I thank the distinguished gentleman for yielding me this

time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 557, which

reaffirms the morality and justice of Operation Iraqi Freedom. One year

ago, our brave men and women in uniform began to liberate a proud and

resilient nation from an unspeakable 30-year nightmare. They also

delivered a clear message to terrorists and tyrants alike: the United

States will not tolerate a regime that pursues tools of mass murder and

destruction. Operation Iraqi Freedom reversed more than a decade of

failed diplomacy which exacted a devastating price. Because the world

permitted Saddam Hussein to violate 16 U.N. resolutions with impunity,

the terrorists became convinced of our weakness. Meanwhile, Saddam

continued to murder, torture, mutilate and rape men, women and children

by the millions. After routing Saddam Hussein's forces from Kuwait in

1991, we urged the Iraqi people to rise up and rebel against this

brutal dictator. Then, because United Nations and international opinion

required us to leave Saddam in power, we betrayed them.

During the Pryce delegation's mission to Iraq last fall, we listened

to the victims and witnesses describe the horrors of this wicked

regime. Incredibly, however, the faces of the Iraqis with whom we met

reflected a new hope, born from the blood, sacrifice, heroism, and

successes of our troops. Even as they endure the attacks of the enemies

of freedom, they know that by working together, we will win the

twilight struggle for their future.

In the heart of the Middle East, we are replacing the oppression and

despair that breeds terrorists with the freedom and hope that defeats

them. Mr. Speaker, this stunning transformation is the very essence of

the war on terror and let us not permit the rhetoric of an election

year to obscure this fundamental truth.