Mr. Speaker, it is with a mix of anger, sadness, and

frustration that I rise in support of the resolution that the House

passed earlier today.

Our words can do little to mitigate the damage that has been

inflicted upon our Nation, our Armed Forces, and our hopes for better

relations with the Islamic world.

Nevertheless, we must offer these words to the Iraqi victims and to

the world. All of us have seen the photographs of smiling American

military personnel mocking hooded, naked Iraqi prisoners. These images

of those degraded are vile. The smiles of those who would degrade are

grotesque.

The soldiers in the photos must not become the face of the American-

lead occupation in Iraq or of the American GI.

Sixty years ago at the end of World War II, the American soldier was

seen as a smiling supplier of chocolate bars. Our men and women in

uniform must not become known around the world for degrading and

humiliating unarmed, naked detainees.

I am deeply proud of our military. The vast majority of our men and

women in uniform serve with bravery, compassion and honor. Sadly, the

barbaric conduct at the Abu Ghraib prison reflects upon all our troops

and it is up to all of us, the Congress, the executive branch, the

justice system and the military itself to address this blight upon our

record. I am glad that several of our senior commanders in Iraq have

publicly apologized to the Iraqi people. I also believe that it was

important for President Bush to express his personal regret to the

Iraqi people and his commitment to a full investigation as he did

during two interviews with Arabic language television yesterday.

I have been to Iraq and met with our young men and women who are

serving there. The most disturbing aspect of this reprehensible conduct

at the prison is that it undermines and endangers the lives of American

soldiers who are diligently working every day in the most difficult

conditions. All of the countless acts of good will performed by our

soldiers, the rebuilding of hospitals, the opening of schools, the

reuniting of families, the building of civic institutions and the

foundation of representative government, all of these are undercut by

these acts.

Our campaign against terror has also been weakened. The war on terror

and the war in Iraq are ultimately wars of ideas. The idea of a civil

society under the rule of law, respective of human rights and

individual liberties is at war with the idea of a closed society devoid

of the right to speak as one chooses, without the free exercise of

religion and propagated by indiscriminate and murderous violence

against innocent men, women and children. The recent events at Abu

Ghraib prison, a place identified with the barbarity of the Saddam

Hussein regime, are a major setback in the war of ideas. A key element

of this war has been our attempt to convince the Islamic world that

America and the West are not out to humiliate and destroy Muslims. The

damage to that effort is incalculable and the soldiers who committed

these acts have betrayed the bravery, dignity and the sacrifice of

their fellow troops.

This resolution is our statement to the world and particularly to

Iraq and the Islamic world that the people of the United States are

united in their condemnation of the stomach-turning acts of abuse that

were perpetrated in our name. But this is only the beginning. We need a

thorough investigation to find out both where the breakdown in the

chain of command occurred and why Congress was left out of the loop,

even though the military has been investigating these incidents for

months and the investigation by Major General Antonio Taguba was

completed in late February, 2\1/2\ months ago. We also need to

determine whether the conduct at Abu Ghraib was an isolated set of

incidents or whether, as some have suggested, similar acts were

committed at other detention facilities in Iraq.

Nearly two centuries ago, Alexis de Toqueville is reputed to have

said,

That was true then. It is still

true today. Our greatness has been built upon countless acts of

goodness and not even an episode like this can undo that proud history,

but it should serve as a reminder that our Nation has succeeded because

Americans are strivers. We are always looking to better ourselves, our

communities, our country and the community of nations. We now face a

great challenge to that perception of goodness and we must all rise to

meet that challenge.