Mr. Speaker, while President Bush

clearly outlined his strategy for victory in Iraq last week, soldiers

of the Second Iraqi Army Brigade were finishing their first day of

independently conducting military activities in Hillah, Iraq. After

undergoing extensive training and testing by coalition forces,

these soldiers have proven that they are capable of protecting and

securing their country.

Each day, Iraqis are playing a larger role in ensuring that democracy

and freedom prevail in their Nation. On December 15, over 225,000 Iraqi

soldiers will be responsible for conducting security operations during

Iraq's nationwide election.

The constant progress in Iraq could not be possible without the

tremendous dedication of the men and women who wear the uniform of the

United States military. Our troops understand the necessity of victory

in the war on terrorism to protect American families.

In conclusion, God bless our troops and we will never forget

September 11.