Mr. Speaker,

I rise today to speak for peace one

more time, to speak against a rush to

war.

Our courageous sons and daughters

have been placed in harm’s way, and I

will continue to support our young

men and our young women, but I cannot

in good conscience betray the nonviolent

principles on which I have

worked all my life. I cannot sit in silence

when I believe there is still time.

It is late, it is very late, it is midnight,

but it is not too late for diplomacy, Mr.

Speaker.

War with Iraq will not bring peace to

the Middle East. It will not make the

world a safer or better place, a more

loving place. It will not end the strife

and hatred that breeds terror. War does

not end strife, it sows it. War does not

end hatred, it feeds it. War is bloody,

war is vicious, it is evil, and it is

messy. War destroys the dreams, the

hopes, the aspirations and the longings

of a people. I believe that war is obsolete.

As a great Nation and a blessed people,

we must heed the words of the spiritual,

‘‘I am going to lay down my burden,

down by the riverside. I ain’t

going to study war no more.’’

For those who argue that war is a

necessary evil, I say you are half right.

War is evil, but it is not necessary. War

cannot be a necessary evil, because

nonviolence is a necessary good. The

two cannot coexist. As Americans, as

human beings, as citizens of the world,

as moral actors, we must embrace the

good and reject the evil.

If we want to create a beloved community,

create a beloved world, a world

that is at peace with itself, if that is

our end, if that is our goal, our means,

our way, it must be one of love, one of

peace, one of nonviolence.

Gandhi said, ‘‘The choice is nonviolence

or nonexistence.’’

America’s strength is not in its military

might, but in our ideas. American

ingenuity, freedom and democracy

have conquered the world. It is a battle

we did not win with guns or tanks or

missiles, but with ideas, with principles,

this whole idea of justice and

freedom and liberty.

We must use our resources not to

make bombs and guns, but to solve the

problems that affect humankind. We

must feed the stomach, clothe the

naked body, educate and stimulate the

mind. We must use our resources to

build and not to tear down, to reconcile

and not to divide, to love and not to

hate, to heal and not to kill.

Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King

Jr.’s words, many years ago, said,

‘‘Take offensive action in behalf of justice

to remove the conditions which

breed resentment, terror and violence

against our great Nation.’’

This is the direction in which a great

Nation and a proud people should

move.

War is easy, but peace, peace is hard.

When we hurt, when we fear, when we

feel vulnerable or hopeless, it is easy to

listen to what is most debase within

us. It is easy to divide the words into

us and them, to fear them, to hate

them, to fight them, to kill them.

War is easy, but peace is hard. Peace

is right, it is just and it is true, but it

is not easy to love thy enemy. No,

peace is hard.

Again, Martin Luther King said when

he spoke out against the Vietnam War,

he said, ‘‘War is not the answer. Let us

not join those who shout war. These

are days which demand wise restraint

and calm reasonableness.’’

He was right then, and the wisdom of

those words hold true today. War was

not the answer then, and it is not the

answer today. It is not the answer in

this hour. War is never, never the answer.

War is obsolete.

It is my belief, Mr. Speaker, that humankind

would rise to a much higher

level if we would lay down the tools

and instruments of war and violence. It

is not too late to stop our rush to war.

Let us give peace a chance.