Mr. Speaker,

I rise to support the resolution before

the House today. Our Nation and

our military may very well need to

right the wrongs being perpetrated

from an evil dictatorship in Iraq. Saddam

Hussein poses a long-term threat

that could jeopardize the freedoms and

the way of life enjoyed by Americans

from coast to coast, from border to

border, a threat that grows more menacing

over time.

I have listened to some of the debate

over the last several hours, over the

last 24 hours. It has been said time and

time again that there is no evidence

that Saddam Hussein is an imminent

threat.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to all that

would say that, if you want evidence,

look no further than September 11,

2001.

I am pleased the President has

sought congressional approval for possible

military action and has worked

diligently with Congress to craft a resolution

that is both appropriate and

constitutional. There are very few

things Congress is explicitly given the

sole authority to execute; to declare

war is one of them. Article I, section 8

is very clear on that point.

These 24 hours, 24-plus hours reserved

for debate on this question is more

than we debated Haiti, Bosnia, and

Kosovo combined. President Bush

should be commended for acknowledging

Congress’s authority with regard

to any military action in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, this leads us to the

merits of authorizing such a serious action.

Putting our Armed Forces into

harm’s way should never be an easy decision

for anyone. As one who represents

a district with two significant

Air Force bases and a large Army post,

I have talked with countless active

duty personnel and military families

during my service here in Congress.

The pilots, the airmen, soldiers, and

other highly trained heroes at Tinker

Air Force Base, Altus Air Force Base,

Fort Sill Army Post are my friends,

my neighbors, they are my constituents.

I care deeply for these brave

Americans.

They understand, like so many

across this country, that freedom is

not free, liberty is not easy, and keeping

the peace often requires sacrifice.

America did not become the leader of

the Free World by looking the other

way to heinous atrocities and unspeakable

evils.

The President told the Nation this

past Monday that Iraq has a massive

stockpile of chemical and biological

weapons that has never been accounted

for, that is capable of killing millions

and millions of people. Surveillance

photos reveal that the regime is rebuilding

facilities it used to produce

chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons.

Mark my words on the latter form of

destruction. The moment Saddam Hussein

acquires a nuclear weapon is the

moment the world will be in even more

danger, grave danger. I hope my colleagues

will reflect deeply on this

chilling possibility.

Some people have pondered whether

a military strike in Iraq would be just.

Will the action of our government constitute

a just war? Saint Augustine,

the father of just war theory said, ‘‘A

just war is wont to be described as one

that avenges wrongs, when a nation or

State has to be punished, for refusing

to make amends for the wrongs inflicted

by its subjects, or to restore

what it has seized unjustly.’’

This Congress must decide whether

the situation in Iraq warrants military

response. I am with the President. I believe

this vote supports the just war

theory when Saint Augustine wrote,

Saddam Hussein has murdered his

own people. His record on human rights

is abysmal. He has aided and abetted

terrorists. He hates America, he hates

freedom, he hates independence, he

hates our allies. He hates us.

Mr. Speaker, at this very hour, we

know a tyrant in Iraq is devising great

evil. We know harm is inevitable if nuclear

weapons are indeed acquired by

Saddam Hussein. As testimony by a

former Iraqi scientist before the Committee

on Armed Services said, as he

revealed last week, Saddam is on a

break-neck pace to acquire those very

weapons. I hope my colleagues put

their trust and confidence in our military,

America’s sons and daughters,

who love freedom and love liberty, to

wage a worthy and just cause.

Military options are the President’s

last choice. But we must give him the

prerogative if the situation in Iraq requires

the use of force. I urge the

House to pass this legislation to support

the President, support our Armed

Forces, and support freedom throughout

the world. We will prevail. As the

President said, we must prevail. Vote

‘‘yes’’ on this resolution.