Mr. Speaker, June 30 is not the

beginning of the end of Iraq, as some would want us to believe but,

rather, the beginning of their future.

There is no doubt that challenges lay ahead, but I am optimistic

about Iraq's future. I am optimistic because just 15 months ago, Saddam

Hussein was a threat to the world and Iraqis had no voice.

Today, thanks to the brave and selfless sacrifices of American and

coalition troops, Saddam is no longer in power and millions of Iraqis

are shaping their own destinies by participating in Iraq's political

process.

The Iraq people are showing tremendous courage as they face enemies

of freedom. Neither the will of the Iraqis nor the coalition will be

deterred by violence and terror.

Mr. Speaker, next week Iraq officially becomes a sovereign Nation,

and I am optimistic because this is no doubt that a free Iraq will be a

decisive blow to terrorism and a victory for the civilized world and

the security of America.