Mr. Speaker, today we are on the eve of Iraq's first

election for a 4-year government based on their newly adopted

constitution. We stand with the Iraqi people as they choose freedom and

democracy over terrorism and oppression. In less than 3 years, they

have gone from a brutal dictatorship to electing 275 representatives

based on province and population, who will then select a prime

minister, a presidency cabinet, and a cabinet of ministers.

We congratulate the people of Iraq. We stand beside them, and we

thank them for their courage, their bravery and their vision. However,

we must acknowledge, as they do, that the path will not be easy, but

they are truly a miracle in the journey they have undertaken. We are

proud of their progress and hopeful for the future for Iraq, the Middle

East and the defeat of terrorism around the world.