Mr. Speaker, I thank

the gentleman from my home State for

yielding me this time and for his leadership

on this and many other issues in

this body.

Mr. Speaker, there is not a single

Member of this body who does not believe

Saddam Hussein is a tyrant who

has murdered his own people, violated

U.N. sanctions, and thumbed his nose

at the world community. However, this

body and our Nation are deeply divided

as to the proper course of action at this

juncture.

My cosponsorship of the Spratt

amendment reflects that uncertainty

among my constituents. The American

people and our allies around the world

have placed calls to my office expressing

overwhelming lack of support for

preemptive military action. Shoot now

and ask questions later has never been

the American way and it should not be

it now.

It is an awesome responsibility to

have the power to set events in motion

that could forever alter another country,

an entire region, not to mention

our Nation’s future relationships in the

world community. We should not put

the lives of our youth at risk and further

fuel the fervor of terrorist actions

against our homeland. We should not

duck our responsibilities as Members

of Congress. I believe this substitute is

the best action to take at this particular

juncture.

Many of us lived through Vietnam

and saw its wretched effects on our Nation.

This is not the time to commit to

an unpopular unilateral act of aggression,

especially one with such great potential

for devastating consequences.

Mr. Speaker, just because we can do

it does not mean we should.