Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning with mixed emotions for

our situation in Iraq. I am certainly pleased for the Iraqi people to

see that it looks as if they have passed the constitutional referendum.

The upcoming

December elections for the national assembly will be another important

milestone for them as well as their nation.

At the same time, it is impossible not to reflect on the other

milestone we reached today, the announcement of the 2,000th American

casualty with the deaths of two Marines in Anbar province last week.

All Americans mourn with their families and all that came before them.

This announcement comes simultaneously with the coordinated bombings on

two Baghdad hotels this morning by insurgents. We can see from this

attack and other engagements with American forces that the insurgency

continues. Defeating the insurgency will not happen with military force

alone. And it will not happen by American hands alone. We know that the

answer in Iraq lies in transitioning security responsibility to the

Iraqis themselves. The administration has been saying this for some

time.

The problem, from my perspective, is that the American and the Iraqi

people, if they are going to stay with us until the Iraqi security

forces are capable of taking over the job, must have a clear sense of

progress. Iraqi security forces must be able to take the fight to the

insurgents on their own and to inspire the confidence of the Iraqi

people. Similarly, the American public must see that there is a

connection between increasing capability of Iraqi security forces and a

diminishing American commitment over time.

For this reason, I have proposed a clear formula that can be used by

our military leaders and that can be explained to the Iraqi and

American publics alike, that for every three Iraqi security force

combat brigades rated level 1--or fully capable--an American brigade or

unit of similar size, type, and mission should be strategically

redeployed from Iraq. In terms of units, because a brigade is the

smallest military unit able to support itself and fight independently,

brigades should be the standard sized units used to measure Iraqi

security force capability over time. Additionally, in terms of

readiness standards, units rated at level 1 indicate that they have the

capability to plan and fight independently, without any assistance from

U.S. forces. In my view, 3 to 1 is the right measurement because an

American brigade surpasses its Iraqi counterpart in both quantity of

forces and in quality. I think this is a formula that makes sense, but

beyond the numbers, it is important because it is a benchmark that is

easy to understand and that sets reasonable, achievable standards for

both our forces and the Iraqis.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I propose that we apply even more resources

toward the training of Iraqi security forces to accelerate the effort.

If more advisory teams would do the job faster, we should add them. All

these advisory units should be staffed and equipped with our very best

officers. Instead of staffing them in an ad-hoc manner, we should take

those selected for command of U.S. units and assign them to advisory

billets. These are the officers the services have determined to be

their very best. Furthermore, we should make every effort to name next

year's advisers today and get them in adviser and language schools now.

We must make a combat adviser tour a highly career enhancing tour in

the military.

Mr. Speaker, I believe like the President that we must leave an Iraq

that is able to provide for its own security. Yet both to build the

confidence of the Iraqis and to maintain the support of the American

people, we must demonstrate a clear sense connection between increasing

Iraqi capability and a diminishing need for American forces. This

formula does that and I urge its serious consideration.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the Record the following letter I wrote to

the President dated October 20 of this year.