Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me the

time.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the privilege of traveling to Iraq twice in

the last few months to visit our troops and to thank them for the job

they are doing, as well as to see firsthand the progress that is being

made by both the Iraqis and the international coalition in providing

security and growing stability to the Nation.

I was amazed to see and hear some of the very real and significant

success stories that our forces are accomplishing. When one travels by

air, for example, over Iraq, it is easy to realize that 65 percent of

the Iraqi people live off the land. Many are accomplished farmers, but

others are being aided by the efforts of the American soldiers and by

American generosity.

In Iraq, the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture once ran a 400-acre farm

not far from where Saddam Hussein was captured. It was called Saddam

Farm, and it produced a harvest that benefited only Saddam Hussein and

his family. Today, the Army is helping Iraqis establish the nation's

very first cooperative farm on that 400 acres. Iraqi farming families

are also being helped by the generosity of the American citizens who

have donated some $20,000 worth of seeds, and the Army has distributed

them.

Throughout my travels in Iraq, I have found Iraqi children with

smiles on their faces. It is remarkable to think that they are living

in freedom for the first time. They know it and they like it. Like many

children throughout the world, Iraqis enjoy the sport of soccer, and I

have seen Iraqi children kicking soccer balls on the playing fields and

vacant lots and empty streets. American troops have undertaken projects

to give soccer balls to some of the poorer Iraqi children who may not

be able to obtain for themselves. For example, the 501st Forward

Support Battalion undertook one

project and gave away 150 soccer balls to kids in Baghdad. The 101st

Airborne also distributed soccer balls in the north.

Perhaps the greatest and most noteworthy accomplishment that I have

seen in Iraq, however, is the increase in the level of security and

stability for the Iraqi people. Unfortunately, there are still those

that want to see a free Iraq fail, but for our troops, many changes in

the Iraqi lifestyle have been evident. In many other areas, security

and stability are succeeding because of the efforts of the

international coalition forces and the Iraqis themselves.

Iraq's security forces have grown tremendously in the last year since

they were first created. The Iraqi Department of Border Enforcement now

employs 80,000 Iraqis and 9,000 border enforcement agents, as well as

to monitor the nation's 3600-kilometer border. More than 11,000

experienced policemen now patrol Iraq, and another several thousand

Iraqi policemen will join their ranks by the end of this year.

There is still much to be done in Iraq, but the fact of the matter is

that there are many success stories, many more than one reads in the

morning newspaper or sees on daily television reports, and certainly

many more than I have time to outline here.

The successes I spoke of and the countless others not only are

helping Iraq to become more stable, but they are helping Iraqis to

provide for that security and stability. Ultimately, the sooner Iraq is

run and secured by Iraqis, the sooner our great troops will come home.

I am proud to stand here today and commend the Iraqi people for their

courage and to say again thank you to our troops for a great job well

done.