Mr. Speaker, while the recent reports and graphic

photographs of the alleged prisoner abuse at the Abu Ghraib prison

sound similar to the atrocities that occurred under the cruel

dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, these unbelievable instances of

brutality and inhumanity, instead, allegedly took place under American

command, perpetrated by American troops. Sadly, the Abu Ghraib prison--

the very prison that epitomized all that was evil under Saddam

Hussein's regime to the Iraqi people--still represents evil, only under

a new name.

Accordingly, Congress must send an unwavering message to the Iraqi

people and to the rest of the world that the United States will not

tolerate the alleged atrocities that have occurred in the Abu Ghraib

prison. While I will vote for this resolution, I do not want to simply

join my colleagues who want to pay lip-service to a solution without

any subsequent action. Congress must ensure that the perpetrators of

the alleged brutality, as well as those leaders who let such inhumanity

occur under their watch, be brought to justice. Just as importantly,

Congress must investigate the scope of this problem; the increasing

number of revelations of alleged prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib and other

prisons in Iraq, leads me to believe that such brutality may not be

isolated to six or seven individuals. We need to ensure that such abuse

is not systemic within and outside of the chain of command by

conducting a bipartisan Congressional investigation and by holding

Congressional hearings.

Additionally, we must make sure that all people who participated in

this alleged abuse are held accountable. This includes the private

contractors who were allegedly involved in the brutality that took

place at Abu Ghraib. While the Department of Defense has reportedly

launched several investigations, none has yet to address the role that

the private contractors played. In fact, several reports indicate that

the private contractors who were named specifically in the classified

Taguba report are still working as paid contractors in Iraq. Not only

must Congress hold hearings to investigate the alleged role of the

private contractors in the alleged prison abuses, the U.S. Department

of Justice must also exercise its ability to investigate, and if

warranted, prosecute those individuals to the fullest extent of the

law.

Congress must also guarantee that this Administration is held

responsible for its actions or more precisely, its inaction, and for

its policies that may have allowed such atrocities to occur. The

actions of Secretary Rumsfeld and the Pentagon, including the decision

that the United States would no longer adhere to the Geneva Convention

as well as the ruling that detainees would be held without due process,

have arguably helped to create a standard for the treatment of

prisoners, which allows for humiliation, torture and murder.

Even worse, Mr. Rumsfeld has not only not read the Taguba report in

its entirety, he has failed on numerous instances to respond to other

reports of alleged violations and abuse. There is no excuse for his

woeful negligence. If Mr. Rumsfeld had responded to these reports,

these abuses may not have occurred to this degree, or at all. Mr.

Rumsfeld must be held responsible for his part and if doing so requires

his resignation, such action must then be called for.