Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, the whole world now knows about the abhorrent behavior

of American interrogators and guards at the Abu Ghraib prison and at

other facilities maintained by the U.S. military in Iraq and

Afghanistan. Unaccountably, neither Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld nor

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Meyers, took the matter

seriously enough to brief the President on the Pentagon report that

there were numerous, specific instances of ``sadistic, blatant, and

wanton criminal abuses'' by American prison guards at Abu Ghraib. The

President knew since January that a general investigation into the

treatment of prisoners was ongoing, but neither the Pentagon nor the

White House acknowledged that investigation until this week when

hundreds of extremely graphic photographs were made public.

I opposed the war in Iraq in part because I was convinced that

unilateral American military action in Iraq would lead to an increase

in the number of terrorists. The behavior of American prison guards at

Abu Ghraib will further breed hatred for the United States and sympathy

for those who do us harm. The images of American soldiers humiliating

prisoners in Iraq have caused severe damage to our efforts to establish

Iraq self-rule and hold free elections. Our standing in the Islamic

world is now far worse than it was even last week.

I am convinced that two actions are now necessary.

First, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld must resign. The events at Abu

Ghraib prison were the inevitable result of the Secretary's policy of

ignoring the Geneva Accords that govern the rights of prisoners.

Despite overwhelming criticism at home and around the world, Secretary

Rumsfeld insisted that the United States will no longer by bound by the

Geneva Convention and decades of previous practice by the U.S. military

in its handling of detainees in foreign countries will be ignored. the

Secretary's insistence on handling prisoners in secret and outside the

law has led to an unaccountable regime in which prisoners in both Iraq

and Afghanistan have been humiliated, beaten, tortured, sexually abused

and killed.

Second, there must be a comprehensive investigation by Congress into

the treatment of prisoners of war. There must be an investigation

independent of the Department of Defense, where the abuses occurred,

that includes an examination of the role of civilian contractors and

other civilians who may have played a role in the incidents of prisoner

abuse. A thorough investigation by Congress would reveal the systemic

deficiencies that contributed to such abuse. 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 profound seriousness of this situation?

The American people must have answers to these questions. I realize

that congressional investigations will take months, but Secretary

Rumsfeld must resign. By ignoring international law and insisting on a

policy that allowed these prisoner abuses in Iraq to occur, the

Secretary has greatly damaged our country's standing in the world and

compromised our national security.

America cannot win the peace in Iraq while, in America's name, some,

however few, commit outrages, as part of the occupation, more akin to

those attributed to Saddam Hussein.