Mr. President, I rise today to reflect and respond to the

reports of what has happened in Iraq over the last several weeks--the

pictures emerging of U.S. soldiers abusing Iraqi prisoners, the

appalling treatment of those in our custody.

I have struggled over the last several days to put into words my own

reactions to these images from half a world away. I have been angered

by it, and I have been, in some ways, sickened by it. This has

besmirched the reputation of our country, damaged the reputation of our

soldiers serving in Iraq, the vast majority of whom have served

honorably, many of them heroically.

Yet, what is dominating the news not only in our country but around

the world are images of American soldiers torturing and humiliating

those we have captured. This does enormous damage to our cause against

terrorism. It does enormous damage to America's standing in the world.

Think of how we would feel if these images were of our

soldiers and American citizens being treated this way by Iraqis. What

would be the reaction in America if we saw our soldiers being

humiliated and abused in the most immoral ways?

This is, first and foremost, an issue of morality. What has happened

is morally wrong. It is wrong to humiliate people. It is wrong to abuse

people. It is wrong to torture people. Those are fundamental values.

Those are American values. Those are values that are shared by

virtually every person in this country. What has happened is not the

America that I know, not the America that I love.

If we think about the larger effects of what has occurred, nothing

can be more clear than that it has done enormous damage to our cause

against terrorism. Before this happened, 71 percent of the Iraqis had

come to see us as occupiers rather than as liberators. That is before

this occurred.

What can be the reaction of Iraqis now? After all of the words about

our intentions and what we hoped to do to help the Iraqi people emerge

from under a dictatorship and move toward freedom and democracy and the

most fundamental values that undergird this country, what can be their

feeling about America now?

I remember so well the President saying we had ended the torture

chambers of Saddam Hussein. I must say that made me proud, that we had

done something good in this war, that we had ended the torture chambers

of Saddam Hussein. I think we now have to ask, Have we just created our

own? That is what the pictures show. That is what the stories say.

That is not America. That is not what we stand for. We cannot let

that be the lasting image of what America has done.

In the last few days, the papers across the globe and television

stations around the world have been full of condemnation and anger

directed at America because there has been a failure, a failure of

values, a failure of leadership, a failure to put the best American

foot forward. These results will be long lasting, make no mistake about

it.

I graduated high school from an American Air Force base in Tripoli,

Libya, North Africa. I lived for 2 years in the Arab culture among

Muslims. I know if one were to try to design something that would

completely and totally enrage people raised in that culture, one could

not have designed a scenario worse than what has happened. To have an

American female in a prison where Iraqi men were naked, forced into

homosexual positions, you could not design a circumstance that would

more gravely enrage Muslim sensibilities than that.

Think of what our reaction would be. Think of the anger we would

feel. In their culture, there is nothing more profoundly humiliating

than that, and humiliation breeds anger, and anger breeds terrorism. We

have created a recruiting poster for al-Qaida that will plague us for

years.

Right at the heart of this is morality, fundamental morality, and it

is imperative that we stand up with one voice and say this is wrong, it

is morally wrong, and that we, first, admit to what occurred; that we

pledge it will never happen again; that we move to make amends for

those who have been injured and humiliated and tortured; and that we

take steps to assure ourselves and others this will never happen again.

Those are the basic steps of redemption under any moral code, and those

are the steps that America must take now.

After September 11, there was a wave of sympathy and support for

America all around the world. Muslims condemned what had occurred--or

at least a significant majority did--and all across the globe people

rushed to America's side. Now, if you take public opinion soundings

across the world, what one finds is we have dissipated that wave of

sympathy and support and replaced it with a rising level of disrespect

for America. That has serious consequences because, in the war on

terror, we need allies, we need people who will help out, we need

people who will provide information on threats to America.

I think we have to seriously rethink how we are conducting this war

on terror. I think the war in Iraq was an enormous diversion from the

real war on terror. We must remind ourselves it was not Iraq that

attacked the United States on September 11; it was al-Qaida.

Their acts were directed by Osama bin Laden, not by Saddam Hussein.

As evil and repugnant as Saddam Hussein, his sons and his regime were,

they were not the masterminds of the September 11 attack on the United

States. That was the dirty work of al-Qaida and Osama bin Laden. They

are the ones who ought to be our priority in holding people to account

for the vicious murder of nearly 3,000 Americans on September 11. It

was al-Qaida and Osama bin Laden who ought to have commanded top

priority in our move to hold people accountable and responsible for

those vicious attacks. Instead, I believe we have allowed ourselves to

be diverted by a war in Iraq that had nothing to do with the September

11 attacks.

I hope that as a nation we will rededicate our effort to go after

those who were responsible for the attacks on this country. It is now

over 950 days since the September 11 attacks on this country, and still

Osama bin Laden threatens America and American interests and our

allies. Still he is issuing threats. Just most recently, he has put a

bounty on the heads of those who stand with us.

If one looks at the priorities of our war on terror, we have 130,000

troops in Iraq and only 15,000 troops in Afghanistan. Many of our elite

units were taken off the hunt for al-Qaida and Osama bin Laden and

shifted to the Iraqi front to be replaced by units in Afghanistan

searching for Osama bin Laden whose specialty was Spanish culture. What

earthly sense does this make in the war on terror?

Our top priority should have been to continue aggressively the search

for Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida and their network of supporters who

continue to plan attacks on this country.

As I have searched for some way to understand what has occurred in

Iraq, I was reminded yesterday in the New York Times of a prison

experiment that was conducted at Stanford University in 1971. The

headline in the New York Times story is ``Simulated Prison in 1971

Showed a Fine Line Between Normal and Monster.''

