Mr. Speaker, we live in a dangerous world. We always

have. But every day, the greatest democracy

on earth wakes. All of us from

Minnesota, we get up every day. We

take our children to school. We go to

work. We enjoy the hope, opportunity

and freedom of this great Nation. We

know that our democracy provides

hope and opportunity not only for our

own families here in America but for

nations around the world.

Nevertheless, we do live in a dangerous

world. We always have. I am 48

years old. There has never been a time

in my life when the United States was

not targeted by another country or

countries with nuclear weapons, or

when another nation has not had the

capacity to attack us with chemical

and biological weapons. How many nations

today have the capacity to strike

us within our borders? How many actually

have targeted us today?

The world is filled with dangers, and

Saddam Hussein and his regime pose a

real danger to America, to the global

community. Osama bin Laden and al

Qaeda remain free and continue to pose

a real danger to America. The anonymous

assassin who 1 year ago murdered

five Americans with anthrax remains

free and is a real danger. How many

other rogue states, terrorist organizations,

drug cartels or pandemics pose a

real security threat to the United

States, our citizens and the millions of

people around the world? If Saddam

Hussein is today’s threat, who or what is the next?

Today, I rise in opposition to this

resolution because I do not believe we

should provide a blank check to this

administration to unilaterally attack

Saddam Hussein. The world looks to

America to promote freedom and justice,

not alone but in concert with the

global community. In the past decades,

we have had models of this success. Let

us build again a global coalition.

In 1991, the senior President Bush

collectively and carefully assembled a

broad coalition against Iraq, unified in

purpose and in action. We succeeded,

and we brought freedom back to the Kuwaiti people.

After September 11, President Bush

tapped the collective will of the international

body to respond to terrorism

around the world; and with the support

of our allies, we rid Afghanistan of the

Taliban. We sent operatives of the al

Qaeda network scrambling, and we restored

freedom to the Afghani people.

But, today, the President seeks to

engage the American people in another

conflict, void of broad-based international

support and lacking a cohesive

international voice. Today, some

of our allies are beginning to move forward,

begrudgingly, to join us, spurred

more by a threat of a weakened relationship

with the United States than

by an immediate threat of Saddam Hussein.

While I believe Saddam is a threat, I

do not believe we should take offensive

military action, the first strike, without

broad-based international coalition

support. I ask why are we not standing

side by side with our neighbors in the

region, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Jordan,

Egypt, our allies around Europe and

around the world? The United States

possesses the intelligence capacity to

assess potential threats to our security.

A diplomatic corps capable of diffusing

tensions and a potent military

force prepared to take appropriate action

if necessary. Why have been unable

to convince our closest allies to

join us in this military undertaking

against Iraq? This is a question that

the families in my district have been

asking me. This is a question that no

one in this administration has been able to answer.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, we live in a

dangerous world; and I want to be very

clear if Iraq possesses an immediate

threat to the American people, the

President has all the authority he

needs to take military action to protect

our Nation without this resolution.

The brave men and women of our

Armed Forces must not be sent into

harm’s way alone. America’s duty is to

build a coalition of allies, seize the

moral high ground, and act as part of a

community of nations against

Saddam’s regime. When this administration

convinces our allies in the region

and around the world the need for

joint military action, then the President

will have my full support to take

every action necessary to eliminate the danger in Iraq.