Mr. Speaker, only a few months ago, for the

first time in history, ballot boxes were coming in from remote places

like Khyber Pass in Afghanistan on the backs of mules. What a great

time it is to live in this world.

And last Sunday we saw free elections in a nation whose people have

been crushed and oppressed since the days their country was called

Babylon. We saw young men carrying old men to the polls. We saw one

gentleman whose leg had been blown off by a terrorist bomb who said, I

will crawl to vote if that is what it takes. And one of Saddam

Hussein's former generals said, When I voted today, it felt so good

inside, like I was free.

Mr. Speaker, the United States of America has been a leader in

freedom, and we have now had the privilege of becoming the unipolar

superpower of the entire world. No nation on Earth can actually

challenge us in military, economic, or technological terms; and truly

every nation sees America now as the flagship of humanity. This Nation

now possesses a greater opportunity to promote freedom in the world

than we have had since the Republic began.

But it is because we have had such great victories and opportunities

that more than ever before we must be deeply humble and remind

ourselves that we are only briefly the temporary stewards of this God-

given greatest Nation in the history of humankind. And we only have a

short time to fulfill our privileged and sacred mission of making

America such a beacon of liberty that the light of freedom will some

day fall across the faces of every person on this planet.

Last Sunday tells me, Mr. Speaker, that this is the generation who

lives in the window of time where we can firmly set the world on that

course. This is freedom's day, and we must seize it while we can. And

while I do not often quote Shakespeare, he said, ``There is a tide in

the affairs of men, which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;

omitted'' or delayed, ``all the voyage of their lives is bound in

shallows and in miseries. On such a full sea, we now find ourselves

afloat, and we must take the current when it serves or lose our

ventures.''

Mr. Speaker, as we take this current to freedom, let us remember that

the best leverage to maintain freedom's march in the world is to make

sure that its foundations are secure beneath freedom's home; and then,

Mr. Speaker, let us take this tide of freedom as it serves so that one

day all generations will bask in this glorious sunlight of liberty just

as it has now begun to dawn on the people of Iraq.