I thank the Senator from Texas.

Mr. President, yesterday marked the 1-year anniversary of the

transfer of sovereignty to the people of Iraq. We now stand at a

crucial point in history. We can see how far we have come, but we know

the final chapter has not been written. This is the time to take stock,

both of our challenges and our achievements.

Many ignore the good news in Iraq, but there is good news. And we

can't prepare for the road ahead without a balanced picture of where we

are today. In the past year, there have been many accomplishments which

stand as milestones on the paths of progress. Since the transfer of

sovereignty, thousands of Iraqis have answered the call to serve their

country. The Iraqi security force now numbers over 168,000, and another

50- to 70,000 Iraqis serve as site protection personnel.

By October, the number of trained Iraqi security personnel will reach

200,000.

This time last year only one Iraqi battalion was capable of

deploying. Today, more than 100 stand ready.

In the past year, the Iraqi Government has taken shape. In January,

more than 8 million Iraqis voted in free and fair elections for the

first time in 50 years.

Today, Iraq has an interim constitution with checks and balances,

separation of powers, and protection for individual rights, and women

are involved.

The Iraqi National Assembly is drafting a new constitution, which is

on schedule to be released on August 15. The Government is preparing

for the October referendum on the constitution, and they are planning

for a new set of elections which will be held in December.

Freedom has begun to take root in Iraq. Political parties, civil

society groups, and a free press have emerged. A government once

shrouded in secrecy now answers directly to the people and communicates

with them through Iraqi newspapers, television, and radio stations.

In the past year, the reconstruction has moved forward. Many of these

successful projects are part of the Commander's Emergency Response

Program, a tool that enables our men and women on the ground to fund

small-scale projects that have an immediate and visible impact on the

lives of the Iraqi people.

This month, for the first time since October 2004, the electricity

supply exceeded 100,000 megawatt hours. On average, 12 hours of power

are now available across the nation each day.

More than 94 water treatment projects are underway. And we have

broken ground on 144 new primary health care facilities across the

country.

In the past year, 628 schools have been renovated. Another 86 are now

under construction.

The international community has rallied around the new Iraqi

Government. Just last week more than 80 nations and organizations from

around the world attended the International Conference on Iraq in

Brussels. The Iraqi Government shared their vision, and the

international community reaffirmed their commitment to help Iraq secure

its future.

I list these accomplishments because we must remember the path to

progress is slow and steady. With the televised reports of car bombings

and other terrorist attacks, it is easy to lose sight of the goals we

have already reached.

Some of us have recently called upon President Bush to keep the

American people informed so our constituents understand what we are

doing and know how we plan to proceed. My concern has been that rising

sentiments about the continued redeployment of Reserve and National

Guard units could jeopardize the important work we are doing in Iraq

and Afghanistan.

Last night, President Bush answered our calls for more information.

In a speech before the American people, he outlined his strategy for

completing the mission. Now, it is time to rededicate ourselves to the

challenges that remain.

We still have work to do in Iraq. Today, the Iraqi Government has

control of Najaf and Fallujah. The insurgents have lost their safe

havens. Unable to expand their operations, they have resorted to acts

of terrorism and targeted innocent Iraqi civilians. These are the facts

of desperate men--men whose only comfort is the hope that we will lose

our will and weaken our resolve.

The only way we can lose in Iraq is if we defeat ourselves--if we

fail to stay the course. The American people--and those of us who have

been chosen to represent them--cannot let that happen.

Americans do not abandon friends in hard times. We do not run from

the duty and responsibility of history. Our will does not waver. Our

resolve does not break.

More than 2 years ago, I joined many of you and supported the

President's bipartisan resolution to commence this action in Iraq. When

the Senate debated the resolution, I urged my colleagues to support it.

I came to the floor of this Chamber and said: ``A new history of

international courage can be written now.''

I repeat this call today--our Nation must have the courage to help

the Iraqi people write the next chapter of their proud history in which

the seeds of democracy--which have been sown by the Iraqi people and

nurtured by the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform--will grow

into a strong, free Iraq.

I urge the Senate not to divide over Iraq. Some continue to compare

this situation to the one we faced in Vietnam. Iraq is not Vietnam.

Those who make this comparison ignore the history.

I outlined the differences between these two conflicts in April and

will not reiterate each of those differences today. The simple fact is

we are in Iraq for reasons entirely different from the reasons we went

into Vietnam. We can and will successfully conclude our operations in

Iraq.

We must succeed. The stakes are high. Iraq is the central front in

the war on terror. By their own admission, what terrorists fear most is

a free, stable and democratic Iraq.

Over a year ago, we intercepted a message Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a

terrorist in Iraq, sent to Osama bin Laden. In the message, al-Zarqawi

said, ``The future has become frightening'' for terrorists because

democracy has gained a foothold in Iraq. He told Osama bin Laden,

``Democracy is coming and there will be no excuse thereafter for the

attacks.''

Iraq has become the proving ground of our commitment to the war on

terror. If we waver, our enemies will read our hesitation as victory.

If we do not fight the terrorists abroad, we will be forced to fight

them on our shores.

We must remain united behind our troops and committed to this

mission. I urge the Senate to continue to support the strategy

President Bush outlined last night.

I yield the floor.