Mr. Speaker, it is

clear that Saddam Hussein has been

and continues to be a threat to Iraq’s

neighbors, his own people, and to all

peace-loving nations of the world. The

United States and the United Nations

have recognized the dangers posed by

his pursuit of nuclear, biological, and

chemical weapons. The world has wisely

taken action to proactively address

this threat.

The issue is not whether Saddam

Hussein is a terrible dictator or whether

or not he is dangerous. He clearly is.

The issue is whether a preemptive war

is justified now. I believe the answer is

no. Iraq is neither an immediate or an

imminent threat to the security of the

American people. Aggressive inspections

and disarmament by the United

Nations with the full support of member

states can be successful. We have

time to work together with the international

community to collectively address

the threat of Iraq without resorting

to war and without endorsing a policy

of preemptive attack.

Following the devastation of World

War II, the United States showed tremendous

leadership in the world as we

created international institutions and

a framework of international law to

prevent war and to sustain and maintain

peace. We were the leaders in promoting

a world where conflicts could

be resolved peacefully and cooperatively.

While never perfect, this system

of international institutions has been

remarkably effective. I and many others

around the world are shocked and

dismayed by the unilateral,

confrontational approach that this administration

has taken in the world

arena. We must recognize the consequences

in the world community of

our rejection of Kyoto, of the International

Criminal Court, of the treaty

to ban land mines, and our own withdrawal

from the ABM treaty. We must

be mindful about how our criticisms of

the U.N. and NATO are heard throughout

the world community.

We have to recognize that after 9–11,

the world came together in solidarity

with our loss, working with us to find

the perpetrators, to break up al Qaeda

and arrest its leaders, to interrupt the

flow of money. It should have been

crystal clear that fighting terrorism

and protecting American security

would require our friends and our allies;

cooperation, not confrontation.

Yet the administration instead engaged

in a single-minded drive to

achieve its Iraqi objectives at any cost

instead of developing a policy to deal

with Iraq by working with our allies,

by working with the world community.

Even if the administration gets what it

wants this time, what is the long-term

damage to our international relationships?

How will it impact our efforts to

stop terrorism and protect the security

of the American people?

I am worried. The people that I represent

are very anxious. It seems more

and more likely that war is around the

corner. What will that war be? Are the

American people prepared? The American

people are expecting, I think, a

smaller conflict than we are walking

into, perhaps a Grenada, a Panama or

the first Gulf War; quick, hopefully few

casualties, troops in and out within

weeks or months. I think that this war

would be different. After a large ground

war to capture the entire country, we

will likely occupy Iraq. The Army

Chief of Staff, General Shinseki, estimated

that we would need 100,000

troops or more for the occupation. We

have no idea how long they would have

to stay. Mr. President, we need to hear

about your exit strategy, and we need

to hear that now.

The congressional debate that we had

last fall to authorize the use of force

against Iraq did not prepare the American

people for the ramifications of

this war and what this administration

truly envisions. I call on this administration

to answer the myriad questions

that have been posed by numerous

Members of Congress on behalf of our

constituencies before ground troops are

committed. All of Congress and all of

America stand by our troops, but we

think it is absolutely incumbent upon

this administration to answer our

questions.