Mr. President, I rise today to echo the horror that all of

our citizens felt when we first viewed the photographs taken at Abu

Ghraib prison. It is a stain upon the honor of our nation and the

actions of these few individuals have undermined many of the

substantial gains and sacrifices that our service men and women have

achieved since the events of September 11th.

At the same time, it is important to remember that these are the

disgraceful actions of a few and by no means do they represent the hard

work and honorable service of the 138,000 soldiers, sailors, airman,

marines, and coast guardsman that are serving our country in Iraq and

surrounding countries.

During this trying time, I am also reminded that one of our troops'

primary responsibilities is to do what is necessary to minimize

civilian casualties. As some of my colleagues have mentioned on

numerous occasions, one of their most vivid memories of the war was

when a young American service member ran out onto an exposed bridge in

order to save a young Iraqi woman. This is just one of many examples of

the high personal, professional and moral conduct that is displayed

every day by our Nation's service members.

The question then arises, how do we remove this stain on our honor?

Our commander-in-chief, the President, as always, is leading the way by

expressing his outrage over these actions and has apologized to the

world.

The Department of Defense has followed the President's example.

In his very forthcoming and candid comments before the Senate Armed

Services Committee, the Secretary of Defense apologized and took full

responsibility for these mistakes.

The statements by President Bush and Secretary Rumsfeld were the

hallmarks of leadership and show the world what is best about the

United States. It is the sign of a great nation to acknowledge openly

when laws have been broken, bring those violators to justice, and apply

the law equally to all. We are working with the Iraqi people to use

these same legal principles as the cornerstone of their developing

legal system. Therefore, it is my hope that the results of the trials

to come will form the real enduring image in minds of the Iraqi people.

I strongly support the resolution that is before the Senate. It adds

our apology to those offered by the President and the Secretary of

Defense; it rightly commends the vast majority of service members who

are serving nobly abroad to support liberty; and it reiterates our

commitment to bring to justice those who broke the law.

It is a beginning to set things right.

However, I am dismayed to learn that some have taken this opportunity

to make a political point. They have called on the Secretary to resign.

It is troubling that some would take advantage of these horrific acts

in order to achieve a political gain during an election year.

This is a Secretary of Defense who has continued to show that he is a

man of honor by taking direct responsibility for the actions of a few

rogue individuals.

Secretary Rumsfeld has proven conclusively time and again that he is

a positive agent for change at the Department of Defense. I know of no

other individual who will engage in a more aggressive investigation of

the events that have occurred and will institute whatever changes are

necessary to prevent these violations from ever happening again.

We have much to do to repair our credibility.

The President's apology, followed by the acceptance of responsibility

by Secretary Rumsfeld and the actions of the Senate today, begin this

process.

However, this process will also require a rigorous investigation.

There is one man who I know who is up for that challenge and it is

Secretary Rumsfeld. This great Nation must stand behind him.