Mr. Speaker, I rise today

in the wake of the remarks by the

President of the United States before

the United Nations, words that resonated

not only around this Nation but

around the world, to respectfully repeat

the question the President asked

that august and historic body today:

Will the United Nations choose to be

relevant on the planet Earth?

As the President described, Saddam

Hussein, the dictator of Iraq, has systematically

and continually violated 16

United Nations resolutions over the

past decade. The United Nations, for

incomprehensible reasons, has chosen

to retreat in the face of Hussein’s audacity.

Mr. Speaker, we must learn the lessons

of history. Over 60 years ago, Neville

Chamberlain retreated in the face

of tyranny in Central Europe when he

returned to the people of England and

held aloft a sheet of paper, an agreement

of peace with the dictator of Germany,

and pledged that he had

achieved peace in our time.

For the past decade, the United Nations

has repeated the mistakes of the

past. President Bush demonstrated by

his speech in the United Nations that

he will not play the role of a modernday

Chamberlain, but he has chosen to

play the role of Churchill. As the President

said today, Saddam has made the

case against himself. A dictator who

routinely murders his own people, harbors

terrorists, develops weapons of

mass destruction is a threat to the civilized

world.

President Bush has made the case for

military action against Iraq, and it is

now time for the United Nations to

fully support regime change in that nation

and for that people.

Iraq has refused weapons inspections

for almost 4 years. Mr. Speaker, 4 years

is 4 years too long. Are we to believe

that Saddam Hussein stopped developing

biological and chemical weapons

and his pursuit of nuclear capability at

the exact moment he prevented weapons

inspections from going forward? As

the President said memorably today to

the United Nations, logic and common

sense scream otherwise.

Are we willing to gamble, as the

President asked, the lives of hundreds

of thousands, if not millions, of people

on the possibility that Saddam Hussein

can be trusted, or is it more reasonable

to assume that when that dictator attains

a nuclear weapon, that he will be

prepared to use it?

Saddam Hussein has already used

weapons of mass destruction. A nuclear

capability is simply the next and logical

macabre step. As the President

said today, this is a gamble that opponents

of military action are taking in

the world. It is a gamble that I and

many in this institution, as the debate

ensues in the weeks and months ahead,

I pray will not be willing to take.

Mr. Speaker, military conflict is a

serious business. There is not a night

that I do not go into my 11-year-old

son’s room late, pull up the covers and

brush back his hair, that I am not

aware of the cost of war. But I must

say today, the risk of inaction against

this malevolent dictator, who has

flaunted the resolutions of the civilized

world, is greater than the risks of action.

The United Nations, as the President

said memorably today, Mr. Speaker,

was designed to be able to respond to

threats from dangerous dictators who

threaten the peace of the world. I say

again that question which the President

asked today. The United Nations

must now choose whether it will be relevant

on planet Earth.

If they choose against relevance, as

the President was clear today, let the

world be assured that by this Congress

and its war powers authorizing our

Commander in Chief, the United States

and its courageous allies will not

choose irrelevance; we will choose justice.

We can seek the safety and security

of our people and the people of the

civilized world.