Mr. Speaker, in late October, I had the opportunity

to be in Iraq as part of a bipartisan female congressional delegation,

and to visit there with our military men and women. Also, while I was

there, I had the opportunity to visit and meet some of the Iraqi women

who are taking a very strong and very decisive stand for freedom in

that country.

Since returning from that trip, I have participated in the Iraqi

Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, and I would commend my

colleague, the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. Dunn), for her

incredible work on pulling that caucus together and for her efforts in

continuing to work with and supporting the Iraqi women.

We had the opportunity last week to have some of those Iraqi women

here. A group of Iraqi women were here to look at how we participate in

freedom, how we learn to run for office, and how we learn to take a

leadership role. They had a fantastic story to tell, and it is a story

that we should be listening to. We should be participating with them in

celebrating the successes that they are having and the achievements

that they are making over in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I find it really quite amazing that much of the liberal

media chooses not to communicate the story of the great successes that

are taking place there in Iraq. At a policy committee last Thursday

morning, we had many of these women with us and we listened to them,

and it was a wonderful opportunity for our Members to ask questions of

these Iraqi women. Many of them did, and the responses were phenomenal.

I wish each and every Member could have heard some of these responses.

One of our colleague's asked, what do you say, what do you say when

Members and constituents will say, well, I do not think we should have

gone into Iraq. What do you say? How do you reply? And the responses

from those very brave and courageous Iraqi women ranged from, well, you

waited too long; to, if you leave, 25 million Iraqis will be subjected

to torture; to, a mother who told us about trying to take a telephone

call from her son when his tongue had been cut out by Saddam's regime;

and the affliction that is felt when 48 of your relatives are killed;

and the sorrow you feel when a million of your fellow countrymen are

missing.

These are all stories that we need to hear, and then celebrate and

support the success that these women have as they are accepting the

responsibility of freedom.

Mr. Speaker, I had this article forwarded to me yesterday by General

David Patrias and his wonderful wife Holly. They have just left the

command at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. General Patrias commanded the 101st

and is now back over in Iraq. This is something that probably we are

never going to see on the front page of many of our Nation's major

newspapers, and certainly on many of the networks we are not going to

hear this story. It comes from a military training post in Jordan, and

it is a story about not the first but the second group of Iraqi women

to complete military training.

This is about 39 women who have graduated from the military training

camp here in Jordan on July 8. And, listen to this, all, all, each and

every one of them, all, with the hope of making a differences for their

country, and none thinking about that they are making history.

And look at this, the reason they are doing this. These women are

committed to freedom. They know that the terrorists are now using women

more often in attacks. So these women are coming forward. One of them

says, ``From when I was young, I dreamed of being in the military.''

Dreamed of fighting for her country; dreamed of fighting for freedom.

``I have some fears, but we have to control them. I'm optimistic about

the future.''

They have such a hope for what can happen in their country, and they

want to be a part of it. They want to support freedom. Then this quote

I really love. ``Everything starts from scratch.''

They realize it is going to be a long time in coming, but they

continue their commitment.