Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me

time. Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate that

we fully discuss here the most serious

responsibility that is entrusted to Congress, and that is authorizing the

President to use force in the defense of

our Nation. The decision by Congress

to authorize the deployment of the

U.S. military requires somber analysis

and sober consideration, but it is not a

discussion that we should delay.

The President has presented to the

American people a compelling case for

intervening in Iraq, and this body has

acted deliberately in bringing to the

House floor a resolution that unequivocally expresses our support for our

Commander-in-Chief. The threat to our national security

from Iraq could not be more apparent.

After the 1991 Persian Gulf War, the

United Nations Special Commission on

Iraq succeeded in destroying thousands

of chemical munitions, chemical

agents and precursor chemicals. Iraq

admitted to developing offensive biological weapons, including botulinum,

anthrax, aflatoxin, clostridium and others.

Yet this list of poisons describes only

what the U.N. inspectors were able to

detect in the face of official Iraqi resistance, deception and denial. They

could not account for thousands of

chemical munitions, 500 mustard gas

bombs and 4,000 tons of chemical weapons precursors. In the intervening period,

development efforts have continued unabated, and accelerated following the withdrawals of U.N. inspectors.

Iraq has repeatedly demonstrated a

resolve not only to develop deadly

weapons of mass destruction but to use

them on their own people: 5,000 killed,

20,000 Iranians killed through mustard

gas clouds and the most deadly agents

that were inflicted on human beings.

Perhaps in different hands the deadly

arsenal possessed by Saddam Hussein’s

Iraq would be less of an imminent threat.

This authorization of force that we

will vote on soon is at some level also

a recognition of the ongoing state of

war with Iraq. In the last 3 weeks, 67

attempts have been made to down collision aircraft. Four hundred and six

attempts have been made this year.

The U.S. has struggled against the

tepid resolutions and general inactivity of the international community

for a decade. Regime change cannot

happen through domestic posturing.

Disarmament requires more than fervent hopes and good wishes.

On December 9, 1941, President Roosevelt said, ‘‘There is no such thing as

impregnable defense against powerful

aggressors who sneak up in the dark

and strike without warning. We cannot

measure our safety in terms of miles

on any map.’’ In 1941, Congress stood with the

President and promised full support to

protect and defend our Nation. I urge

our colleagues today to do the same.