I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, insurgents in Iraq this weekend had vowed to wash the

streets in blood. Yet, despite all their threats of people who were

going to get killed and places that were going to be bombed, and indeed

43 people were killed, despite all that, voters turned out, of course,

in record numbers because the election itself was a record.

One voter said on Sunday that each vote was a bullet in the heart of

the enemy. We are defeating the terrorists in coming here, he said

proudly, as he dipped his finger in the famous purple ink. This was

done in over 30,000 polling places. And now the votes are being

counted.

When we look at the turnout, nearly 60 percent, we are not really

sure what the turnout officially is, but compare that to the United

States presidential election just this November of a 60.7 percent voter

turnout. Yet no one was threatened to be killed. That was the highest

turnout in the United States of America in 38 years. Indeed, in my home

county in Savannah, Georgia, Chatham County had a turnout of a mere 48

percent 2 years ago when we elected the Governor of Georgia.

So for them under these circumstances to have a 60 percent voter

turnout, it is phenomenal; but it is also a huge statement on how badly

people want freedom, how badly they want to throw off the shackles of

oppression, and how they value the opportunity to vote.

The U.S. Marines said that watching voters go to the polls was a

spectacular and a wonderful payoff of the magnitude of the well-

visualized photo of their knocking down Saddam Hussein's statue 2 years

ago in Baghdad. And the people who died, the 43 lives who are no longer

with us, they should all be remembered along with the other heroes who

made the day possible. We owe them a debt of gratitude.

It took the United States of America 7 years to fight the

Revolutionary War to win its independence from Britain, and then it was

not until 1789 that we threw out the Articles of Confederation and

wrote our own Constitution. And yet we fought a Civil War since then

and we have had lots of struggles and lot of amendments to our

Constitution. Indeed, over 200 years later, we are still fighting and

working on this experiment that we call democracy, representative

democracy.

What the world needs to do right now is to support Iraq in this

endeavor. It is time for folks around the globe to say this did serve

as a referendum and a statement; now let us reach out and do what we

can to help Iraq become independent.