Mr. Speaker, the decision before

the Congress this week is whether or not

to give the President the option to use force

with Iraq if all else fails. It is similar to the one

before the Congress early in my career when

the elder Bush was in the White House. The

main difference was that Iraq had invaded a

sovereign nation, Kuwait, to the outrage of the

world community.

The world agreed that Iraq was the aggressor

and must be driven out. The U.N. voted

for precisely that and we led the effort. Although

much clearer in circumstance, it was

an extremely difficult decision.

Today things are not quite so clear. There

has been no invasion and there, at least at the

moment of this writing, is no U.N. sanction for

military action.

The arguments are more like piling straws

on a camel’s back. Saddam Hussein is a murderer

of his own people. He is a warmonger,

witness Kuwait, Iran and the Kurds in his own

country. He aggressively pursues the development

of nuclear weapons. Remember Israel

bombed an Iraqi nuclear facility many years

ago. Hussein still pursues that goal. He has

accumulated thousands of liters of chemical

and biological weapons and is not afraid to

use them, in fact he has used them against

Iran and his own people. He planned an attempted

assassination of an American president.

He defies U.N. resolutions that ended

the ’91 Gulf War, which called for the destruction

of all weapons of mass destruction. He refused

to allow weapons inspectors to do their

job and threatened and intimidated them at

every turn.

Now we are told that Iraq may have become

a weapons supermarket for terrorism. Some al

Qaeda leaders are there and other terrorist organizations

have close ties; i.e. Abu Nidal. We

are told that Hussein provides $25,000 to

each family of the suicide bombers who attack

Israel. And we can’t forget that during the Gulf

War Hussein rained Scud missiles down on innocent

Israeli civilians in Tel Aviv and other

communities. Iraq now is working to extend

the range of their missiles.

Now, under the threat of U.S. action, Hussein

agrees to let weapons inspectors back

into his country. Can there be any doubt that

the only thing this man responds to is the

threat of deadly force? One is tempted to believe

Hussein is now prepared to admit weapons

inspectors. And indeed we should and

must let that scenario play out before any act

of war. But the skeptic in me doesn’t believe

a word that he says. History is a wonderful

teacher and we all know this man’s history.

The U.N. has shown itself to be incapable

and unwilling to enforce its own resolutions.

As a guarantor of world peace they have a

checkered past at best. Without having the

threat of military intervention, the U.N. is a

paper tiger. I have long been a supporter of

the U.N. I believe that the nations of the world

must have a forum in which to settle their differences

but when a tyrant like Hussein

thumbs his nose at the world, something isn’t

right.

One last point, since the 9/11 attack on our

country we have been pouring over the coals,

literally and figuratively. One by one we have

connected the dots that led to the attack. We

have seen the threat that connects the plans

to do great harm to our country and our people.

The President in these past weeks has connected

the dots for us. He has pointed to Iraq

with great alarm and tried to help us to understand

the threat. It is real. What we don’t know

is how imminent and what shape the threat

will take.

After much thought and prayer and consultation

with my constituents and with people

I love and trust, I have decided to support the

resolution before the House. Not because I

want to go to war. I don’t, I remember the last

one. I remember meeting with Marsha Connor,

the mother of Patrick Connor of Marcellus who

was killed in action. It was heartbreaking.

But if we don’t give the President that option,

Saddam Hussein and Iraq will continue to

grow more troublesome and if they ever develop

a nuclear weapon it would be horrific. I’ll

vote for the resolution but I will implore the

President not to use force unless all else fails.

Negotiation, weapons inspectors, and U.N.

sanctions should come first.

And if we do indeed go, we should do so

with the other nations of the world who should

feel as threatened as we.