Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong support of House Joint

Resolution 114, authorizing the President to

employ the use of our Armed Forces against

Iraq, and urge its adoption by this Chamber.

For the past 2 days, the House of Representatives

has had under consideration one of the

most serious resolutions it is capable of adopting

and, like my colleagues, I take it very seriously.

Some have argued that this resolution

is not necessary, that Iraq poses no immediate

danger to the United States or any other

nation, and that we should not employ military

force against a sadistic terrorist regime that

displays not the slightest regard for human

life. Mr. Speaker, I disagree.

For the past 10 years, Saddam Hussein had

developed and stockpiled chemical and biological

weapons and continued to construct facilities

capable of producing nuclear weapons.

Evidence of this and other destructive activities

on the part of Saddam Hussein is overwhelming.

Mr. Speaker, for the sake of our

Nation’s safety and that of our neighbors and

allies we cannot ignore this problem any

longer. Either Saddam Hussein gives the U.N.

weapons inspectors full, un-fettered, and unconditional

access to all Iraqi facilities or the

United States will take action to disarm him.

I applaud President Bush, who has prudently

and methodically made a strong case

for why the United States has the moral and

political authority to take action against Iraq, if

necessary. Mr. Speaker, we are at the end of

the line and words and international declarations

will no longer do against a dictator who

has nothing but contempt for the freedom-loving

world and his own people.

In addition to its stockpile of weapons of

mass destruction, Saddam Hussein has repeatedly

violated the Persian Gulf War ceasefire

agreement, snubbed numerous U.N. resolutions,

brutalized and killed his own people,

plotted to assassinate a former U.S. President,

and has aided and harbored members of terrorists

cells, including al-Qaida. Clearly, we

must act.

Mr. Speaker, the foremost responsibility of

government is to ensure the safety and security

of its citizens. We demand safety and security

in our neighborhoods, schools, and

workplaces; we should expect the same in the

international community as well. Although I remain

hopeful that this conflict with Iraq can be

resolved peacefully, I am prepared, for the

sake of our Nation’s security, to employ force.

This resolution is not, as some have stated, a

‘‘blank check’’ for the President. Congress has

and will continue to maintain its constitutional

prerogatives if armed conflict with Iraq should

ensue, but as a nation, we have the right to

take action. Thus, I urge the adoption of

House Joint Resolution 114.