Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the resolution before us. This is one of the

most important votes I ever expect to

cast on this House floor, and I make it

after much serious thought and deliberation.

The events of the past year have affected every single person in America.

Our lives will never be the same. The

terrorists on September 11 tried to break the spirit of America, but they

failed. The spirit of our Nation is unbreakable

and unwaivering. As a Nation,

we will work together to fight the

war on terrorism, to preserve our own

lives and the lives of our peace-loving

friends all around the world.

During his address to the United Nations

on September 12, and again on

Tuesday in Cincinnati, the President

outlined a powerful case as to why pursuing regime changes by military

means, if necessary, in Iraq, is in the

vital national interests of America and

all freedom-loving people everywhere. I

feel that the President provided a clear

and compelling case that will lead to

broad international support of our objectives.

The President told us that Iraq possesses

the physical infrastructure required to build nuclear weapons and

maintains stockpiles of chemical and

biological agents for the purpose of

killing literally thousands of people.

U.N. inspectors have stated that they

believe Iraq has produced as much as

four times the amount of biological

agents it claims to possess and has

failed to account for more than three

metric tons of material that could be

used to produce biological weapons.

Along with this threat, Iraq possesses a

force of SKUD-type missiles with

ranges beyond the 94-mile limit permitted by the U.N. resolutions.

Last week, I stood with the President

and congressional leadership in the

White House Rose Garden in support of

this resolution authorizing the use of

force against Iraq, and I am proud to

rise to the support of that resolution

today. All the while, I fervently hope

and pray that force will not be necessary.

However, I strongly believe that American foreign policy, especially

with regard to eradicating weapons

of mass destruction and terrorism, must be a top priority.

Our actions do not come without sacrifice

or consequence; and I want to personally recognize our young men

and women, these brave young men and

women who are currently engaged in the war on terrorism and who may be

called to service in Iraq. As a parent, I

know firsthand the sacrifice that military

personnel and their families are making.

I was a pilot in the Air Force, and

nothing made my wife Mary and me

more proud than our son Lance as he

served his country as an Air Force pilot in the Desert Storm conflict. We

know firsthand what it is like to have a loved one in harm’s way.

However, once again, America is

forced to defend herself against forces

that do not respect human life, freedom or the American way.

We cannot wait until Saddam Hussein or one of his terrorist allies

strikes first. We cannot let another

horrific event like September 11 happen again while we stand idly by.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues

to join with me in support of this important resolution.