Mr. Speaker, during this Congress

I have been honored to serve as Vice

Chairman of the Government Reform Committee’s

Subcommittee on National Security, Veterans

Affairs and International Relations.

Under Chairman SHAYs’ leadership our Subcommittee

has conducted at least 14 hearings

and briefings, many of them well before September

11, 2001, which addressed in some

measure the threat from the proliferation of

chemical, biological and nuclear weapons.

Congress has recently conducted hearings

on who missed the signals leading to 9/11.

The signals of the potential for an even greater

catastrophe have been writ large before our

subcommittee over the past two years of testimony.

These hearings provided ample evidence

establishing that Iraq is one of the premier

consumers—if not the—premier consumer

of the components and precursors of

weapons of mass destruction. This unprecedented

build-up serves no positive purpose,

but rather demonstrates an attempt to dominate

the region and threaten our peaceful interests.

Let me share with you just a few examples:

1. Iraq is seeking to purchase chemical

weapons agent precursors and applicable production

equipment, and is making an effort to

hide activities at the Fallujah plant, which was

one of Iraq’s chemical weapons production facilities

before the Gulf War.

2. At Fallujah and three other plants, Iraq

now has chlorine production capacity far higher

than any civilian need for water treatment,

and the evidence indicates that some of its

chlorine imports are being diverted for military

purposes.

3. Saddam Hussein is continuing to seek

and develop biological weapons. In 2001, an

Iraqi defector, Adnan Ihsan Saeed al-Haideri,

said he had visited twenty secret facilities for

chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. Mr.

Saeed, a civil engineer, supported his claims

with stacks of Iraqi government contracts,

complete with technical specifications.

4. Saddam Hussein is continuing to seek

and develop nuclear weapons. A new repot

released on September 9, 2002, from the

International Institute for Strategic Studies—an

independent research organization—concludes

that Saddam Hussein could build a nuclear

bomb within months if he were able to obtain

fissile material.

5. Saddam Hussein is continuing to seek

and develop prohibited long-range, ballistic

missiles. Iraq is believed to be developing ballistic

missiles with a range greater than 150

kilometers—as prohibited by the U.N. Security

Council Resolution 687. Discrepancies identified

by UNSCOM in Saddam Hussein’s declarations

suggest that Iraq retains a small

force of Scud-type missiles and an undetermined

number of launchers and warheads.

6. There is ample evidence that Saddam

Hussein is using his Presidential palace sites

to hide prohibited WMD and missile technologies.

In December 1997 Richard Butler reported

to the U.N. Security Council that Iraq

had created a new category of sites, ‘‘Presidential’’

and ‘‘sovereign’’ from which it claimed

that UNSCOM inspectors would henceforth be

barred. The terms of the ceasefire in 1991

foresaw no such limitations. However, Iraq

consistently refused to allow UNSCOM inspectors

access to any of these eight Presidential

sites. Many of these so-called ‘‘palaces’’ are in

fact large compounds, which are an integral

part of Iraqi counter-measures designed to

hide prohibited weapons and material.

7. To implement the agreement that ended

the gulf war the United Nations Security Council

passed a number of resolutions demanding

that President Saddam Hussein stop pursuing

weapons of mass destruction and allow inspectors

total access to his country to verify

his compliance. In 1998 Saddam Hussein suspended

cooperation with the U.N. inspectors.

The U.N. General Assembly has subsequently

failed to enforce the sixteen (16) existing Security

Council Resolutions that Iraq has violated.

While the United States is working with

our allies to craft yet another resolution for

consideration by the Security Council, it

should be noted that the Saddam Hussein regime

has already rejected this proposal before

it has even been brought before the Security

Council.

Mr. Speaker, this is a particularly difficult decision

for me, because I recognize that it is

largely the men and women of my generation,

those in their twenties or younger, who will

fight this war—if war comes. Today, Marine

Lance Cpl. Antonio J. Sledd, 20 rests in honor

under our flag somewhere between Kuwait

and his home in Hillsborough County, Florida.

We would be remiss in our responsibilities if

we do not acknowledge that there will be a

cost, and there is a price being paid this very

day, by America’s young defenders and their

families.

Opponents of military action against Iraq

argue that until it is clear that Iraq poses an

imminent threat, the United States should continue

to contain and deter Saddam Hussein.

Our hearings have demonstrated that Saddam

Hussein is not deterred, and that the threat

posed by his regime’s continued pursuit of

weapons of mass destruction and missile

technology is in fact imminent. Today, we are

at the point, very much as the democracies of

the world once were in their great confrontation

with Hitler, where we have a choice to

confront or appease an aggressor. I intend to

vote in favor of House Joint Resolution 114

and support President Bush in his decision to

confront Saddam Hussein and end the threat

to the United States, and the world, posed by

Iraq’s development of weapons of mass destruction.