Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart,

but my conscience is clear. I am so sick and tired of seeing so many of

our young men and our young women die in Iraq.

Why has our Commander in Chief led them to their deaths in this

unnecessary war? What will we tell the parents who will never see their

children again? What will we tell the children longing in vain for

their mothers and fathers to come home? Why did they die? Why?

After the atrocities we have committed against the Iraq prisoners of

war, after the physical and psychological damage we have inflicted on

the people of that nation, we can no longer truthfully say we are

leading Iraq to freedom. Before the war, we were told that we would be

welcomed as liberators.

Mr. Speaker, I say to you today, we must take a good hard look at our

leadership in America. I say to you today, we must hold them

accountable for mistake after mistake we have committed in this war. We

must hold them accountable for the deaths of our young people, and we

must hold them accountable for the unjust torture of our prisoners of

war.

Mr. Speaker, it is not a question of who committed these unbelievable

acts of torture. It is not a question of who, but what. What led to

this flagrant disregard for the humanity of our fellow human beings?

Those at the highest level of this government, the President, the

Vice President and the Secretary of Defense, they have all created the

climate and the environment that led to these abuses. They have

disregarded the sovereignty of another nation. Now our soldiers have

disregarded the humanity of the citizens of Iraq.

Violence begets violence, Mr. Speaker. A military overthrow of

another government does not lead to a peaceful democracy.

American soldiers smiling as they humiliate citizens of Iraq. There

must be a sense of righteous indignation in America about what happened

in those prison cells, and there must be a sense of righteous

indignation in this Congress against these unspeakable acts.

Mr. Speaker, I have said it in the past, and I will say it again

today: war is messy. It is bloody. It tends to not just hide the truth,

but to sacrifice the truth.

Why did it take so long for this information to come out? Why did the

officials at the highest level of government try to hide these crimes

against humanity? Why did they try to cover them up?

Mr. Speaker, we have made mistakes, yes; but it is not enough to

issue an apology. It is not enough to say we are sorry. We should issue

an apology, but we should say we are sorry also.

But, Mr. Speaker, the handwriting is on the wall. It is time for us

to get out. It is time for us to bring our young men and our young

women home. It is time for us to close this very dark and sordid

chapter in the history of our great Nation.