Mr. Speaker, I join my many esteemed colleagues today in support of

the resolution authorizing the President to use force against Iraq. This is a

historic moment in our country, and it

should not be taken lightly. But it is

not the first historic moment when it

comes to Saddam Hussein’s regime.

This is hopefully the last chapter in a

long saga of our dealings with Saddam Hussein.

More than 20 years ago he began to

endanger his neighbors. More than 12

years ago he invaded Kuwait. His cruel

regime has had a long history of the

kind of practices that are not tolerated

anywhere on this globe, and yet they persist.

Mr. Speaker, Saddam Hussein is in

fact writing the last chapter as we

speak in a 12-year war. We are not considering action which would be preemptive or a strike to begin a war. We are,

in fact, dealing with an absence of

peace which has cost America lives and

time and effort for more than a decade.

Over the past 10 years he has made a

mockery of the United Nations and the

multi-national diplomacy that we have

in fact participated in. He has systematically undermined the United Nations resolutions that were designed to

disarm and reform his regime. He

threw out weapons inspectors in 1998

and has rebuilt his weapons of mass de-

struction; and there is no question he

intends to target America. In fact, in

1993 he targeted President George Herbert Bush for assassination.

Each of those events was more than

sufficient for us to do what we now

must do. But the United States was patient. The United Nations was patient.

We have all been patient for more than

a decade. I believe that we need not

look for the proverbial straw that

breaks the camel’s back; but in fact we

need to simply ask, Why did we wait so

long? Why did we tolerate this dictator

so long? Even why in 1998 when the last

administration rightfully so called for

a regime change did we not act?

I hope that this body in its consideration of this resolution does not ask

why should we act today, but in fact

should ask why should we not act and

why did we take so long?

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I yield myself

such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in order to have the dialogue

stay focused, I think we need to

periodically look at the threat.

We have no doubt in this body.

Speakers on both sides of the aisle

have repeated the need to deal with

someone who has used mustard gas and

other agents against his own people.

There is no question in this body about

the war crimes committed by this dictator.

But when we talk about the threat

not being imminent, I just want to

read from an unclassified document

something for us all to focus on as we

again talk about do we or do we not

empower the President to deal with all

the cards in his hand, not missing the

one of potential military action.

‘‘Mustard gas, potential agents based

on best estimates, 200 metric tons;

sarin gas, 200 metric tons; VX, up to 200

metric tons; and anthrax, at least 8,500

liters. That is 2,245 gallons, but it could

be as much as 10-fold that, 22,457 gallons of anthrax.

We all know in this body all too well

what an almost infinitesimal amount

in an envelope can do. I hope that we

will think about this as we talk about

whether or not to empower the President

to have all the full force of our

military at his disposal in negotiations.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the remaining time.

Mr. Speaker, as I close, I would like

to thank the gentleman from New Jersey.

This has been, in fact, a long debate.

It has been spirited at times, but,

in fact, it has always lived up to the

gravity of what we are considering, and

we owe that in no small part to the

gentleman from New Jersey.

The gentleman from Illinois (Mr.

HYDE) has empowered me to close, and

I take that as a very unusual thing for

a freshman and something that is pretty

important for somebody who not

only supports this resolution but who

supports this resolution often to the

dismay of other Arab Americans.

My family emigrated from the Middle

East, one side of my family emigrated

from the Middle East, and I bear

an Arab surname, and so for me and I

think for many people who are going to

support this resolution tomorrow, this

has to be a special case. We are not

pushing an 11-year or 12-year war to

the brink of a final military conflict lightly.

I would call the Speaker’s attentions

to these advertisements that came out

of Baghdad September 11 and a year

after September 11 as just another example

of what is different about Saddam Hussein’s regime.

After September 11, both as a member

of the Committee on International

Relations and I believe as one of the

Members of this body whose ancestry

goes back to the Middle East, I was visited

by not just one but every single

ambassador from the Middle East represented

in this country. In every case

they expressed their horror, their sympathy

and distanced themselves from

the terrible events of September 11;

and they did so in private, not intending

to do it for the camera, but so that

I would understand. And I am sure they

visited virtually every other Member

so they would understand that that is

not what the Arab people are about,

that is not what Arab society, one of

the great societies that helped create

the world as we know it today, is about.

It is not what the Iraqi people are

about, and to put out propaganda in

the Baghdad press talking about September

11 being Allah’s revenge, in

fact, says it all about this regime.

Saddam Hussein and his party and

his almost 30-year rule has been all

about killing and violence and hatred.

He is not alone, but he is in a league of

his own. And as we close for tonight

and we move into tomorrow’s short debates

of 1 hour and final passage probably

by midday, I hope that all of us

will remember that this is not about

Arab people, not in this country and

not anywhere in the world.

The need to empower the President

to take this action, should it become

necessary, is all about the uniqueness

of this administration of Saddam Hussein

and the actions he has taken in

the past, he takes in the present, and

we are quite certain that if that regime

is not changed or replaced, he will take in the future.

I say as one Arab American to the

many Arab Americans and Muslim

Americans in this country and perhaps

to the Arabs around the world, America

and particularly my community in

America has absolutely no hatred and

no willingness to participate in anything

that is adverse to the Arab people.

But we do have to insist that the

kind of tyranny that has gone on in

Iraq for so many decades must in fact

stop, either by Saddam Hussein living

up to his obligations under the U.N.

resolutions or his being driven from

power and an Arab leader who will respect

the rule of law and who will provide

the kind of fairness for his own people can be found.