Mr. Speaker, in 2003 the United States

military and its allies began operations to remove Saddam Hussein from

power, who was a ruthless dictator and a threat to stability in the

Middle East undermining world peace. Yesterday, the United States

military successfully concluded its military involvement in Iraq. We

have victory in Iraq for the people of Iraq to build upon.

As a proud father of two sons who served in Iraq, I want to offer a

heartfelt thank-you to every American service member who served in the

country and their families. I want to thank and assure the family

members of the service members who lost their lives--exemplified by

Major Trane McCloud--and those who are wounded warriors, fighting for

freedom, that their sacrifice and their military families will always

be cherished.

Secretary Leon Panetta in Baghdad said:

Army General Lloyd J. Austin, III,

Commander of U.S. Forces in Iraq, praised service members and families

for meeting our national objectives and giving Iraq hope for a

prosperous future.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget

September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.