As a woman of peace, I am compelled

to rise in opposition to this resolution.

I oppose this resolution as someone

who loves this country very deeply.

Perhaps one would have had to have

grown up under segregation in the deep

South, as I did, to truly appreciate how

much this Nation means to me and how

honored I am to serve my country in Congress.

As one of the most senior Members of

Congress, few have seen what I have

seen in this Nation’s history. I remember

clearly the Japanese preemptive

attack, or first strike, against the

United States that plunged us into

World War II. We called it a sneak attack

and an act of cowardice. They

called it a preemptive attack against a

foreign enemy that threatened their interests.

I also remember clearly when we

went to war in South Korea, and after

50 years we are still in Korea. Since I

have been in Congress these past 10

years, I have supported every Defense

authorization and Defense appropriations

bill, every one of them. I feel very

strongly that we need a strong national

defense, and we need to be prepared,

and indeed we are.

We are the strongest Nation in the

world, and number two is not even

close to us. I believe that our Nation

sets the standard for the world. What

we do and how we do it has a huge impact

on the actions and things that

other nations do. I also believe that we

need a strong Presidency. I felt that

way under President Clinton, and I feel

that way under President Bush. However,

we must use our power very carefully.

We must set standards for other

nations and promote our security, our

interests and our goals. A strong chief

executive should not be an all-powerful

chief executive; strong, but not all-powerful.

It is for these reasons I oppose this

resolution.

Are we in imminent danger of attack?

The claims of proof are lacking.

The media has reported today that the

consensus of all relevant U.S. military

intelligence agencies is that Saddam

Hussein is unlikely to initiate an attack

upon us. In fact, the relevant U.S.

intelligence agencies have concluded

that the major threat to the United

States is not a first strike but the

weapons of mass destruction against

our invading troops.

Is Saddam Hussein an enemy? Yes, he

is. Is Saddam Hussein interested in

military conquests? Unquestionably.

Do we need to take action against him

to dismantle any existing weapons and

prevent the construction of others?

Emphatically yes. But is he an imminent

threat to the United States? The

answer is, no. Such a serious threat

that we have no choice but to immediately

attack him? The President simply

has not even come close to proving

his case on that to me, representing

over 600,000 people, or to the American

people, nor have those who are promoting

this war.

Under such shaky justifications when

we have other options, why are we in

such a hurry to start a war? Why are

there so many people beating the

drums of war? My answer to this resolution

is that we do not have clear evidence,

we do not have a demonstrated

imminent threat, and so we do not

have a compelling reason to pass this

resolution.

As I said, I believe in a strong chief

executive, but I also believe in a strong

constitutional government. Only Congress

has the authority under the Constitution

to declare war. This resolution

authorizes the use of force immediately

regardless of our efforts to gain

the support and assent of the other nations

that share the world with us. I

am certainly not willing to approve

this blank check to give such power to

any President, whether he be Democrat

or Republican.

As a leading member of the international

community, the United States

must live and get along with and set

example for the other nations of the

world. If we claim the right to attack

other nations on our own, what would

we do when other nations claim that

same right and then act upon it? The

world is filled with nations that already

have weapons of mass destruction

and that already have hate and

fear their neighbors. How would we

contain the preemptive attacks by

other countries that would be justified

by our own actions? Such attacks

could even be directed against us.

Finally, I believe we should fully and

aggressively utilize every diplomatic

option available to us. We have worked

with the United Nations in the past,

and we can do it again.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the world of

President William McKinley. The real

and imminent threat to our Nation is

from terrorism, not from other nations.

Mr. Speaker, I include the following

for the RECORD.