Mr. Speaker, I wanted to thank the Latvian government

for extending their troop commitment to Iraq for another year. Last

January, 8.5 million Iraqis voted. Last October, more than 10 million

voted. In both of these elections, the Iraqi people refused to be cowed

by terrorist threats.

A week from today, Iraqis will, once again, defy terrorists and go to

the polls a third time this year. They will choose their first 4-year

parliament since Saddam Hussein was removed from power.

More than 300 parties and coalitions are registered for this

election, and even those who opposed the October constitutional

referendum have organized for this vote.

In his speech last week, President Bush mentioned Marine Corporal

Jeffrey Starr who died fighting in Iraq. In a letter found after his

death he wrote,

Mr. Speaker, it is because of soldiers like Corporal Starr that

Iraqis will one day live like we live, under freedom and democracy.