Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise with heavy heart, a heavy heart for two reasons.

The first reason is that a group of American soldiers forgot that they

were soldiers and they forgot that the middle name of a soldier is

``honor,'' in doing the despicable acts that they did in that prison.

That breaks my heart. I know it breaks the hearts of Americans who saw

those pictures and learned of those acts which border on the

unspeakable.

But the seconds reason my heart is broken is that the occurrences

happened between October and December of last year; they were reported

in January of this year. A two star general in the Army, Major General

Taguba was called to investigate and his report was rendered in

February. And as ranking member on this committee, I found out about it

this month, in May, not by any official sources, but through the news

media.

Mr. Speaker, that also breaks my heart. We in Congress under the

Constitution are the first of the three parts of government listed. We

are the ones that raise the money and write the rules for those who

serve in the military. We are an important part of the national

security, and I think that we should be informed as quickly as possible

when these very, very tragic occurrences happen.

Recently in the Wall Street Journal, on April 22, an administration

official in response to the expenditure of appropriations funds

regarding Iraq and the Middle East stated, ``If lawmakers do not ask

questions, they do not get answers.''

Mr. Speaker, it is incumbent upon them to keep U.S. informed because

we are the genesis of their funding. We are the genesis of the rules by

which they in uniform operate and the defense of our Nation are

concerned.

This error has become a mistake. The late John F. Kennedy once said,

``An error does not become a mistake until you refuse to correct it.

Without debate, without criticism, no administration, no country can

succeed and no republic can survive.''

We seem, Mr. Speaker, to have forgotten that.

I support this resolution, and I think it is necessary. It is a

shameful series

of acts. I support this resolution because it deplores and condemns the

abuse of those in custody. And it is not just about isolated cases of

abuse. This incident could very well be the tipping of the security and

reconstruction of Iraq. I hope that is wrong. But if we lose the trust

of the Iraqi people, if we lose their hearts and minds, we cannot bring

anything else effectively to that part of the world.

We must win back the trust, the safety of our troops, and the future

of these citizens of Iraq. For that reason, I support this resolution.

It urges the Secretary of the Army and the appropriate military

authorities to complete a thorough investigation to bring anyone who

committed crimes to justice. This applies regardless of who committed

the crimes, military personnel, government agencies or private

contractors.

The Iraqi people must see U.S. taking swift and strong action. As a

matter of fact, we here in Congress and our chairman, the gentleman

from California (Mr. Hunter), has announced that we will have a hearing

on this very subject tomorrow in the hearing room 2118 at 3 o'clock

with Secretary Rumsfeld. I think that is the right thing for the

gentleman to have called, and I thank him for it publicly.

It is an important role for U.S. to have continuing oversight of this

issue. We do need, in addition thereto, a congressional inquiry by the

staff on the broader policy issues that were raised by this incident. I

will underline that.

Finally, I believe this resolution appropriately points out that so

many of our troops have served honorably, and the chairman is correct

on that, done extraordinarily well in difficult circumstances.

Not long ago I attended a funeral over here at Arlington Cemetery of

a staff sergeant from the Fourth District of Missouri, which I am

privileged to represent. And these soldiers who forgot that they were

soldiers caused his death, in so many respects, to have been in vain.

We have to correct this and make sure that those who pay the ultimate

sacrifice will be remembered and will be honored for the work that they

do in Iraq to bring stability and some sort of representative

government there.

We have to look at the chain of command. We have to look at the

command atmosphere that allowed these occurrences to happen. So for

this reason and the reason that we were not told promptly and the fact

that we need not only the hearing tomorrow, which I am pleased we will

have, we need a thorough investigation to go forward on this subject.

We must be successful in Iraq. We must show not just the Iraqi

people, we must show the world the values of our country. We need to.

And one way to do it is to proceed to investigate this and make this a

very transparent, clear picture for the world to see.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for this time. It would be well for those in

authority to understand the admonition that sat on the desk of the late

President Harry S Truman: ``The buck stops here.''

Keeping that in mind, let U.S. move forward and do the right thing,

for the Iraqi people, for those who served so honorably and so well,

and for those who paid for the sacrifice of their service. Let this be

a reflection of the decency and honesty and thoroughness of the values

of America in what we do.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, I might say there was a serious attempt to have a

bipartisan resolution today; but let me say that on this side we were

not shown a draft until almost 6:30 last evening, and we were not

permitted to share a copy with our leadership until 9:45. Our

leadership was not given the opportunity to make a change on the draft

that was given at that time, and we were not given a copy of the final

version of the bill until after it had been introduced. When the

leadership could not reach unanimous consent; we were not given the

opportunity to offer an alternative, an amendment or even a motion to

recommit. I was hoping we could do a better job of being bipartisan,

but we are here and I intend to vote for this.