Mr. President, we are now on the resolution and the two

managers are gathering now to start that debate. In the interim period,

I wish to make another comment that has to do with a truly historic

occurrence in Iraq.

Today is a historic day for the Iraqi people. Today, the Iraq

Governing Council will formally sign an interim constitution that

represents one of the most liberal and democratic governing documents

in the Arab world. It is a historic day for the entire Arab world.

The new Iraqi Constitution is a monumental achievement. I applaud the

courage and the foresight of Iraq's leaders to seize this historic

opportunity before them and to work together to forge a framework for

freedom that reflects the aspirations and God-given rights of every

single Iraqi citizen.

After 35 years of torment and oppression by an evil and dictatorial

regime, Iraq is finally emerging from the shadows and becoming a

democratic nation by and for the people. Remember, the people of Iraq

just 1 year ago were ruled by a tyrant who worshipped Hitler and

Stalin, two of the 20th century's most prolific mass murderers--just a

year ago.

Iraq is emerging from a terrible history, and the Iraqi people

deserve our highest praise for their ability to set aside

recriminations and to set aside old ethnic conflicts, to confront their

fears and overcome mistrust in order to embrace the future. It is my

sincere hope that others in the region and around the world will take

heart at Iraq's extraordinary progress and that this fledgling nation

will one day soon become a beacon of freedom for all.

The new interim constitution is rightly a document of principles. It

guarantees freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, privacy,

thought, conscience, religious belief, and due process. It protects

women, ethnic and religious minorities, and strives to balance regional

and national imperatives.

No longer will the Iraqi people have to fear secret police,

government abductions, torture, or arbitrary imprisonment. No more mass

graves, no more child prisons, no more forced confessions or mass

executions.

I have great hopes for Iraq. Like President Bush, I believe all

people are capable and deserving of a democratic government. That is

because I believe, like President Bush, freedom is an inherent right,

not a privilege to be dispensed by pundits or politicians. Securing

freedom in Iraq, as we all know, will be hard. The continuing vicious

bombings against innocent Iraqis demonstrate that we are up against

determined and evil forces. My heart goes out to those victims and to

those families.

We know from our own 9/11 how truly devastating these acts of evil

are to the immediate victims and to the nation that is forced to watch,

helpless, in horror. But I have faith that the Iraqi people will

persevere. We will not allow our enemies to divide us. We will stand

together as two free nations. We will defeat the forces of terror and

the Iraqi people will live in peace and freedom.