Mr. Speaker, I thank

the gentleman from Illinois for yielding

time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this

resolution, which authorizes the President

to use all force necessary to bring

to justice those nations, operations,

and people responsible for the cowardly

act that was perpetrated upon this Nation

on September 11, 2001.

The Constitution of the United

States, the document that protects the

freedoms of all Americans, gives the

Congress certain responsibilities. Article

1, Section 8 of the Constitution says

the Congress shall have power to provide

for the common defense and the

power to declare war.

Earlier today, the Congress exercised

its responsibility to provide for the

common defense by passing the supplemental

spending legislation. Now we

give the President the congressional

authority to use all necessary force to

bring to justice those who attacked our

Nation.

This is the most solemn responsibility

that this Congress can undertake.

We do not do so gladly or with a

bitter sense of revenge. We do so because

we must in order to preserve

freedom and democracy in this Nation.

These are the times that try men’s

souls. On September 11, we lost thousands

of people, with thousands more

injured, and with two symbols of the

strength and vitality of our democracy,

the World Trade Center and the Pentagon,

destroyed or badly damaged.

A sworn enemy that dares not confront

us in the open attacked us in the

most cowardly way, by targeting innocent

citizens of this great Nation. This

enemy operates in the shadows, hates

with an unnatural passion, and practices

political fanaticism that glorifies

violent death and condemns innocent

life.

For too long, this enemy has been

protected and supported and sheltered

by rogue nations. The friends of our enemies

are also our enemies, and they

will bear equal responsibility. We must

defend our Nation. We must defeat

these enemies once and for all. We

must eliminate the scourge of terrorism.

This will be the great challenge for

our generation. It may take years. It

may cost additional lives. It may require

greater sacrifices for our citizens.

But great challenges have made us

stronger in the past. On July 4, 1776,

our Founding Fathers decided to challenge

tyranny. After we won our freedom,

we constructed the world’s greatest

constitution, and created a stable,

thriving democracy.

We faced dark days when our Nation

was torn asunder in the Civil War, and

we came together after that war between

the States to become the savior

of Europe in the First World War.

The empire of Japan deliberately attacked

us on December 7, 1941, and we

emerged as the greatest defender of the

free world.

We faced down communism in a painful

Cold War and emerged as the

world’s sole superpower.

Now, after this greatest of American

tragedies that we have faced here on

American soil, we face the greatest of

challenges.

I am comforted by the work of the

President and his team. They are assembling

a worldwide coalition of civilized

nations. These nations look to

the United States for leadership, and

they want to join us in this great crusade.

We will provide that leadership.

We have a job to do in this Congress,

and this authorization for the use of

force is an important part of that responsibility.

I ask my colleagues to vote for this

authorization and to join with me in

supporting our President, in supporting

our Constitution, and in supporting the

American way of life.