These experiments were conducted by the man who was my professor of

psychology at Stanford University, Dr. Zimbardo. He took volunteers and

randomly split them into groups of ``guards'' and groups of

``prisoners.'' And he found within days of the prison experiment

beginning that the guards had become swaggering and sadistic to the

point of placing bags over the prisoners' heads, forcing them to strip

naked, and encouraging them to perform sexual acts. This was not half a

world a way in Iraq. This was on the campus of Stanford University in

California. That experiment and studies like it have given, as the New

York Times reports, insight into how ordinary people can, under the

right circumstances, do horrible things.

Professor Zimbardo said that when the news from Iraq emerged, he was

not surprised that it happened. He said: ``I have exact, parallel

pictures of prisoners with bags over their heads from the 1971 study,''

the prison experiment at Stanford University.

He went on to say that it is not that we put bad apples in a good

barrel; we put good apples in a bad barrel. That barrel corrupts

anything that it touches.

Maybe that is what occurred here. Maybe we put good apples,

fundamentally decent people, in a bad barrel and that barrel has

corrupted everything that it touched.

One thing that has been learned from these experiments is that in

situations where people have absolute power over others, it is

critically important that there are others who are watching, others who

are monitoring, others who are ensuring that there is not abuse. The

fact that proper oversight was not present is a failure of leadership,

and it is a failure of leadership that goes right up the chain of

command in our country.

I was asked yesterday, do I favor the resignation of the Secretary of

Defense, Mr. Rumsfeld. I responded by saying, I want to see the full

facts before I call for anyone's resignation or removal. I want to know

what did he know, when did he know it, and what did he do about it.

Those tests do not just apply to the Secretary of Defense; those

tests apply to everyone in the chain of command.

They apply to our commanders in Iraq. They apply to General Myers, the

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Those tests apply to the

Secretary of Defense and they apply to the President of the United

States. What did they know, when did they know it, and what did they do

about it?

What has occurred here is wrong. It is morally wrong. It has done

enormous damage to our country, damage that will last for a very long

time. Those who are responsible should be held to account and we should

make certain that nothing like this ever happens again. This is not

America. These are not American values. This is not how America acts

towards others.

The behavior shown in these photos and on these tapes are not the

best of America. They are the worst of America, and we can do so much

better. We are so much better.

I was also asked yesterday if I believe America should now leave Iraq

immediately. Yesterday I had lunch with the young people working in my

office for the spring semester, interns from all across my State. I

asked them the question, What do you think we should do? Even those who

felt passionately that America had made a mistake in going to war in

Iraq believe that we simply cannot leave now; that we have an

obligation to improve things; that we have an obligation to stabilize

things; that we have an obligation to prevent the bloodbath that would

certainly follow an immediate exodus by our country.

I voted against authorizing this war in Iraq because I did not

believe it was in the national security interest of the United States.

I believed we should not open a second front before we had finished

business with al-Qaida and Osama bin Laden. I believed Iraq would be a

distraction. I believed it would take us away from a successful

prosecution of the real war on terrorism. As much as I feel strongly

that that was correct, I also think it would be a mistake for the

United States to exit precipitously from Iraq. The fact is, we are now

responsible for what occurs there. We have an obligation to try to make

this work.

I do not believe that means the United States has an obligation to

make a country in the image of America.

I ask unanimous consent for an additional 5 minutes.

But I do believe we have a responsibility to bring

stability and to give the Iraqi people a chance to make judgments about

their own future. That, fundamentally, is what democracy is all about.

It is not about America picking the leaders for Iraq. I must say, last

week I was taken aback to read Mr. Bremer and others talking about how

we are going to pick Iraq's new leaders. Think about that. How we are

going to decide who Iraq's leaders are going to be? That is not

democracy. That is not the role of America. Our job is not to pick

Iraq's leaders. How arrogant is that, to say we can go into a country

and designate the leaders and think that those people would have any

credibility among their own people?

If you want to set up a group for failure, have them chosen by the

United States. And for us to tell the Iraqi people, these are your

leaders, what does that have to do with democracy? Those are not the

values of America. We would not permit for one moment another person to

choose our leaders. What business do we think we have choosing theirs?

I think the obligation we have is to help Iraq pick their own leaders

and have a society where there is sufficient security for them to make

those decisions and for them to be able to rebuild an economy that has

been shattered by decades of despotic rule by Saddam Hussein, and now

by this war.

This is an important moment in history for our country. We are being

tested, and we need to apply the best of American values and the high

standards of morality that have made this country great. We need to

send a signal to the rest of the world about what we really stand for.

We need to show all those across the globe that America is fully

committed to the fundamental values of democracy and freedom and for

the ability of people to choose their own leaders free from fear and

intimidation and terror. That is a test that we have faced many times

in our history, and it is a test that we have passed with flying

colors.

At the same time, we should remind the world of the proudest moments

in American history when, over and over, this country stood up against

terrorism and fascism and communism and helped the rest of the world be

free. That is in the finest traditions of America. Those are the values

we embrace. That is the example we offer the world. Anything less

detracts from America's greatness.

I hope in the days ahead that this body and the other body and the

President of the United States will reflect on a new direction for our

country in Iraq and in the war on terror. We are faced with a grave

threat. I believe the strategy that has been pursued is one that,

instead of reducing the threat to our Nation, has actually increased it

because when one humiliates, that creates anger, and anger breeds

terrorism and strengthens those who wish to bring America down.

So this is a turning point. We have an opportunity to choose which

direction we take. So many times in our past we have been faced with

these choices, and always America has responded with its best. I am

confident that we will do the same now.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.