Mr. Speaker, after this partisan debate, I want to open my

remarks by saying I agree with Bill Clinton who in December of 1988

said, ``There should be no doubt, Saddam's ability to produce and

deliver weapons of mass destruction poses a grave threat to the peace

of that region and the security of the world.'' I could not have put it

better myself.

Unfortunately, too many in the minority, faced with the harsh

realities of the war on terror, have not even tried to say it at all.

Too many seem to be in denial. Too many seem to prefer to ignore the

war on terror or choose to see it as ``far less of a military operation

and far more of a law enforcement operation.''

Well, Mr. Speaker, this is a fundamental debate before us today. Are

we at war or are we not? Should the United States appease international

terrorists and pretend that they are a law enforcement problem or fight

them as the military threat that they are? Let us consider the records

of these competing positions.

First, the appeasement approach. Through the 1990s, the United States

and our allies were victimized by progressively deadlier and more

audacious terrorist attacks, and in accordance with the international

law enforcement strategies, our leaders did nothing. They passed U.N.

resolutions and they issued subpoenas and indictments. They wrung their

hands about root causes, and they tried to reduce the problem of

international terror to a dorm-room dialectic.

Meanwhile, as we listened to double-talk about constructive

engagement and cross-culture dialogues, they gutted the national

security and intelligence infrastructure of this Nation. They slashed

our military budget and surrendered national interests to the higher

authority of international institutions. And on September 11, 2001, on

September 11, 2001, we witnessed the tragic and the inevitable

consequences of the international law enforcement approach.

By contrast, America's foreign policy since 9/11 has been to wage war

on the terrorists before they wage war on us. In Afghanistan, in Iraq,

in the Philippines, in southeast Asia, everywhere in the world a

terrorist sticks his head out of a cave, there will we fight, fight the

terrorists, their networks, their allies, their financiers and, most

importantly, their state sponsors.

Enter Saddam. One year ago, Iraq was still enslaved, still ruled by

an unstable psychopath who started two regional wars, two regional wars

in just a decade, who possessed and used weapons of mass destruction

against his own people when he gassed the Kurds in 1988, who funded

international terrorism and provided terrorists a safe haven; a mass

murderer, sitting atop a nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons

program, a ticking bomb, a ticking time bomb, a nuclear 9/11 waiting to

happen.

So we violated the principle tenet of the international law

enforcement approach. We acted, and in less than a year, since Iraq's

liberation, a preliminary constitution, the most progressive of its

kind in the region, has been signed by its leaders. Elections will soon

be scheduled and the human right, the human right of self-determination

will be exercised by the Iraqi people.

Had we not acted, as our opponents wished, Iraq would still be

enslaved. Terrorists would still enjoy a strategic ally and a safe

haven and a financier in Baghdad, and we would still be fighting the

war on terror with U.N. resolutions and losing; but instead, Iraq is

free, America is safer, and the world has changed for the better.

Now, terrorists have no safe harbors in Afghanistan and Iraq nor

potential partners in Saddam Hussein or Moammar Qaddafi's weapons of

mass destruction programs. States once conflicted about terrorism, like

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and others are now vital allies in the war,

providing us with invaluable intelligence and assistance. And for all

these reasons, Operation Iraqi Freedom and the courageous policies that

set it in motion have won the most significant battle yet in the war on

terror, and yet appeasers who endorsed the law enforcement approach,

who did nothing to deter terrorism in the 1990s, had the audacity to

call the Bush doctrine and Operation Iraqi Freedom reckless.

Well, what would you have us do? Wait until Saddam proved that he had

nuclear weapons by detonating one in New York City? Wait like we waited

for al Qaeda to prove that they really meant business on September 11,

2001? A war raged and many people did not know it. A war raged for 8

years and our national policy on Iraq was regime change, which had

overwhelming bipartisan support and yet nothing was done. Six dead in

the World Trade Center bombing, 19 dead at Khobar Towers, 224 dead in

the African Embassy bombings, 17 sailors dead on the USS Cole, 3,000

dead on 9/11. And you speak to us about recklessness?

People are dying and the course of human history hangs by a thread,

and that thread, Mr. Speaker, is the moral courage of this Nation.

In the name of justice, vote yes on this resolution to affirm the

liberation of Iraq as a victory for all humanity over barbarism. In the

name of decency, vote yes to salute our brave and compassionate troops,

and in the name of freedom, vote yes to reaffirm that the citizens of

these United States of America will never abandon the cause of human

liberty, no matter how terrifying its enemies or tempting the

platitudes of appeasement.

Support the resolution and make our voices heard. No retreat, no

surrender, and no apologies. Victory, Mr. Speaker, only victory.