Mr. Speaker, today we

debate the gravest and most important

matter that ever comes before the Congress,

the use of military force.

Mr. Speaker, the cowardly, barbaric

attack of September 11 was an assault

on America, on humanity and on the

civilized world. It was the cold-blooded

calculated murder of untold thousands

of innocent Americans. It was nothing

less than evil, plain and simple.

Mr. Speaker, September 11 changed

much about America and the world,

but I am proud to say that it has not

perverted our democratic system. That

is because the Congress and the President,

as coequal branches of government,

have worked together, consulting

closely throughout the process.

As a result, we have agreed to this resolution.

So we speak with one voice tonight,

Mr. Speaker, and the House will overwhelmingly

vote to authorize the

President to use military force to respond

to the terrorist acts of September

11.

Mr. Speaker, the United States is

united in its commitment to bringing

to justice those who perpetrated this

assault on our people. But make no

mistake, this campaign may be long

and it may be difficult.

As we take this action tonight, let us

pray for the men and women of our

armed services as they undertake this

assignment for our Nation.