Mr. Speaker,

Secretary Powell’s address today reiterated

that Saddam Hussein is an evil

dictator, but he did not explain how a

preemptive war is in the best interests

of the American people. Will a preemptive

attack on Iraq without United Nations

support make America safer?

How will attacking Iraq prevent the

proliferation of weapons of mass destruction?

What will preemptive war do

to stability in the Middle East? Are we

ready to commit to a decade of American

troops policing Iraq and the billions

of dollars needed to rebuild and

stabilize that country?

Before we start a war that could kill

thousands of civilians, could create

hundreds of new al Qaeda recruits,

could increase the potential of blowback

aimed at innocent American citizens,

we must think through the consequences

of our actions and be prepared

for a long, difficult road in Iraq.

One thing is certain: Any action

against Iraq will be much more difficult,

much more costly, much more

dangerous if we take preemptive action

against Iraq without the support of the

United Nations Security Council.