Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this

time and for his work in bringing this resolution to the floor.

Two weeks ago, I had the opportunity to have a discussion with the

new President of Iraq, President Yawar, about his vision of a stable,

sovereign, and democratic Iraq. All of us who joined with him in this

building that day were impressed by his resolve and, frankly, impressed

by his courage, the courage of Prime Minister Illawi, and the courage

of hundreds of others who have demonstrated great bravery and resolve

by taking the reins of the Iraqi Governing Council in the aftermath of

Izzedeen Salim's assassination in mid-May, in the face of daily

attacks, and this desperate attempt of tyrants and tyranny to prevail

in a part of the world that has experienced tyranny for far too long.

Why, in the prime of their lives, are Iraq's new leaders risking

everything, including their very lives, for such a cause? It is

because, Mr. Speaker, they desire liberty. It is because they desire

freedom. The men and women who will officially become Iraq's interim

leaders June 30 all share a vision of their native land free at last of

Saddam Hussein's brutal oppression. This vision respects the rule of

law and will listen to the voice of the people. This government, of

course, is one step toward elections and an elected government that we

hope to see in Iraq in just a few months.

We should not forget that our Nation was built on the backs and the

minds and the hearts and the hands of the same kind of brave and heroic

figures. Two hundred twenty-eight years ago, 56 Americans challenged

the British crown by signing the Declaration of Independence, risking

their families, their fortunes and their lives for the cause, again

just like Iraqis today, the cause of liberty.

Today, Mr. Speaker, in supporting the brave Iraqi leaders and the

millions of Iraqi citizens who are standing up to the terrorists and

insurgents for the cause of freedom for the Iraqi people, we recall the

sacrifices made by brave Americans throughout history for our own

freedom. We express our pride in the men and women of our Armed Forces

who are making this day possible for the Iraqi people. Even after next

week's handover, the cause of freedom in Iraq will continue to require

sacrifices by the American people and by our brave soldiers. The

American people must be prepared to help the fledgling government

financially as it generates the type of infrastructure necessary to

support a stable democracy. We must be prepared to encourage this

government as it moves to free and fair elections.

Iraq is still a dangerous place. Terrorists continue to target our

troops as well as innocent men, women and children in an effort to ruin

Iraq's attempt at democracy. But democratic institutions are forming

and our soldiers and civilian advisers continue to train Iraqi police

and other security forces. During today's deadly terrorist attacks, the

reports of Iraqi soldiers fighting side by side with their American

counterparts demonstrate just how determined Iraqis are to destroy this

insurgency and live in peace for the first time in 30 years.

Mr. Speaker, with today's resolution, the House reaffirms that the

United States' motives in Iraq are founded on virtue. We do not desire

any territory.

We do not desire an empire. We seek stability both at home and in the

Middle East. The President's decision to intervene in Iraq was made in

the best interests of Americans and Iraqis. Saddam Hussein is in a jail

cell, no longer able to pursue weapons of mass destruction or encourage

global terrorism that threatens the lives of freedom-loving people.

Most importantly in the context of today's debate, Iraqis at last have

the chance to demonstrate to the world that democracy can spring forth

in the cradle of civilization.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution, and even beyond

that, I urge all of us and all Americans to support this great effort,

this great experiment in freedom that we encourage today and in the

days ahead.