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

Mr. Speaker, this is a very difficult vote for me. If there is ever one vote

that should be made in the national interest, a vote that transcends politics

and where Members must vote their

conscience, it is the one that is before us tonight.

I have received thousands of letters

against the resolution, and just this

past weekend over 15,000 gathered in

Central Park in my district to protest.

But what is at stake are not our political careers or an election, but the future of our country and our way of life.

I believe there is a more compelling

case now against Saddam than 12 years

ago. Then the threat was of a geopolitical nature, a move to change the

map of the Middle East. But I never

saw it as a direct threat to our Nation. The main question before us today is

whether Saddam is a threat to the United States and our allies. No one

doubts that he has chemical and biological weapons. No one doubts that he

is trying to stockpile weapons of mass destruction. No one doubts that he has

thwarted inspections in the past and

has developed UAVs. No one doubts

that he has consistently worked to develop nuclear power. No one doubts

that he has twice invaded his neighbors. The question is, Will he use these

weapons against the United States and

our allies, and can we deter him without using force?

As Lincoln said in the beginning days

of the Civil War: ‘‘The dogmas of the

quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled

high with difficulty, and we must rise

to the occasion. As our case is new, so must we think anew and act anew.’’

I would be for deterrence if I thought it would work. We are in a new era and

no longer in the Cold War. Deterrence

depends on the victim knowing from

where the aggression will come and the

aggressor knowing the victim will

know who has attacked him. It has been a year since the anthrax attacks

in our Nation, and we still do not know

where the attacks came from. Saddam has likely taken notice that we were unable to tie evidence of attacks

to their source, and if he believes he can give weapons of mass destruction to

terrorists to use against us without our knowing he has done so, our ability to

deter him from such a course of action will be greatly diminished.

Opponents of our war talk about the

unintended consequences of war. They

do not talk about the unwanted consequences of not disarming Saddam. In

today’s environment, it is very possible

he could supply weapons to terrorists

who will attack the United States or

our allies around the world. I am pleased the resolution has been

improved with congressional input. We

should proceed carefully, step by step, and use the United Nations and the

international community to disarm Saddam so that we are safer in the

United States and New York and in our

respective States and clear around the world.

Just today I spoke with British Permanent Representative to the United

Nations, Sir Jeremy Greenstock, on this issue. Ambassador Greenstock told

me that the members of the Security Council, both permanent and otherwise, will approve a robust inspection

resolution; and if this fails to disarm

Iraq, he expects a second resolution that may authorize force.

I come from a family of veterans. Most recently, my brother served in the 101st Airborne in Vietnam. It happens to be his birthday today. He told

me that he parachuted many times behind enemy lines to acquire enemy intelligence. He saw many of his friends

machine gunned down. This searing experience left deep wounds. So it is my

deepest hope that we will not have to

send our men and young women into harm’s way.

So it is with a very heavy heart, but a clear resolve, that I will be voting to

support this resolution. The accumulation of weapons of mass destruction by

Saddam and the willingness of terrorists to strike innocent people in the

United States and our allies across the

world have, unfortunately, ushered in a dangerous new era. It is a danger that we cannot afford

to ignore. I will be voting yes. I will be supporting the President on this resolution.