Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the gentleman from

Illinois (Mr. Hyde) and the gentleman from California (Mr. Lantos) for

their wonderful bipartisan effort in putting this together and also my

great colleague from the Committee on Armed Services, my partner, the

gentleman from Missouri (Mr. Skelton), for his work and contribution.

I will be very brief, but there are two messages in this resolution.

I think it is appropriate that this resolution follows the funding of

our Defense bills and our Intelligence bills because those are the

bills that give our forces the tools to get the job done.

I think we have done an excellent job in putting together bills that

give the force protection, the surveillance capability, the extra

troops that are going to be needed over the next several years, and the

funding for those troops, and particularly that $25 billion bolt-on

that we did on the Defense authorization bill and the Defense

appropriations bill.

So it is appropriate that this resolution, this message to the people

of Iraq and the people of the United States, follow those funding bills

because this is a very important message that the gentleman from

Illinois (Mr. Hyde) and the gentleman from California (Mr. Lantos) and

the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. Skelton) and many others are sending.

The message to the American people can be found in this resolution

that the command of American forces will remain with American

commanders. That is very important to moms and dads and people who care

about our uniformed people, that that chain of command will remain

firmly in place, that we will continue to pursue our mission against

terrorists, and that operation will be overseen and supervised by U.S.

leaders. That is a very important message.

But to the Iraqi people there is also a message, and the message is

that we are giving them a running start. We are handing over a country

divested now of the leadership of Saddam Hussein. We are handing over

to them a chance to maintain freedom in a very, very difficult part of

the world. We are going to provide for them this military shield just

as we have in other countries around the world as they stand up this

free government.

But I think it is important for the Iraqi people to understand that

too, and I think they do understand it, that this enduring, the

endurance of this government in a very difficult neighborhood is going

to require some real grit on the part of the Iraqi people and that no

country, not our country, not any country, is guaranteed perpetual

freedom.

We are giving them a running start. We have given them the sacrifice

of many brave Americans and the continued sacrifice right through this

day in terms of Americans KIA, killed in action, and wounded in action,

as well as coalition partners, as well as many Iraqis. But they are

going to have to take hold, and they are going to have to be able to

lift that weight.

I hope that under the good leadership that is now forming, that is

taking over on the 30th of this month, they are going to be able to

make that transition. This is only when the Americans were in Iraq, one

thing that can be said from the dawn of time until the end of time,

only when the American came to Iraq did they have a chance to have a

free and fair government. We are giving them this chance.