Mr. President, I thank my friend for his comments. I want

to talk about several issues, but let me say with regard to the whole

question of illegal status of the freedom we are winning, along with

the Iraqi people, in Iraq, there are many people in the international

community for whom the definition of is

quite flexible, depending upon what it is they happen to want at any

particular moment.

I was serving in the Congress, albeit on the other side of the

Capitol, in the 1990s and remember when, at the urgent request of the

Europeans, particularly the western Europeans, the United States

assembled a coalition and used its military power to prevent genocide

in southeastern Europe, to protect the Kosovars from genocide that was

being conducted by Milosevic and the Serbs at the time.

The nations that wanted to do that asked the Security Council for a

resolution of support and were denied it because, if you will recall,

Mr. President, the Russians threatened to veto it, just as the French

indicated 2 years ago they would veto any resolution of support for our

action in Iraq.

Now you would think that to be consistent with the position they are

now taking, some of the Western European countries, in particular the

French and Germans, would have said at the time, If you can't get a

Security Council resolution, then we don't want to intervene in Kosovo

and prevent genocide there. But that was not the position they took at

all. They insisted, they urgently pleaded with the United States to

lead a coalition of nations to intervene for humanitarian reasons at

that point, notwithstanding the fact they could not get a Security

Council resolution because they recognized then what we have been

consistent in recognizing all along: That we always seek the support of

international alliances, and we have support of an international

coalition in Iraq. We always seek to operate within international

bodies and get the support of the U.N. when possible, but we protect

our freedom with or without the support of that body in any given

circumstance.

That is what we did in Kosovo when we prevented genocide, and that is

what we are now doing in Iraq.

I want to add a few more words along those lines and then talk some

about health care. Let me say how moved I was by the eloquence of Prime

Minister Allawi and the way in which he represented the aspirations of

freedom and free people everywhere.

I think of two statements in particular, one in which he quoted Prime

Minister Blair in saying that whenever people are given a choice, they

choose freedom over tyranny, democracy over dictatorship, and the rule

of law over the rule of the secret police. It does not matter whether

the people who are being asked to choose are of the Islamic faith or

the Christian faith or the Jewish faith or any other faith; it does not

matter where they live or the circumstances under which they are

raised; there is a universal desire placed in the human heart by our

Creator for freedom. We are seeing that desire in Iraq, and we saw it

with Prime Minister Allawi today.

I was tremendously impressed by his courage. He probably has the

biggest target on his back of anybody in the free world, and yet he

stood there and said not only do the Iraqi people want freedom--and I

made a note of this comment--as you have stood with us, we will stand

with you in the ongoing battle against terrorism.

I think this is a vindication of the underlying strategy that the

United States is following with its allies and the coalition in freeing

Iraq.

There were two strategic goals in going into Iraq. One of them was to

remove a regime and a person who even if there had never been a 9/11

was on his own a serious organic threat to the security of the region

and the freedom of the United States.

We saw this and lived it in the 1990s. We saw him attack his

neighbors twice. We saw him plow missiles into his neighbors. He

developed weapons of mass destruction. He had stockpiles of sarin gas

and other chemical and biological weapons. He showed he was willing to

use them on his own people and on his neighbors.

We had tens of thousands of American personnel, American airplanes

and warplanes in the region specifically designed to contain him year

after year. I could see the Clinton administration building up toward a

policy that would end this threat to American interests and American

freedom and the stability of the region, and it was necessary to remove

him. That was part one.

Part two, necessitated by 9/11, was to replace Saddam Hussein, in

corroboration with the Iraqi people, with a democracy that respected

human dignity, stood for human rights, would fight for human rights and

be an ally with us in the war against terrorism. We heard from Prime

Minister Allawi today the determination of the Iraqi people to do that

and to be an ally.

I was greatly encouraged that this man, who represents a nation that

is in some turmoil, that is coming out of decades of totalitarian rule

and terror and is in a weakened condition, stood defiantly against the

terrorists with courage. Many others, who are in stable countries and

have much more power, are trying to appease them. The Iraqis know the

danger of tyranny and terrorism. They have lived it, and they are going

to stand with us in fighting it in the future.

The existence of this new democracy in Iraq will be a standing rebuke

to the vision of the terrorists of a Pan-Islamic world dominated by

terrorism, totalitarianism, and twisted religious extremism. Prime

Minister Allawi made that point clearly and made it without apology to

anybody, and he made it again and again. And have we not seen several

of those from the dais on the other side of the Capitol in this

Congress? I thought it was an inspiring and brilliant speech. We owe it

to ourselves, to our own freedom, to our allies and our own courageous

people to see this through and to win this in Iraq.

I was also tremendously encouraged by his statement that we are

succeeding there. Anybody who looks at the facts in an unbiased way can

see that. Most of the country is stable. We are constantly seeking new

ways to stabilize the rest of it, in part through the application of

military power on our own or with our allies, in part through

negotiations with people who are not yet committed completely to the

terrorists on the other side. He made that very clear. They are using a

combination of political and military tools to stabilize the country in

anticipation of the elections in January. Hearing him, I have full

confidence those elections will go forward.

I am proud of what we have done there and proud of the resolution of

the American people. I want my constituents in Missouri and

constituents around the country to take satisfaction in what we have

done through their resolution and through the sacrifice of the men and

women in the American military.