Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, before I

begin my prepared statement, I just

wanted to say a word about the extraordinary

leadership that we have on

the Permanent Select Committee on

Intelligence from our chairman. The

gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS) is

an extraordinary chairman. He has

done so much. He has done a great job

for our committee and for America

since 9–11, and he deserves an awful lot

of praise for the work he has done with

the administration for all the Members

of this House in really just doing an extraordinary

job as chairman of the Permanent

Select Committee on Intelligence.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support

of H.J. Res. 114, a bipartisan resolution

that authorizes the use of our Armed

Forces against Iraq. I want to take a

moment to applaud the President and

his team for continuing to work to garner

international support to bring Iraq

into compliance with U.N. resolutions,

for continuing to update the Congress

on the situation in Iraq, and for continuing

to work with Members on both

sides of the aisle in formulating the

resolution we are discussing today.

We do not take lightly what we are

voting on here today. The decision to

authorize the potential use of our Nation’s

Armed Forces is very difficult.

However, this resolution is not a rush

to war. Our immediate goal is to allow

weapons inspectors complete and unrestricted

accesses to determine Iraq’s

compliance with disarmament requirements.

This resolution explicitly expresses

support for the President’s ongoing

efforts to work with the U.N. Security

Council to quickly and decisively

act to ensure Iraqi compliance

with all Security Council resolutions.

However, the resolution also provides

for the authorization of the use of military

force that may be needed to protect

U.S. national security and enforce

Security Council resolutions if diplomatic

efforts alone are no longer effective.

Congress will be kept informed.

Saddam Hussein knew what was required

to end the Persian Gulf War: destroying

all existing weapons of mass

destruction, discontinuing any development

of these weapons, and allow

United Nations’ weapons inspectors unrestricted

access so compliance with

these demands could be ensured. Iraq

has failed to comply with each and

every U.N. resolution and has continued

to stockpile and develop weapons

that are a threat to not only its neighbors

in the Middle East, but also the

entire world.

Iraq’s history of violations, combined

with its present policy of working to

acquire weapons while continuing to

restrict U.N. access, led to a future

where the United States and the

United Nations must be able to commit

whatever resources are necessary to

ensure Iraqi disarmament.

I am proud to serve on the Permanent

Select Committee on Intelligence

and have had the opportunity to carefully

study the ongoing weapons activity

in Iraq. And I am convinced that

this resolution is needed to allow us to

use every option at our disposal to deal

with Iraq. We know what Iraq is capable

of, and we know that Saddam Hussein

is striving to expand that capability.

The people of Iraq are not safe.

American military personnel who serve

in the Persian Gulf are not safe. And,

in fact, the world is not safe if Iraq

does not begin to comply with U.S. and

U.N. resolutions and disarmament demands.

I believe it is important for the Iraqi

people to know that the United States

and the United Nations will not allow

the continued development and buildup

of the stockpile of weapons in their

country. Saddam Hussein has turned

these terrible weapons against his own

people who continue to suffer repression

at the hands of this dictator’s persistent

and willful violations of his

international obligations.

I am pleased that this is a bipartisan

resolution. The security of the United

States and the security of the world

rise above partisan points of view. This

resolution shows Iraq that we are

united in its condemnation of its continued

flagrant violation of all U.N.

resolution, and in our determination to

achieve Iraqi disarmament.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the

President for his ongoing efforts to

work with the international community

and the Congress. And I want to

thank my colleagues for this opportunity

to use this to thoroughly discuss

this resolution, which is one of the

most significant pieces of legislation

many of us will ever vote on during our

time in Congress. Most importantly, I

want to thank the men and women who

serve in our Nation’s Armed Forces,

continually working to achieve and

maintain peace, in the Persian Gulf region

and around the world. And they

deserve our devoted and unrestrained

thanks for the wonderful, wonderful

service that they provide to our country.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues

to support this bipartisan resolution.