I want to thank my

friend, chairman of the committee, for

yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I first want to commend

my friend and colleague from California

for her active and valuable contribution

to the work of the Committee

on International Relations and to the

work of this House. I appreciate the

views of my colleague from California

and I share her view that we must exhaust

all diplomatic and peaceful

means for disarming Saddam Hussein,

and we all agree that war can be only

our very last resort. Indeed, Mr. Speaker,

the joint resolution before us supports

the diplomatic process at the

United Nations and it requires the

President to exhaust all peaceful

means before resorting to war. Our distinguished

Secretary of State, Colin

Powell, is working nonstop at the

United Nations to move towards a

peaceful and diplomatic resolution of

this crisis, and I fully support Secretary

Powell’s efforts.

However, Mr. Speaker, I strongly believe

that our diplomacy will achieve

its purpose only if the Iraqi regime

knows that a sword of Damocles hangs

over its head. Our joint bipartisan resolution

represents that statement of resolve.

I am also concerned that my friend’s

amendment disregards the very serious

threat posed by Iraqi sponsorship of

international terrorism, clearly a serious

danger to the security and safety

of the United States.

I am convinced, Mr. Speaker, that

the bipartisan and bicameral agreement

reached with the White House is

approaching a final decision in both

the House and the Senate. Our chances

of obtaining the support of friends and

allies will be dramatically increased by

our show of decisiveness and unity in

this House. This is not the time to unravel

an agreement that is on the verge

of ratification. It is for these and many

other reasons that I regretfully and respectfully

oppose the gentlewoman’s

amendment.

Mr. Speaker, I thank

the chairman of the Committee on

International Relations for yielding me

time.

First, Mr. Speaker, I want to commend

my good friend from South Carolina

(Mr. SPRATT), one of the most valued

of this House, on a very thoughtful

and creative amendment. I believe,

however, that the amendment would

weaken the hand of our Secretary of

State in international negotiations

that are occurring as we speak.

Every Member of this body prefers a

diplomatic and peaceful solution.

Every Member of this body prefers to

have as many nations, friends, allies

and others come with us as possible.

But to enhance the prospects for a

peaceful solution, both the Security

Council and Saddam Hussein must perceive

that diplomatic failure will lead

to military action. This amendment

fails to convey that critical message.

Mr. Speaker, the Spratt amendment

requires the President to certify ‘‘that

the use of military force against Iraq

will not impair international cooperation

in the fight against terrorism.’’

This amendment effectively asks the

President of the United States to certify

the unknowable.

The initial impact of action in Iraq

on international cooperation is uncertain.

It may be argued that it will diminish

it or it will enhance it. But one

thing we are all certain of: Once Iraq is

disarmed, international cooperation

against terrorism will skyrocket, and

international terrorism itself will have

been dealt a severe blow.

While the principles behind the

amendment and the underlying text

have some similarities, I must oppose

the amendment, Mr. Speaker, because I

believe at this stage we must support

the bipartisan-bicameral agreement

reached with the White House.

I strongly urge my colleagues to reject

this well-intentioned amendment.

It would unravel the agreement which

is on the verge of ratification, and it

would undermine our goal of speaking

with a strong and united voice.

Mr. Speaker, I yield

myself 4 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to end my part in

this great debate as I began in tribute

to the patriotism of every Member of

this body and with special thanks to

my dear friend and distinguished counterpart

on the Republican side, the

gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), a

combat veteran of World War II.

Over the course of the last 2 days, my

colleagues have expressed many different

views, but all have affirmed

their commitment to safeguard our national

security, to pursue peace and to

wage war only as a very last resort.

The depth and dignity of the debate is

worthy of this great subject and of our

great democracy.

At the outset, Mr. Speaker, I wish to

commend our Democratic leader, my

good friend, the gentleman from Missouri

(Mr. GEPHARDT). In the proud tradition

of that great Republican Senator,

Arthur Vanderberg, half a century

ago, the gentleman from Missouri

(Mr. GEPHARDT) transcends parties and

politics to craft and champion a bipartisan

resolution that best serves the interest

of our Nation. His leadership has

been a true profile in courage.

Mr. Speaker, as our debate has

shown, none deny the danger posed by

Saddam Hussein. We differ only in the

means of addressing this mounting

threat; and in doing so, we grapple

with two paradoxes. The first is the

paradox of peace: Faced with an implacable

and belligerent foe, how do we

avert war? The answer, as our resolution

affirms, lies not in disavowing the

use of force, but in authorizing it. It is

only when the Iraqi dictator is certain

of our willingness to wage war, if necessary,

that peace becomes possible.

Saddam, like his mentor, Stalin, and

all dictators, recoils before strength

and pounces on weakness.

The second paradox, Mr. Speaker, is

the paradox of leadership. Faced with

skepticism from some friends and

timid bystanders, how do we form the

broadest possible coalition to confront

Saddam? Publicly, few nations have responded

to our call to arms against

Iraq. Privately, as I have learned in innumerable

meetings with heads of

state, foreign ministers and ambassadors

from the Arab world and beyond,

the United States enjoys strong

support. Bridging the divide between

public opposition and private support

requires that the United States assert

leadership. Our joint resolution will

demonstrate to the world our steadfast

resolve. It will convince others that

joining us is the best hope for securing

peace. If we show the courage to lead,

others will follow.

To preserve peace, we must authorize

force. To build support, we must be

prepared to lead. Our resolution resolves

these paradoxes and represents

the best means of averting war and of

marshaling international cooperation.

It is for these reasons that I urge support

for our bipartisan resolution.

Mr. Speaker, in moments we will be

casting our vote and we will make history.

In so doing, we dare not repeat

the history of the last century, a history

characterized too often by appeasement

and inaction in the face of

tyranny. It is a history that should

haunt all of us. Let us cast a vote in

favor of this resolution. It will be a

vote for American leadership. It will be

a vote for peace.