Mr. Speaker, I rise today

in the wake of so many thoughtful remarks

made in this Chamber as perhaps

this Congress is about to adjourn

a weekend before America may again

be called upon to lead the civilized

world and the arsenal of democracy

into battle.

We have heard from my colleagues

this afternoon, many of the strategic

and military and diplomatic justifications

for that. They are legion. The

violations of U.N. Resolution 1441 are

painfully and patently obvious. The rejection

by the regime of Saddam Hussein

over the last 2 decades through

five Presidential administrations and

17 U.N. resolutions, of one international

convention after another,

argue for the civilized world, for the

forces of order, to rise up against the

forces of disorder, as the columnist

Thomas Friedman, from the New York

Times, is want to say.

I rise today after having received a

very thoughtful e-mail from a constituent

named David in Richmond, Indiana.

David is opposed to the war

strongly, and he wrote to me after urging

my staff to make sure that I saw

the letter, not knowing that I see all

my mail, but he urged me to look at a

Web site, and so I did. It was not just

a Web site opposed to the war, but it

was mostly a Web site,

takebackthemedia.com, or some such

thing, that showed very moving photographs

of families in Baghdad.

Mr. Speaker, I brought a few of those

photographs with me today, like this

photograph of a beautiful baby boy

curled up on a rug with his official

travel papers of his family before him

to prove his location. He looks an often

lot like one of my three small children.

David had me look at these pictures of

families, like this beautiful young family

with a boy about the age of my 11-

year-old son, families on the streets of

Baghdad. The argument was if as a

Member of Congress, I were to look

into the faces of those who may by virtue

of living in Baghdad fall into

harm’s way, I might change my mind

about the use of force.

Mr. Speaker, I must tell Members, as

I told David in a phone call, when I

look into these bright shining faces of

families who live in Baghdad, in the region

of what used to be Mesopotamia,

this picture taken January 5, 2003, I am

not moved away from taking action to

remove this regime, I am moved closer

toward it. As I said to David in a phone

call late yesterday, when I look into

these faces, I see an argument for removing

Saddam Hussein because I cannot

imagine, particularly for the four

young women depicted in this photograph,

what it is like to live in Iraq

during these last 20 years.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I rise today.

It is in the hope of talking about the

human rights record of this regime

that I come to the floor today. We recall

a great deal of focus in the 1990s on

the human rights record of Slobodan

Milosevic, and the world community

coming together, including France and

Germany, calling on the United States

of America to challenge and to remove

Slobodan Milosevic for one reason: Because

of his record of abuse of human

rights, his wanton killing of Muslims

strictly out of a policy horrifically

known as ethnic cleansing. President

Clinton did nobly lead America into

the breach with France and Germany

under the color and authority of NATO

and remove that barbarous dictator.

There were no U.N. resolution. There

was no previous example of them attacking

their neighbors or discussion

of weapons of mass destruction, there

was just a dictator who abused and tortured

and killed his own countrymen

for ethnic reasons.

So I am a bit confused when the

human rights record of Saddam Hussein

seems to be irrelevant to many

who oppose the war. It is a record

against which the record of Slobodan

Milosevic pales in comparison. The

United Nations Commission on Human

Rights has actually said that Saddam

Hussein’s record on human rights is

second only to that of Adolph Hitler in

the 20th century, and I want to speak

on some facts, things that we know

about Saddam Hussein and his regime.

It is about these beautiful young girls

that I hope Members’ hearts will attach,

to think of a regime in which

these young girls are forced to live is

my purpose today.

First, from the United Nations High

Commissioner for Human Rights, a 1997

report, the Commission on Human

Rights, reaffirming that all member

states have an obligation to promote

and protect human rights elaborates

the following actions by Iraq that it

strongly condemns:

One, the massive and extremely

grave violations of human rights and

international humanitarian law by the

Government of Iraq, resulting in an allpervasive,

repression and oppression

sustained by broad-based discrimination,

and this is the U.N.’s terms,

against his own people, widespread terror.

Two, suppression of freedom of

thought, expression, religion, information,

association, assembly and movement

through fear of arrest, imprisonment

and other sanctions.

