Mr. Speaker, while I rise

in support of this resolution, I do so with serious

concerns.

Torture is a crime and a vile human rights

abuse. Syria should be condemned in the

strongest possible terms for committing acts of

torture against detainees and prisoners. This

is why I support the resolution. Yet, the fact

that our government has sent detainees to

Syria knowing that these individuals would be

tortured and abused is morally repugnant and

violates international, as well as U.S., law.

The practice of extraordinary rendition—our

government’s practice of outsourcing torture to

countries like Syria must also be condemned,

repudiated and immediately ordered stopped

by President Bush. Human Rights Watch,

which is frequently cited as an authoritative

source in this resolution, has stated that the

U.S. policy of ‘‘denouncing torture in Syria,

and then handing over prisoners to Syrian torturers

sends the ultimate mixed message.’’

Syria is a notorious violator of human rights

that should be condemned. The hypocrisy of

our government using Syrian torturers as a

subcontractor to immorally and illegally commit

human rights abuses is shamefully absent

from this resolution.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today

in support of H. Con. Res. 18 to express Congress’

concern about the treatment of the Syrian

and Lebanese people by the Government

of the Syrian Arab Republic. I want to thank

my colleagues from Florida and New York for

introducing this resolution and bringing it to

the floor today.

Earlier this body considered H. Con. Res.

32, which expresses support for the liberation

movement in Lebanon. Now, under this second

resolution, we take into consideration the

effect of Syrian rule of its own people. The

Syrian Arab Republic is governed by an authoritarian

regime which continues to commit

serious human rights abuses, including the

use of torture, arbitrary arrest, and detention.

Within Syria both freedom of speech and

freedom of the press has repressed through

systematic intimidation. Syrians are prohibited

to publicly assembling in order to express discontent

of any kind. Political prisoners are\FM\K16MR7.050 H16PT1

known to have been held in detainment for up

to twenty years. Ruling authorities continue to

allow honor killings. In the North, Syrian forces

have attacked unarmed Kurd populations with

live ammunition. Human rights organizations

working in opposition these injustices are targeted

by Syrian authorities with intimidation

tactics.

The Syrian government’s treatment of its

people can no longer be tolerated. I encourage

my colleagues to pass the resolution in

question and in doing so condemn the Syrian

government’s gross human rights violations

upon its own people and support the Syrian

people’s struggle for a free and democratic

government.