I thank the gentleman

from New York for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support

of this resolution.

Iraq, under the tyrannical dictatorship

of Saddam Hussein, has been in

violation of 16 different United Nations’

resolutions over the past decade,

resolutions passed to ensure that Iraq

dismantle its chemical, biological and

nuclear weapons programs and destroy

any remaining weapons of mass destruction.

Ensuring compliance with these U.N.

resolutions, which represent the will of

the international community, is essential.

Iraq has demonstrated its willingness

to use these horrific weapons in

battle and against its own people.

One particularly gruesome example

occurred in the late 1980s when Saddam

Hussein unleashed deadly chemical gas

attacks over entire villages in Iraq,

killing thousands of innocent men,

women and children, so he could experiment,

experiment, with finding the

most efficient ways to spread nerve,

blister and mustard gas.

Given Saddam Hussein’s 11-year

record of defying and misleading the

international community, I believe the

United States, our allies and the

United Nations are justified in their efforts

to rid Iraq of biological and chemical weapons.

Just this week, a new CIA report exposed

Saddam’s vigorous concealment

record as further proof that he has no

intention whatsoever of honoring his

U.N. commitments by giving up his

ever-expanding stockpile of weapons of mass destruction.

Month by month, Saddam Hussein increases

his arsenal of chemical and biological

weapons, while he aggressively

works to build nuclear capacity. The

CIA now believes that Iraq could make

a nuclear weapon within a year if it

manages to obtain weapons-grade material from abroad.

The CIA further reports that Saddam

is intent on acquiring nuclear weapons,

and Iraq’s expanding international

trade provides growing access to the

necessary materials.

Given these developments, we simply

cannot wait any longer.

September 11 taught us that there

are those who would use any means to

harm Americans. I am increasingly

concerned about weapons of mass destruction

being transferred from Iraq

to terrorists like Osama bin Laden’s al

Qaeda network, bent on destroying

Americans, or being used by Saddam

himself against his neighbors, our allies,

or against the United States.

The United States should seek to

achieve our objective with as little risk

to Americans and Iraqi civilians as possible.

However, we must act to permanently

disarm Saddam Hussein, because

the cost in lives and misery if we

do not act will be incalculable.

Before any action is taken, the President

is right in seeking approval of

Congress, and I commend him for that.

The more information the American

people have, the stronger our Nation will be.

Further, it is important that we continue

to make every effort to marshal

international support. I would prefer to

work in concert with the United Nations.

Saddam Hussein is, after all, a

threat to international security. But,

in the final analysis, my responsibility

is to protect my constituents and protect

the national security of our Nation,

so I will be voting in favor of this

resolution.