Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time. Mr. Speaker, if there is anything

that 9–11 and the events of that day

taught us, it is that our policy of containment and deterrence does not work

against terrorists who are willing to

blow themselves up and, at the same

time, innocent civilians. I rise in support of this historic resolution, fully aware that this may be

one of the most important votes this body casts.

We all hope that we can disarm Iraq

without bloodshed. That is our goal.

We all hope and pray that risking the

lives of the women and men of our

Armed Forces will prove unnecessary.

We hold out hope that this time,

against the recent tide of history, Saddam will allow U.N. inspectors full access, free of deception and delay. But if

the events of 9–11 and ongoing intelligence-gathering have shown us anything, Mr. Speaker, it is that we must

remain ever vigilant against the new

and growing threat to the American

way of life. Terrorists who are willing

to commit suicide to murder thousands

of innocents will not be halted by the

conventional means and policies of deterrence we have deployed.

The greatest danger we face is in not

acting, in assuming the terrorists who

are committed to destroying our Nation will remain unarmed by Saddam.

The first strike could be the last strike for too many Americans.

Mr. Speaker, we know enough at this

point about the specific dangers posed

by Iraq to make this resolution unavoidable: large stockpiles of chemical

and biological weapons, an advanced

and still-evolving nuclear weapons production program, support for and the

harboring of terrorist organizations, the brutal repression and murder of its

own civilian population, and the utter

disregard for U.N. resolutions and dictates.

Mr. Speaker, we know enough.

We all applaud and support the President’s commitment to working with

the U.N. Security Council to deal with

the threat that Iraq poses to the

United States and our allies. I continue

to hope and pray for a peaceful, inter-

nationally driven resolution to this cri-

sis, but I believe that passing this resolution strengthens the President’s hand to bring this about.

But with the events of September 11

still fresh in our minds and in our hearts, we cannot rest our hopes on the

possibility that Iraq will comply with U.N. resolutions. Iraq has defied the

United Nations openly for over a decade.

Today we are being asked to fulfill our responsibilities to our families, our

constituents, and our Constitution; and

I think we have to give the President

the appropriate tools to proceed if Saddam does not cooperate with the arms

inspectors and comply with existing U.N. resolutions.

While we should seek the active support of other nations, we must first and

foremost protect our homeland, our people, and our way of life.

Mr. Speaker, I pray for the best as we

prepare for the worst. Today, we recognize that there may come a time in a

moment when we realize that we are

involved in a profound global struggle

in which Saddam’s regime is clearly at

the epicenter on the side of evil; when it becomes clear there are times when

evil cannot be appeased, ignored, or

simply forgotten; when confrontation remains the only option.

There are moments in history when

conscience matters, in fact, when conscience is the only thing that matters.

I urge my colleagues to vote their conscience and acknowledge the danger

confronting us, by not entrusting our

fate to others, by demonstrating our resolve to rid the world of this menace.

I urge this with a heavy heart, but a heart convinced that if confrontation

should be required, we are ready for the task.