Summary and arbitrary executions

were also condemned by the U.N. Commission

on Human Rights in 1997, including

political killings, enforced or

involuntary disappearances by the

thousands. Without regard to due process,

political opponents of Saddam Hussein,

according to the U.N. Human

Rights Commission, have disappeared

into the mist. Arbitrary arrest, detention

consisting of a routine failure to

respect due process of law, and again

thinking of these families, Mr. Speaker,

I quote, ‘‘widespread systemic torture

in its most cruel forms. The enactment

and implementation of decrees

prescribing cruel and inhuman punishment,

namely mutilation for punishment

of offenses and diversion of medical

care services for such mutilations.’’

Mr. Speaker, this is a barbarous regime,

and I begin by quoting from the

United Nations because we hear so

much about how we ought to rely on

the United Nations and I begin there,

but the facts simply continue to flow.

Think about that for a moment, Mr.

Speaker. Widespread terror against his

own people, the suppression of human

rights, suppression of freedom of

thought, expression, religion, information,

association, assembly and movement

through fear of arrest, imprisonment

and other sanctions, summary

and arbitrary executions and political

killings, widespread and systematic

torture in its most cruel forms. That is

from the Commission on Human Rights

United Nations High Commissioner,

April 16, 1997.

Mr. Speaker, citing from the report

published by Great Britain, let us talk

about what we know from organizations

like Amnesty International and

others, let us talk about the torture

that is sanctioned by the government

of Saddam Hussein and in which he has

been personally involved on many occasions.

From the British report, we find that

the victims of torture and their families

have reported the following methods

of torture to international human

rights like Amnesty International and

Human Rights Watch, eye gouging.

Amnesty International reported the

case of a Kurdish businessman in Baghdad

who was executed in 1997. When his

family retrieved his body, the eyes had

been gouged out and the empty eye

sockets stuffed with paper.

Piercing of hands with an electric

drill. A common method of torture for

political detainees, Amnesty International

reported one victim who then

had acid poured into his open wounds

during interrogation in Iraq.

Suspension from the ceiling. Victims

are blindfolded, stripped and suspended

for hours by their wrists, often with

their hands tied behind their backs.

This causes dislocation of shoulders,

tearing of muscles and ligaments. Iraq

is also known to use electric shock. A

common torture method, shocks are

applied to various parts of the body including

ears, tongue, fingers and genitalia.

Sexual abuse. Victims, particularly

women, have been raped and sexually

abused as a means of interrogation on

a routine basis by this regime.

Mock executions. Victims are told to

be executed by firing squad. A mock

execution is staged. Victims are hooded,

brought before a firing squad, and

then blanks are fired as a form of torture.

David Scheffer, U.S. Ambassador at

Large for War Crimes, reported that

photographic evidence showed that

Iraq had used acid baths during the invasion

of Kuwait. Victims were hung

by their wrists and gradually lowered

into acid.

These are unspeakable acts of barbarism,

Mr. Speaker. I am a bit loathe in

this, what is a public forum by definition,

to speak these words after school

is out, but I think it is important as we

think through the strategic issues, as

we think through the diplomatic

issues, international convention, disarmament,

international terrorism, that

we also think of this. These are the

facts that I must assume that the sincere

activists, perhaps at this very

hour, are engaged in some demonstration

here in America, or perhaps even

on the streets of Baghdad, these are

the facts that these people must not

know. How could any decent human

being, knowing the official barbarism

of the regime of Saddam Hussein, ever

deign to defend it.

Let us talk for a moment about the

cost to fellow Muslims. There are many

who want to divide the world along religious

lines between the West and the

Islamic world, suggesting that we in

the West are not challenging an outlaw

regime in Baghdad that has attacked 3

of its 5 adjacent neighbors during its

regime and used chemical weapons on

its own people, but rather that we are

somehow engaged in a war against an

‘‘ism,’’ against a religion.

Here is the truth, again citing the recent

British report published this fall.

The truth of it is that Muslims have

had no greater enemy in contemporary

history than Saddam Hussein. I believe

it is accurate to say that Saddam Hussein

has killed more Muslims than any

government leader in the past 50 years,

including Slobodan Milosevic who

sought, through a policy of ethnic

cleansing, to destroy the Muslim population

in the form of Yugoslavia.

