Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, the Iraqi regime has posed a threat to peace, to the United

States, and to the world for too long.

In order to protect America against

this very real and growing threat, I

support giving the President the authority to use force, to use military action if necessary against Iraq. Without

a doubt this is one of the most difficult

decisions I have had to make as a Member of Congress. But after briefings

from the administration, testimony

from congressional hearings, I am convinced the threat to our Nation’s safety is real. After repeatedly failing to

comply with U.N. inspections, Saddam

Hussein’s efforts to build weapons of

mass destruction, biological, chemical

and nuclear, have gone unchecked for far too long. The world cannot allow

him to continue down this deadly path. Saddam Hussein must comply with

U.N. inspections; but if not, America and our coalition must be prepared to

meet this threat. After the Gulf War, in compliance

with U.N. resolutions, a no-fly zone was

implemented. The purpose was to protect Iraqi Kurds and Shiite Muslims

from Saddam Hussein’s aggressions and

to conduct aerial surveillance. But since its inception, pilots patrolling

the zones have come under repeated attack from Iraqi missiles and artillery.

The connection between Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction and its longstanding ties to terrorist networks

such as al Qaeda has significantly altered the U.S. security environment.

The two linked together pose a clear

and present danger to our country.

Consider that Saddam Hussein could

supply the terrorists who have sleeper

cells in our land with weapons of mass

destruction to attack the U.S. while

concealing his responsibility for the

action. It is a very real and growing threat. The Iraqi regime has been

building a case against itself for more than 10 years, and if we fail to heed the

warning signs and allow them to continue down this path, the results could

be devastating, but they would not be a surprise.

After September 11, we are on notice.

If Saddam Hussein refuses to comply with U.N. resolutions and diplomatic

efforts, we have only one choice in

order to ensure the security of our Nation and the safety our citizens.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS), a member of the

Committee on International Relations.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, years ago

when I was a world away fighting to contain the scourge of communism in

Southeast Asia, a movement grew up here at home to protest what we were

doing. Late in the war, one of the anthems of that movement was a song by

John Lennon called ‘‘Give Peace a Chance.’’ We are not here to debate the

Vietnam War, but we are discussing

war and peace. Peace is a very precious

thing, and we should defend it and even

fight for it. And we have given peace a chance for 11 long years. We gave peace a chance through di-

plomacy, but Saddam Hussein has broken every agreement that came out of

that diplomacy. We gave peace a

chance through weapons inspections,

but Saddam Hussein orchestrated an

elaborate shell game to thwart that effort. We gave peace a chance through

sanctions, but Saddam Hussein used

those sanctions as an excuse to starve

his own people. We gave peace a chance

by establishing no-fly zones to prevent

Saddam Hussein from killing more of

his own citizens, but he shoots at our

planes every day. We gave peace a

chance by allowing him to sell some oil

to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi

people, but instead he used the revenue

to build more weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Speaker, we have given peace a

chance for more than a decade, and it

has not worked. Even now our President is actively working to achieve a

diplomatic solution by getting the

United Nations to pass a resolution

with teeth; and while the United Nations has an important role to play in

this, no American President and no

American Congress can shirk our responsibility to protect the American

people. If the U.N. will not act, we must.

If we go down to the other end of the

national Mall, we will see on the Korean War Memorial the words ‘‘Freedom is not free.’’

Peace is not free either. What some of those who are protesting the President’s request for military authority do not

understand is that our freedoms were not won with

poster paint. Antiwar protestors do not

win our freedoms or our peace. The

freedom to live in peace was won by

men and women who gave their lives

on the battlefields of history.

As the world’s only remaining superpower, we now even have an even

greater responsibility to stand up to

prevent mass murder before it happens.

No world organization can override the

President’s duty and our duty to protect the American people. If Mohammed Atta had had a nuclear weapon, he

would have used that weapon in New

York and not an airplane. By all accounts Saddam Hussein is perhaps a

year away from having nuclear weapons. He already has chemical and bio-

logical weapons capable of killing millions.

When police detectives investigate a

crime, they look for three things:

means, motive, and opportunity. Clearly Saddam Hussein has the means, he

has the weapons, and he has the motive. He hates America, he hates the

Kurds, he hates Kuwaitis, he hates

Iran, he hates Israel, he hates anyone

who gets in his way. And we know that

when he hates people, he kills them,

sometimes by the thousand. He has

shown the propensity to use his weapons and so he has the means and the

motive. But does he have the opportunity? Saddam Hussein could easily

pass a suitcase with a nuclear weapon

off to an al Qaeda terrorist with a one-way ticket to New York. No fingerprints, no evidence, and several million

dead Americans.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very real danger. Before September 11 we might

have thought this could never happen.

Today we are too wise to doubt it, and

it is a danger that grows every day.

Every day Saddam Hussein grows

stronger. Every day Saddam Hussein

builds more chemical and biological

weapons. Every day Saddam Hussein

comes a little closer to achieving nuclear weapons capability. Every day

that passes, America grows more vulnerable to a Saddam-sponsored terrorist attack.

In this case inaction is more costly

than action. The price of delay is a

greater risk. The price of inaction

could be catastrophic, even worse than

September 11. We must disarm Saddam Hussein.

Mr. Speaker, we are not advocating

war. We are calling for peace, but peace

might only be possible if we are willing

to fight for it, and the President needs

that authority to do that. I urge support for the resolution.