Mr. Speaker, I thank the

gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY)

for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, it should be stated at

the outset that not one Member of this

body wants war. We all want peace.

The decision whether to send American

soldiers into battle is the most agonizing

vote we will cast in Congress. It is

a choice between confronting the horrors

of war versus allowing a potentially

devastating attack on our homeland,

one that could kill tens of thousands

of Americans.

But make no mistake, the threat

posed by Saddam Hussein also ultimately

threatens world peace and stability.

It is for this reason that we

must consider the resolution before us

today, allowing the President to take

unilateral military action to disarm

Iraq in the interest of long-term peace.

First, I believe we must consider this

issue in the context of the post-September

11 world. Our enemies and their

supporters have demonstrated their

willingness to strike at us in covert

and highly-destructive ways. As a result

of briefings I have received from

military experts, former weapons inspectors

and colleagues in the intelligence

community, I am convinced

that Iraq does indeed possess weapons

of mass destruction.

First, chemical and biological

threats. Saddam Hussein has VX nerve

gas, mustard gas, and anthrax. These

toxins are deadly and could kill thousands.

Second, we know that Saddam has a

growing fleet of manned and unmanned

aerial vehicles, UAVs, that could be

used to disburse chemical and biological

weapons across broad areas. Intelligence

data suggests that Iraq may be

exploring ways of using these UAVs for

missions targeting the United States.

Third, as we learned from last fall’s

anthrax attacks, sophisticated delivery

systems are not required. For chemical

and biological attacks, all that is required

is a small container and one

willing adversary.

Next consider the nuclear threat.

Iraq can develop nuclear capabilities in

1 to 2 years. We know that Iraq has already

experimented with dirty bombs.

There is nothing to suggest that they

have discontinued this program. With

enriched uranium and subsequently an

atomic bomb, Iraq could use nuclear

blackmail to conquer other countries

in the region and threaten U.S. national security.

Now, some people that say that our

focus should be on the war against terrorism.

In my view, the Iraqi threat is

part and parcel of the war against terrorism.

There is ample evidence of al

Qaeda and Iraqi contacts in the development

of chemical and biological

weapons. Additionally, Saddam has

harbored known terrorists such as Abu

Nidal, who, prior to his mysterious

death, was connected to at least 90 attacks

throughout the world.

Iraq poses a threat to the Persian

Gulf and the Middle East as well as

110,000 United States American troops and civilians.

As a representative from the Washington,

D.C. suburbs, I am particularly

concerned about the threat to our

homeland and the Washington metropolitan

region. We learned on September

11 that the D.C. area is indeed

a terrorist target, and a prime target.

Now, many ask why is Iraq unique?

Other countries have weapons of mass

destruction and hostile intentions.

This is true. But none have the unique

history of Iraq. I submit to you some of

Iraq’s prior aggressions and violations:

First, Saddam’s invasion of Iran.

Second, Saddam’s invasion of Kuwait.

Third, Saddam’s use of chemical and

biological weaponry against his own

people as well as his enemies.

Fourth, Saddam has continued to obstruct

U.N. weapons inspections. We

cannot continue to ignore these violations.

And in his most recent gambit,

he tells us yes, we will accept inspections,

but you can not inspect my palaces,

some of which are as big as small

cities. This is unacceptable.

I believe that actions speak louder

than words and that past is prologue.

In Saddam Hussein we are dealing with

a shrewd and diabolical aggressor who

must be thwarted.

However, despite all of this, what we

want is inspections and disarmament,

not war. I agree with those who believe

war should be our last option. Thus, we

must consider the viability of diplomatic

measures. Although Saddam has

defied 16 U.N. resolutions over the past

decade, the President has asked the

United Nations to pass another resolution

requiring complete, unconditional

inspections of all sites. The U.N. can do this.

To those who can say we only act

multilaterally with our allies, I say

yes, and I hope they will support us in

the United Nations Security Council.

Unfortunately, some of our allies are

willing to appease Saddam Hussein.

Winston Churchill said, ‘‘An appeaser

is one who would feed a crocodile, hoping

it will eat him last.’’

Like a crocodile, the longer Saddam

Hussein is left unchecked, the stronger

and hungrier he will get.

This resolution sends Saddam Hussein

the type of clear message aggressors

understand, that we will no longer

stand idly by while he threatens U.S.

interests and American lives. Disarm

or bear the consequences of your actions.

Many of my colleagues believe that

this resolution will start war. However,

as the President said about the resolution

now before us during his speech 2

days ago, ‘‘Approving this resolution

does not mean that military action is

imminent or unavoidable. The resolution

will tell the United Nations and

all nations that America speaks with

one voice, and it is determined to make

the demands of the civilized world

mean something.’’

Thus, I believe this resolution can be

used to apply maximum leverage on

the United Nations to step up to the

plate and avoid war.

As provided in an amendment I introduced

to this resolution, I urged the

President to give the United Nations a

reasonable opportunity to pass and implement

a new resolution for unfettered

and unconditional weapons inspections.

If the President takes his prudent approach,

allowing a reasonable opportunity

for the U.N. to act, it would

demonstrate our desire for international

support and cooperation and a

peaceful resolution to the Iraqi problem.

I believe our patience could garner

further support.

Finally, should military force be necessary,

I believe nation building is a requirement.

Some of my colleagues

across the aisle have opposed nation

building. I am pleased to see the President

say we must have nation building

if we implement a military action.

Finally, this end game strategy is as

important as military action if we are

to achieve our long-term goal of peace

in the region. In the final analysis, we

all want peace, we all want a diplomatic

solution or a multinational military

effort. If we can achieve these things, fine.

However, being a world leader means

more than just waving flags and saying

that we are the greatest country in the

world and waiting for others to be willing

to act. Sometimes we have to make

difficult decisions and sacrifices in

order to stand for principles and

against aggression. Sometimes the

willingness to fight a war avoids the necessity to fight.

I support this bipartisan resolution,

and I urge my colleagues to do so.