Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House Armed Services

Committee, I rise in support of H. Res 627. Recent reports regarding

the alleged abuse of Iraqi prisoners by American soldiers are deeply

disturbing and inexcusable. While I know this outrageous behavior is

not characteristic of our men and women in uniform, we must make it

clear to the international community and our own citizens that such

actions are not our policy or common practices in Iraq, and they will

not be tolerated under any circumstances. It is unfortunate that these

abuses have overshadowed the work of the many service members

performing critical, and dangerous, missions to ensure a stable and

safe Iraq for the newly-freed Iraqi people.

I am equally troubled by the Administration's lack of attention to

such abuses in Iraq and elsewhere. There is no excuse for their failure

to act swiftly to remedy this stark violation of both the Geneva

Convention and basic human rights. Not only did they withhold such

allegations and the subsequent investigation from Congress, but the

flouting of international law continued while those responsible went

unpunished.

The Administration and the Pentagon must find those responsible and

hold them accountable for these heinous actions. I have joined many of

my colleagues in requesting that the Military Inspector General of the

Department of Defense supervise the investigation of tortured Iraqi

prisoners of war, and other reported violations of the Geneva

Convention at Abu Ghraib Prison. In addition, I have urged Attorney

General Ashcroft to investigate the role of private contractors in

these abuses. I hope that thorough and open investigations will allow

us to hold the appropriate parties responsible and ensure such behavior

never occurs again.