Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the resolution before us today. The

principle purpose of the resolution is to authorize

the use of military force—if deemed necessary—

to remove Saddam Hussein from

power in Iraq. The Hussein regime poses a direct

threat to the security of the United States

and our partners in the world. And this threat

must not be allowed to stand.

In the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War,

Saddam Hussein agreed to numerous United

Nations Security Council resolutions—16 of

them—as conditions of his political survival.

Now, almost 12-years later, Iraq’s leader has

failed outright to comply with these terms of

peace. Hussein has continued to stockpile

weapons of mass destruction, subjected the

people of Iraq to squalor and starvation, openly

sponsored terrorist attacks, and has in all

ways defied the international community. He

has lied repeatedly and there is no doubt that he cannot be trusted.

Yet still, many wonder if Saddam’s distant

rogue regime is a real threat to our national

security, and the safety of American citizens?

To answer this question we need look no further than the horrors of 9–11 and how terrorists

from afar were able to strike at America. Hussein’s hatred of our country has been

made plain. Despite our best efforts at border

security, it is conceivable that terrorists, sponsored

by Hussein, might smuggle Iraqi weapons

into the United States for use in an attack against our citizens.

Our intelligence reports confirm this threat

as real. Iraq maintains an extensive stockpile of sophisticated chemical and biological weapons,

and is continuing in its program to develop

nuclear weapons and the means to deliver

them. We also know that Iraq supports

terrorist groups and encourages violence

against Israel with cash payments to the families

of suicide bombers. Under Hussein’s regime,

Iraq has become a new safe-harbor for

al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups.

Just as we must vote to pass the resolution

before us, so too must the United Nations reaffirm

its importance in the global theater, approving

the use of force against Iraq. As in the

Gulf War, a unified coalition effort from the beginning

would help foster consensus to rebuild

Iraq and reconstitute a new Iraqi government following military action.

As we prepare for what may be an inevitable

war scenario in Iraq, we must acknowledge

the possible outcomes of such an action,

both positive and negative. Our objective would be to eliminate the

threat posed by Hussein’s regime, and thereby

create a more stabile political environment in

the Middle East. Still, the decision to commit

American troops to the battlefield is never

easy. In addition, there are also other considerations,

such as, if we are successful in our

mission, what happens next? What kind of

force will it take to successfully see through a

transition in Iraq and foster a new democracy?

While these possibilities must be considered

when weighing any action, the immediate

issue is clear: Iraq is a threat that must be dealt with swiftly.

I firmly believe that our President will make

the right decision, in the best interest of the

United States, and I have the utmost confidence

in the integrity of his counsel. Mr. Speaker—at times we must be willing to use

force to protect the security of our people and of our Nation.

Now is one of those times. I would like to thank my colleagues in the

House for introducing this strong resolution,

and would like to urge all to stand by the President and vote for its passage.