Mr. Speaker, Iraqis are not yet fully capable of defending

themselves against the terrorists. But they are getting much closer.

In Tal Afar 5,000 Iraqis led 3,800 Americans in taking back the town

from terrorists. The force killed 157 terrorists, captured 440, seized

34 weapons caches. The victory is a watershed moment in the war against

terror. It was the largest urban offensive in Iraq since Americans led

the Fallujah offensive last year. It is proof that with proper training

Iraqis can do it better than us.

In Fallujah, the Americans withdrew and the terrorists reappeared. In

Tal Afar, though, Iraqis are weeding out the terrorists and seeding the

town with security forces. This will become the model for future

operations in towns like Ramadi. Upcoming elections and the permanent

establishment of the Iraqi constitution will lend legitimacy to this

young democracy and move them closer to victory. Another ally in the

cause of freedom.