Mr. Speaker, until

tonight the most important vote that I

had cast as a Member of this body was

the vote that I cast in 1991 to support

then President George Bush in our Gulf

War. Now we are at another grave moment

of decision for our Nation.

This is a tragedy of unspeakable proportions.

We grieve for all of those who

have been affected by this horror.

After Abraham Lincoln was assassinated,

Melville wrote a poem that expresses

as best we can the force of our

emotion in the wake of this horror. He

wrote, ‘‘There is a sobbing of the

strong, and a pall upon the land. But

the people in their weeping bare the

iron hand. Beware the people weeping

when they bare the iron hand.’’

The cowards who planned and executed

the attack and any state that

harbors them should be aware and beware

of our iron hand, because they

will pay.

As a Congress we will lock arms, we

will rally behind our President and we

will confront terror as one, because

freedom will prevail.