Mr. Speaker, as Members of Congress

we face no more important issues than

those of war and peace, and for that

reason I agree wholeheartedly with my

colleague from Ohio (Mrs. JONES) who

just spoke that this must be a vote of

Congress. For that reason this ex-

tended debate on the House floor is

very appropriate and the views expressed by Members of Congress are deserving of respect. Having read it closely, my view is that the carefully crafted resolution before us is the right approach.

On Monday in my hometown of Cincinnati, the President of the United

States clearly explained to the country

what is at stake. He not only made the

case that inaction is not an option, but

that given the dangers and defiance of

the Iraqi regime, the threat of military

action must be an available option.

Time and time again, Saddam Hussein

has proven to be a threat to the peace

and security of the region. That is why

the international community through

the United Nations has repeatedly

called on the Iraqi regime to keep its

word and open all facilities to weapons

inspections. Yet repeatedly Iraq has refused, defying the United Nations.

There is no reason to believe that without the threat of force, the disarmament the Iraqi regime agreed to as

part of the disarmament after the Gulf

War more than 10 years ago will ever occur.

And there is other gathering danger

and risk to America and all freedom-loving people. The horror of September

11, Mr. Speaker, awakened us to that

reality. We know that the Iraqi regime

is producing and stockpiling chemical

and biological weapons. We know they are in the process of obtaining a nuclear weapon.

We know that this regime has a consistent record of aggression of supporting terrorist activities.

Once the Iraqi regime possesses a nuclear weapon, it, or the technology

that creates it, could easily be passed

along to a terrorist organization. Already chemical and biological weapons

could be provided. We must not permit this to happen.

The resolution will authorize military action but only if it is necessary.

I would hope that every Member in this

Chamber would pray that it would not

be necessary. But the choice is clear,

and it is a choice for the Iraqi regime

to make. If the regime refuses to disarm, our military and our coalition

partners will be compelled to make a

stand for freedom and security against

tyranny and terrorism. And if we take

this course, it will not be unilateral as

others on this floor have said. The

United States will not be alone.

I commend the President for his diplomatic initiatives, for continuing to

try to work through the United Nations, and for an impressive array of

coalition partners already assembled. I

do not take lightly the fact that the

course laid out by this resolution may

put at risk the lives of young men and

women in uniform. But I believe not

authorizing the possible use of force

would put even more innocent Americans at risk.

This is a solemn debate and a tough

vote of conscience. Mine will be a vote

for an approach that I believe faces up

to the very real dangers we face and

maximizes the chance that these dangers can be addressed with a minimum

loss of life. I will strongly support our

President, Mr. Speaker, and I support the resolution.