Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the fact

that this Sunday, January 30, will be a truly historic day, a day when

the Iraqi people, once oppressed and without a voice, will cast their

vote in their nation's first democratic elections. It is an amazing

fact when you think that just 2 years ago they suffered under a brutal

dictatorship.

There is no question that the desperate tactics and deliberate

attacks

will increase in the final days leading up to the election. But in

spite of the efforts of those that hate freedom, the elections will

take place; and it will begin a new period in Iraq's history, a

beginning that will lead to freely elected leaders, a national assembly

and a constitution founded on freedom and equal rights.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues and the people of this

great country to join me in awe and admiration for the Iraqi people as

they show the world the power of liberty and their determination to

forge a path towards lasting freedom.