The Iran-Iraq war, which ranged from

1980 to 1988, resulted in 1 million Muslim

casualties dead and wounded. Iranian

casualties in that war, Mr. Speaker,

were estimated at between 450,000

and 730,000. Iraqi casualties were between

150,000 and 340,000. Really not

since our Civil War have we ever as a

nation experienced casualties the likes

of which occurred in a barbaric and

ruthless war between these two nations

for 8 years.

During the 1988 Anfal campaign in

Iraqi Kurdistan, Iraqi troops were responsible

for the death or disappearance

of up to 100,000 Muslim Kurds.

Also according to Great Britain on

March 16, 1988, Iraqi troops killed up to

5,000 and injured some 10,000 Muslim

Kurds in a single day in a chemical

weapon attack on the town of Halabja

in northern Iraq.

The 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait led

to the death of 1,000 Kuwaiti Muslim

nationals. 605 prisoners of war remain

completely unaccounted for since 1991,

including nationals of Kuwait, Saudi

Arabia, India, Syria, Lebanon, Iran,

Egypt, Bahrain and Oman. Between 3

million and 4 million Muslim Iraqis

have abandoned their homes and

sought refuge outside of Iraq. Many

hundreds of thousands of Iraq’s Muslims

have been displaced internally.

Estimates of 900,000 according to the

United Kingdom’s report may be conservative.

In the north, towns and villages were

systematically destroyed by the regime

during the war with Iran. Further

south, non-Arabs in the region of

Kirkuk have been relocated to other

parts of Iraq and Arabs induced to occupy

their homes and lands. And in the

south, between 300,000 and 500,000 Muslim

citizens have been forced from

their traditional homes in Iraq’s

marshlands. Thousands of Muslims

have been arbitrarily arrested, ill

treated, tortured, and executed in Iraq

in recent years.

This is according to the International

Alliance for Justice News

Service, Amnesty International,

Human Rights Watch Country Report,

and the U.S. Committee for Refugees

Report, and I will cite each of the following.

The regime of Saddam Hussein

has reaped an extraordinary and barbarous

toll on Muslims in the region

over its 20-some-odd-year history. This

is also a regime that has used chemical

weapons according to the Human

Rights Watch’s ‘‘Genocide in Iraq’’ report.

Mr. Speaker, I will say for a moment

that while I have great respect for Amnesty

International and great respect

for Human Rights Watch and as a

member of the Committee on International

Relations I greatly cherish

any organization that makes its business

to attend to the human rights of

people around the world, I must concede

standing on this particular side of

the aisle, Mr. Speaker, not to have a

great deal culturally in common with

most of the people that are drawn to

the work of these organizations. I have

a passion for human rights. I am on the

Subcommittee on the Middle East for

precisely that reason. I am interested

in advancing the human rights of people

all across the world in whatever

brief time that I have in this institution.

But I know that most people who

think about these things and donate to

these organizations have a little bit of

a different political view from mine

and I suspect, Mr. Speaker, a different

political view of the war from mine.

And so I am hoping that somehow

through this process, we can reach

some of those who object to this war,

who express fealty and appreciation for

Human Rights Watch and for Amnesty

International and for all the plethora

of groups out there that largely draw

their support from the left, who have

nonetheless chronicled as a great service

to mankind the barbarism of this

regime.

According to the Human Rights

Watch ‘‘Genocide in Iraq’’ report,

which carried extensive research into

chemical weapons attacks in northern

Iraq, based on field interviews, they

have determined that at least 60 villages

as well as the town of Halabja

were attacked with mustard gas, nerve

gas or a combination of the two during

the Anfal campaign against the Kurds

between 1987 and 1988.

Human Rights Watch says that the

Iraqi regime has used chemical weapons

for at least four complementary

purposes: number one, to attack base

camps and main-force concentrations

of Kurdish guerillas; two, to harass and

kill retreating guerillas; three, to inflict,

I make emphasis here, Mr. Speaker,

that we are not simply talking

about Iraq deploying chemical weapons

in a military environment, which according

to international convention

and expectation is barbarism but also,

according to Human Rights Watch,

they have deployed chemical weapons

to inflict exemplary collective punishment

on civilians for simply supporting

the Kurdish guerillas. The most dramatic

case is the chemical bombing of

Halabja after the seizure of the town

by guerillas and Iranian revolutionary

guards. And lastly, they have used it

simply to spread terror among civilian

populations as a whole, flushing villagers

out of their homes to facilitate

their capture, relocation, and killing.

