Mr. Speaker, the resolution before us today seeks to

rewrite history. It recognizes that on March 16, 1988, Iraq used

mustard gas and other nerve agents against the Kurds in Halabjah, Iraq,

killing an estimated 5,000 people. This is an atrocity that is used by

many, including members of the President's war cabinet, as

justification for invading Iraq.

Yet, if the gassing of the Kurds was a reason for war, why did these

same people in both the Reagan and the first Bush administrations work

to increase aid, cooperation, trade and intelligence-sharing with Iraq

after the gassing occurred? Before history is rewritten, it is

important to set the record straight about what did happen in this

tragic event.

Secretary of State Colin Powell was Ronald Reagan's National Security

Adviser from December 1987 to January 1989 and was the chairman of the

Joint Chiefs from 1989 to 1993.

Under Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz was Under Secretary of

Defense for Policy from 1989 to 1993.

National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice was a director on the

National Security Council from 1989 to 1993.

Vice President Dick Cheney was the Republican whip in the House in

1988 and the Secretary of Defense from 1989 until 1993.

Why then, when they were in positions of tremendous influence, did

they not cry foul when this atrocious gassing happened? Briefly, here

is what they did after the Halabjah gassing happened.

In 1988, the Reagan Administration sent $1.1 billion in loan

guarantees to Iraq.

According to declassified State Department documents, the United

States shared intelligence data with Iraq before and after this mass

murder.

In early October 1989, President Bush signed a national security

directive to expand political and economic ties with Iraq, including $1

billion in new aid to Iraq.

On October 31, 1989, Secretary of State Baker personally intervened

with the Agriculture Department to get more money to go to Iraq.

On April 19, 1990, the National Security Council did the same thing.

Following the end of the Gulf War, U.N. inspectors discovered that

front companies for every known site at which Iraq developed biological

and chemical weapons bought American computers with licenses approved

by the Reagan and Bush administrations.

Weapons of mass destruction did exist in Iraq, but that was 15 years

ago. We missed our chance to do something about it, and we cannot allow

history to be rewritten here today. This war was not about Halabja or

other human rights abuses. It was a preordained preemptive war of

choice based upon twisted intelligence and driven by an equally twisted

ideological agenda.