Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of our troops and

the work of our armed forces in Iraq. About a year ago, our troops

embarked on a mission to liberate the people of Iraq and end the threat

posed by Saddam Hussein.

Looking back on the year, it is important that we remind ourselves of

the nature of the threat against the United States, the Middle East,

and the Iraqi people. Saddam Hussein was nothing short of evil. He

threatened his neighbors through war and invasion. He threatened his

people through rape, torture, and intimidation. He threatened the

United States through years of nuclear, biological, and chemical

weapons development. Thanks to the brave efforts of the American armed

forces and our Coalition allies, we are now safer. Terrorists still

prowl the earth but one of their protectors and one who wanted to add

WMD to terrorism is finished.

The mission has not been easy. These are attacks by terrorist and

Baathist forces who remain determined to undermine the United States,

the war on terror, and democracy in Iraq. Our troops, however, are

equally determined to root out and destroy these forces. Despite news

reports and a constant barrage of negative commentary on our mission's

success, American military personnel have routed the main Iraqi forces,

rounded up countless rebels, and restored much of Iraq's long neglected

infrastructure.

I had the opportunity and honor to visit our troops in Iraq in

January. I visited with a number of troops from my district and the

State of Indiana. Among these troops and among troops in general, I saw

no signs of the low spirits that some media reports say are plaguing

troops. The troops I met complained about the food, sand fleas and

weather conditions, but felt their service is worthwhile.

None of Iraq's rehabilitation and reconstruction would have been

possible without the hard work of American and Allied troops, including

the thousands of National Guardsmen and Reservists who put their

civilian lives on hold to serve their country. Our military relies

increasingly on National Guard and Reserve units to supplement regular

army deployments, and the liberation of Iraq was no exception. During

this war, members of the 1-293rd Army National Guard Infantry unit and

the 122nd Air National Guard Fighter Wing from the Third District of

Indiana served our nation and kept us secure.

I rise support of this resolution because I think the worst thing

would be for our troops to think there isn't support for them or their

mission in the United States. This resolution sends a message to our

troops that we support them. The U.S. mission was and remains

justified. Our troops were and remain the key to this mission's

success. I will continue to support the American troops in the field

and those who have returned from their duty.