The list of chemical attacks by Iraq

against its own citizens, and not just in

a military context, is astonishing and

horrifying. And the list goes on, Mr.

Speaker, of evidence upon evidence of a

regime that has lost any connection to

the civilized world.

But I want to go back to these pictures,

if I can; and I have not yet

shown all of them. These are some

great-looking kids. This photograph

that I got off the aforementioned Web

site was apparently taken on December

19, 2002, in Baghdad, and those are some

beautiful little girls. I have got two little

girls of my own. They are 9 and 8

years old, Mr. Speaker. I think that I

would do anything to deliver my little

girls from living in the kind of society

and under the kind of regime that I am

here to describe and that organizations

like Amnesty International and Human

Rights Watch have identified and associated

with the regime under the leadership

of Saddam Hussein.

Let me share with you some testimony

which was presented before the

Congressional Human Rights Caucus

on the human rights situation in

northern Iraq, the Kurdish minority.

This is the testimony of Bayanne

Surdashi, a Kurdish humanitarian aid

worker now in asylum in the United

States of America. After pleasantries,

Bayanne told the following story. This

is a Kurdish Iraqi and her personal

story:

‘‘I was 12 years old when I experienced

firsthand the suffering of my

people. One evening in the spring of

1987, one of my aunts and her whole

family showed up on our doorstep in

Sulaymaniyah unexpectedly. We

learned that their village, Askar, was

one of several that were attacked by

Iraqi helicopters using chemical gas

and then turned into rubble by bulldozers.

My aunt’s family had managed

to avoid the military and find their

way to our home. They spent 11 months

hiding with us.

‘‘Later the Iraqi regime relocated

them to newly built government settlements

where they could be closely

watched by the military. They were

not allowed to return to their farms

and were turned from hard-working

independent people into people dependent

on the government for their very

simplest needs. Over time my family

discovered that at least 40 of our relatives

living in the villages had been

killed during this genocidal campaign

known as the government’s Anfal policy.

Only those relatives who managed

to escape or hide survived the horror of

Anfal which killed more than 150,000

Kurds.

‘‘Three years later after our failed

uprising against Saddam Hussein in

1991, the Iraqi army used every possible

form of brutality as they moved into

northern Iraq, destroying everyone and

everything before them. In the middle

of a cold, rainy winter, we were awakened

by the sound of bombs. It was

clear that Saddam’s army was very

close. My parents feared that Saddam

would again use chemical gas like he

did during the genocidal campaign, so,

like hundreds of thousands of other

frightened Kurds, we fled. We said

good-bye to our home, and we joined a

flood of other refugees crowding the

streets on our way out of the city and

out of Iraq in search of sanctuary. We

walked on foot for 10 days through the

mountains before we reached Iran and

safety, poorly clothed from harsh

weather and without enough food or

water. We were surrounded by the

sound of misery and distress and witnessed

families burying their dead

along the road and weeping mothers

unable to let go of their dead infants.

Due to shock, one of my brothers suffered

terrible seizures a few times a

day.

‘‘When we finally returned home,’’

Bayanne would conclude before this

congressional committee, ‘‘we learned

that some of our relatives did not survive

the exodus. My mother’s aunt had

been in the hospital when we left but

died along with hundreds of other patients

abandoned by the staff who were

forced to flee the city as well. My uncle

was found frozen to death in the mountains.

On the radio we heard more than

a thousand Kurds died every day during

the exodus.’’

That was the testimony of a 12-yearold

little girl who because of the courage

of her family made it out. This

could be a picture of her, Bayanne

Surdashi. She is now a Kurdish humanitarian

aid worker. She escaped. Hundreds

of thousands did not. But when I

think of my children that same age and

I think of that horror through which

she passed, my blood runs cold. And I

am amazed that others’ does not. I am

amazed, Mr. Speaker. I really am. And

I just must assume that those who oppose

the use of force in Iraq do not

know this. Because I believed when I

voted to authorize the use of force, Mr.

Speaker, I believed it was right under

international conventions going from

the U.N. resolution 687 that was the

cease-fire in 1991 and that it was appropriate

for us to make clear to Iraq that

they must disarm, they must disclose,

they must destroy their weapons and

cease any liaisons with terrorist organizations.

