Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res.

691, and I would like to congratulate the gentleman from Illinois (Mr.

Hyde) for the leadership that he has provided and the gentleman from

California (Mr. Lantos) for the leadership that he has provided in not

only this piece of legislation but in guiding our country through a

very delicate moment of history.

Mr. Speaker, ladies and gentlemen, and my colleagues, we are

Americans. We are not Republicans. We are not Democrats. We are

Americans today. Our country is at war with a force, a hostile force

that hates everything that we stand for. That the gentleman from

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

both parties are united in supporting this historic effort to defeat an

enemy which would slaughter our people before our eyes and cut the

heads off of American citizens and try to intimidate our entire Nation

in order to make us cowards, the fact that we stand together is the one

thing that gives us strength.

H. Res. 691 reaffirms that we Americans are standing together behind

the central purpose of the operation in Iraq, which is nothing more or

nothing less than providing the Iraqi people the means to determine

their own destiny through the ballot box; and by taking this stand, we

take a stand for democracy that will be available to those in the

Islamic world. It is a strategic move on our part but, yet, something

totally consistent with our values as a people, as the American people.

Thus, it is fitting today that we stand, as I say, not as Republicans

and Democrats, but we stand behind our President and this noble effort

in Iraq to get rid of a tyrant who slaughtered hundreds of thousands of

his people and help those people in Iraq establish a democratic

government so that all our children will live at peace and this evil

force of radical Islam that threatens us will be defeated.