Mr.

Speaker, let me thank the distinguished

gentlewoman from California

for yielding time and express the reason

that I come to this floor because it

is with a heavy heart. I remind my colleagues,

as I know all of them are very

conscious of, it is a question of life and

death. That is why I rise to support the

Lee amendment, because I believe it

does not preclude the constitutional

duties that this Congress has, and that

is the singular duty to declare war.

Might I note in her amendment that

she specifically notes that Iraq is not

in compliance with the United Nations

Security Council resolution. She acknowledges

that the additional United

Nations resolutions on inspections,

that they are in noncompliance and

that they violate international law.

Iraq cease-fire obligations potentially

endanger the United States and regional

security interests.

We know the dangers of Iraq. But

what we also say to this body is that

the President of the United States has

every authority to be able to protect

the United States upon the basis of imminent

danger, of immediate danger.

But what the President does not have,

what we are seeking to do is to give

him authority for a first strike without

the constitutional obligation of Congress

to declare war. I rise to support

the Lee amendment.

Mr.

Speaker, because I believe the debate

on this resolution is a matter of life or

death for hundreds of thousands of

Americans and other innocent persons

and believe that it should only be done

on a declaration of war by this constitutionally

constituted body, this

Congress, I rise to oppose this resolution.

Mr. Speaker,

I rise this evening to speak about the question

of life or death as we have considered the

steps we will take to deal with the problem of

Saddam Hussein’s regime in Iraq.

The Constitution was not created for us to

be silent. It is a body of law that provides the

roadmap of democracy in this country, and

like any roadmap, it is designed to be followed.

Saddam Hussein is indeed an evil man. He

has harmed his own people in the past, and

cannot be trusted in the future to live peacefully

with his neighbors in the region. I fully

support efforts to disarm Iraq pursuant to the

resolutions passed in the aftermath of the gulf

war, and I do not rule out the possibility that

military action might be needed in the future to

defend the United States.

Right now, however, we are moving too far

too quickly with many alarmist representations

yet undocumented. There is no proof that our

Nation is in imminent danger, because if there

were, every single member of this body would

rightfully expect and approve of the President

acting immediately to protect the country.

It is not too late for peace. With tough

weapons inspections and strict adherence to

the Security Council resolutions dealing with

weapons of mass destruction, war can still be

averted if we are willing to pursue aggressive

diplomacy. Since we are a just nation, we

should wield our power judiciously—restraining

where possible for the greater good.

We should make good on the promise to

the people that we made in the passage of the

1998 Iraqi Liberation Act. We should do all

that we can to assist the people of Iraq because

as President Dwight Eisenhower said,