Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the Iraqi

people. Today, millions of people in Iraq are headed to the polls to

cast their vote for a free and open society. This vote stands directly

in opposition to the prior government which was predicated on terror

and fear, and ruled by the iron fist of one of the world's most vicious

dictators. This is the most powerful blow to the terrorists and

rejectionist elements of the Iraqi insurgency to date. Iraqis are

determining their own destination, their own destiny, and by doing so

they have reached an important benchmark drawing the U.S. closer to

victory and reducing American presence in Iraq. Today's parliamentary

elections in Iraq

have the makings of a watershed moment in history, not only for the

Middle East, but for the long-term security of the United States.

A democratic Iraq is absolutely essential to winning the global war

on terror. Now, more than ever, America's leaders must stand united

behind the Iraqi people as they venture forward in the hope for a

better future.