Mr. Speaker, I, too,

just returned from a month in my district,

and spent a good deal of time

traveling the district and talking with

my constituents. I have a district that

in fact voted in the majority for

George Bush, and yet, I found, widely

traveling my district, talking to diverse

groups of constituents, a lot

more questions than certainty about

the President’s position on Iraq. In

fact, there is a great deal of misgiving

in my district, as I believe there is

abroad in the land.

The gentleman who preceded me

made an eloquent case on a number of

points, and I will not repeat those but

I will emphasize a few others.

I am today sending a letter, along

with 17 other Members of Congress, to

the President. We are pleased that the

President has now recognized the constitutional

authority of the Congress

to declare war and about the fact that

he will come to Congress for approval

for a war against Iraq.

At this point, I would venture and

hope that Congress would not be willing

to grant such approval to the President,

given the lack of specificity and

the many questions that need to be answered.

Among the questions that need to be

answered are the following:

What is the threat posed by Saddam

Hussein to the United States?

UNSCOM said they destroyed 90 to 95

percent of their weapons of mass destruction.

Is there convincing evidence

of renewed production of chemical and

biological weapons? Is there evidence

that Iraq has successfully produced a

nuclear weapon? Is there evidence Iraq

has produced a reliable delivery system

for weapons of mass destruction?

Are there new developments that

mean Iraq poses an imminent threat to

the United States, and therefore requires

immediate attention? A year

ago, the administration did not seem

to think that. What has changed in

that intervening time? If not, would a

policy of enforcing no-fly zones, vigorous

weapons inspections, military

sanctions be effective in containing

and/or reducing the perceived threat,

given the success of such strategies

over the last decade?

Is there any convincing evidence that

Iraq planned, authorized, committed,

or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred

on September 11, or harbored

such organizations or persons? That

would give some authority to act without

a specific grant from Congress, but

the administration has not made that

case.

Is there convincing evidence that

Iraq has shared its knowledge of biological,

chemical, or nuclear weapons,

or the weapons themselves, with other

nations or terrorist organizations? How

does the threat of Iraq doing so compare

with the threat posed by Iran,

Pakistan, China, North Korea, or a

number of other nations that are

known to possess weapons of mass destruction,

some of whom are known to

be sharing and selling such information?

How does the administration intend

to assure Iraq does not become balkanized?

This was the problem that was

confronted by Colin Powell and the father

of President Bush when they decided

not to go to Baghdad, as they

said at the time.

Will Iraq become balkanized? If it

does, what happens with Turkey? What

happens with the Kurds wanting their

own nation? What happens with the

Shi’as in Iran? What happens with the

long-term prospects for the governance

of Iraq itself?

I witnessed a Republican Senator

saying we were going to rule Iraq. The

United States of America is going to

rule Iraq alone, without allies? Has

anybody really thought about what

that would mean?

What are the potential disruptions to

the United States economy? We have

some problems here at home. I have a

lot of unemployed people in my district,

the highest unemployment rate

in the Nation in my State.

What are the potential economic disruptions

that might come from a war

with Iraq? Would it lead to a disruption

of oil supplies? Would it drive up the

price of oil dramatically, as it did in

the last Gulf War? How much would

such a war cost the United States of

America and its taxpayers? What are

the risks to our troops? What are the

risks in terms of a long-term occupation?

We have not yet resolved the situation

or stabilized the situation in Afghanistan,

which is a country that had

no discernible military, no weapons of

mass destruction. They did harbor terrorists.

It was a rogue regime. But yet,

the United States of America, with a

substantial number of allies around the

world, has yet to bring settled conditions

to that country. Yet, we are

about to depart for a much larger nation

who has not been involved, as far

as has been revealed to Congress or the

people of the United States, in the attacks

upon our country, has not posed

a credible threat to the United States

or our allies. However, we are off on

another adventure.

Is this left-over business from George

Bush’s father’s administration? It

seems like a number of the most

hawkish people in his administration

are people who served in his father’s

administration, who still regret the

fact that they did not pursue the war

to an end then, and they want to revisit

the issue.

Many questions need to be answered

before this Congress should extend authority

to the President to wage a war

against Iraq, the first preemptive war

in the history of the United States of

America.