Mr. Speaker, we are all shocked, saddened, and outraged

by recent reports of the abuse of prisoners in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The evidence cannot be in dispute. Graphic photos have gone from one

end of the earth to the other that show stripped young Iraqi men forced

to lie in a naked pile with a male and female soldier standing over

them and hamming for the camera. Whether we like it or not, the

picture of a hooded, wired prisoner, which one commentator described as

an eerie throwback to drawings from the Spanish Inquisition, has become

the new image of the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

And this hooded image may be one of the kinder and gentler images to

have yet seen the light of day. A highly critical report completed by

the Pentagon in March paints a much more graphic and disturbing picture

of prisoner abuse. The report outlines a number of intentional abuses,

and I will quote partly from it:

and

Yes, we are all sickened and outraged by the photos and the reports.

The President, his cabinet, military leaders, and the Secretary of

Defense have all lined up to say that this is not what America is

about; it is just the unfortunate handiwork of a few bad apples, and

they will be held accountable for their actions. Perhaps. But as Philip

Kennicott writes in today's Washington Post:

Should it be surprising, however, that these events have occurred

under the watchful eye of an administration that prizes secrecy and

loyalty above all else?

Mr. Speaker, the prisoner abuse scandal demonstrates that the United

States is on the precipice of a major foreign policy disaster. Our

standing in the world has been lowered to the point that the United

States has been isolated in the court of world opinion. President

Mubarak has stated unequivocally that the United States is the most

hated Nation in the Middle East. Ouch, that hurts. And sadly, even in

other parts of the world, we are no longer viewed as peacemakers but

instead as the principal threat to world peace.

To date, the war has cost the taxpayers over $150 billion. Now we are

being told that the war will cost more and that 135,000 U.S. troops

will remain in Iraq through 2005. Billions of dollars have been spent

to enrich private corporations such as Halliburton and Bechtel. Private

contractors are running around even interrogating prisoners with what

appears to be less than optimal supervision. Congress has failed thus

far to exercise its proper oversight of the war. What additional

scandals and outrages are lurking just around the corner?

Mr. Speaker, now is the time to change course in Iraq. The principal

architects of the war in Iraq, Secretary Rumsfeld and Deputy Secretary

Wolfowitz, have presided over a failed policy. It is past due time for

them to leave their posts and submit their resignations. The security,

safety, and prestige of our Nation is at stake, and we will not win the

hearts and the minds of Iraqis, the Arabs, and the rest of the world

with blood in the sand.