Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong

support of H.J. Res. 64 to authorize the President

to use whatever means necessary to respond

to the heinous, barbarous terrorist acts

of September 11. I am proud to stand here in

unity with my Democratic and Republican colleagues

in support of our President, our

Armed Forces, our law enforcement personnel,

and our entire great nation, as we

seek justice for these horrible atrocities.

On September 11, we were violently attacked

in an act of war. It was not a war of

our choosing. Indeed, Americans are by their

nature a good people, and we seek to settle

our differences through peaceful means. But

when we are violently attacked, we respond

with tremendous resolve. This is not a war of

our choosing. But we must choose today to

forcefully respond to this cowardly act to ensure

that it never happens again.

Ten years ago, I was proud to stand in this

chamber as we debated a similar resolution to

address the aggression of Saddam Hussein.

We had principled differences over the use of

force, but when we finished our debate and

passed the resolution, we all stood united behind

our President. Because we are a strong,

healthy democracy, we know when to put our

differences aside for the greater good of

peace, prosperity and security.

Today we are confronted with an even

greater challenge to the future of our democracy.

But I believe our courage, resolve and

unity today has never been stronger. Only a

week ago, we were passionately debating the

budget, taxes and Social Security. Those

issues, important as they are, now pale in

comparison to the challenge before us. Today

we cast aside our labels of Democrat and Republican,

and we stand as one America.

The perpetrators of these heinous acts will

be found, their terrorist networks will be eradicated,

and justice will be served. This will not

happen overnight. Every American should be

prepared for a long campaign. But we will succeed.

When America’s spirit is moved, it is unbound

by conventional limits. When America’s

freedom is threatened, it responds decisively.

The terrorists who committed these atrocities

will never understand the power of American

freedom, and they will always underestimate

American resolve. That is because they

live in fear of a world that embraces our ideals

of freedom, democracy and equality. While

terrorists plot behind closed doors to destroy

human lives, compassionate and courageous

Americans risk their lives to save lives—as our

firefighters and other rescuers heroically demonstrated

in the past few days.

The actions that we will authorize today will

likely result in lives lost—a reality not of our

choosing but forced upon us by the events of

September 11. But the eradication of terrorist

networks that threaten America, and the punishment

of nations that harbor these criminals,

will preserve countless lives for many generations

to come—not just of Americans, but of

all people in the world who cherish freedom

and democracy as a way of life. We must use

the full might of America and its allies to create

a secure world for all of us to live in.

Our world changed dramatically with one

swift, despicable act of terrorism. We will

never be able to return to the world that existed

before September 11. But America has

the tremendous resilience to heal, recover and

grow stronger after great periods of tragedy.

We will meet this new challenge, and rebuild

a society that embraces even more vigorously

the ideals of freedom and democracy.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to support H.J.

Res. 64 to give the President the unwavering

support he needs to successfully execute

America’s mission. Eradicating this terrorist

threat is a daunting—but achievable—challenge.

America will prevail, because her cause

is just. Freedom will endure, because America

is its protector.