Mr. Speaker, today, we are debating the most fundamental issues we face

as a Congress and as a country. Today we

are debating whether to send America’s sons

and daughters into harm’s way, whether a

threat exists to America’s security and whether

we need to act now or wait. We have no more

grave responsibility as legislators than defending

our Nation and democratic way of life.

American foreign policy has had a single

objective since the foundation of our republic.

That objective has been to defend our independence and freedoms. Over the years the

policies America has followed have changed to meet the changing threat.

During America’s first century we followed a

policy of staying out of foreign conflicts, comfortable

in the security offered by two oceans.

The Monroe Doctrine represented the first expansion

of American policy in its vigorous assertion

of America’s right to ensure that no foreign

power intervenes in our hemisphere. The

last century saw a further expansion of American

power as we acted to prevent any hostile

power or ideology from dominating the eastern

hemisphere and threatening our continued independence.

Today, we face a new challenge, a homicidal

dictator striving to acquire the means to

threaten our civilization and kill millions of our

fellow Americans. Saddam Hussein already

has the means; he only lacks the material

needed to build an atomic bomb. It has been

widely reported that he could build a bomb

within a year were he to acquire certain materials.

A nuclear armed Saddam Hussein would

represent a clear and present danger to our nation.

No one who has objectively looked at the

facts, no one who has seen the Kurdish villagers

gassed on Saddam Hussein’s order, no

one who remembers the invasion and looting

of Kuwait, no one looking at the facts can

doubt that a nuclear Saddam Hussein would

be a threat to our Nation and civilization.

Given these facts I think it is important we

understand what we are debating today. We

are not debating whether a nuclear Saddam

Hussein is a threat. No honest analysis can

deny that. We are not debating how to confront

Saddam Hussein. No one wants war and

it is my earnest hope that our actions today

will convince Saddam Hussein that he must

disarm and give up his goal of acquiring nuclear

weapons. However, we can only succeed

in avoiding war if Saddam Hussein is

convinced that he risks war and the destruction

of his regime if he continues to defy us.

What we are debating today is timing. Do

we confront Saddam Hussein today or wait.

Do we act now when he does not possess nuclear

weapons or wait until he does. Common

sense tells us that the risky course is to wait.

Our responsibility as legislators dictates we

act against any threat to our independence.

Opponents of this resolution say the risks are

too great and that there is too much that is unknown,

but the risks of not acting are far

greater and the unknown far more terrifying.

Let us remain true to previous generations

of Americans who have been vigilant in protecting

our freedom and vote for this resolution.

Let us live up to the expectations set by

the Founding Fathers and support this resolution.