Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for

yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I watched the debate, discussion that took place in the

last hour, as many Americans did; and I could not help but note that

lots of questions were raised by our friends on the other side of the

aisle. I think the American public needs to be reminded that the vast

majority of Members in this body on both sides of the aisle supported

the resolution authorizing the use of force. The vast majority of

Members on both sides of the aisle supported the supplemental

appropriation that continues to support the operations in Iraq, and I

think the public needs to ask itself whether debates like the one they

just saw are really a serious discussion of policies and principles or

whether or not they are more about election-year politics.

Debate is a good thing. We should debate. We should debate often, but

I think we also have to remember that the world is watching and our

soldiers are watching, and there should be no doubt whatsoever about

this Nation's resolve to continue to fight on and to prevail in the war

against terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important time; and even though it is an

important time, I think it is useful for us to slow things down a

little bit because I think sometimes we can only appreciate the

significance of events perhaps after the fact. Sometimes we are too

close to events to fully understand how they fit into the larger

context, and I think we need to step back for a moment and take a look

at where we are right now in Iraq.

I believe that in the months and years ahead, as we take a look at

these very important weeks and months that surround the handover of

sovereignty to Iraq, I believe that we will look at these as great

months and years for this nation. With each passing day, leaders for a

new, free Iraq are taking steps forward, just as the terrorists try

with their terrible attacks to force these same Iraqi leaders to take

steps backward, but I believe that the clarity of hindsight will show

us all in the years ahead that the violence and the bloodshed and the

senseless destruction that we have seen far too often in that country,

that our national media focuses on to the exclusion of all else, it

seems is happening not because the coalition efforts are failing or

falling short, but instead, because they are succeeding.

They are the result of a growing fear in the terrorist world that

decency and democracy will succeed, that they will take hold, that the

success will not only inspire more and more Iraqis to embrace self-rule

and to invest of themselves in the future of Iraq, but that it will

serve as an inspiration to many oppressed peoples in many troubled

lands all throughout that region.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to take time to talk about what is going

on in Iraq because so much of it is really outside the narrow view of

the camera lens. It is important for our soldiers that we tell their

story because so many of our brave young men and women have put

themselves on the line, have shed sweat, have shed blood for a mission

that they believe in, a mission that I also believe in.

Young men and women from all over America have traveled thousands of

miles for this cause. One of the units from my own district, the 432nd

Civil Affairs Battalion, has as its motto ``Order Out of Chaos.''

Well, that is just what they, the 432nd and the members of the 395th

out of Appleton, and countless other units and soldiers from Wisconsin,

and all over America, that is just what they are accomplishing. Some of

it I saw myself firsthand when I was in Iraq late last year.

The most recent good news, the good news that you may not have seen,

is that President Bush has outlined a clear 5-step plan for Iraqi

sovereignty and its implementation is already underway. On June 8, the

U.N. Security Council unanimously, unanimously, adopted a resolution

supporting free elections in Iraq and reauthorizing the multinational

security force. This will provide greater security for Iraqis and for

Americans in that country. Already the G-8 has responded favorably, and

its members are making new commitments for the long-term rebuilding

process.

In Iraq itself, there are key signs that the government and the

economy is beginning to mobilize and the economic and civic

redevelopment process is underway, the rebuilding is marching on. For

example, as my colleague, the previous speaker, has noted, the number

of telephone subscribers in Iraq is 45 percent above prewar levels.

There are now 55,000 Internet subscribers in Baghdad alone. Less than 2

years ago there were 37,000. Eighty-five percent of Iraqi children have

now been immunized. Two hundred forty Iraqi hospitals and 1,200

preventive health care clinics are now operating. Twenty-five hundred

schools have been rehabilitated, with another 1,200 to be rehabilitated

by year's end. Hundreds of free, local government units have been

launched and are up and running.

Now, I cite these numbers, Mr. Speaker, not to gloss over the

challenges but, instead, because I am afraid too many of us are guilty

of glossing over the successes. These successes have been paid for with

the lives of too many Americans. They have been paid for with the lives

of countless Iraqis, people who believe in the future, people who are

willing to put themselves on the line.

Now, June 30th is not a switch we can simply turn on and have

security and prosperity and perfect democracy, but it marks one more

step down a clear path from which, for Iraqis, the future will be much

brighter. Mr. Speaker, there are challenging times ahead of us, there

are dangerous and dark days that we will see all too often. But,

clearly, clearly there are good things happening in Iraq. Clearly, many

people believe in the future. They have put themselves on the line. And

that future is happening quickly and more brightly, I think, than many

people expected could possibly occur.

So, Mr. Speaker, debate is a good thing. We should talk about what is

going on in Iraq, and we should question our leaders. That is

important. But I think we must not let that crowd

out what is going on, what is positive, the bright future that lies

ahead, the hope that so many of us have. And, more importantly, the

clear plan that we are following and that we are proceeding along each

and every day; a plan that will bring democracy and decency to that

country, a plan that will bring a brighter future to that entire

region, a plan that so many Americans have fought for, a plan that all

of us can be very, very proud of.

I yield back to the gentleman from Indiana.