Mr. Speaker, I thank my esteemed chairman for

yielding me time.

I rise in strong support of this resolution.

On June 30, as all of us know, Iraq will assume control of its own

destiny. Iraq will enter the post-Saddam era with the hope of the world

resting upon them. No longer will the Iraqi people be subjected to a

climate of fear and desperation. Saddam's murderous,

thieving cronies have been removed. Uday and Qusay's henchmen likewise

will no longer be free to roam the streets, terrorizing people.

The challenge now for the Iraqi people and their new government is to

set their future on a course of open thought, popular choice for their

leaders, and freedom of action in which to conduct their lives.

The Iraqi people understand that with this new-found freedom comes

responsibility, a responsibility to remember the interests of all

Iraqis. Each and every Iraqi has a stake in that Nation's future, and

now, with our transfer of sovereignty to them, that stake can be fully

realized.

We are honored to have played a role in empowering the Iraqi people

and supporting them in their efforts to rebuild their country after

decades of corruption and oppression. They have the opportunity to make

their Nation a shining light for all to see, not only in the Middle

East, but around the world. A nation filled with talent beyond

imagination, Iraq can create a climate of freedom and opportunities for

others to emulate.

Yes, problems have arisen. Yet, we must acknowledge the positive

developments that could not have happened without the brave men and

women of the United States military and our allies. Through their

courage, commitment, and sacrifice, we have managed to free an enslaved

people. We have brought down a tyrant who has killed as many as 1

million of his own people. Thus, history will record that the United

States brought a beacon of light and hope to a people that had only

known misery, suffering, and brutality under Saddam Hussein.

The future will judge us to have done right by the Iraqi people, and

for our own Nation as well.

We are, however, not naive about the challenges that lie ahead.

Freedom and democracy take time and hard work. They take vigilance and

dedication, dedication to truth and commitment to justice. These are

things that come with patience.

The terrorists want to deprive the Iraqi people of their future, but

Iraq can and will prevail. Iraq's chance is now. Let us stand by the

Iraqi people as they struggle to enjoy these rights and liberties that

they were denied for so very long. Let us be motivated by the knowledge

that we have helped make the world a better place for the Iraqi people

and for all.

As our beloved former President Ronald Wilson Reagan would say, ``You

and I have a rendezvous with destiny. If we fail, at least let our

children and our children's children say of us, we justified our brief

moment here. We did all that could be done,'' and that we have done for

the Iraqi people.