Mr. Speaker, I share

the same revulsion that many others

have toward Saddam Hussein. We all

know that he is brutal and that his regime

has terrorized the Iraqi people

and the peoples of nearby countries.

But there was a time not so long ago

when, despite all of this, we chose to

allow him to be our friend. There was a

time when we supplied him with chemical

weapons and other military technology.

If our Nation really cared about

Iraq’s neighbors, we would never have

supplied him the military arsenal that

we did. And if we really cared about his

people, we would have done something

to alleviate the suffering of the Kurds,

who for years have been brutalized by

the Iraqi military. If we cared about

the Iraqi people, we would have done

something to lift the burdens imposed

on them by U.N. sanctions, which to

date have claimed in excess of an estimated

500,000 Iraqi children. But the

truth is we did not really care about

any of that suffering. Madeline

Albright even said that the price of

500,000 dead Iraqi children was worth it.

Now, however, we claim to care.

Now, Saddam Hussein has just become

another name on a long list of

other tyrants who we once aided and

abetted but now oppose.

But what to do? In the past, other tyrants

we have grown tired of were assassinated,

like Jonas Savimbi; or

charged with war crimes, like Slobodan

Milosevic; or forced from power

through U.S.-backed uprisings, like

Mobutu Sese Seko.

President Bush is confronted with

the ‘‘what to do question.’’ He appears

to be choosing war to get rid of this tyrant;

and, of course, he has to justify

it. That is the public relations part of

the equation.

The words ‘‘Gulf of Tonkin’’ have

echoed around Washington this last

month, with many people concerned

that the Bush Administration is now

manufacturing an international crisis

in order to launch a preemptive military

strike against Saddam Hussein.

In 1964, there were some courageous

Members of this House who knew that

the Gulf of Tonkin incident was a political

ruse being used by the Johnson

administration in order to justify the

United States going to war in Vietnam.

For their courage to speak out and resist,

they suffered a tidal wave of public

ridicule. But we now know that

they were right and that the Vietnam

War was a monumental mistake that

cost the lives of some 60,000 brave

young Americans and hundreds of

thousands of Vietnamese.

And, still, we have many Americans

and Vietnamese who suffer the health

effects of Agent Orange and other toxins

faced on the battlefield. And all

across the American and European

landscape today, veterans still suffer

from Gulf War Syndrome and exposure

to depleted uranium.

Will we let this President create yet

another generation of veterans to

whom we have broken our promise? I

see too many of these veterans sleeping

on our streets. The President can see

them, too, if he would just look. They

sleep on the sidewalks, the benches and

the heating vents just across the street

from the White House. And, sadly, one

of the first things our President did

after he declared this war on terrorism

was to deprive our young men and

women who are now fighting on the

front lines of their high deployment

overtime pay. He does not even want to

pay them.

Mr. Speaker, do we give this President

the green light to go to war with

Iraq based on evidence which many

weapons experts believe to be exaggerated?

Are we now turning a blind eye

to another Gulf of Tonkin-type incident?

Should we not trust the legal and

diplomatic means of the United Nations?

Do we give the President the green

light to go to war in Iraq because it has

refused to comply with U.N. Security

Council weapons inspections resolutions?

At the same time, Israel refuses

to comply with U.N. resolutions with

respect to the occupied territories. Do

we have different standards for different

countries?

Mr. Speaker, the Cuban missile crisis

and the Gulf of Tonkin, if they taught

us anything, they taught us the dangers

of choosing the military option

over diplomatic and legal alternatives.

The current terrorist crisis confronting

our Nation is so much bigger

and more complicated than this call

for war on Iraq. Should we miscalculate

our military actions in Iraq, we

could cause many American servicemen

and women to lose their lives.

Needless to say, we could also cause

untold numbers of Iraqis to be killed or

injured. Worse still, instead of solving

the current threat of terrorism against

us, going to war in Iraq might well

make things far worse for us, both at

home and abroad.

I hope and pray that we choose our

options carefully; and, for that reason,

I will be voting no on this resolution to

go to war in Iraq.