Mr. Speaker, as we look back through history, there are

shining examples of men and women removing a murderous tyrant's regime

from power and in its place building a government that represents the

will of a free people with the right to choose their own path and

control their own future. Iraq is yet another shining example for other

oppressed people throughout the world to look to for hope and

encouragement.

History was made on Sunday, and the American people observed this,

knowing that our efforts have created a society of hope and liberty, as

well as new friends who share our vision of freedom. Two days ago,

millions of ordinary people stood in line for hours for the opportunity

to do an extraordinary thing we too often take for granted.

For weeks leading up to Sunday's election, terrorists threatened

violence upon any Iraqi who defied their will and dared cast a ballot.

And sure enough, as soon as the polls opened and the long lines formed,

the terrorists came calling. While the troops of our liberating

coalition, working closely with newly trained Iraqi forces, sprang into

action, capturing and killing the insurgents, the voters waited

patiently in line, in humble defiance of evil. For 2 years, America's

troops have been deployed abroad, and for 2 years they have served

honorably and heroically. Sunday, that service was affirmed by 8

million Iraqis who took it upon themselves to take the next steps

towards their freedom.

What has been proven in the United States, and now in Iraq, is that a

free society will not and cannot be deterred by violence, nor will it

be held hostage by the evil will of terrorists. Today the people of

Iraq share a common bond with Americans. The experience of freedom and

liberty that was born on American soil is taking root in Iraq.

But Sunday's elections will not end the violence, nor the sacrifices

we will make to ensure the freedom and security of the Iraqi people. I

will tell you what is next. Despite the violent days that still lie

ahead and despite the partisan rhetoric now being spouted to undermine

the significance of Sunday's victory for freedom, the free people of

Iraq know the truth. Two years ago Iraq was ruled by a brutal dictator.

Just 13 months ago, coalition forces marked the end of the beginning

when they captured the brutal dictator, Saddam Hussein. Today, it is a

free democracy, an ally in the war on terror, and a lesson to everyone

suffering under the oppressive rule of a hostile tyrant.

Freedom and terrorism cannot coexist; and last weekend in Iraq, we

learned the inevitable result of that conflict. Iraq is free, her

people are free, and they will no longer be held hostage by evil men

and evil terrorists. Sunday in Iraq history was made by the people who

showed up; and by the courage of 8 million patient souls, terrorism was

struck another blow.

Because of those souls, and all the Iraqi men and women who made

Sunday possible, we honor their commitment to freedom and will continue

to stand shoulder to shoulder with them.