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Iraqi National Assembly Convenes for Inaugural Session
Historic meeting is on anniversary of infamous 1988 attack on Kurds

WASHINGTON, D.C.- Congressman Todd Akin (R-MO), a member of the House Armed Service Committee, applauded today's historic meeting of the Iraqi National Assembly as it convened for its inaugural session. Today is also the anniversary of the brutal WMD attack on the Kurds in 1988, during which the regime of Saddam Hussein brutally slaughtered 5,000 innocent men, women and children in the Kurdish town of Halabja.

"This is a truly historic moment for the people of Iraq and for the entire region as the newly elected Iraqi National assembly meets for the first time," Akin said. "Americans were inspired by the courage of Iraq citizens as they defied threats to their own personal safety and overwhelmingly participated in their nation's elections, and we are now seeing how their courage is inspiring change in Lebanon and elsewhere in the region.

"In today's meeting, we see further vindication for the policies of President Bush, which have ended a vicious dictatorship and brought freedom and hope to millions. The advent of self-government for the Iraqi people is a watershed moment in their history.

"The establishment of the new democratic parliament of Iraq on the anniversary of the brutal chemical weapon attack on Halabja stands as a stark reminder of what is at stake in the region and in the world. It also reminds us of the commitment and courage of U.S. and Coalition troops and how the democracy they are helping to spread is the only real safeguard against tyranny."