Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the leadership and

Chairman Hyde of the International Relations Committee for drafting

this important resolution.

Yesterday's elections mark yet another milestone for Iraqis in the

future of a democratic Iraq. It is estimated that over 70 percent of

Iraqis voted in yesterday's election. That is 12 percent more than

voted in the last election, and with remarkably low violence. There

were reports of polling stations running out of ballots early in the

day because of the large numbers who came out to vote, and the voting

deadline was extended in many parts of the country because of high

turnout.

Many of those voting were Sunnis, who are now choosing to play an

active part in their country's new democracy; and it was Iraqi Security

Forces who took over responsibility of their country's security, with

over 214,000 Iraqis now trained and equipped.

Mr. Speaker, this is concrete progress. No matter how you cut it,

this vote was a win. Not only are Iraqis making progress by coming out

to vote in the millions; they sent a message to the world yesterday:

they want democracy, and they are willing to defy terrorist threats to

make it happen.

We are supportive as Americans.