Mr. Speaker, before

9–11 the threat of terrorists and those

states that harbored them was unfortunately

not taken as seriously.

In the 1990’s, terrorists bombed the

World Trade Center, two American embassies,

an American barracks, and the

USS *Cole.* We took only limited action

then, but now we cannot let the deaths

of nearly 3,000 Americans on September

11 be in vain. We vowed after that to do

our best to rid the world of terrorists and fear.

Over the past 12 years, the United

Nations has issued numerous warnings

about the blatant defiance of Iraq. Additionally,

we know that Saddam Hussein’s

brutal regime has used biological

and chemical weapons against even his

own citizens. Hussein has violated the

Oil for Food Program, diverting uncounted

millions to fund a military

buildup and develop weapons of mass

destruction, all the while allowing a reported

1 million children to die of starvation.

The oppressed citizens of Iraq are not

our enemy, only the evil regime of Saddam

Hussein. This resolution is a

grave, but necessary, step in confronting

the danger of his regime. It

does not inevitably lead us to war. It

encourages the United Nations to live

up to its true purpose.

President John F. Kennedy described

courage as ‘‘doing what is right even in

the face of unrelenting pressure.’’ The

time has come for the U.N. to take decisive

action, but we cannot let the

U.N.’s inaction keep us from defending

our national security.

President Bush is effectively building

an international coalition, but for

those countries afraid or unwilling to

join our coalition, this resolution encourages

them to help in our effort to

preserve peace and democracy.

A few weeks after September 11, I

personally visited Ground Zero. I will

never forget the smouldering rubble

where innocent thousands lost their

lives. There I spoke with the New York

City firefighter who lost so many of his

heroic colleagues. And before I departed,

he passionately challenged me,

saying, ‘‘Don’t you ever let them forget

what happened here.’’

I now have the honor to speak on behalf

of that brave firefighter and challenge

this Congress. We must not forget

those who lost their lives on 9–11,

and we must overwhelmingly support

this resolution to defend our freedom.