Mr. Speaker, I, along with many of my

colleagues, had the opportunity to view the photographs of the prisoner

abuses in Iraq this past week, and I have had many of my constituents

calling me and questioning me about these issues. I certainly agree

with all of those who express outrage to see this kind of abuse going

on, perpetrated by Americans. However, I disagree strongly with many of

those who look at these recent developments and assert we should never

have gone into Iraq in the first place, considering these great

problems that are developing over there.

I continue to feel very strongly the President did the right thing in

using force against Iraq, and that Iraq was a serious threat from a

terrorist perspective. And I think Tony Blair expressed this most

clearly and most succinctly when he addressed the House of

Representatives and the Senate in joint session right in this very

Chamber. The reason we went into Iraq was because if you ever had the

joining of weapons of mass destruction with the terrorist elements of

al Qaeda, instead of 3,000 dead, as we had on September 11, we could

have 30,000 or 300,000 killed.

We went into Iraq for the right reasons. And to those who would say

that the war in Iraq is unwinnable, I would assert that we have won the

war in Iraq. The challenge that we face today is winning the peace. And

clearly winning that peace is critically important.

By taking the war against terror into the Middle East, there are many

of our detractors, supporters of totalitarian regimes in that part of

the world who would like to see us fail in establishing democracy in

Iraq and would like to see some sort of totalitarian regime reemerge in

that country.

I will say this. If we cut and run as some people are proposing,

there will be tens of thousands of Iraqis who will die unnecessarily. I

was in Iraq in November of last year, and many Iraqis are cooperating

with us. They want to see a democratic institution established that can

govern their country, and many of those people will be imprisoned,

tortured, and executed if we see a regime resume in Iraq similar to

Saddam Hussein's regime.

Now, many are questioning as to how this could have happened and are

raising questions about Americans' character. How could it be that

Americans are guilty of these kinds of terrible things? And, indeed,

many of our detractors in the Middle East are trying to assert that we

are no different from Saddam and his henchmen in that they torture

people, and here we were, torturing people.

I think if we look at the brutal execution that we saw recently where

an American was executed in front of video cameras, we can clearly see

there is a difference between us and them.

The American people are rightly outraged, and they demand these

abuses stop and that investigations be conducted. Well, in reality, the

U.S. military responded appropriately months ago when they recognized

this problem. Investigations have been underway for a while, and the

abuses stopped long ago. Indeed, all we are seeing right now is a media

and public reaction because the photographs were made available.

The American people are good people, the American people are a moral

people, and we are reacting appropriately. The perpetrators of these

deeds will be brought to justice. Indeed, as I understand it, court

marshals are underway almost now as we speak. The real question is why

could a small few be driven to such terrible deeds? And that is a

legitimate question for us to ask.

Clearly, one important thing is a breakdown of command and control of

authority, and we need to seriously investigate what happened here with

the brigade commanders and the company commanders. How did we have

breakdowns in our military intelligence operations where standard

Geneva Conventions were ignored? But those investigations were

underway, and we will find out. And that is how America is different.

That will play out in the eyes of the public.

To compare the United States to Saddam Hussein and his brutal regime,

where this was business as usual, indeed it was official policy of the

regime, is just totally inaccurate and totally distorted.

What struck me most about viewing these photos was the simple fact

that many of these photos were pornographic. How could it come to pass

that American servicemen and women are perpetrating these kinds of acts

and recording them all on camera? Certainly we need to ask those

questions in this country today. But I do not think we can escape

asking the question of whether or not this is an impact of all the

availability of pornography in our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, we have too much pornography in this country, and this

body needs to act more and our court system needs to act more to try to

stop it. We need to ask the questions of how could a small few carry

out such morally reprehensible deeds.