Mr.Speaker, for more than a decade,

American foreign policy has struggled

to define its role in the post-Cold War

world. Unsure of when to use military

force, how to use it, and with which allies, we have stumbled from engagement to ad hoc engagement from Somalia to Kosovo. We have at times

acted hastily in the world; more often, far too late.

Our recent fecklessness points up the

foreign policy confusion that the welcome end of the long war with totalitarianism has left with us. Confronted

with the Soviet Union, Democrats and

Republicans were united in the goals of

containment and deterrence, this latter purpose backed up by the threat of

nuclear annihilation. Such strategies

are, of course, still not outdated, as we

face an unstable Russia and a growing

China, both armed with significant nuclear arsenals. But the primacy of

these doctrines has no doubt receded

with the Peace of Paris and with the

difficult challenges that have arisen since.

As our Nation enters the 21st century, we are confronted by some of

these challenges, like humanitarian

crises in Somalia which are brought

into our homes through the global

reach of communications technology,

and world opinion demands action to

bring relief. Ethnic cleansing, with its

echoes of the Holocaust, insist that the

United States and its Western allies

make good on the promise of ‘‘never

again.’’ And the spread of weapons of

mass destruction, which means that,

for the first time in history, a nonstate

actor can inflict lethal harm on a

State, compels us to develop new doctrines of defense.

It is amidst this intellectual muddle

that the current crisis with Iraq arises.

There are certain undeniable facts

about Saddam Hussein, who has so

ruthlessly ruled Iraq for more than 20

years. He alone in the world has used

chemical weapons, against his own people. He has a sophisticated biological

weapons program. Most importantly,

he has an insatiable appetite for nuclear weapons, which, but for the foresight of Israel and the success of the

Gulf War, he would already possess.

With these capabilities, Saddam Hussein has repeatedly tried to dominate

the Middle East, a region of critical

importance to the United States.

These facts alone dictate immediate

action to disarm Iraq. If Saddam Hussein were to acquire a nuclear weapon,

he would be able to muscle surrounding

states, as he attempted to do with Kuwait in 1990, with relative impunity,

for the threat of nuclear reprisal would

deter all but the most determined vindicators of international law and Middle East stability.

Were Saddam Hussein to control not only his own mighty oil fields but also

those of his neighbors, the havoc to the

world economy could not be overestimated, as would the danger to our

long-standing ally, Israel.

Many people over the last 2 days

have spoken eloquently of the need for

United Nations approval before any American action against Iraq. President Bush was wise to recently address

the U.N., and I am confident that the

United Nations will acknowledge the

need to enforce its own resolutions demanding the disarmament of Iraq; and

recognize, too, that only the threat of

military force can make those demands understood.

But if the United Nations itself has

so little self-regard as to not demand

compliance by Iraq, then that body’s

impotence should not forestall the

United States from making the world’s demands on its own.

While consistency is not always valued highly in Congress, my own party

would well remember that President

Bill Clinton chose to take action in

Kosovo without any approval from the

Security Council; indeed, against the

opposition of at least one permanent

Security Council member, but with the

approval of most Democrats in the

House of Representatives.

Still others of my colleagues have

suggested that we must wait for fur-

ther provocation by Iraq. Somehow,

they argue, it is against the American

tradition to take preventative military

action; or they argue that Iraq can be

deterred in the same manner as was

the Soviet Union. Grenada, Panama,

and Haiti rebut the notion that the

United States is a stranger to unilateral preventative action, as does the

commonsense realization that times

have changed, and it is not so much the

detonation of a nuclear bomb that

threatens the United States but Iraq’s

mere possession of such a weapon.

Deterrence works well when it must,

but the assumption that all are deterrable is, in the wake of September

11, on very shaky footing, indeed.

There is, in the end, no choice about

disarmament. The only alternatives

are between forced agreement or nonconsensual military force. Paradoxically, it is the threat of force which

we authorize in this resolution that offers the best chance for a peaceful disarmament.

The authorization of force, which has

in recent years taken the place of formal declarations of war, is the most

grave and momentous decision anyone

in Congress can make, but we will authorize force against Iraq tomorrow,

and we will be right to do so. We will be right not because we desire war with

Iraq, but because we desire to prevent

it; right not because we lead this cause,

but because no one else will; and right

not because war is our first resort, but, unlike Iraq, it is always our last.

Mr. Speaker, let’s get this straight: a preemptive war is a war

nonetheless, a war the would-be preemptor starts.

According to our Congressional Budget Office,

the aggressive war the President wants

to start against Iraq would cost our taxpayers

between $6 and $9 billion a month. With most

people’s retirement accounts in the tank, the

Federal accounts drenched in red ink and so

many people out of work, don’t we have better

and less violently fatal ways to spend money?

Despite our using parts of Iraq for bombing

practice over a ten year period, Iraq hasn’t attacked

us. But if we carried out a campaign to

destroy the regime entirely, what would Saddam

have to lose by trying to sneak biological

weapons into the U.S.? As we have seen in

Afghanistan, it is not physically possible for us

to bottle up a country so that no one can slip away.

A preemptive strike without U.N. Security

Council compliance is, by definition, aggression

and a treaty violation. A duly entered into

treaty is the law of the land. Moreover, the

mandate of our Constitution is that Congress

alone has the authority to start a war. And the

Constitution does not permit Congress to delegate

any part of that authority to the President

as this proposed resolution would do. In discussing

that Constitutional provision (Art. 1, Sec. 8, Clause 11), Congressman Abraham

There are twenty million people in Iraq not

named Hussein. An invasion would kill untold

thousands of those already weakened people.

On Saturday the President said, ‘‘We must

do everything we can to disarm this man before

he hurts one single American.’’ Could that

possibly mean that the President believes the

American soldiers who would be slaughtered

in the war he wants to start against Iraq would

not be ‘‘hurt.’’ Should such stark horror be so

casually inflicted on so many young Americans

on such flimsy and dubious evidence?

Let’s get another thing straight: the al-Qaida

did not invent terrorism; it is anything but ‘‘a

new kind of war.’’ It went on during the reconstruction

period in America and periodically since.

Not long ago, President Reagan and Vice-

President Bush were telling us one of the

good things about their then-friend Hussein

was that he was secular and not a religious

fanatic. Now suddenly this President Bush is

telling us that Hussein is in cahoots with religious

fanatics who, even the most casual student

of the mideast knows, hate Hussein’s

guts and would be delighted to overthrow him.

Bear in mind that the Bush/Hussein friendship

was still going strong after both the Hussein

invasion of Iran and his use of gas weapons

against his own people.

For 40 years, the Soviet Union was our adversary

and was armed to the teeth with awesome

nuclear weapons with intercontinental

capability that made Hussein the pipsqueak he

is. The Soviet Union also slaughtered millions

of its own people and invaded neighboring

countries. The Soviets were our Saddam Hussein

of the time. But no U.S. ‘‘preemptive

war.’’ Not necessary because the Soviets

knew use of nuclear weapons would mean their suicide.

For the sake of argument, let’s say Hussein

had primitive nuclear weapons now, which he

almost certainly does not. He and his gang

aren’t so dumb that they don’t know use of

such weapons would mean that he and his

‘‘grizzly gang’’ would be vaporized within minutes

by our awesome nuclear capability.

So why war now? Mr. Rove, the White

House politics man, is on record as saying

that war is good for his party to win elections.

Is this, then, a political question or a moral one?

One of the greatest dangers to an American

soldier is a poor economy at election time.

In good conscience, I cannot cast my constituents’

vote for this latter-day Gulf of Tonkin

Resolution. It is said that the only thing we

learn from history is that we do not learn from history.