Madam Speaker, this has been a remarkable day in Iraq, and

I would like to redirect our attention for a moment to the things that

Mr. Osborne outlined. Remarkable, the accomplishments of Iraqi people

today. More than 70 percent of their population went to the polls and

exercised the right that they have never had before, the right to vote

for a democratic government. That vote was courageous. It showed

commitment. It showed the resolve of the Iraqi people to take control

of their destiny and their future. It was a tremendous step forward for

peace, stability in the future of freedom in the Middle East. So I

would like to take a part of my time to salute and to call attention to

the incredible things that the Iraqis have done today and have

committed themselves to do in the future by voting for a free Iraq.

But more especially, Madam Speaker, I would like to call attention to

the men and women in uniform from America and around the globe in the

coalition forces, but especially tonight the American men and women who

have made this election possible, who have spoken out, who have given,

in many cases, their lives so that Iraqi men and women could vote today

and determine their own future.

My most sincere thanks and the thanks of a grateful Nation is

extended from every quarter today to these men and women who have

performed so courageously and so remarkably and have made this day and

this election possible. I do not know how we can thank them enough, but

it is a privilege for me to stand before the people's House and call

attention to these wonderful men and women who represent America and

all we stand for: freedom, democracy, equal opportunity.

They did it today. What a tribute to them, but especially a tribute

to their families, the moms and dads, wives and husbands of those

soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines whose lives have been lost in the

quest for freedom for people around the world.

So as I close, Madam Speaker, thank you for allowing me to speak

tonight on behalf of myself, the Eighth Congressional District of North

Carolina, the home of Fort Bragg, the 18th Airborne Corps, the 82nd

Airborne Division, and all the men and women in uniform. God has

blessed America so richly by giving us these men and women who have

stood and fought and won for democracy.

God bless them all.