Mr. Speaker, the American Forces Press

Service recently reported that only 7 months ago, the Iraqi 2nd Brigade

of the 9th Mechanized Division had no personnel, weapons, uniforms,

housing or tanks.

Since January, members of the U.S. Army's 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry

Regiment, have served as mentors, coaches and battle partners to the

Iraqi Brigade. While fighting together against terrorists on the

streets of Iraq, they have formed a strong partnership and greatly

improved the brigade's ability to protect the lives of citizens and

create a civil society in Iraq.

Today, the 2nd Brigade is now ready to defend 150 square kilometers

of the region. As these brave Iraqi soldiers begin to fulfill this

important responsibility, I believe we should recognize this clear sign

of progress in Iraq. I am especially proud of the U.S. troops who

trained and equipped Iraqis to serve their own country. By confronting

terrorism in Iraq we are protecting American families at home.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget

September 11.