Mr. Speaker, today I am sending a letter to Secretary-

Designate Rice and Ambassador Negroponte expressing concerns over the

Iraq elections that are to take place in just 5 days.

It will be impossible to determine the extent to which corruption,

voter intimidation or outright fraud will mar the results. Here is why:

there is a total absence of international election observers for the

process. As such, it will make the elections themselves, regrettably, a

farce.

International observers were present at polling sites in Nigeria,

East Timor, Haiti, Afghanistan, Palestine, and Ukraine. Iraq is the

first so-called transitional election in the past 2 decades that will

not have international election observers touring polling stations.

Instead, Iraq will have a ``mission,'' which will assess the elections

from Amman, Jordan, inspecting the Iraq elections from Amman, Jordan.

This is not acceptable, to stage an election that cannot be monitored

for fairness, where it cannot be independently determined whether

ballot boxes are being stuffed.