Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman yielding me this

time.

I just want to say the comments by the gentleman from California (Mr.

Lantos) are well taken; and it is because of his work, and particularly

his work to hold us together and work together on these issues, that

that kind of bipartisan support for these resolution happens. So I

commend the gentleman and thank him very much for his work and his

willingness to work with us.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. Burgess) who

came to the floor because he just returned from Iraq a couple of weeks

ago and he has some very important things to say.

Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I appreciate the

gentleman from Texas entering the Prime Minister of Iraq's remarks into

the Record. I think it is very appropriate to do at this time,

particularly on this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, the central point of this resolution is the central

point of America's foreign policy: that mankind is made more secure

when tyranny is replaced by democracy. That is the story of the

American revolution against the old world, Western Europe's liberation

from Nazism, Eastern Europe and Central America's liberation from

communism and despotism, and the Middle East's liberation from

terrorism. The victory of human freedom over human oppression, of good

over evil, Mr. Speaker, is why we are here.

Last Sunday morning, the people of Iraq showed the world that

humanity's will to freedom knows no borders. When I first saw the news

Sunday and saw an image of a woman in Najaf exiting her polling place

alive and well with tears streaming down her proud, smiling face, I

thought to myself, now, this, this is what Operation Iraqi Freedom was

all about. But I was wrong. Sunday's election, Sunday's miracle of

democracy, was about more than that.

I thought about the image of the elderly man in a wheelchair in Basra

who, in his long years, saw revolution and war, tyranny and terror and,

finally, with a joy only possible in a man who had known such pain,

cast the first ballot of his life.

I thought of the image of the little girl with a ribbon in her hair,

holding her mother's hand as hundreds of women in traditional hijab

dress waited in line. Now, this little girl was not quite sure what was

happening, only that the women knew it was important.

I thought of the image of the voters in Baghdad who ducked for cover

as their polling place came under fire, yet whose lines never broke.

There were bullets and bombs and mortar shells, yet their lines never

broke.

These voters in Baghdad, not soldiers, but shopkeepers and

homemakers, knew when they left for the polls in the morning that they

might not come home. They knew that they were targeted, that their

spouses would be, could be widowed and their children orphaned. Yet the

lines never broke. A humble defiance of evil.

And that is when it hit me, Mr. Speaker. Just as on Sunday all free

men and women were Iraqis and on Sunday the Iraqis were all free men

and women. Sunday's elections are not just why we invaded Iraq. They

were why we stormed Omaha Beach and took the Normandy cliffs. They are

why we held Little Round Top and braved Valley Forge.

The lines that formed in Iraq on Sunday stretch not only around the

world but back in time to the moment when 13 British colonies declared

their independence. For the first time, at that moment, a nation

declared itself endowed with an inalienable right to liberty, and in

228 years since, no nation, no nation, no people ever offered a chance

at freedom refused it.

Against all odds and it seemed at times even against all hope, the

Iraqi people, over 8 million of them, all marked by death by the

terrorists, woke up Sunday morning and got into line.

Some people still do not get it. They still do not understand Concord

and Lexington or Gettysburg or Bastogne or the Cold War, or even Flight

93.

They do not understand why those lines in Iraq never broke or that

every man and woman who ever lived, fought, or died for freedom was

standing in that line with them. They still do not know why we fight.

Last weekend that Iraqi woman in the photograph knew. After a

lifetime of oppression she voted in humble defiance of evil, and then

she broke down crying. And in those tears she is shedding along with

the anguish of how many friends and children lost and how many wars and

prisons are the hopes and dreams of all God's children who still yearn

to be free.

Sunday's elections in Iraq were not an accomplishment; they were a

miracle, a miracle made possible by the resilience of a liberated Iraq,

the mercy of a loving God, and the moral courage of this Nation under

God to stare evil in the face and make the devil blink. Eight million

brave Iraqis struck terrorism a lethal blow on Sunday, replacing

tyranny with democracy, and in doing so they made America and the world

safer, for which it is altogether fitting and proper that we commend

and thank them.

Despite the continued threat represented by terrorists and terrorism

and despite the threat of disgraceful partisan rhetoric coming from

many on the other side, Sunday's miracle in Iraq shows that the dead

who died to free that nation have not died in vain and that even in the

darkest recesses of violent oppression, all who would live in peace and

liberty have yet reason to hope.