I supported giving the President

that authority. I have supported

the administration unflaggingly in its

attempt to develop international support

for this war and believe those arguments

are enough.

But there is this, which when taken

in its totality, 20 years of barbarism,

we see that the case against Iraq does

not end with diplomatic resolutions,

Mr. Speaker. The case against Iraq

does not end with liaisons with terrorist

organizations. The case against

Iraq ends here. It ends with what will

end when that regime ends.

I want to speak specifically to the

issue of torture, which as I have said

before is systematic in Iraq. I think

again of David who asked me to look at

a Web site, Mr. Speaker, where there

were pictures, and I think of innocent

Iraqis like this. This photograph was

taken January 5, 2003, on the streets of

Baghdad. These are adorable kids who

maybe look an awful lot like the kids

that we now know are tortured to extract

information from their parents

by this regime.

Mr. Speaker, I am very moved by

that thought, and the sheer horror of

it, but I want to reflect for a moment

on what the word ‘‘systematic’’ means.

We are not talking, Mr. Speaker,

about the torture that happens on the

margins in the basement of the prison

because of the brutality of prison

guards who are operating outside the

rule of law. When the U.N. Commission

on Human Rights and Amnesty International

and Human Rights Watch use

the phrase that torture is systematic

in Iraq, that means it is part of the system

of Iraq. It is part of the ordinary

undue process that the people of Iraq

must endure.

And I hope I make this point, Mr.

Speaker, that we are not talking about

a regime that has left the rails. We are

not talking about a regime that some

of its operators have lost their way. We

are talking about a regime that sanctions

the torture and killing of its own

people. The most senior figures in this

regime, according to international

sources, have been personally involved

in torture.

Saddam Hussein runs Iraq with close

members of his own family, the ‘‘filthy

40’’ that we heard about in the media

this week, most of them either married

into the family or in some way related

by blood. Most of these come from his

hometown of Tikrit. These are the only

people he feels he can trust. He directly

controls the security services and,

through them and a huge party network,

his influence reaches deep into

Iraqi society. Saddam presides over the

all-powerful Revolutionary Command

Council, which enacts laws and institutions

and it has been through this

council, according to Amnesty International

in a report published in August

of 2001, ‘‘torture is used systematically

against political detainees. The

scale and severity of torture in Iraq

can only result from the acceptance of

its use at the highest level.’’

Over the years, Amnesty International

and other human rights organizations

have received thousands of

reports of torture and interviewed dozens

of torture victims who survived

and escaped. Some of the propagandists,

Tariq Aziz comes to mind,

may step before the cameras some day

in the near future and hold out something

from a statute book in Iraq that

says that torture is illegal in Iraq. But

according to the report recently published

by the British Government, our

intelligence sources are not aware of a

single case of an Iraqi official suspected

of carrying out torture being

brought to justice or prosecuted, not

one.

I quote again, Amnesty International

in a report from 2001: ‘‘Torture is used

systematically against political detainees,’’

and stay with me now. ‘‘The

scale and severity of torture in Iraq

can only result from the acceptance of

its use at the highest level,’’ according

to Amnesty International.

Let me tell the story about a family,

and I think we have a picture of a wonderful

family in Baghdad. This photograph

taken on the streets of Baghdad

on January 7, 2003. A father, maybe a

grandfather, with his arm around what

looks to be about an 11- or 12-year-old

boy and a daughter in a shawl, and it is

a warm family photograph. Let me

read the story of a family arrested in

late 2000, not long ago. They were

taken to two separate interrogation

centers in Iraq within Republican

Guard facilities located along the road

to Abu Ghraib, according to a report

published by the United Kingdom.

The husband was held in one center

whilst the wife and children were held

in a women’s facility. The husband and

wife were interrogated under torture

about the husband’s sale of vehicle

that the interrogator said had been

captured by Iraqi security forces during

a raid on Iraqi oppositionists. The

interrogators said separately to both

husband and wife that they would

cease the torture if they signed confessions

admitting to be collaborating

with oppositionists. They refused. The

wife was stripped naked and cigarettes

stubbed out on all parts of her body

when she refused to implicate her husband.

This was August of 2000. I am not

talking about ancient history, Mr.

Speaker. According to testimony, she

was beaten and thrown around the interrogation

room. Her children were

forced to watch the torture. She was

eventually released, having been told

her husband would continue being tortured

until she returned to confess. She

was arrested again 2 weeks late and the

same pattern of torture was repeated,

leaving her a psychological wreck.

