Mr. Speaker,

I appreciate my colleague yielding

me the time.

Mr. Speaker, last evening we completed

the work on the Defense appropriations

bill. That measure is designed

to provide the funding whereby America

is able to carry forward its responsibility

in the world as the force for

peace in our world. I am very pleased

with the results of that bill, and while

we were not discussing this with the

other body yesterday, I could not help

but from time to time watch the discussions

of this measure on the floor.

This resolution is a very, very important

statement by the American Congress.

It has been crafted by some of

the most capable people in both of our

bodies, and I want to congratulate the

chairman, as well as others who have

been so involved.

I could not help but come to the floor

as I watched this discussion begin regarding

some substitutes for this resolution.

I must say, Mr. Speaker, it is

most important that we reject those

alternatives for the resolution is designed

simply to give our Commander-in-

Chief some flexibility as he goes forward

in projecting our responsibilities

for peace in the world.

Indeed, there are those who presume

that this automatically means a war in

Iraq. This resolution does not automatically

take us to war. As a matter

of fact, it is a tool for the Commander-in-

Chief to indeed go forth with those

efforts that are most important in

terms of our future hopes for peace.

There is little doubt that America focused

again upon the importance of our

strength as a result of 9/11 just 1 year

ago. There is little doubt that the

world understands that a strong America

is very important for peace.

I would suggest to my colleagues

that the one thing that we could do to

undermine that strength is to pass a

resolution like this one that is before

us at this moment. Indeed, my colleagues,

there is much discussion about

what the Commander-in-Chief has not

done. In the past, there was a lot of discussion

about the fact that perhaps his

advisers were not as good as some

would like.

We look at the Vice President, we

look at the Secretary of State, we look

at the Secretary of Defense. The community

not so long ago was amazed at

how great their strength might be. Do

we presume that they have not been

giving advice and counsel to the Commander-

in-Chief?

Indeed, I believe they have a plan

that will strengthen our ability to be a

force in the world for the good.

Resolutions like this will take us exactly

in the opposite direction. Let us

not by actions today undermine the

President’s ability to lead.

At the same time, let me say that

most of my colleagues know that I am

a strong believer in a bipartisan force

in this House. Let us not as a result of

these votes today have one of our parties

be the party working with the

President for peace and have the other

party be the party of the United Nations.