Mr. Speaker, I rise in support today of H.J. Res. 114. I

want to commend the gentleman from

Illinois (Mr. HASTERT) and House leadership

for working in a bipartisan manner

with the White House to develop

what I believe is a very strong, but balanced, resolution.

Last week by a strong vote the Committee

on International Relations

passed this resolution. As part of its responsibility

to carry out its role in

helping shape United States foreign

policy toward Iraq, our chairman, the

gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE),

and our ranking member, the gentleman

from California (Mr. LANTOS),

deserve a great deal of credit for their

efforts in guiding this effort through

the committee process.

September 11 has tragically taught

us the price of not acting when faced

with a clear and present danger, and

there should be no doubt today we face

a clear and present danger in the form

of weapons of mass destruction in the

possession of Saddam Hussein. We

know after the 1991 liberation of Kuwait,

Iraq unequivocally agreed to

eliminate its nuclear, biological, and

chemical weapons programs and agreed

to allow international weapons inspectors

to ensure that be accomplished.

But as we all know, Iraq has willfully

and in direct violation of its own agreement

and those of the United Nations

Security Council thwarted over and

over again the efforts of the inspectors

to find and destroy those weapons. This

can only mean one thing, Mr. Speaker.

Saddam intends to hold on to these

weapons and use them at the appropriate

time and in the manner he

deems necessary.

As early as 1998, U.N. Secretary General

Kofi Annan in a letter to the Security

Council stated, ‘‘No one can doubt

or dispute that Iraq’s refusal to honor

its commitments under Security Council

resolutions regarding its weapons of

mass destruction constituted a threat.’’

These words remain even more true

today in light of the scourge of global

terrorism. Today the threat to the national

security of the United States

and to international peace and security

continues to grow. It is especially serious

because we know that Saddam Hussein

supports terrorist organizations

such as al Qaeda and could very well be

working with these agents at this very

moment providing them with the expertise

to use chemical and biological

weapons against the United States and others.

In 1991 in the aftermath of the Iraq

invasion of Kuwait, I led a group of our

colleagues in the House in introducing

a resolution authorizing then-President

Bush the use of all necessary

means to force Iraq from Kuwait.

There were dissenters who felt we

should not go to war, but in the end

there is no question we were proven

right. In 1998 I strongly supported the

House resolution which declared Iraq

to be in breach of its international obligations,

and we urged the President

to take appropriate actions to bring

Iraq into compliance.

However, at that time significant

penalties for noncompliance were not

invoked, and so here we are again

today, confronting the same issue

without an inch of change in Saddam’s

attitude or actions.

Today we are faced with the same

proposition and very similar arguments

on both sides; but with the passage

of this resolution, we will again

provide the President the authority he

may need to take the appropriate actions

necessary to protect the national

security of this great Nation.

Mr. Speaker, this time around we

must have an absolute commitment to

not allow Saddam Hussein to have

chemical or biological weapons anymore.

But the enforcement of Security

Council resolutions this time must include

significant penalty for noncompliance

which are immediate and

automatic. The resolution we are debating

today is forceful in that it again

gives the President the authority to

use whatever means, including force, to

rid Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction.

But this resolution is balanced in

that it encourages the President to

pursue diplomatic avenues to achieve

international support of enforcing U.N.

mandates and provide for an important

role in the Congress.

I believe the gravity of this issue

mandates that we act now to give the

President the tools he should have to

deal with this significant threat. The

potential terror of weapons of mass destruction

in the hands of a madman to

the world must be addressed, and it

must be addressed decisively and now.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the support of

this resolution.