Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution. I am

deeply troubled that lives may be lost

without a meaningful attempt to bring

Iraq into compliance with U.N. resolutions

through careful and cautious diplomacy.

The bottom line is that I do not trust

the President and his advisors.

Make no mistake. We are voting on a

resolution that grants total authority

to a President who wants to invade a

sovereign nation without any specific

act of provocation. This would authorize

the United States to act as the aggressor

for the first time in our history.

And it sets a precedent for our

Nation or any nation to exercise brute

force anywhere in the world without

regard to international law or international

consensus. Congress must not

walk in lockstep behind a President

who has been so callous as to proceed

without reservation as if the war is of

no real consequence.

Mr. Speaker, 3 years ago, in December,

Molly Ivins, an observer of Texas

politics wrote, ‘‘For an upper-class

white boy, Bush comes on way too

hard, at a guess, to make up for being

an upper-class white boy. Somebody,’’

she wrote, ‘‘should be worrying about

how all this could affect his handling of

future encounters with some Saddam

Hussein.’’ Pretty prophetic, Ms. Ivins.

Let us not forget that our President,

our Commander in Chief, has no experience

or knowledge of war. In fact, he

admits that he was at best ambivalent

about the Vietnam War. He skirted his

own military service and then failed to

serve out his time in the National

Guard; and he reported years later

that, at the height of the conflict in

1968, he did not notice any ‘‘heavy stuff’’ going on.

So we have a President who thinks

foreign territory is the opponent’s dugout

and Kashmir is a sweater. What is

most unconscionable is that there is

not a shred of evidence to justify the

certain loss of life. Do the generalized

threats and half-truths of this administration

give any one of us in Congress

the confidence to tell a mother or father

or family that the loss of their

child or loved one was in the name of a

just cause? Is the President’s need for

revenge for the threat once posed to his

father enough to justify the death of

any American? I submit the answer to

these questions is no.

Aside from the wisdom of going to

war as Bush wants, I am troubled by

who pays for his capricious adventure

into world domination. The Administration

admits to a cost of around $200

billion. Now, wealthy individuals will

not pay; they have big tax cuts already.

Corporations will not pay; they

will just continue to cook the books

and move overseas and send their contributions

to the Republicans. Rich

kids will not pay; their daddies will get

them deferments as Big George did for George W.

Well, then, who will pay? School kids

will pay. There will be no money to

keep them from being left behind, way

behind. Seniors will pay. They will pay

big time as the Republicans privatize

Social Security and continue to rob the

trust fund to pay for this capricious

war. Medicare will be curtailed and

drugs will be more unaffordable, and

there will not be any money for a drug

benefit because Bush will spend it on a

war. Working folks will pay through

loss of jobs, job security, and bargaining

rights. And our grandchildren

will pay, through the degradation of

our air and water quality, and the entire

Nation will pay as Bush continues

to destroy civil rights, women’s rights,

and religious freedom in a rush to

phoney patriotism and to courting the

messianic Pharisees of the religious right.

The questions before the Members of

this House and to all Americans are

immense, but there are clear answers.

America is not currently confronted by

a genuine, proven, imminent threat

from Iraq. The call for war is wrong.

What greatly saddens me at this

point in our history is my fear that

this entire spectacle has not been

planned for the well-being of the world,

but for the short-term political interests of our President.

Now, I am also greatly disturbed that

many Democratic leaders have also put

political calculation above the President’s

accountability to truth and reason

by supporting this resolution.

But I conclude that the only answer

is to vote ‘‘no’’ on the resolution before us.