Mr. Speaker, we confront

in this Chamber today a decision

of utmost gravity, to authorize the

President to use military force if necessary

to remove the threat of chemical,

biological, and nuclear weapons

from the hands of Saddam Hussein.

To risk the lives of our sons and

daughters for this cause burdens the

hearts and minds of every Member of

Congress. For the past several weeks,

we have weighed this decision in the

balance. People of goodwill have had

their differences of opinion. We know

that military action by its nature is an

assumption of risk, risk to the lives

and safety of our military forces, risk

of outcome and duration of battle, and

risk of economic and political dislocations.

In spite of these dangers, the greatest

danger is to do nothing. The failure to

act will leave an international outlaw

undeterred and will sacrifice a freedom

that President Franklin Roosevelt

called fundamental, the freedom from fear.

On a clear autumn morning on September

11 we were awakened to the reality

of a new and growing threat to

our security. We saw all too vividly

how vulnerable our Nation can be to

unconventional warfare. We were

forced to face the stark reality that an

international terrorist organization

named al Qaeda exists and is dedicated

to the destruction of America and our way of life.

Our time-honored policy of security

through deterrence backed by our overwhelming

military superiority is no

longer sufficient to protect our Nation

from a weapon of mass destruction in

the hands of a single terrorist on a suicide mission.

Opinions differ on the question of

whether Saddam Hussein will engage in

a terrorist act against our Nation or

place weapons of mass destruction in

the hands of terrorists, but there is no

debate that the motive and the means

are present; and, in my judgment, the

threat is unacceptable.

Much of what we know, we have

known for a long time. We know Saddam

Hussein has developed biological

weapons. We know that Saddam has developed

chemical weapons. We know

that he has used them in war and

against helpless civilians, and we know

that he is working feverishly to acquire

nuclear weapons. We know he has

launched ballistic missiles at his

neighboring countries of Bahrain,

Saudi Arabia, Iran and Israel; and he

continues to develop missiles that can

hit American bases. We know he invaded

Iran in 1980, causing the deaths

of over 1 million people.

We know he invaded Kuwait in 1990

and ordered the torture and murder of

tens of thousands of civilians. We know

this man and we know his works. He

has the capability and he has the motive

to bring great harm to our Nation.

We have been at war with him for over

10 years. His hatred for the United

States has no limits, and his cruelty

and atrocities committed against his

own people, his closest associates, and

even his family leave no room to doubt

his murderous nature.

For 10 years the United Nations Security

Council passed resolutions to

open Iraq to weapons inspectors, to disarm

Saddam, to take away his weapons

of mass destruction. For 10 years he

has avoided, evaded, and escaped the

rules we tried to use to secure the

peace. Saddam Hussein is in material

breach of international law.

Mr. Speaker, knowing these things to

be true, to protect our homeland, to

take weapons of mass destruction out

of the hands of a tyrant, and to uphold

the rule of law, I support the President

in his request for authorization to use

force, if necessary, to accomplish these

goals in Iraq. Saddam Hussein is an

international outlaw who is a clear and

present danger to our country, and

time is not on our side. To meet this

threat, we will work with the United

Nations, but we will not wait for the

United Nations. We do not seek war,

and the best way to avoid it is to be

clear with our intent and be prepared

to act. Saddam must have no doubt

about our course. He can disarm or his

days are numbered.

Some have suggested that we adopt a

two-step resolution that would assure

our allies that we seek U.N. approval;

and if approval is denied, the President

would seek a second resolution from

this Congress authorizing the use of

unilateral force. This could weaken our

President’s hand in the effort to secure

Security Council support and work

contrary to our very interest of securing

multilateral cooperation. If the

U.N. declined to act and then we had a

subsequent resolution on this floor, we

would be in a position that we all seek

to avoid; and in addition, a two-step

resolution would detract from the effort

to send a clear message to Saddam

to give up his weapons of mass destruction without delay.

The quest for America’s security in

the 21st century begins with us. The

Bible tells us to whom much has been

given, much is required. Our duty and

our responsibility to future generations

of Americans leave us no option

but to act with resolve, with courage,

and the will to win. America is a special place. God has

blessed us beyond measure; and while a

few pursue hatred and destruction and

can bring us harm, there are millions

every day who seek to come to this

land of promise because we stand for

peace, for justice, and for democracy.