Mr. Speaker, on behalf

of the people of Guam, I would like to express

my support for President Bush and the international

community in forcefully addressing

the threat posed by Saddam Hussein and his

regime in Iraq. In this regard, I strongly support

the efforts of the President to seek and

secure unconditional Iraqi compliance with full-fledged

arms inspections. His seeking United

Nations renewal and approval of these efforts

is to be commended and supported by this

Congress. However, while I believe that the

United States must act to disarm Iraq, I hope

that we do not do so alone. I support efforts

to gain as much international backing as possible

to meet our disarmament objective. We

must act alone only if absolutely necessary

and only after the international community has

been given the full opportunity to support this

important cause.

In the course of debate on this important

issue, I believe that I must also express my

concerns about the impact that an impending

armed conflict in the Middle East will have on

my home island of Guam. As the Member of

Congress representing a district located closest

to the area of concern and to the theater

of operation that our Armed Forces may be increasingly

engaged in as a result of this resolution,

I remain acutely aware of the challenges

we find ourselves confronted with

today. As I indicated on the House floor last

week, these challenges do not affect all communities

around the country in the same way.

The people of Guam will undoubtedly feel the

effects of a decision to use force against Iraq

in many disproportionate ways. History proves

this to be the case.

Servicemen and women from Guam will

likely find themselves contributing to the war

effort in higher numbers per capita than most

other U.S. jurisdictions. Sadly, this may result

in higher casualties for our service members

than it would for other communities. During

each major war of the last century, World War

I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam and the Persian

Gulf War, Guam endured disproportionate

military casualties of native sons per capita in

the United States. Today, our people serve

disproportionately in high numbers in the

armed services. While this demonstrates our

support for the nation’s military, it also underscores

our vulnerability to war’s disproportionate

effects on our community.

Although, we would inevitably witness a

build-up in military activity on our island, the

economy of Guam would be adversely impacted

by any decision to go to war. We are

directly economically challenged by this impending

armed conflict because our economy

is primarily based on tourism. Eighty percent

of our visitors come from Japan and nothing is

more disconcerting to Japanese tourists than

the prospect of war and conflict. If the situation

which occurred in Guam immediately after

the Gulf War crisis or immediately after September

11 of last year again unfolds as a result

of an armed conflict with Iraq, we will see

a dramatic downturn in visitor arrivals which in

turn will further weaken our struggling economy.

However, despite these probable disproportionate

effects, for which we will prepare to

cope with, I stand in strong support to the use

of force should Saddam Hussein continue to

pose an imminent threat to regional and world

peace and security. His efforts to produce

weapons of mass destruction are just as troubling

to us in Guam as they are for the rest

of the country. His weapons of mass destruction

stockpile and capability must be permanently

eliminated. His threatening and deplorable

behavior must be confronted and

stopped. His flagrant violation of international

law must be directly dealt with and his disarmament

obligation must be compelled. As a

member of the House Armed Services Committee,

I understand, through voluminous testimony

that has been presented to the committee

over the past few weeks, that this is a

matter of serious importance that demands

our immediate action.

Guam has time and time again done its part

to support the foreign and military policy of the

United States in the Western Pacific region. In

1975, more than 115,000 evacuees from the

fall of Vietnam were repatriated via Guam as

part of Operation New Life. In 1996, 6,600

Kurdish refugees who feared retaliation by

Saddam Hussein were housed and comforted

on Guam as part of Operation Pacific Haven.

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September

11, 2001, Guam has served as a vital

part of our national effort to protect our homeland

and an essential military base in the war

against terrorism. Combat aircraft capable of

intercepting and diverting any unauthorized or

threatening aircraft that would approach the

continental United States from the Pacific, was

quickly positioned on Guam as part of Operational

Noble Eagle. Andersen Air Force Base

has served as a critical air bridge for airlift in

support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Here

again, we find ourselves ready to support the

nation during this urgent situation, ready to do

our part in the effort to further rid the world of

terror.

As our country prepares to address the

threat posed by Saddam Hussein and his regime,

I want to reiterate the people of Guam’s

support for our troops and Guam’s role to assist

our nation in our national security needs

in the Western Pacific region.