Mr. Speaker, last week on June 28, Iraq

became a sovereign nation as control was handed over from coalition

forces to a new Iraqi Government headed by Prime Minister Iyad Allawi

and President Ghazi al-Yawer. This is an extraordinary achievement for

President George W. Bush, the American military, and our coalition

partners.

Despite attacks from political opponents, President Bush firmly acted

to protect American families from future terrorist attacks by

liberating Iraq from one of history's most brutal dictators. Today,

only 15 months after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, Iraq has

turned from an enemy to a developing democracy. No longer a supporter

of international terrorism, today's Iraq, along with Afghanistan,

represents a beacon of hope in the Middle East for freedom and

democracy.

As the Iraqi people continue their struggle for a better future, our

brave men and women in uniform continue to work with Iraqi forces to

hunt down and stop the depraved enemy who is desperate to stop the

march for freedom.

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

September 11.