Mr. Speaker, we are

being asked to commit our young servicemen and women to a possible war in

Iraq. It is important for everyone to

understand the gravity of this vote and

the legal, ethical and moral grounds

for such a grave commitment of U.S. lives and resources.

To date, I have received nearly 900

communications opposed to the United

States acting unilaterally against Iraq

and approximately 16 communications

in support of the President’s position.

No matter what the result of the vote

on each proposed resolution, I am confident that every Member will rally

around our brave young servicemen

and women if or when they are committed to hostile action in Iraq or anywhere else in the world.

Over the past few weeks, I have at-

tended classified briefings on Capitol

Hill, at the Pentagon, and with the

President. In reflecting upon the views,

opinions, and concerns expressed by my

constituents, and after a thorough review of international law, it is clear

that war with another country should

only be declared if your country is directly attacked; if another nation is an

accomplice in the attack on your country; if there is an immediate pending

attack on your country; and, finally, if

there is defiance of international law in the community.

To rush headlong into war without

world support under any one of these

four conditions violates every principle

and every ideal on which this great Nation is founded and on which a free and democratic world exists.

In review of these four principles,

there is no question that Iraq did not

directly attack America. The evidence

is also clear that Iraq was not an accomplice with the al Qaeda attacks on

America. If there was any complicity

by Iraq and Saddam Hussein, I am confident the President would have addressed this complicity in his U.N. address or in Monday’s speech to the

American people. In the classified

briefings, no one could document with

any certainty Iraq’s complicity in the attacks on America.

There is no dispute that Iraq is not

an immediate imminent military

threat to the United States at this

time. Some people would argue Saddam Hussein will give biological, chemical or nuclear weapons when obtained

to terrorist groups, but there has been

no credible evidence provided to House

Members of these weapons being supplied to terrorists.

Individuals may still argue that we

must assume that Iraq must have an

accomplice with the al Qaeda attacks

of September 11. If we wish to make

this assumption, and it is only an assumption, not fact, then the President already has the authority to use ‘‘all

necessary and appropriate force against Iraq.’’ If Saddam Hussein and

Iraq are directly or indirectly responsible in any way with the attacks of

September 11, the President has the authorization to take whatever means

necessary to bring them to justice. The

authority was given to the President

just 3 days after the cowardly attacks on our country.

The link between the September 11

attacks and Saddam Hussein is so tangential even the President cannot justify military action against Saddam

Hussein and Iraq based on complicity.

The strongest claim for military action against Iraq is its continued defiance of international law since the 1991

Gulf War cease-fire. It is on this principle that President Bush went to the

U.N. to seek their approval to use the

U.S. military to enforce U.N. resolutions against Iraq. The legal, ethical

and moral justification to get rid of

Saddam Hussein and invade Iraq is enforcement of international law, the U.N. resolutions.

The United States has never invoked

a first strike invasion of another nation based on a fear of what might happen tomorrow. Now is not the time for

a first strike policy based on fear, but

let us strike with the support of the U.N. Security Council resolutions, with

a multinational force to once and for

all rid the world of Saddam Hussein.

If we now allow the U.S. military to

invade a nation or change a regime because of fear, then the goals of terrorism have been accomplished. If we

allow the U.S. to become a first-strike

nation in the name of defeating terrorism because of the possibility of future terrorist attacks, this opens the

world to a Pandora’s box of selected

conflicts around the world. The U.S. would lose its moral, ethical and legal

grounds and its stature to protest or to

prevent, for example, Russia from invading Georgia to hunt down Chechnya

rebels, Pakistan from invading India,

or China from invading Taiwan.

In our world, terrorism would now be

defined and determined by the aggressor nation. The United States would

lose its legal and moral ability to protest, as it did in 1979, the Soviet army’s

invasion of Afghanistan.

The situation in Iraq must be addressed, but we must not be seen as

moving forward unilaterally, and we

must not alienate our allies who support it and fought with us in the Persian Gulf War.