Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution.

I was fortunate to go to Iraq with a couple of my colleagues, the

gentleman from Indiana (Mr. Pence), the gentleman from Indiana (Mr.

Burton), and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. Davis) just a few weeks

ago, and was able to see firsthand what is going on.

I think there is consensus that Saddam Hussein was a brutal dictator

and he committed horrific crimes. But the question is whether we are

right in ending this regime. I say emphatically I think the Iraqi

people back this up, and we did the right thing there. There is still a

very difficult security situation there, and the bombings which

happened today underlie that.

But what are we to expect? When Saddam Hussein and his followers

fled, coalition forces and ordinary Iraqis had to start from scratch to

defend the place.

We had a taste of what went on over the past decade in particular. We

went to several palaces built during the Oil-For-Food Program. We were

told over 70 palaces were built during the 1990s when Saddam Hussein

was supposed to use all of the revenue from oil to pay for food and

medicines. Seventy palaces, with an estimated cost of over $2 billion,

were built while Saddam Hussein's people starved.

We also went into the basement of one of these palaces and saw Uday

Hussein's stash of personal belongings: booze, cigars, swords, guns,

paintings, all kinds of things, while the people went without medicine.

Saddam Hussein and his shallow circle of loyalists were able in part to

control Iraqis by depriving them.

We were the first CODEL able to go to the south in Basra, and we were

able to see what those people had during that time, particularly the

last decade. A lot of them simply were killed by neglect. No money was

put into the south. The buildings are falling down, the infrastructure

is horrible, and the

people were literally killed. We discovered remains of about 400,000

Iraqis. Over a million are believed to have been killed during that

time.

Mr. Speaker, the question here is did we do the right thing. I can

tell Members the Iraqi people know we did the right thing. Are we safer

today because Saddam Hussein is gone? Yes, emphatically. People all

over the world are safer because that madman is gone. I urge support of

the resolution.