Mr. President, I do want to make a very brief statement on

this resolution submitted by Senator Daschle and myself expressing the

sense of the Senate on the transition of Iraq to a constitutionally

elected government.

This resolution does a number of things. I will mention a couple.

First, it congratulates Iraq on its transition to a free and

constitutionally elected government. All of this is in reference to

Iraq's assumption of full sovereignty on June 30, which will occur

while we are on recess, and its transition to democracy in the months

ahead.

Secondly, it expresses the Senate's appreciation for the service,

courage, and commitment of the Iraqi interim government to a free and a

democratic Iraq. It commends all members of the U.S. Armed Forces and

their families for their noble and courageous service in this cause. It

affirms that success in Iraq is a global priority that demands

cooperation from all States and international organizations. It calls

on the international community to assist Iraq in the training of police

and security forces. It calls on NATO to respond positively to Iraqi

Prime Minister Allawi's request of NATO to assist Iraq in the training

and equipping of Iraq security forces. It urges countries that cannot

provide security forces or similar resources to assist Iraq in other

ways such as providing financial assistance or forgiving Iraq's debt.

The resolution thanks the U.S. coalition partners and other countries

that

have joined us in Iraq for their efforts in promoting Iraq's security,

stability, reconstruction, and transition to democracy.

In particular, I also thank Senator Sessions for originating the idea

of this resolution and for turning it into real language for his

colleagues to consider. He initially proposed such a resolution that

provided certain language. At that time, he was working in a bipartisan

manner with Senator Lieberman and other Members of both sides of the

aisle on this bipartisan resolution. He later joined with Senators

Lindsey Graham, Joe Biden, Tom Daschle, and myself--most of us have

actually been in Iraq recently--to hammer out a resolution that not

only celebrates the liberation of Iraq and its transition to full

sovereignty but also prescribes a number of steps that should be taken

in the coming months to ensure those fruits of our efforts are

realized.

I thank Senator Daschle and his colleagues for their help in fine-

tuning this resolution so the entire Senate can endorse it. It is a

good resolution. The importance of its passage I do not think can be

underscored given the fact we are about a week before Iraq's transition

to full sovereignty. It sends a timely message, the right message, of

thanks to our coalition partners and our support to the Iraqi interim

government and the Iraqi people who are endeavoring to defeat terrorism

and secure the blessings of democracy.

I will just add to the comments of my friend from Nevada

that I had the opportunity to meet with the Prime Minister a little

over 2 weeks ago when we were in Baghdad.

I know Senator Daschle and Senator Biden and Senator Graham also had

the opportunity to meet with the Prime Minister on their recent trip. I

mention that because 4 weeks ago nobody knew that he was going to be

Prime Minister. In fact, he didn't know. It was not a position that he

had asked for. The interim government, through this selection process,

asked him to step forward, and he did just that. Uniformly, the people

who met him and who have talked with him since he has assumed this

position have been impressed with his courage, his determination, and

his understanding of the role that is before him.

I should also add the distinguished assistant Democratic leader and I

had the opportunity to meet with the President of Iraq who will be

working with the Prime Minister. He, too, is very impressive in terms

of his leadership and his vision, and the boldness we know is going to

be required.