Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, over the last 6 weeks,

the President has changed long-standing policy that prohibits a unilateral

American first strike and has argued

that his new policy should be imposed upon Iraq.

President Bush, to his credit, has decided to include Congress in this process and to seek international support

for his positions, although he will not

wait for such support to enforce his new policy.

The process is important, but it is

not the most important aspect of his

efforts. For me, the most important

question in this entire matter is what

happens after Saddam Hussein is dethroned. Forty years ago we amended

our policies to state that America will

no longer allow long-range nuclear

weapons to be installed in our hemisphere, a precise policy that applied

only to Cuba at that time.

Twenty years ago we amended our

policy to state that America will not

allow foreign leaders to enrich themselves by using their governmental

structure to ship illegal drugs into

America. Again, a precise policy which

applied only to Panama at the time.

Although the President has changed

some of his arguments, there do seem

to be three constant points that he uses.

Number one, Iraq has weapons of

mass destruction. Number two, Iraq

has supported terrorists even if the

link to al Qaeda cannot be proven.

Number three, Iraq has a history of aggression and brutality against its own

people and against its neighbors. We all

agree on all of those points. They are

not subject to debate. Based on constant repetition of these factors, we

must conclude these are the criteria

America will use to implement our new

unilateral strike policy. But is this reaction to Iraq’s threat comparable to

previous reactions to such threats? Is

it clear and precise? Who else violates

this new policy and, therefore, who

would be next to have our new policy implemented against them?

Let us start with Iran. They have weapons of mass destruction. Iran has

certainly supported terrorists and does

so today. In fact, many people believe

that this country, Iran, now is home to

more al Qaeda members than any other

country in the world. Finally, Iran has a history of aggression and brutality

against its own people and its neighbors. When do we attack Iran?

What about China? They certainly

have very powerful weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons.

They are the leading sellers of both

weapons of mass destruction and, more

importantly, the industrial means to produce such weapons around the

world. They have ignored all calls to

withdraw from Tibet or to treat Tibetans fairly. They brutalize the Falun

Gong. They brutalize Christians. They

threaten Taiwan and the peace in of all

of Asia. When do we attack China?

When do we attack the Sudan? When

do we attack North Korea? When do we attack Russia itself?

Each of these countries meets all of

the criteria the President is now using

to say we should attack Iraq unilaterally.

Most Americans want Saddam Hussein gone. So do I. Most Americans

want the United States to remain the

strongest Nation in the world. So do I. But most Americans also want the

United States of America to continue

to be the world’s moral leader while we

accomplish both of these goals. President Bush’s unclear, imprecise

new policy in support of a unilateral

force first strike does not do it.

Not long ago another American stated, ‘‘Our purpose is peace. The United

States intends no rashness and seeks

no wider war. We seek the full and effective restoration of international

agreements.’’ This House reacted by

voting, ‘‘The United States is prepared

as the President determines to take all

necessary steps including the use of armed forces.’’

I am sure some of you recognize

these words from the 1963 Gulf of Tonkin Resolution that led to the Vietnam

debacle. We all know the results of

that resolution. We all know that this

House had to repeal this resolution 6 years later.

This resolution before us tonight

uses virtually the same language and

grants the President comparable authority to the Gulf of Tonkin resolution. But I think our actions here

today may actually prove to be more

dangerous because we base them on a

new policy of unilateral first strike. At

a minimum, the President needs to refine his new policy before we implement. Until we do so, America must

adhere to the long-standing policies in

existence now. Those policies require

international agreement on war and

peace, and they require war to be the last alternative, not the first.

As of today, the United States, and

we know it, has not exhausted our peaceful options; and by tomorrow

when we vote on this, we will have set

America and the world on a new course

that has not yet been fully thought out

or debated. We owe it to ourselves and to our children to go slow.

Others have cited history as well. Let

me be clear, no one has forgotten September 11. Everyone wants to avoid an-

other such incident. But no one has divine insight as how to best accomplish

that goal. Let me ask those who have

cited World War II and to remind them

that when Iraq did try to expand its

borders, the world did react. This Congress reacted, unlike Europe in the

1930’s. The comparison is not valid.

If necessary there will be plenty of

time to wage war against Iraq, and I

may support it. But if an unnecessary

war is waged, we risk forfeiting America’s well-deserved reputation as humanity’s best hope for a long-lasting worldwide peace.

Mr. Speaker, I urge this Congress to vote ‘‘no’’ on this resolution.