Mr. Speaker, today I rise with a heavy heart because the

decision to go to war is the greatest

vote a Member of Congress can make. I

take my sworn constitutional duty in

this matter very seriously. Accordingly,

I have conducted a thorough

analysis of this situation since the

President indicated discussions several

months ago about the possible need for

American military action in Iraq. The

examination and analysis has resulted

in my conclusion to support this resolution.

Ultimately, we must do what is right

for the security of our Nation. Before

the United States agrees to commit

troops abroad, we must first determine

that Iraq represents an imminent and

serious threat to the American interests.

We have known for some time that

Iraq possesses biological and chemical

weapons of mass destruction and material,

an unacceptable breach of its

international obligations. Additionally,

Iraq seeks to produce nuclear

weapons. Moreover, we have evidence

that Iraq has worked to build the delivery

systems and now has the capacity

to deliver these weapons all over the world.

After considerable deliberations, I

have, therefore, determined that a convincing

case has been made that Iraq

presents an imminent threat to our national

security. Without question, we

know that we cannot trust Saddam

Hussein. Other nations might have the

same deadly capacities as Iraq, but

none has a leader like Saddam Hussein,

who is a vicious and dangerous man.

At this critical junction, we must,

therefore, act quickly to safeguard our

national security and the security of

our allies. If we do not, millions may

die. Let us err on the side of national security.

Further, we have before us a well crafted

compromise resolution to authorize

the use of force against Iraq.

This resolution imposes some appropriate

checks on the President’s authority

to use force against Iraq. It

also represents a reasonable compromise

between what the President

had initially requested and what the

Congress felt was wise to allow. After

all, under our Constitution, only Congress

has the power to declare war.

We must additionally consider the

consequences of military intervention

for our diplomatic relations with other

nations. In my mind, the President has

made a convincing case to Congress

about the need for such action in this

instance. His administration in recent

weeks has made progress in educating

the rest of the world about the need for

such action. Furthermore, the resolution

before us today prioritizes U.S.

diplomatic efforts in the United Nations

for resolving this escalating situation.

As a result, it is my hope we will

resolve the situation through diplomatic

means. But should those efforts

fail, we must and we need to ensure

that the President has the tools he

needs to protect our national security.

Further, if we must use force against

Iraq, it is imperative that we not leave

a vacuum of power so that one dangerous

regime replaces another dangerous

regime. If we fail in the second

part of our mission in Iraq, we will not

have accomplished much.

If we ultimately pursue military action,

we must therefore commit this

Congress and the American people to

provide assistance, as we did after the

war in Europe. Consequently, I am

pleased that the President has expressed

his support for rebuilding

Iraq’s economy and creating institutions

of liberty in a unified Iraq at

peace with its neighbors.

Mr. Speaker, Congress must act

swiftly to pass this resolution so that

the United States can fully protect the

national security of the American people.

The resolution now before us represents

a reasonable compromise between

the desires of the administration

and the goals of Congress to protect

the American people. We should, as a

result, support this resolution and support

the President as he upholds the

duties he was sworn to do.