Mr. Speaker, I thank

the gentleman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise in

support of the proposal by my friend

and colleague, the gentleman from

South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT).

Several weeks ago the gentleman

from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) and

I drafted a resolution for the use of the

minority leader, the gentleman from

Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT) in negotiations

with the White House. That draft

contained a number of important principles,

focusing on the role of the

United Nations, on more narrowly defining

the threat posed by Iraq as to its

weapons of mass destruction, and on

planning for what will be needed after

the conflict, if military action should

be taken.

These principles do not undermine,

rather, they strengthen, American national

security. Many of these principles

have now been included in the

resolution offered by the Speaker and

the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT).

On Tuesday night, I expressed my

support for that resolution as it represents

a significant improvement over

the original draft submitted by the

White House. But the Spratt substitute

perfects a number of the principles

contained in the base bill.

It connects American efforts more

strongly to those of the United Nations.

This resolution urges the President

to work with the United Nations

to enforce Iraqi compliance with its

disarmament obligations. If the United

Nations authorizes the use of force to

achieve these goals, the Spratt resolution

provides immediate congressionalE:\CR\FM\K10OC7.031 H10PT1

authorization. But if the United Nations

cannot, or will not, act, then this

Congress must consider the benefits of

unilateral action under a second resolution

using expedited procedures.

The Spratt resolution does not tie

the President’s hands. U.S. national security

will be protected. This resolution

sends a strong message to Iraq

that the Congress insists that it comply

with its obligations.

It also sends a strong message to the

United Nations and to our friends and

to our allies all around the world that

we are committed to acting with them

to the greatest extent possible to meet

this threat. In these ways, the Spratt

substitute improves the resolution already

before us.

I urge my colleagues to vote with me

to support it.

Mr. Speaker, today I

speak of duty. This is the third time

that I have stood at this podium with

the question of military action in the

balance. There is no more serious vote

nor more sacred duty than this, deciding

to ask those who serve this great

country to go into harm’s way.

So it is a decision that must be taken

soberly and deliberately. It must be

taken mindful of the regional implications,

and it must balance the risks of

not acting with those of not acting

prudently.

Winston Churchill’s book ‘‘The Gathering

Storm’’ details the world’s slide

into holocaust. I point out, Mr. Speaker,

that his book is subtitled ‘‘How the

English-Speaking Peoples, Through

Their Unwisdom, Carelessness, and

Good Nature, Allowed the Wicked to

Rearm.’’ Many of us saw firsthand the

consequence of that rearmament.

Never again, Mr. Speaker, never again.

The issue of Iraq was never whether

evil should be confronted, but how. My

own questioning began in a letter to

the President on September 4. My concerns

were to emphasize multilateral

action, understanding the implications

of using military force for the United

States’ role in the world.

We must have a plan for the rebuilding

of the Iraqi government and society

if the worst comes to pass and armed

conflict is necessary. We must ensure

that America’s commitments to the

war on terrorism and to other missions

throughout the globe will be upheld.

In short, to paraphrase the great

military strategist, Carl von Clausewitz,

we must not take the first step in

this conflict without considering the

last.

This resolution, while not perfect, is

a vast improvement from that originally

sent by the White House. To my

mind, this resolution makes clear

Congress’s intention that America

achieve its goals multilaterally if possible.

As importantly, it announces our

determination to stay the course and

deal with the aftermath if military action

is taken.

Having achieved these clarifications,

the question before the House is this:

Shall we stay the hand of the miscreant,

or permit the world’s worst

government to brandish the world’s

worst weapons?

I believe that, Mr. Speaker, difficult

as it is, there can be only one answer.

I support the resolution.