Mr. Speaker, Halabja is alluded to in the resolution

before us. Because Halabja is where Saddam slaughtered some 5,000 Iraqi

Kurds with chemical weapons. The resolution appears to suggest that

this despicable act--this crime against humanity--provides some

justification for the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

But the tragedy of Halabja occurred in March of 1988. And we did

nothing then. Because Saddam was our ally. And many of those currently

serving in the Bush Administration were key figures in that alliance.

They were fully aware of what happened in Halabja.

Our Secretary of Defense, Mr. Rumsfeld, was a special envoy to

Saddam. The Vice President, Dick Cheney, was Secretary of Defense for

the first President Bush. The Secretary of State, Colin Powell, served

as both National Security Advisor and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

The history of our relationship with Saddam is important so that we

do not repeat the errors of the 80s and 90s in today's war on terror.

Under Presidents Reagan and Bush, Iraq was removed from the terrorist

list. Full diplomatic relations were restored. Billions of dollars in

loan guarantees were provided to Saddam. The sale of dual-use

technology for weapons of mass destruction was approved--no wonder,

after the first Gulf War, that we found that Iraq had an advanced

nuclear weapons program. We gave them the tools to build it. We let

other countries supply U.S. military equipment. We even shared highly

sensitive satellite intelligence with Saddam's army. And even though we

knew Saddam was using chemical weapons against Iran, the U.S. prevented

the United Nations from condemning Iraq.

According to a Congressional Research Service report, which I will

insert into the Record, not only did we support Saddam, but

when the Congress tried to impose sanctions on Iraq for the use of

chemical weapons, the Reagan and Bush Administrations blocked those

efforts.

I fear now we are forging similar unholy alliances in our war on

terror. In Uzbekistan we are supporting a tyrant who, according to our

own State Department, heads an oppressive regime that has more than

5,000 political prisoners. In Turkmenistan, we are allied with another

Stalinist thug, by the name of Turkmenbashi, who has created a

personality cult that rivals Saddam's. He's renamed January after

himself, and the month of April after his mother.

So let us remember the lessons of Halabja. If we are going to speak

of democracy and liberty, let us practice it. If we are going to talk

about human rights, let us defend them. If we are sincere about the war

on terror, let us not ally ourselves with those illegitimate heads of

state who terrorize their own people. Let us keep what credibility we

have left.