Today I am signing into law H.R. 4655,

the ‘‘Iraq Liberation Act of 1998.’’ This Act

makes clear that it is the sense of the Congress

that the United States should support

those elements of the Iraqi opposition that

advocate a very different future for Iraq than

the bitter reality of internal repression and

external aggression that the current regime

in Baghdad now offers.

Let me be clear on what the U.S. objectives

are:

The United States wants Iraq to rejoin the

family of nations as a freedom-loving and

law-abiding member. This is in our interest

and that of our allies within the region.

The United States favors an Iraq that offers

its people freedom at home. I categorically

reject arguments that this is unattainable

due to Iraq’s history or its ethnic or sectarian

make-up. Iraqis deserve and desire

freedom like everyone else.

The United States looks forward to a

democratically supported regime that would

permit us to enter into a dialogue leading

to the reintegration of Iraq into normal international

life.

My Administration has pursued, and will

continue to pursue, these objectives through

active application of all relevant United Nations

Security Council resolutions. The evidence

is overwhelming that such changes will

not happen under the current Iraq leadership.

In the meantime, while the United States

continues to look to the Security Council’s

efforts to keep the current regime’s behavior

in check, we look forward to new leadership

in Iraq that has the support of the Iraqi people.

The United States is providing support

to opposition groups from all sectors of the

Iraqi community that could lead to a popularly

supported government.

On October 21, 1998, I signed into law

the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency

Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999,

which made $8 million available for assistance

to the Iraqi democratic opposition. This

assistance is intended to help the democratic

opposition unify, work together more effectively,

and articulate the aspirations of the

Iraqi people for a pluralistic, participatory

political system that will include all of Iraq’s

diverse ethnic and religious groups. As required

by the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations

Act for FY 1998 (Public Law

105–174), the Department of State submitted

a report to the Congress on plans to establish

a program to support the democratic

opposition. My Administration, as required

by that statute, has also begun to implement

a program to compile information regarding

allegations of genocide, crimes against humanity,

and war crimes by Iraq’s current

leaders as a step towards bringing to justice

those directly responsible for such acts.

The Iraq Liberation Act of 1998 provides

additional, discretionary authorities under

which my Administration can act to further

the objectives I outlined above. There are,

of course, other important elements of U.S.

policy. These include the maintenance of

U.N. Security Council support efforts to

eliminate Iraq’s prohibited weapons and missile

programs and economic sanctions that

continue to deny the regime the means to

reconstitute those threats to international

peace and security. United States support for

the Iraqi opposition will be carried out consistent

with those policy objectives as well.

Similarly, U.S. support must be attuned to

what the opposition can effectively make use

of as it develops over time. With those observations,

I sign H.R. 4655 into law.