We have had an interesting several

months together and not all fun; but it

is a very, very serious thing.

I would like to start off my comments

by saying that this Member, although

I am a veteran, as many are

here, I am not a hawk, I am not a dove.

I am a concerned American who wants

our country and our people to be safe.

I have had some of those sleepless

nights. I think of the gentleman from

California (Mr. CUNNINGHAM). I think of

the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM

JOHNSON), the price he paid. I think of

the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BOYD)

and the gentleman from California (Mr.

THOMPSON) and many others who have

served and know something as well as

I what it is like to face war. It is not a good thing.

I am a member of the Permanent Select

Committee on Intelligence, and I

have tried to prepare myself with

knowledge and information, and some

things I am convinced of and I would

share with you today. I am convinced

that Saddam Hussein has weapons of

mass destruction. I am convinced that

he has the chemical and biological and

he wants very badly to have the nuclear;

and given a chance, he will have

them. I am convinced that he would

use them. He is a despot. No question

about it in my mind. But he would not

only use them, I think he would make

them available to others if they came

to buy or he would even give them to them.

So I am very concerned about this,

and I have had my sleepless nights. It

almost reminds me of some of the

times going into a major operation

when I was in Vietnam. It was pretty

hard to sleep when we knew that lives

would be lost that next day and we

might have to write the letters to the

next of kin, the moms, the dads and

the husbands, the spouses about how

their son paid the supreme sacrifice that day.

I served 20 years, served a couple of

tours over in NATO. I know something

about the international relationship

that needs to be there as we go into

this world that we live in today. It is a

very, very serious matter, and I have

no quarrel with those that have spoken

just as the last speaker. I respect that.

But I am concerned about the tomorrow

for my children and my grandchildren.

I know that when I went to Vietnam,

I settled my family there in a little

farm there in southern Iowa the night

before I was to leave. My little daughter,

who now has a teen-age child,

came out to the yard where my wife

and I were sitting and having kind of a

quiet moment as the sun was going on.

She said, Daddy don’t go. So I said,

Sweetheart, I’m a soldier. I have to go.

She said, Please don’t go. I am afraid.

Think about this, your own child: I am

afraid you may not come back. So I

tried to give her assurance as I had the

first time I had gone that I would come

back. Lucky for me, I did; but everybody

did not come back. So I understand

that this is one of the most serious

things we deal with.

I had the occasion to get invited over

to the White House 2 weeks ago tomorrow

with several of my colleagues.

Some of my colleagues might be listening.

And I was one of the four or five

that the gentleman from Missouri (Mr.

BLUNT), the gentleman from Texas (Mr.

EDWARDS), a few were there and others

to have dialogue with the President.

And I said to the President I think that

he is right, that the U.N. ought to lead

on this. That is their charter and their

responsibility. But they might not. If

he really believes hard facts that Saddam

has had his finger on the trigger

or he may have, we have to deal with

this, but let us have the American people behind this.

I will give a contrast. When we sent

our troops off to Desert Storm, the

communities were behind the troops

when they left, when they were there,

and they brought them back. By contrast

I said, Mr. President, I went to

Vietnam twice. The American people

were not behind us. It was pretty tough

to go and give everything we had to

fulfill the commitment that we were

given, the mission to give all we had

and not have the American people behind

us. And they were not.

And I said, Mr. President, remember

how we left Vietnam? We were thrown

out. I remember the scene, people falling

off the helicopters trying to get out

of the embassy. But what did we bring

back? We brought back 56,000 body

bags, and some of us have put people in

those body bags and carried them back

to the collection point. But the American

people were not with us.

So if he commits our troops, have

good cause, have his facts straight and

tell the American people. He has been

doing that. I think there has been a

constant stream, Mr. Speaker, going

over to the White House to talk about

this; and I think that his speech and

the other things he has done, his trip

to the United Nations, he is making

the efforts to do what is right, and I

hope he is being straightforward and

honest about it. I accept his statement

that he said to us, to me, ‘‘The last

thing I want to do is to send our troops

into harm’s way.’’

I am accepting that and I am also

saying to the President that it is up to

him in his position as leader, President,

Commander in Chief, that he

keep the American people informed

that they understand and that they

know that this country is doing this

because we want to preserve it safely

for our future, for our children, my

grandchildren, my teen-age grandchild.

Cindy who was so worried about her

dad going, of course, is concerned

about her son and others across this country.

If he is the person we think he is,

then we have to be ready to tell him do

not do it or the consequences will be

severe, and that is what has brought

me from this point today from undecided

and walking the floor to say that

I will support this resolution. It is a

hard decision, but it is one we have to

make. And I am proud to have served

with the gentleman from California

(Mr. CUNNINGHAM), as I see him on the

floor now, and the others I have mentioned.

But our country is a precious

thing, and we have to save it for the future;

and this is our moment to deal with this now.