Mr. Speaker, on this very day 8 months ago, Prime

Minister Tony Blair stood in this chamber and addressed a joint session

of Congress. He said, ``The spread of freedom is the best security for

the free. It is our last line of defense and our first line of attack.

``And just as the terrorist seeks to divide humanity in hate, so we

have to unify around an idea. And that idea is liberty.

``We must find the strength to fight for this idea and the compassion

to make it universal. Abraham Lincoln said, `Those that deny freedom to

others deserve it not for themselves.' ''

Mr. Speaker, for over 2 decades Saddam Hussein denied freedom and

liberty to the Iraqi people. He killed Kurds because of their

ethnicity. He killed Shiites because of their religion. He killed

Sunnis for their political views. And he even killed Egyptians,

Kuwaitis, and Iranians because their lives meant nothing to him or his

evil regime.

Today, Saddam's regime is no more. Overthrown in May and pulled from

a spider hole in December, Saddam is now in jail.

America and its great military--made up of men and women from all

branches of our Armed Forces including our resilient National Guard and

reserves--recognized that our security and freedom was under direct

threat from Saddam Hussein.

With the strength of an international coalition, America took

decisive action and set out on a clear mission: to defend America.

Nearly one year later we are seeing the fruits of our work take hold.

Operation Iraqi Freedom has delivered hope and optimism to the well-

educated people of Iraq. Today, 25 million Iraqis are free from the

grip of Saddam's oppressive regime.

Our operation and responsibility in Iraq, however, did not end with a

quick and decisive military victory. Finishing the fight and removing

Saddam did not mean we finished the job.

We pledged to see a new Iraq government grow into a model for

democracy and freedom in the Middle East. We must stay until the job is

done because America's security still depends upon it.

Terrorism cannot be defeated unless we bring civility to Iraq. With

assistance from our coalition, the Iraqi people have taken the first

steps toward controlling their own destiny. Schools, medical clinics

and hospitals have been reopened. An army and more effective police

force have been rebuilt. A fair judicial system has been constituted.

And a foundation has been laid for democratic elections.

An interim constitution has been signed. Every Iraqi--no matter their

gender, religion or ethnic origin--today has the guarantee of basic

freedoms, rights and protections under law.

I wish every member of this House could have taken the trip I took to

Iraq last year. Led by Chairman Jerry Lewis, we traveled from Baghdad

to Mosul to Al Hillah to witness the incredible work of our brave young

men and women in uniform. We thanked them for their service to our

country and let them know how grateful America was for job they were

doing protecting our freedom and bringing democracy to Iraq.

To see our mission up-close and through the lens of our soldiers gave

me great hope that one day Iraq will be a country of great promise and

able to demonstrate strong leadership in the region.

On the first anniversary of Operation Iraqi Freedom let us honor

every service man and woman who is making our country safer and more

secure. And let us remember all those who have sacrificed and fallen

while defending our freedom. We mourn the loss of very American soldier

and pray for the early recovery of our wounded.

Today, America's courage remains firm and steadfast. Yet, we know

that dangerous days still lie ahead. Terrorists who have previously

sought weapons of mass destruction from Saddam ``like ants to honey''

continue to plot against America. The terrorists will not rest. When

they're not attacking, terrorists are planning or strategizing about

where and when to attack next. And remember, we were attacked without

provocation on September 11, 2001.

For freedom and democracy to prevail over violence and terrorism, we

must continue to take the fight to the terrorist before they again

bring terrorism to our shores.

Mr. Speaker, let us commend the members of the United States Armed

Forces and Coalition forces for liberating Iraq by passing this

resolution.