Mr. Speaker, I rise to support H. Res. 627

only because we need to begin the healing process, not because it

offers a real solution to our troops and peace in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, yet again we are seeing politics driving our policy in

Iraq rather than logic, and compassion, and sense of duty. The

resolution before us today is political damage control. This Congress

has a constitutionally mandated duty of oversight over the executive

branch. We and the world have seen over the past days that some

horrible deeds have occurred in Iraq--deeds that truly threaten to

undermine everything that we have worked toward on the international-

diplomatic front for the past century. We must be thoughtful in

crafting our approach to diffusing this awful situation, bringing those

responsible to justice, and protecting the honor of those members of

our armed-services who serve so valiantly and honorably around the

world.

This resolution contains several provisions, including (1) deploring

and condemning the abuse of Iraqi prisoners in U.S. custody; (2)

reaffirming and reinforcing the American principle that any and all

individuals under the custody and care of the U.S. armed forces shall

be afforded proper and humane treatment; and (3) urging the Department

of Defense to conduct an investigation into any and all allegations of

mistreatment or abuse of Iraqi prisoners and bring to swift justice all

members of the Armed Forces who have violated the Uniform Code of

Military Justice.

I agree with all of that; however, is that all the duty of this

Congress is? All this resolution does is says, ``We read in the paper

that mistakes were made. Somebody else, find out what happened.

Somebody else, tell us what you find out. Somebody else, make this

problem go away.'' That is a dereliction of our duty.

Members in this body have extraordinary experience and expertise in

these issues. We owe it to the people we represent to immediately

launch full congressional investigations into Iraqi prisoner abuse.

After the Defense Department report was buried and hidden from

Congress, and maybe even the President, for months, it is absurd to now

trust that same department to police itself and purge itself of bad

actors. We are already seeing the methods by which they will approach

this--blame the six people in the pictures and maybe a couple of

others, and assume that they were some sort of outliers.

We all hope that that is indeed the case, but we must make sure. Last

week, I wouldn't have believed that any American soldiers were capable

of such grotesque abuses. We must be objective as we delve into whether

this problem goes far deeper than just a few cells at Abu Ghraib.

Further missteps in the U.S. response to these atrocities could bring

about a monstrous backlash in Iraq, and across the Middle East.

What message does it send to those struggling for democracy and

freedom around the world, when this People's House, in the greatest

democracy in the world--simply toes the majority party line?

We need bipartisan congressional investigations to be conducted

immediately into these allegations of abuse, including those by U.S.

civilian contractor personnel or other U.S. civilians, and into chain

of command and other systemic deficiencies that contributed to such

abuse.

We all know that the vast majority of U.S. troops in Iraq are

performing superbly. It is tragic that the behavior of a small number

of American soldiers has besmirched the reputation of U.S. troops

overall. The vast majority of U.S. troops in Iraq are courageously

performing their duties and are living up to the highest standards of

the U.S. military. They are serving our country with honor, distinction

and dedication and deserve our country's deepest gratitude.

However, the grotesque abuse of Iraqi prisoners is completely

unacceptable--and is against everything our country stands for and

holds dear. The abuse of Iraqi prisoners in the Abu Ghraib prison by

U.S. soldiers that has been documented with photographs is abhorrent

and does not represent America. The citizens of America have been

appalled by what they have seen and condemn these actions as against

our ethics and against our practices. These abuses are truly un-

American.

Congressional investigations are critically needed in order to get to

the bottom of this outrage. Among the questions that must be answered

are: How widespread were these incidents of prisoner abuse? Were

personnel trained adequately to do the jobs to which they were

assigned? When did senior leadership of the Department of Defense learn

of these allegations? Was their response timely and did it reflect the

seriousness of this situation?

We owe it to the American people, to those around the world who are

watching intently, and especially to our troops whose reputations have

been called into question by this situation. We must put this Congress

to work purging our military of those who encourage such un-American

behavior, and restore the honor of our brave soldiers serving in Iraq

and around the world.

I again call for Secretary Rumsfeld to appear before the full body of

this House with the complete story of this travesty. Ultimately, I call

for his resignation and that of Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz.