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**PENCE REFLECTS ON HISTORIC DAY**
*Looks Ahead to Iraq's Future*

**Washington, Apr 9, 2003** - WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Congressman Mike Pence today took to the House floor to reflect on the historic liberation of Baghdad and to consider Iraq's future:

"Mr. Speaker, the battle for Baghdad is drawing to a close. Less than two hours ago amidst the cheers and grateful smiles of the newly freed people of Iraq, the 3rd Army met the First Marine Expeditionary Force at the Tigris River.

"Thanks to U.S. and Coalition courage and leadership, liberty has reached the center of Baghdad, darkened by tyranny for more than a quarter of a century.

"Soon we will turn this body's attention to reconstruction, to interim governments, to the creation of a free and democratic Iraq.

"As the President said in Belfast yesterday, the United Nations will play a 'vital role' in helping to 'stand up' our humanitarian efforts. But despite the fondest wishes the President of France, I would offer, Mr. Speaker, since the UN chose against being central to the war, the UN should not and will not be central to the peace."

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