Mr. Speaker, there is nothing we hold in trust more

sacred than the good name of America, and the good name of our great

country is at stake. We have been defiled, maligned, if not damaged

irreparably in some parts of the world; and we cannot diminish the

consequences.

Just as the world has been fixated on those revolting photographs,

the world is watching now to see what America will do, not what we will

say, but how we will respond in fact. We should first of all rise up in

indignation and outrage and condemn these atrocities and not diminish

them. I do not care whether six soldiers or 600 were involved. We

should make it unmistakably clear that this is conduct that Americans

will not tolerate, we will not diminish, we will not excuse, and we

will punish with severity.

But our response cannot end with just indignation or even an abject

apology. We must make every effort to find out what was involved in

these atrocities, who was involved in these atrocities, directly

involved, and involved in a supervisory capacity up the chain of

command and down the chain of command, wherever it leads; and we must

punish everybody who is culpable in a way that makes clear this is

despicable conduct which we will not abide in the United States of

America.

That quest for facts must ask candidly, painfully whether or not

these were isolated acts, these atrocities were isolated acts of poorly

trained, undisciplined reservists, or whether they arise out of a

culture that permitted and allowed interrogation techniques that call

for hoods, sleep deprivation, and incessant questioning.

These are hard questions. We have got to ask them. Was this military

intelligence, military police, or was it both? Where did the system

break down?

In the committee room of the Committee on Armed Services, Mr.

Speaker, we have cast in bronze a plaque with article 1 clause 8 of the

Constitution which gives Congress the power to raise and support an

Army, a Navy, and provide for their regulation. This was the way that

the Parliament in the 17th century gained control of the government by

gaining control of the military, among other things, by keeping on a

short leash the law that permitted courts martial.

The Department of Defense is and ought to be conducting its own

investigation; but if we are worth our salt, if we are up to the powers

the Constitution vests in us, we must conduct our own investigation.

Woodrow Wilson once said that our greatest power is the power to

investigate, to inform, to check the Commander-in-Chief, to notify, to

make the American people understand what is happening in their

government. So this is not a matter that we can delegate. This is not a

matter that we can trust anyone else. This is a matter where we must

not take the role of outsiders looking in. We should launch our own

investigation. And one of the places where this resolution stops short,

I would say to my good friend, the chairman of the committee, is that

it does not emphatically call for our own independent investigation to

lead wherever the facts may take us. We should do it because it is our

duty. We should do it because of the trust we hold. We should do it for

the sake of the soldiers, the vast majority of soldiers, who have are

served honorably, who have served and sacrificed and secured the

interests of our country.

But here, as in many places, this resolution pulls its punch. I

support it. I will vote for it, but I think it should be more emphatic,

more outraged, and I think it should be more of a beginning to our

effort than an end, to the constitutional trust that we all hold, to

find the facts, to ask why we are so late ourselves in being informed,

and to see that the truth and the whole truth comes out.

Mr. Speaker, I have great respect for the gentleman, and

he and I served together, as he will recall, on one investigative panel

that looked into what happened in Beirut in 1983. We had both been

there a month before, both talked about what happened, and that was an

investigation that really did unearth new facts. And it is a good

illustration of why we need to have a similar investigation here where

our committee has searched its constitutional authority and gets to the

bottom of this matter.