Mr. Speaker, I’ve

been in Congress for nearly six years. Never

have I been so torn over a vote. Even though

I am going to vote for this legislation, I have

deep concerns and grave reservations about

it.

First, it is too narrow. We need a comprehensive

anti-terrorist approach. This legislation

does not represent such a comprehensive

strategy and war against terrorism around

the world. It only pertains to the terrorism associated

with the events surrounding September

11, 2001. This legislation looks backward,

not forward. This legislation fails to develop

a strategy to combat and prevent potential

or future acts of terrorism.

Second, and paradoxically, it is too broad.

The literal language of this legislation can be

read as broadly as executive interpreters want

to read it, which gives the President awesome

and undefined power. As written, the resolution

could be interpreted, if read literally, to

give the President the authority to deploy or

use our armed forces domestically.

Earlier today I voted to support $40 billion in

supplemental spending for a fight against terrorism

and public social spending for New

York’s recovery. Tonight I would have preferred

to support a vote to reaffirm the authority

of the President under the War Powers Act,

which gives the President all the authority he

currently needs to fight terrorism and protect

the citizens of the United States. That would

give all Americans more time—60 or 90

days—to investigate more and learn more

about all of the issues and facts involved on

September 11.

I support the President’s commitment to investigate,

capture, and punish all of those responsible

for this horrible and inhumane deed.

This was not only an assault on our nation

and our people, but an indiscriminate attack

on civilian life. Thus, I also support and approve

removing the sanctuaries and support

systems of terrorists. I urge all governments to

unite to investigate this crime, to prevent its

recurrence, and to being to justice those who

are responsible. I support doing whatever is

constitutionally lawful and necessary to isolate

those nations who sponsor and harbor terrorists.

But I am not voting to give the President

new authority—in the words of Deputy Secretary

of Defense Paul D. Wolfowitz—to ‘‘end

states who sponsor terrorism.’’ We need to

operate within traditional constitutional constraints.

I would have preferred to have voted to reaffirm

the War Powers Act because it, after 60

or 90 days of the President launching a military

response to these terrorist attacks, the

President had returned with more information

on who did this and how it happened, I might

be prepared to vote $100 billion to fight terrorism.

And if, after 60 or 90 days, President

Bush returned with a request and a rationale

for new and expanded presidential authority, I

may have been willing to vote to grant him

that as well-but not now.

In private meetings all day yesterday, Members

raised serious questions and concerns

that troubled me greatly.

Some Members noted the similarity to the

open-endedness of this resolution to the Tonkin

Gulf Resolution. We know the consequences

of the vote, which was based on

insufficient information and, in that instance

we now know, deception. Senators Wayne

Morse of Oregon and Ernest Gruening of

Alaska voted ‘‘No’’ on August 7, 1964, and

they are seen as wise and heroic today. I am

not voting ‘‘Yes’’ on September 14, 2001, for

an open-ended Tonkin Gulf-type Resolution. I

do not want a repeat of the Johnson administration—

which used it to provide dubious legal

cover for a massive escalation of an

unwinnable war in Vietnam—for either a similar

domestic or foreign over-reach against terrorism.

I’m not willing to give President Bush

carte blanche authority to fight terrorism. We

need to agree to fight it together within traditional

constitutional boundaries.

Another Member asked, ‘‘By voting for this

resolution, are we granting the President new

authority to conduct extra-legal and extra-constitutional

assassinations?’’ If we are, we are

becoming like the terrorists we despise. What

does killing people already willing to die really

accomplish? It will only create martyrs and

multiply terrorists.

We must not become like those who believe

that the end justifies any means in the struggle

against terrorism. That is the logic of the

terrorists. We must respond to this outage, but

we must not validate this logic. We must respond

to this outrage effectively-by eliminating

the underlying grievances that is motivating

the terrorism in the first place. What we must

do is affirm the principles that came under attack

on September 11—respect for innocent

life and international law. That is how to rob

the terrorists of victory.

Recently President Bush said the United

States ‘‘will make no distinction between the

terrorists who committed these acts and those

who harbored them.’’ But we must make distinctions.

In the words of Human Rights

Watch, we must distinguish ‘‘between the

guilty and the innocent; between those who

commit atrocities and those who may simply

share their religious beliefs, ethnicity, or national

origin. People committed to justice and

law and human rights must never descend to

the level of the perpetrators of such acts. That

is the most important distinction of all.’’

Another Member said we needed to show

national unity. A vote to reaffirm the War Powers

Act would have given us the national unity

we need—and would have given us 60 days

to investigate this matter more fully and see

more clearly what we are actually looking at.

Another Member said she had been in Congress

for 19 years, but never had been asked

to make a decision and cast a vote with so little

information. In light of one Senator’s

breach of trust, the administration is now withholding

information from Members of Congress.

We are voting huge sums of money

and granting virtual unlimited authority to the

President with little actual information.

Other Members expressed a concern that if

we are going to conduct a ‘‘comprehensive

and sustained war against terrorism that eliminates

terrorists and terrorism root and branch’’

that we must give Americans an understanding

of why there are so many people in

the world who hate us. We must explore and

learn why people are willing to give their very

lives in suicidal missions; and why their supporters

dance and celebrate in the streets

when these terrorists inhumanely succeed to

destroying American lives and our symbols of

economic power and military might.

I have raised the concern that we need

more time to explain to the American people

that this is a new kind of protracted war. This

is not the kind of war former President Bush

fought in the Persian Gulf that ended in just

over a month. This is a war that will be fought

in public places on our shores and within our

borders—in our crowded public buildings, in

our subways, in our airports, in our train stations,

in our colleges and universities, at our

sporting events, and possibly with chemical

and biological weapons. The War Powers Act

would have allowed us at least 60 to 90 days

to better understand and inform the American

people about the nature of the war that today

they are so anxious to fight.

I too am deeply hurt, distraught, in mourning,

fearful, and angry. But we must resist the

temptation to allow ourselves to become like

those we today so despise. Terrorist violence

must be halted, but the pain behind their rage

must be heard and addressed. Human beings

become terrorists in an ocean of despair.

Therefore, any comprehensive approach to

ending terrorism must address the waves of

pain and injustice of the ocean. The most effective

anti-terrorist campaign is one that replaces

the despair and hopelessness of the

terrorist’s supporters with a policy that brings

dignity, respect, and justice to every person,

neighborhood, community, and nation in the

world.