During his testimony, the husband’s

arms were tied behind his back. He was

then suspended in the air using a hook

hung from the ceiling. According to

testimony, this caused intense pain as

his muscle and shoulder ligaments

were torn. After a period, the interrogators

entered the room and the husband

was unhooked, placed in a chair.

From close range, he was then shot at

with a pistol whenever he refused to

agree to sign the confession. Sometimes

shots were fired which missed his

body. At other times, a pistol muzzle

was placed against his fingers, toes,

and arms and fired so as to mutilate

those areas. Over the following 2

weeks, further interrogations occurred

at intervals following periods of food

and water deprivation. Eventually the

husband and wife’s wider family paid a

bribe to an Iraqi intelligence officer

and they were released, and subsequently

survived to escape from Iraq

and testify.

Mr. Speaker, I recite these things because

I think many people just do not

know them. I recite these things because

there are many who want to

morally equivocate in this case and

even to suggest that there are other

countries that have weapons of mass

destruction, Iraq is no different. Iraq is

different, Mr. Speaker.

Let me give you more examples.

Among these pictures that I was presented

when I went to a Web site called

to my attention by a constituent who

opposed the war who asked me to look

into the eyes of some recent photographs

of people who live in Baghdad

and think about the cost of this war.

Among those photographs here is a

January 5 picture of four beautiful

girls and one little boy, and it is a good

starting point for us to talk about

women in Iraq, Mr. Speaker. I am not

going to quote some propagandist organization

on the right or some pro-war

organization. I am going to quote from

the Human Rights Alliance in France

and Amnesty International’s report in

2001 about the treatment of women by

the regime in Baghdad.

According to Amnesty International,

a 25-year-old woman known as Um

Haydar was beheaded in the street

without charge or trial at the end of

December, 2000, after her husband, suspected

by the authorities, of involvement

in Islamic armed activities, fled

the country. Beheaded in the street

without a trial. And some think this is

just another country, Mr. Speaker.

Men belonging to Saddam Fidayeen

took Haydar from her house in the al-

Karrada district in front of her children

and mother-in-law. Two men held

her arms and a third pulled her head

from behind and beheaded her in front

of her family, according to witnesses

with firsthand knowledge presented to

Amnesty International. Human Rights

Alliance in France, their report in 2002,

young woman was arrested because her

husband had refused to join the war

against Iran. Pregnant at the time, she

gave birth in prison on 3 December,

1999. She said, ‘‘I breast-fed my son, but

they took him away when he was 17

days old so that he would not become

like me. I’m still looking for him. I

never had further news of him.’’

This woman, who was also horribly

tortured in prison, still said she suffers

endless torture, the torture of not

knowing where her son is. This according

to Human Rights Alliance in

France.

Najat Mohammed Haydar, an obstetrician

in Baghdad, was beheaded in

October, 2000, apparently on suspicion

of prostitution, according to Amnesty

International. Even by Iraqi standards,

her execution was an outrage, Mr.

Speaker. There was no evidence to support

the charge of prostitution. She

was reportedly arrested before the introduction

of the policy to behead prostitutes.

The real reason for her death

was believed to be, according to Amnesty

International, her criticism of

corruption in the Iraqi health service.

A female obstetrician in Baghdad was

beheaded in October of 2000.

I cannot say enough, and as I prepared

for these remarks today, these

are things that shocked my conscious

and mind. I know where I was in October

of 2000, Mr. Speaker, and to think

that there is still a place in the world

where a professional woman, an

OBGYN, a medical doctor could criticize

her government’s health policy

and be beheaded publicly is a frightening

thought. But that is Baghdad and

that is Iraq.

A few more personal stories, Mr.

Speaker, and then I will yield this

Chamber to another colleague. It is the

individual stories that touch me the

deepest. When I got that e-mail from

David in my district, I had to thank

him. He challenged me, Mr. Speaker.

He said that if you support this war, I

challenge you to go to a Web site where

there are photographs of families that

live in Baghdad, recent photographs of

the people who may fall under the

wake of U.S. military involvement. He

challenged me, and I rose to the challenge,

and I went to the Web site, but

instead of finding myself backing away

from engagement, I found myself

drawn to it. I looked into the face of

this little boy and he looks like mine.

