Saturday was a great day in American history. It was a

great day in international history. And for those of us that do not

read Time Magazine, it was a great day for democracy.

The Iraqi elections came off Saturday. The results are still coming

in. We do not know all that occurred. But there are great things that

already can be gleaned from what happened. The Iraqis showed an

extraordinary amount of courage. Whereas in America on election day we

have people who say, I don't know if I can brave going down and

standing in line for 5 or 10 minutes. That may be more than I can

handle.

Or, gee, the traffic is kind of heavy today. I don't know if I am

going to go vote. I don't know, it looks like it might rain. I may

catch the next election.

Not in Iraq. The Iraqis had the opportunity to vote on a

constitution. They had an opportunity to vote for governing themselves

for the first time in the history of mankind in what many acknowledge

to be the cradle of humanity, where mankind began, and they came out

and voted.

When I was in Iraq earlier this year, it was after the January

elections, and they talked in terms of 8 by 11 flyers that were posted

all over the countryside, around the voting areas, that simply said, If

You Vote, You Die. Those people that voted knew they were going to have

to dip their fingers into permanent blue ink that would be on their

fingers for probably a couple or 3 weeks. They knew they could be

targets by what they had marked on their fingers. Yet they had the

courage to step forward.

Some of the things people do not hear and do not read because not all

magazines give you all the facts, but there were many places where

Iraqi policemen stepped up to protect the voters. These were not

American soldiers. These were not American police. They were Iraqis

protecting Iraqis who had developed national pride in what they were

trying to accomplish. I did not hear it on any of the media, I

certainly did not read it in Time Magazine, but there were a couple of

policemen who gave their lives in stepping forward and trying to

protect voters. I was told by the Iraqis when I was over there, the

voters never got out of line because they realized if they got out of

line from voting and ran for cover, those guys that died protecting

them while they tried to vote would have died for nothing, much like if

we cut and ran from Iraq before this process is finished, then those

valiant, brave people whose names we have just heard more of would have

died for nothing. Thank God we have a President who is seeing this

through to the end.

There was an additional policeman, I was told by Iraqis, who found a

suicide bomber in the voting place. He grabbed him, rushed him outside,

threw him to the ground, threw himself on top of him and they were both

killed in the ensuing explosion. Nobody got out of line, they told me,

because they knew that would have meant that the policeman died for

nothing. They stayed, they voted, and thank God they have some great

days ahead. It is not easy days. It is difficult days. We have got to

stay the course.

Some of the headlines I did read, not in magazines necessarily but

some of the periodicals said it turned out to be the most peaceful day

in months, this preceding Saturday when it was voting day. Only one of

Baghdad's 1,200 polling stations came under attack, another article

read. The relatively small number of insurgent attacks compared with

the last poll may be a sign of how Sunni involvement in politics can

complicate matters for insurgent leaders whose aim is to destroy the

political process.

Just as evil unimpeded and unobstructed by good people will spread in

an insidious way, so will good and democracy spread just like sunlight

during the dawn of a new day as it touches more and more land and

spreads. That process is in its infancy in the Middle East, but it is a

beautiful thing to see occurring and we can thank God and thank those

people who have served their country and given their lives.

Here are other comments. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said the

Sunnis are now invested in this process. There is no political base any

longer for this insurgency.

I was told by a former general under Saddam Hussein this past spring

in Iraq that if you will just stand behind us in America until we get

our constitution voted in, until we have an election under the

constitution, you will see violence subside.

We are very grateful for all those who have contributed.