Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of American efforts

to rid the world of terrorism and help democracy take root in a region

long controlled by hostile dictators and murderous regimes.

All around the world we are working to eradicate terrorists and their

organizations. Iraq has emerged as a central battlefield of this war, a

battlefield where Saddam was captured in a hole and is now in jail,

where Zarqawi met his demise, and where insurgents and jihadists are

fighting and losing to the might and skill of coalition forces. Most

importantly, it is a battlefield far, far from the shores, schools,

neighborhoods, and cities of America.

I recently traveled to Iraq with our Speaker and was able to meet

with the Prime Minister and other key government officials, as well as

our U.S. commanders overseeing the operations. I was impressed by what

I saw, but I was more impressed by what I heard from the servicemen and

women themselves. Morale is high, and they are confident in the success

of this mission.

Iraqi citizens have embraced freedom and have now voted in three

national elections, each garnering wider and broader support. Iraq now

has a constitution, a parliament, a president, a prime minister and a

fully formed cabinet. What is more, this new government reflects a

broad ethic and sectarian balance, a balance that will help ensure the

needs and voices of all Iraqis are represented.

Ultimately, it is that freely elected government that is the most

important success of this effort, elected leaders who are Iraqi first,

and all other identities second, interested, invested in the future of

their own country, of their own people. These Iraqi founding fathers

face great challenges, no doubt. But what opportunity is more powerful

than freedom from tyranny?

We must remain committed through patience and hard work to help this

new government succeed.

I support this resolution. I support the rule that is allowing this

resolution to come forward and the manner in which it was created. And

I urge my colleagues to join us in passing this important affirmation

of the hard work of America's servicemen and women.