Mr. Speaker, Tuesday’s

events were an attack on the

United States, but they were more

than that. They were an attack on humanity

and civilization itself. This resolution

tonight represents a policy

change in our country, a big policy

change, a monumental policy change,

because we are declaring war not

against any nation, not against any individual,

not against any religion. We

are declaring war against animalistic,

inhuman behavior called terrorism

wherever it exists on Earth. That is a

monumental step for this country.

This country needs to take that step

in my opinion, though, because we are

the leader in freedom and democracy

and human rights in the world. And so

on behalf of humanity and on behalf of

civilization, on behalf of our children

and grandchildren’s future, we take

this burden on tonight. We did not seek

it. But, ladies and gentlemen, we have

seen the face of evil and we must crush

it.

We are filled with grief, yet buoyed by pride.

Like all Americans, I want to right this wrong

and to avenge these cold, calculated killings.

While this might seem a forgone conclusion to

the overwhelming majority of those home and

abroad watching and awaiting our decision,

this is the single most difficult obligation for a

Member of this House to fulfill. In approving

this measure, one is reaffirming one’s support

for our nation, our President, our military leadership,

and expressing our collective outrage

and defiance on behalf of the thousands of

American families that have been torn apart.

In this respect, this is an easy decision. But,

as Members of Congress, we do not have the

luxury of reacting solely on emotion.

Ultimately, the weight of this awesome responsibility

and the consequences of this decision

falls on each of us. Thus, we as members

of this institution, are required to divorce

ourselves from the emotions, consider the interests

of our nation, and to give serious consideration

to the very real prospects, or one

might say, the inevitable consequences of our

choice. One cannot avoid the probability that

the action we consider here tonight will likely

bring additional loss of American life. As such,

the exercise of this Constitutional obligation is

never easy, regardless of the relative merits or

personal convictions with respect to the

course prescribed.

Moreover, tonight each Member has the additional

burden of knowing that in approving

this measure we are not only responding to

this action, but we will be embracing a monumental

change in U.S. policy. With this resolution,

we declare that we will no longer draw

any distinctions, limiting our response to those

individuals who materially participate in an act

of hatred and cowardice against the United

States and its citizens. We are clearly at a

point of demarcation in U.S. foreign policy.

From this point forward, we say to the world,

choose sides. Either you join us in the singular

purpose of rooting out and destroying these

merchants of fear and networks of hate, or we

will regard you as a co-conspirator and, as

such, you will be subject to the same fate as

the perpetrators.

Again, this seemingly simple adjustment is

no insignificant matter. This is a major policy

shift which presents numerous challenges.

This resolution will change the tone and tenor

forever. This was an attack on civility and as

such it will require a monumental effort. It will

require us to have the fortitude and strength of

resolve to see it through to its conclusion,

without regard for the unavoidable

unpleasantries. We must stay the course. To

deviate or to shy away would surely risk exposing

our nation, our citizens and life as we

know it to far greater dangers.

America is the embodiment of freedom, the

beacon of hope and in a very real sense, the

guardians of justice—a justice shaped and

honed by our values and morals. From this

point forward, we will surely have our morality

and values tested. We must strive to seek that

delicate balance between accomplishing our

objectives and ridding the world of these vessels

of hate, while showing utmost care not to

allow it to lead to a decay of our appreciation

of humanity. We must not allow our anger to

burn so deep that we become like those we

condemn. In our zeal to right the wrongs we

must show care not to dim the lamp of freedom

or diminish the sacrifice of those who

have given their lives to promote, protect and

preserve this great democracy.

This was not just an attack on New York

City, the Pentagon or even America, but rather

an attack on civilization, itself. It marks an escalation

which cannot be ignored. We must

join the other nations in an all out fight against

these enemies of society. I applaud President

Bush and Secretary Powell’s efforts to reach

out and build international support. We must

spare no efforts to seek the full support and

cooperation of allies, as well as friend and foe

in the Arab world. This effort will certainly require

an unprecedented level of diplomatic cohesion

and demonstration of political sensitivity.

Failure to gain the support and cooperation

of the international community will surely

limit our effectiveness and expose this nation

to grave dangers. We can ill afford to become

isolated in this pursuit.

As a nation, America has slumbered in the

naive belief inherent in our decisive military

might, superior technology and the safe labor

provided by the great expanse of open ocean.

Heretofore, we have been afforded the luxury

of remaining unsoiled by the dirty business of

hatred so common in a majority of the world

today. On Tuesday, we were rudely awakened,

our naive sense of security shattered by

the ugly realities of terror.

We did not choose this course of our own

volition, but having seen evil’s face we must

be resolved to join the fight with everything we

can muster.

I stand in support of this resolution. May we

proceed wisely.