Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support

of this important resolution. It has been almost a year now since our

brave men and women in uniform liberated the Iraqi people from the

oppressive regime of Saddam Hussein. In doing so, our Armed Forces

brought individual freedom to a people who have for decades only known

persecution. Now they are proving just as impressive at rebuilding the

country.

Mr. Speaker, several of the previous speakers have said that the Bush

administration falsely claimed that the threat posed by Iraq was

imminent. The threat was not imminent. The administration made no such

claim. The threat was it needed to be dealt with before the issue

became imminent. Saddam's regime continued to try to kill our American

and British air crews patrolling the no fly zone, people like the

gentleman from Illinois (Mr. Kirk), who flew those missions as a naval

reservist. The United States could not keep a potential invasion force

on station near Iraq indefinitely, nor would we want our soldiers to

have to fight at the height of the summer.

With the ousting of Hussein from power, we have discovered the true

horror and atrocities of this regime. As we look at the unearthed mass

graves and reflect on the countless human rights abuses, how can we

possibly question the legitimacy of this decision? The world is a safer

place with the liberation of Iraq, particularly for the 25 million

Iraqis who no longer have to live in fear of a brutal tyrant.

We entered Iraq to free its people and plant the seeds of a

democratic government, and that is precisely what we are doing. If a

few years ago, one would have told someone, anyone, that in the year

2004 the Iraqi people would be creating a constitution founded on

democratic principles, I daresay that no one, no one, would have

objected. Consequently, that is just what our decision has done.

I commend the diligence of our Armed Forces in the reconstruction

effort, and I am pleased with the rapid progress that is being made.

The road is certainly not an easy one, but I remain confident in the

ability of the Iraqi people, with the cooperation of the coalition, to

rebuild their country and to create a secure and stable sovereign

nation.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.