And it is the personal stories that draw

me into this and reaffirm my belief

that the rule of law and the laws that

govern civilized men and women on

planet earth are not the province of the

west. They are not the province of

English-speaking people or Europeans,

but the freedom from terror, the obligations

of due process, the freedom of

speech and association, these are

things that attach to the human heart

that this little boy, sitting on a carpet

in Baghdad, smiling for all the world to

the camera, not knowing what may

well be coming to his city, touches me

deeply.

A few more personal stories and I

will close. These are from an Amnesty

International report issued in November

of 1999. They are personal stories

regarding Iraq’s obvious human rights

violation, and I say this it as often as

I can, Mr. Speaker, that I might per

chance by some be heard that what I

am reading now is not from some prowar,

pro-Bush Web site or document.

This is from Amnesty International.

Abd al-Wahid al-Rifa’i, married with

nine children, according to Amnesty

International, was arrested without a

warrant on 8 March, 1999, at 2 a.m.

Taken from his house in Baghdad by

plainclothes security men, initially he

was held in the headquarters of the

General Security Directorate. According

to Amnesty International and testimony

thereafter, he was then taken

to a hospital because of ill health, returned

to the Baghdad security headquarters

where he is currently held

without charge or trial. Since his arrest,

his family has not been allowed to

visit him. He is believed to have been

arrested because authorities suspected

he was in contact with the opposition

through his brother, an active antigovernment

opponent who lives in Europe.

His brother, a businessman, fled with

his wife and children to Jordan in 1995.

The previous month, he had been detained

in Iraq accused of having contacts

with opposition abroad, and was

tortured. This included beatings, suspension

by his feet, electric shock to

his lips and genitals. He escaped by

bribing a prison official in August of

1995, and a criminal court sentenced

him to death in absentia. His brother

remains incarcerated without charges

in his absence.

Ibrahim Amin al-’Azzawi, a 70-yearold

lawyer, according to Amnesty

International, was arrested on the

morning of 23 March 1999. Four plainclothes

security men took him away

from his house in Baghdad. He was reportedly

not involved in any opposition

activities.

The previous evening his daughter,

Bushra, married with two children,

came with her children to her parents’

house in a state of shock. She told her

family, who are Sunni Muslims, that

her husband had been arrested at his

house and taken away by security men.

The whole family could not sleep

that night. When the four security men

came to the house around 6 a.m., they

knocked at the door, and it was

Ibrahim Amin al-’Azzawi who opened

the door. They searched the house, confiscated

documents, and arrested

Ibrahim without giving him any reason

for the arrest.

The family then feared that the security

men would return and arrest them.

Bushra and her two children and her

two unmarried sisters and their 61-

year-old mother collected some of their

valuables and ran from the house. A

few weeks later, they managed to flee

the country. They believe that the reason

behind their father’s arrest was

that his son-in-law, a Shi’a Muslim,

was suspected of involvement in some

antigovernment activities.

Ibrahim Amin al-’Azzawi was executed.

His body was buried by the authorities.

No information of a charge,

trial, or sentencing was available. No

information was made available to Amnesty

International as to the fate of his

son-in-law. This was a 70-year-old lawyer

in Baghdad, who upon hearing that

his son-in-law had been arrested in the

dead of night, went to his house to

comfort his daughter and was himself

dragged off and executed. This is Iraq,

Mr. Speaker. This is Iraq today, 1999,

according to Amnesty International.

Let me tell you a story about a 67-

year-old man, married with four grown

children. Ayatollah al-Shaikh

Murtadha al-Burujerdi is his name, I

say with respect, age 67. He was shot

dead by armed men on the night of 22

April 1998 as he walked home from the

shrine of Imam Ali in al-Najaf one of

the Shiite Muslims’ holiest cities,

where he had led the congregation in

dawn prayers. His two companions

were also shot and sustained injuries.

He had reportedly been harassed in

the past by Iraqi security services, and

there had been at least one attempt on

his life in 1991, and following the Shiite

uprising in the South, he was arrested

with scores of other Shiite scholars,

was detained, and then released.

A few weeks before his murder, he

had been visited by a delegation from

the Ministry of Religious Endowments

and Religions Affairs, urging him to

stop leading the prayers. He was reported

to have stated to the delegation

he would only agree if he received in

writing an order from the Iraqi government.

