Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

On the eve of potential military action

abroad, I am reminded of President

Reagan’s speech before the British

House of Commons when he said, ‘‘If

history teaches anything, it teaches

self-delusion in the face of unpleasant

facts is folly.’’ Reagan was speaking to

a people who knew well the ravages of

war and the terrible price of appeasement.

Churchill called World War II the unnecessary

war. He did not mean that it

was unnecessary to rise to the occasion

and defeat Nazism, he meant that had

we taken early notice of Hitler’s clearly

stated intentions rather than naively

drifting through the 1930s, a

world war may not have been necessary.

Weary of conflict, some of the

allies adopted a policy of peace at any

price, but no peace that a freedom-loving

people could tolerate.

While the circumstances are different,

there are lessons to be drawn

from the annals of history. Just because

we ignore evil does not mean

that it ceases to exist. Appeasement invites

aggression. Dictators, tyrants

and megalomaniacs should not be trusted.

Saddam Hussein has used weapons of

bioterror against his own countrymen.

He has committed genocide, killing between

50,000 and 100,000 people in northern

Iraq. His regime is responsible for

widespread human rights abuses, including

imprisonment, executions, torture

and rape. Just in the past 12 years,

he has invaded Kuwait, he has

launched ballistic missiles at Israel,

Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and previously at Iran.

Following the Gulf War, he arrogantly

defied the international community,

violating sanctions and continued

in the development of weapons

of mass destruction while evading

international inspectors. His regime

has violated 16 U.N. resolutions devoid of consequences.

Most ominously, in the wake of the

September 11 terrorists’ attacks, Saddam

has quantifiable links to known

terrorists. Iraq and al Qaeda have had

high-level contacts stretching back a decade.

We know based on intelligence reports

and satellite photos that Saddam

is acquiring weapons of mass destruction.

He possesses stockpiles of biological

and chemical weapons, and he is aggressively

seeking nuclear weapons.

Every weapon he possesses is a violation

of the Gulf War truce. A crazed

man in possession of these instruments

of death is a frightening prospect, indeed.

Had Saddam possessed nuclear capabilities

at the time of the Gulf War, we

may not have gone into Kuwait.

Should he acquire nuclear capabilities,

his aggressions would be virtually unchecked.

Deterrence can no longer be relied upon.

President Bush was accurate to characterize

Saddam as a grave and gathering

danger. The President challenged

the U.N., calling into question their

relevance should they leave unchecked

Saddam’s blatant disregard for their

authority. He consulted Congress and

made a case to the American people.

The President should continue to push

for a U.N. resolution with uncompromising

and immediate requirements

for the Iraqi regime, thereby rejecting

the tried course of empty diplomacy,

fruitless inspections, and failed containment.

Americans looked on in horror as the

events of September 11 unfolded. At the

end of the day, the skyline of one of

our greatest cities was forever

changed; the Pentagon, a symbol of

America’s military might, was still

smoldering; and a previously indistinguishable

field in western Pennsylvania

had suddenly and terribly become

an unmarked grave for America’s newest heroes.

In the aftermath, Americans have

been asking questions, some of which

we may never have satisfying answers

to. But today we know that a sworn

enemy is pursuing weapons of mass destruction.

It is incumbent upon the

free world, led by the United States, to

dismantle these destructive capabilities.

We have before us a resolution

which will authorize, if necessary, the

use of America’s military to enforce

the demands of the U.N. Security Council.

There is no greater responsibility for

us as elected officials than to provide

for the common defense of our fellow

countrymen. In voting for this resolution,

we send a message to a tyrant

that he should not rest easy; that those

who would venture to strike at our Nation

will encounter consequences. We

send a message to the Iraqi people that

the world has not forgotten them and

their suffering at the hands of a madman.

We send a message to the world

community that we are unified as a

Nation; that the President possesses

the full faith and backing of this distinguished

body; that we are committed

to defending the liberties which

are the very foundation of our Republic;

and that we are steadfast in our resolve

in the war on terror.