Mr. Speaker, I offered

President Bush, as did so many

others here, immediate bipartisan support

for the war on terror, but regime

change in Baghdad, rather than disarming

Iraq, represents a diversion

from that bipartisan effort.

Not only do we have continuing concerns

about Osama bin Laden, but also

we have grave concerns about the

looming nuclear threat from North

Korea, which does have long-range missiles.

This threat was deliberately hidden

from this House until after our

vote on Iraq.

The Korean peninsula crisis worsens

by the day with Administration mismanagement

and neglect heightening

the far greater danger from this

xenophobic, despotic regime. The Administration

has a ‘‘Don’t Talk, Don’t

Tell’’ policy that is steadily narrowing

our options and increasing the risk of

what could easily become a devastating

conflict.

Just yesterday, former Defense Secretary

William Perry and former Secretary

of State Madeleine Albright

warned that North Korea could be

headed toward ‘‘serial production’’ of

nuclear weapons.

I believe that the Administration’s

fixation with regime change in Baghdad

is diverting precious intelligence

and other resources that we need to

protect American families from what is

a very genuine threat. Despite its clever

marketing campaign, and it has

been clever indeed, attempting to link

9/11 with Saddam Hussein, as of this

very moment, the Administration has

not offered one shred of evidence to

make that connection stick, nor has it

demonstrated why Iraq represents any

greater danger of attacking our families

today than it did on September 10,

or since the time we were supplying

them aid.

Today, we have crisscrossed Iraq

with weapons inspectors. It does not

even pose such a threat that its nextdoor

neighbor, Turkey, is willing to

challenge it.

The Central Intelligence Agency, in

reports that we forced out of the Administration,

has indicated that the

real threat to our families would come

with an invasion to Iraq and the danger

that any weapons of mass destruction

might spread and affect us.

Overthrowing a single tyrant, in

what many will perceive to be a crusade

against Islam, will ultimately

jeopardize families across America as

we create a generation of terrorists.

Further attacks will only reinforce

those here in America, who are determined

to ensure our safety by trampling

our civil liberties.

Attacking Iraq is apparently the first

step in implementing a dangerous new

security policy that dramatically alters

a half century’s bipartisan reliance

on containment that has served to

protect us from villains as bad as Saddam

Hussein. America will now attack

first with preemptive strikes in what

could spiral into wars without end because

other countries are likely to

copy our model.

Fighting wars as a first choice, not a

last choice, is a formula for international

anarchy, not domestic security.

A quick draw may take out the

occasional tyrant, but it comes at the

cost of destabilizing the world, disrupting

the hope for international law

and order, and, ultimately, it makes all

of us unsafe.

True security certainly requires a

strong military and a willingness to

use it. We are strong enough to conquer

Iraq and others, but we must be

wise enough to rely on our many other

strengths to rid the world of dangers.

Ultimately, imposing our will by force

unites our enemies and divides our allies.

Defense Secretary Rumsfeld may

dismiss our major partners as ‘‘Old Europe,’’

but many yearn for ‘‘Old America’’

that collectively and successfully

worked to prevent and remove threats

to peace and ensure the safety of our

families.

This is not a choice between ‘‘war’’

and ‘‘appeasement.’’ Rather, the better

alternative is to isolate Saddam Hussein

and unite both his neighbors and

our allies behind an aggressive inspection

and weapons destruction program.

We know that the real cost of war is

paid in blood. But Americans are already

paying for this war at the gas

pump. And with so few allies, hundreds

of billions of our tax dollars that could

be spent on the needs of Americans will

be spent abroad.

A robust debate in an elected Congress

on whether war should be waged

with Iraq is the sign of a strong democracy.

Unfortunately, this year, that debate

took place in Turkey, not here in

the U.S. House of Representatives.