further lives from being lost. In

addition to the 1,500 troops killed, more than 11,000 Americans have

been severely wounded and a staggering tens of thousands of innocent

Iraqi civilians have died in this war.

The tremendous cost of the war is no less dangerous to our security

here at home because thousands of Iraqi insurgents have been created

since we attacked Iraq. Congress has charged U.S. taxpayers over $200

billion in less than 2 years to pay for the ongoing occupation of that

country.

Imagine what we could do with $200 billion. We could fund our

Nation's homeland security efforts for an entire year or shore up the

budget shortfalls of every single State in the country and still have

billions of dollars left over to help reconstruct Iraq's decimated

infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, we need to pursue a new national security plan, one

which defends America by relying on the very best of American values,

our commitment to peace, our commitment to freedom, our compassion for

the people of the world, and our capacity for multilateral leadership.

With the help of Physicians for Social Responsibility, the Friends

Committee on National Legislation and Women's Action For New Direction,

I have created a SMART security strategy for the 21st century. SMART

stands for Sensible, Multilateral, American Response to Terrorism.

A SMART security strategy for Iraq means providing the developmental

aid that can help create a robust civil society; building schools for

Iraqi children so that they can learn about peace and freedom; water

processing plants so all Iraqis will have clean drinking water; and

ensuring that Iraq's economic infrastructure becomes fully viable in

order to avoid a fiscal collapse.

Instead of troops, let us send scientists, educators, urban planners

and constitutional experts to help rebuild Iraq's flagging economic and

physical infrastructure and establish a robust and democratic civil

society.

It is time for the Bush administration to pay attention to its own

claims. If 142,000 Iraqi security forces have been trained, as General

Myers told us yesterday, then the President should agree with me that

it is time for the United States to cease playing a militaristic role

in Iraq and begin playing a humanitarian role.

SMART security is the right approach for America in Iraq. The SMART

approach would prevent any more American soldiers and Iraqi civilians

from being needlessly killed. It would save the United States billions

of dollars in military appropriations, and just as importantly, it

would keep America safe. It is time for America to adopt a SMART

security policy.