Mr. Speaker, I was a

fervent opponent of the Vietnam War

and a strong supporter of sensible detente

with the Soviet Union. But under

today’s circumstances, the best way to

give peace a chance and to save the

most lives, American and Iraqi, is for

America to stand united and for Congress

to authorize the President to use

force if Saddam does not give up his

weapons of mass destruction. Confront

Saddam now, or pay a much heavier

price later.

We dismissed the first World Trade

Center bombing as an isolated incident.

When two embassies were bombed, we

failed to see the broader implication of

those acts. When the USS *Cole* was attacked,

still we did not read the handwriting

on the wall. It was irrational,

we thought, that madmen would grow

bold enough to attack America on her

own shores. We wanted to give peace a

chance.

But then came 9/11, and it is time to

say ‘‘no more.’’ The Democratic leader,

the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT),

and many of my colleagues

have told us why a yes vote is necessary.

We have brought key members of the

Clinton national security team to the

Hill, architects of our past policy to

contain Saddam. These foreign policy

experts from the Democratic Party

have told us to a person that containment

will no longer do the job and that

the policy we are asked to endorse

today is the right one for a peace-loving

people.

On the issue of Saddam Hussein, I

have some experience. I begged both

the Reagan and first Bush administrations

to stop selling Iraq materials and

technology that could be used for

weapons of mass destruction, to put

Iraq on the terrorist list, to impose

economic sanctions. Saddam, with a

nuclear weapon, is too horrifying to

contemplate, too terrifying to tolerate.

As one who has watched this man for

20 years, let me pose an analogy. It is

just an analogy, because I reject the

unproven efforts to tie Saddam to the

events of 9/11.

We are on an airplane, and we know

that a few passengers have smuggled

box cutters on board. We know these

passengers have taken courses to learn

how to fly a jumbo jet. We know that

their friends have already flown a

small plane into a building, killing

hundreds of their own neighbors. But

those armed passengers have not yet

lunged for the cockpit.

What should a peace loving people

do? We know that people sitting near

these dangerous passengers could be

hurt if we take aggressive action.

Should we wait until they kill the pilot

and take over the airplane before we

act? Of course not. We admire those

with the courage to surround the

armed passengers and demand that

they give up their weapons under

threat of force. That is what this resolution

does.

Is the threat imminent? Well, surely

Saddam has box cutters, Saddam has a

history of using them, Saddam is in the

process of upgrading the box cutters,

Saddam has boarded the plane with the

box cutters.

Confront Saddam now, or pay a much

heavier price later.