Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support

of this resolution, and I want to thank the gentleman from California

(Chairman Hunter) for bringing it to the floor.

First, I want to stress my unwavering support for our men and women

in uniform. I am absolutely convinced that recent reports of prisoner

abuses are in no way representative of the majority of those who serve

in our armed services.

Our fellow Americans who are in Iraq are some of the most dedicated

and honorable people in our whole country. It is a rare thing these

days to find them with such strong commitment to the values that have

made this Nation so great.

Our military is known throughout the entire world for upholding and

fighting for human rights, and that is why the American people are so

shocked at the recent reports of prisoner abuse and torture. I, too, am

shocked, and it is unfortunate that a few soldiers have harmed the

reputation of our entire military.

There is no excuse for abusing and torturing any human being. We are

there to restore dignity to the Iraqi people, not to demean and

humiliate them.

It absolutely cannot and should not be tolerated. We would not want

American POWs abused, and we should not abuse those who we hold as

prisoners of war.

The United States has always held very strictly to the standards of

the humane treatment of POWs that are universally accepted as

international law. We should hold those standards now more than ever.

As the world's superpower, we are an example to every Nation and are

viewed as the defenders of life and liberty.

One of the reasons we are in Iraq is because we wanted to liberate

the Iraqi people from the torture and abuse of Saddam Hussein's regime.

What kind of message do these very few soldiers send to the people of

Iraq and to the entire Middle East by now abusing the people that we

once rescued? There is absolutely no excuse.

The vast majority of Iraqi people have been treated with respect and

dignity by our service members, and I know will continue to be treated

properly. Our men and women in uniform know they have a moral and legal

obligation to treat prisoners of war humanely and with decency.

These very few individuals who have not acted in this upright

tradition should be quickly brought to justice.

Already, the Army has placed a new unit leadership at this facility.

As of April 1, we now have one single person responsible for all the

detainee activities in Iraq.

Additional training on the Geneva convention and the rules of

engagement have been given to all new units going into these

facilities.

A mobile training team of corrections and legal experts is on the

ground working to help train soldiers to improve operations at the

facilities.

I am encouraged and I applaud the quick response by our military

leaders. I hope this incident, which involved just a very small group

of individuals, will not overshadow the integrity of our soldiers.

The 138,000 Americans in uniform in the Iraqi theater are some of the

most dedicated and honorable people, and they are doing a tremendous

job. Because of the sacrifices that they are making, our Nation is more

secure, and Iraq is on the path to becoming a free and prosperous

Nation.

May God bless America and may God bless our men and women in uniform.