Mr. Speaker, I stand to oppose H.J. Res. 114, the authorization for military force against Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I have attended numerous administrative hearings on Iraq

where not one bit of new evidence was

offered to demonstrate that presently Saddam Hussein is more of a menace

than that proven diabolical character,

Osama bin Laden. Why are we not still

focusing our attention on him? I remember so well the declaration made

by the President: ‘‘Wanted, dead or

alive.’’ We have painfully experienced

his capacity to wreak havoc on thousands of our people from thousands of

miles from his own perch. And now, he

appears to be an afterthought. We have given Saddam Hussein the

power to force the greatest country on

Earth to abandon its domestic agenda,

to potentially violate the U.N. charter,

and possibly take unilateral and preemptive action before exhausting all

diplomatic efforts. I am not convinced

that Saddam Hussein warrants the

daily headlines and the extraordinary

amount of time and resources given to

him. We are equating his power with

ours and, in some ways, ascribing it to be beyond our ability to detect.

While we are monitoring his every move, I have no doubt that if he were

to plan an attack on the United States or on our allies, we would be able to

stop him in his tracks. But what we

cannot do is to provide the proof of Osama bin Laden’s whereabouts or

whether he is dead or alive, or who

spread anthrax and, currently, right

here in this country, who is killing innocent Americans in a close radius of

the White House. But our focus remains thousands of miles away on a

villain who cowardly goes after the

weakest. It is beneath us to choose war

over diplomacy, and not only carry a

big stick, but beat our perceived enemy over the head with it.

The United Nations is being diminished with our rhetoric of the last few

weeks. As a charter member, we are

not giving it credit for trying to uphold the principle of sovereign equality of

all its members. The U.N. charter states that in recognition of the sovereignty of all nations, all shall settle

their international disputes by peaceful means. The U.N. charter also states

that all members shall refrain in their

international relations from the threat

or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State.

Chapter VI of the charter empowers the Security Council to investigate any

disputes and to recommend appropriate

procedures for the settlement of the dispute. If the dispute is not resolved,

it is then referred to the Security Council for action. Under Chapter VII,

the U.N. Security Council shall determine the existence of threats to peace.

Article 46 provides that plans for the

application of armed force shall be

made by the Security Council. The

U.N. charter does not provide for preemptive or first-strike options of member states against a perceived threat.

Too little in this House has been

made of peace. When will we mature to

a point when we will find non-combative ways to settle our differences?

When are we ready to use our higher

selves to find ways to be nonviolent?

To effect a regime change, we are threatening an invasion of a territorial

foe to enhance our own security; but

such an invasion will, in fact, degrade and diminish us.

This resolution offers only the incessant drumbeat of war. During the Vietnam War, it was often said that ever

every time we kill a Viet Cong guerrilla, we create two more. Our invasion

of Iraq will be watched by millions of

Muslim men and women. Many governments around the world will become

less cooperative in helping us track

down terrorist operatives in their countries. Hundreds, if not thousands,

of American men and women may perish in the streets of Baghdad. Our invasion will engender a bottomless well of

bitterness and resentment towards the

United States that will haunt us for decades to come. We now have a choice to maintain the moral high ground or

sink to the depths of our tormentors. History will record this moment.