Following the assassination, an

official statement released by the government

blamed the intelligence service

of a foreign country. Amnesty

International.

These names are hard for me to pronounce,

but these facts are not hard for

me to understand: a 67-year-old grandfather

coming back from a prayer service,

shot and killed. Two men were

coming back from one of the holiest

places for Shiite Muslims were also

shot and wounded. His offense was

praying.

The list, Mr. Speaker, goes on and on

and on. There is persecution of the

Kurds that has been documented again

and again. There has been much human

rights and religious persecution within

Iraq. It is a record of mindless barbarism

that is contemporary, not ancient

history.

Some may believe that these were

things of a frontier period in the regime

before law and order took hold.

These things may happen, they say;

but I am talking from the benefit of

the great work of Human Rights Watch

and Amnesty International.

Mr. Speaker, I speak of things that

have happened within months of this

day. A woman who was a medical doctor

was beheaded because she criticized

the government; a grandfather walking

back from a prayer service, shot and

killed simply because he did not adhere

to the government’s demand that he

stop leading prayers with the Shiite

Muslims; and the systematic use of torture

as part of government policy.

So I rise today to simply add something

to the discussion. I do so with

great humility, Mr. Speaker, knowing

that each one of us among the 435 who

are privileged to serve in this place are

simply part of a national conversation.

We are the way America talks to itself.

I had a burden on my heart, Mr.

Speaker, that America ought to be

talking about this. We get caught up in

resolutions and weapons of mass destruction,

and were they or were they

not involved with al Qaeda, were they

or were they not involved in September

11. Each one of us, by our own lights

and by the facts, will decide what we

believe, and decide what we believe

should be the proper course of action.

However, what I see the debate bereft

of is an honest discussion of the barbaric

and virtually unprecedented

record on human rights that is contemporary

Iraq under Saddam Hussein.

These families, these kids. December

19, 2002, this paragraph was taken of

two beautiful little girls, about the age

of my girls, in Baghdad. When I think

of the man who was beheaded in front

of his wife and children, when I think

of the parents who were incarcerated

and tortured in front of their children,

when I think of the woman who escaped

from Iraq, but they took her boy

of 17 days away because they did not

want him to be polluted by her ideology

and thinking, she grieves to this

day, not for the torture that she suffered

and no doubt the physical scars

she bore, but she feels the emotional

scars of not knowing where her baby

boy is.

It is about these families, Mr. Speaker,

that I believe in the justness of our

cause. I think of those words from Ecclesiastes,

Chapter 4: ‘‘Again I looked

and saw all the oppression that was

taking place under the sun. I saw the

tears of the oppressed, and they have

no comforter. Power was on the side of

their oppressors, and they have no

comforter. I declared that the dead who

had already died are happier than the

living who are still alive; but better

than both is he who has not yet been,

who has not seen the evil that is done

under the sun.’’

When I look into these eyes, Mr.

Speaker, I see the tears of the oppressed.

When I look into these eyes, I

know the evil that is done under the

sun. Because of the outstanding work

of Human Rights Watch and Amnesty

International, I am able, and millions

are able, to know of these things, and

the reality of them.

But let it not be said in this place

that they have no comforter, that they

have no defender; because in the days

ahead, as we pause and reflect this

weekend, each of us going to our own

place of worship, I suspect many millions

of Americans in churches and

synagogues and mosques and in their

own private devotions will pray.

We will, each of us, pray, not just for

the safety of our troops, but we will

pray for these who shed the tears of the

oppressed. We will pray that God will

have his mercy on all the innocent in

the way of war, confident that our

military will use extraordinary efforts

to avoid casualties by noncombatants.

It is my hope that somewhere in the

heart of hearts of the children in these

pictures that I have shown today, and

in the families they represent, there

will be the knowledge that there is a

defender; there is a nation, some 50 nations,

that stand ready to end their oppression,

to dry their tears, and to lead

Iraq into a new dawn of civilization, a

new dawn of freedom from oppression

and torture and the abuse of women

and the stifling of basic civil and

human rights.

That is my prayer, that is my hope,

and of that I remain confident, that

the United States of America will, if

need be by force, or by showing enough

force that it is voluntary, lead Iraq

into that bright future.