Mr. Speaker, I rise

today to give a speech I never imagined

I would give; that of support for an authorization

of force, a 21st century declaration

of war.

As a member of a generation largely

shielded from the horrors of war, I accept

this responsibility with no small

amount of respect and humility.

Today we undoubtedly will approve

the mobilization of our Nation’s sons

and daughters to combat, to injury,

pain, sacrifice and death. There is no

glory in our vote this evening, only

duty.

We have a solemn duty to protect our

shores, our countrymen, and our liberties.

We step away from the rhetoric

this dark September night to commit

ourselves to a national sacrifice with

this vote to a sustained commitment of

lives, liberties, and provisions necessary

to preserve those things we here

subscribe.

Many of the men and women in the

service of our Nation are in the springtime

of their lives. But to many in my

generation, Pearl Harbor was an exam

question, Korea a backdrop for a TV

rerun, and Vietnam a blurry scene cobbled

together by Hollywood and an

oldies radio station. To many Americans,

the Gulf War seemed like a sustained

video game writ large in ticker

tape parades, precision bombs, and talk

of future bloodless wars.

Mr. Speaker, the future is here and

this war is bloody indeed. Our Nation is

ready. Our forces are prepared. The

public is supportive and Congress

stands together as one. Godspeed to the

President and God bless America.