Mr. Speaker, today, we must speak not with one voice, but

as one democracy—giving voice to the

millions of Americans increasingly

concerned with an Administration’s deliberate

choice to make the terrible

weapon of war a predominant instrument

in its foreign policy.

Among the more than three thousand

communications I have received from

my neighbors in Central Texas concerned

with this rush to inflame a region

that is as volatile as the oil it

holds, is that of Bill Hilgers, a World

War II veteran with 30 bombing missions

over Germany and a Purple

Heart. He writes, ‘‘No one can foresee

the potential damage [to] our troops or

citizens. . . . We stake our future on an

unprecedented breach of our moral

principles . . . and our past commitment

to peace. [W]e should . . . use

every diplomatic strategy . . . to see

that Iraq’s weapons are destroyed before

[using] military force.’’

A more recent veteran, General Norman

Schwarzkopf, writing of the Gulf

War, was more direct: ‘‘I am certain

that had we taken all of Iraq, we would

have been like the dinosaur in the tar

pit.’’ [‘‘It Doesn’t Take a Hero, Bantam

Books, 1992, page 498]

The house-to-house urban warfare

that would likely result from a land invasion

would endanger our soldiers, detract

from our ongoing war on terrorism,

and expose our families to terrorism

for years to come, in what to

many in that part of the world would

perceive as a war on Islam.

Many Americans are asking, ‘‘how

best do we protect our families?’’ And,

‘‘do they know something in Washington

that we do not know?’’

From our briefings in Congress, we

do know something about which the

public is uncertain and fearful. We

have been shown no evidence that Iraq

is connected to 9/11. We have been

shown no evidence that Iraq poses an

imminent threat to the security of

American families today. From Central

Intelligence Agency reports, secret

until very recently and finally released,

we know that terrorism, not

Iraq, is the real threat. The CIA has

concluded that an American invasion

of Iraq is more likely to drive our enemies

together against us and certainly

more likely to make Saddam

Hussein use any weapons of mass destruction

that he may possess.

How do we make our families safe at

this time? Certainly, through a military

second to none, yes. Through effective

law enforcement here at home,

yes. But arms alone are insufficient

protection, as the tragedy of September

11 demonstrated all too well.

True security means working together

with nations, large and small. It

means that we must be wise enough to

rely on America’s other strengths to

rid the world of Iraq’s danger, rather

than unilaterally imposing our will by

force that will only unite our enemies

while dividing our natural allies.

Overreliance on packing the biggest

gun and on having the fastest draw,

will not make us safer. Rather, it is a

formula for international anarchy. A

quick draw may eliminate the occasional

villain, but only at the cost of

destabilizing the world, disrupting the

hope for international law and order,

and, ultimately endangering each of our families.

President Bush has correctly said, I

would not trust Saddam Hussein with

one American life. What fool would

trust him? But that is not our choice

today. Nor is it a choice between ‘‘war’’

and ‘‘doing nothing,’’ or between ‘‘war’’

and ‘‘appeasement.’’

The better choice today is for effective,

comprehensive, international inspections

and the disarmament of Iraq

of any weapons of mass destruction

that we believe it possesses. The better

choice is to follow the prudent, indeed

the conservative approach, a firm policy

of containment that kept the

threat to American families at bay.

Abandoning that successful policy, a

policy which Ronald Reagan used

against another ‘‘evil empire,’’ abandoning

that policy which avoided nuclear

Armageddon, abandoning that

policy which we used successfully

against Muammar Qadhafi—that abandonment

will place America on a truly perilous path.

Containment and disarmament may

not end all wars, but they are clearly

superior to the new ‘‘first-strike’’ formula

that risks wars without end.

America has the might and right to

defend itself against imminent threats

to its security, even unilaterally. If in

fact the quality of the President’s evidence

matched the quality of his oratory,

I would be ‘‘ready to roll.’’ The

President does not need us to consent

to saber rattle, but let him return to

Congress if he has any clear evidence,

not yet provided, to show us it is time to let the saber strike.

With this daily talk of war overshadowing

all our hopes and dreams for this

country and world, I would address my

final remarks to those who are struggling

with how to respond. Continue to

thoughtfully, respectfully but forcefully

voice your opposition. Do not lose

hope. Petition for peace. Pray for

peace. Do not give up on peace. Let us

work together for an America that remains,

indeed, a beacon for the world,

that joins with its allies in ensuring

the collective security of families here

and around the globe. minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota

(Mr. RAMSTAD).