Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia

for giving me this opportunity of taking a few moments here with my

colleagues. I hope you will apologize as we talk about this historic

event; I am still an old history teacher at heart, and sometimes I talk

too much about it, but I see historical precedence that we sometimes

forget all about.

In the late 18th century, the revolution took place in France, which

ended with the overthrow of the monarchy, the beheading of the king.

The Jacobins established the republic, with three goals in mind:

liberty, equality, and fraternity. While this was happening, across the

English Channel, in the British Parliament, Burke was watching it all

unfold, and he made the statement that now the French are free to do as

they please. We ought to see what it pleases them to do before we risk

congratulation. As my colleagues know, before the century was done, the

French Revolution had degenerated under Robespierre into the Reign of

Terror, as we call it now, into which all of those noble concepts were

lost in the blood of the beheadings that took place.

We sometimes do things here on the floor in which small minorities

take upon themselves their rights and prerogatives which extend our

debate, totally free to do as they please, but I am not so sure if the

American public will always congratulate those types of occasions.

I do want, with some credit going to J. D. Crouch, from whom I have

read an article, to talk about an election that I do think risks

congratulations; it rises to that particular level now. I am talking

obviously about a country that is far away from here, that has a

culture and a language so vastly different from ours, that was lead by

a brutal dictatorship, a corrupt family, one man whose brutality in

murdering his rivals, even relatives, is almost unparalleled; a one-

party domination whose control squandered their resources and wealth,

destroyed the economy; a secret police that invaded everyone's rights

and terrorized people and led to ethnic violence. Of course I am

talking about the country of Romania, pre-1989.

Because what we did not realize is that last year, there was an

election in Romania, where the Prime Minister, Adrian Nastase, lost the

election and peacefully transferred power to the opposition leader,

Traian Basescu. I apologize for not knowing how to pronounce that name

because, quite frankly, it was not in the news. I do not have any news

reports of people trying to properly pronounce his name, because this

election in Romania was so blase, we did not even cover it; we did not

even talk about it. It just simply seemed to happen.

We can make some vast parallels between Romania pre-1989 and Iraq in

2003. Romania had the Communist Party, whereas Iraq was dominated by

the Ba'athist Party, a brutal dictator in Hussein versus a brutal

dictator in Ceausescu. The Fedayeen Saddam of the secret police was

similar to Romania's Securitate. The Kurds and the Sunnis, who were

ethnically abused similar to many of the Hungarians and the natives in

Romania at that time. It is true, I will admit, that Slovakia and

Moldavia did not send all sorts of rebels across the border to try and

stir up ethnic violence, but they did in the 1990s have significant

clashes where bloody miners attacked peaceful demonstrations, and the

result of the world to that was to meet it with both patience and

support for their efforts of moving towards a democracy.

Fifteen years later, Romania now still has some effect of a one-party

state, but they are moving away from that as new Romanians are coming

back into the country who were trained in the West and are bringing a

spirit of entrepreneurship with them. There is still some element of

the communist corruption, but no longer do people think in Romania that

it is the grease of commerce, and there are tough laws against it.

Fifteen years later, Romania is a strong democratic nation and a

powerful friend of ours as a member of NATO.

We need to not forget in the history of this world, it took 7 years

after World War II to have the first election in Japan, and 4 years

after World War II to have the first election in Germany. We have done

the same thing in Afghanistan in 18 months. The first election that

showed clearly to the world that most of Iraq is not in chaos, that

that small lens of the camera has to focus in on the picture so you do

not see a full view of what is happening over there. It showed that al-

Zarqawi is not a leader.

We had a Member who serves in this building, not necessarily in this

particular body, who said our military and the insurgents are fighting

for the same thing: the hearts and minds of the people. I have to

reject that. That is an inaccurate analysis. We are not fighting for

the same thing. Those fighting to destroy democracy coming to Iraq are

the Ba'athist Party seeking a return to power. It is very similar as

George Will in one of his articles quoted ``1984,'' George Orwell where

he describes the government as the boot stomping on a human face

forever. That is what the Ba'athists would like to return to Iraq.

The other is al-Zarqawi which is a radical rejection of the idea that

government derives legitimacy from the

consent of the governed. It is a concept of popular sovereignty that

Western traditions accept as the basis of our government as something

he still thinks of as an evil principle. His rage would have the same

effect, a different kind of boot, but still on the face of the people

forever. Those insurgents are not fighting for the hearts and minds of

the people; they are fighting for chaos and terror and pure political

control.

The hearts and the minds of the people are those who went to the

polls on Sunday and voted, like the 32-year-old Samir Hassan who said,

I would have crawled here if I had to, to the first vote ever held in

his country; and he used that phrase because he had one of his legs

blown off in a car bomb prior to the election. And then he went on to

say, I do not want terrorists to kill other Iraqis like they tried to

kill me. So much for the idea that Arabs do not want democracy.

Freedom is the antidote for terrorism. The Iraqis have had a defining

moment and the good guys, those who went out to vote, they won. What we

now must give Iraq is the same thing we gave to Romania 15 years ago:

patience, international support. Despite any smug predictions to the

contrary, we are moving in Iraq at a faster pace toward a truly new

style of government in which people count; not power, but people count.

And with an eye to that future, with an eye to that future, I think the

election in Iraq is one that rises to the level where we can risk

congratulation.

I thank the gentleman from Georgia for allowing me to share this time

with him.