Mr. Speaker, I thank

the gentleman for yielding me this

time and for his extraordinary leadership

in presenting this option to the

House of Representatives. I also want

to commend him for his leadership as a

person who speaks for our Armed Services

in this Congress, his commitment

to provide for the common defense, as

provided for in the Preamble of our

Constitution. Today, we are all benefiting

from his wisdom.

The Spratt substitute, Mr. Speaker,

captures many of the concerns of the

American people who overwhelmingly

support a multilateral approach to

dealing with Saddam Hussein. The

Spratt substitute also honors the Constitution

when it says that Congress

shall declare war.

Some who have opposed the Spratt

substitute have done so on the basis

that we do not have time to come back

to the Congress. This is simply not

true. As called for in the Spratt substitute,

should the Security Council

fail to act in a satisfactory way, we

come back to the Congress.

I want to speak to the issue of time

by quoting what is now declassified but

is contained in a letter from the Director

of the Central Intelligence Agency

to the chairman of the Senate Permanent

Select Committee on Intelligence,

this letter, signed by George Tenet.

When asked if Saddam did not feel

threatened, is it likely he would initiate

an attack using a weapon of mass

destruction, the Director of Central Intelligence

responds in this letter and

says,

This is the Director of Central Intelligence

saying the likelihood of Saddam

initiating an attack using weapons

of mass destruction, the likelihood,

would be low. So it is not about time.

It is about the Constitution. It is about

this Congress asserting its right to declare

war when we are fully aware of

what the challenges are to us, and it is

about respecting the United Nations

and a multilateral approach, which is

safer for our troops.

Force protection. I have been on the

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

for 10 years, longer than anyone.

My service there is coming to an

end. But in the time that I have been

there, force protection is one of our top

priorities, to protect the men and

women in uniform.

This letter goes on to say, ‘‘If we initiate

an attack,’’ if he felt he was

threatened, ‘‘if we initiate an attack

and he thought he was in extremis or

otherwise, what is the likelihood in response

to our attack that he would use

chemical and biological weapons?’’ The

response, ‘‘Pretty high.’’

We are placing our young people in

harm’s way in a way that can be avoided

by taking a multilateral approach

first. I commend the gentleman from

South Carolina for his leadership. I will

support this with great pride, and I

thank him for giving us that opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I thank

the distinguished ranking member for

his recognition and his kind words.

First, I wish to congratulate all of

the Members of the House of Representatives

for the patriotism that

has been demonstrated on this floor in

the last 2 days. I think the American

people saw something very special.

They saw what we show every day, that

people here love our country, are committed

to its value, and are committed

to and respect our men and women in

uniform.

I come to this debate, Mr. Speaker,

as one at the end of 10 years in office

on the Permanent Select Committee

on Intelligence, where stopping the

proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

was one of my top priorities.

I applaud the President on focusing on

this issue and on taking the lead to disarm

Saddam Hussein.

From that perspective, though, of 10

years on the Permanent Select Committee

on Intelligence, I rise in opposition

to the resolution on national security

grounds. The clear and present

danger that our country faces is terrorism.

I say flat out that unilateral

use of force without first exhausting

every diplomatic remedy and other

remedies and making a case to the

American people will be harmful to our

war on terrorism.

For the past 13 months, it will be 13

months tomorrow, we have stood

shoulder to shoulder with President

Bush to remove the threat of terrorism

posed by the al Qaeda. Our work is not

done. Osama bin Laden, Mullah Omar

and the other al Qaeda terrorist leaders

have not been accounted for. We have

unfinished business. We are risking the

cooperation that we have from over 60

nations of having their intelligence and

their cooperation in fighting this war

on terrorism.

There are many, many costs involved

in this war, and one of them is the cost

to the war on terrorism. We cannot let

this coalition unravel.

Others have talked about this threat

that is posed by Saddam Hussein. Yes,

he has chemical weapons, he has biological

weapons, he is trying to get nuclear

weapons. This is a threat not

only from him but from other countries

of concern in the past.

I want to call to the attention of my

colleagues a statement about Saddam’s

use of chemical and biological weapons

that was just declassified and sent to

the Chairman of the Senate Select

Committee on Intelligence.

The question is: If we initiate an attack

and he thought he was an extremist

or otherwise, what is the likelihood

in response to our attack that Saddam

Hussein would use chemical and biological

weapons? This is a letter from

George Tenet, the head of the CIA to

the committee. The response: Pretty

high, if we initiate the attack.

Force protection is our top priority

on the Permanent Select Committee

on Intelligence. We must protect our

men and women in uniform. They are

courageous. They risk their lives for

our freedom, for our country. We cannot

put them in harm’s way unless we

take every measure possible to protect

them. So another cost is not only the

cost on the war on terrorism but in the

cost of human lives of our young people

by making Saddam Hussein the person

who determines their fates.

Another cost is to our economy. The

markets do not like war. They do not

like the uncertainty of war. Our economy

is fragile as it is. The President

has spoken. In his speech the other

night, he talked about rebuilding Iraq’s

economy after our invasion. We have

problems with our own economy. We

must focus on building our own economy

before we worry about Iraq’s economy

after we invade Iraq.

So let us do what is proportionate,

what is appropriate, which mitigates

the risk for our young people.

Another cost in addition to human

lives, the cost of terrorism, cost to our

economy, another cost is to our budget.

This cost can be unlimited, unlimited.

There is no political solution on

the ground in Iraq. Let us not be fooled

by that. So when we go in, the occupation,

which is now being called liberation,

could be interminable and so

could the amount of money, unlimited

that it will cost, $100-, $200 billion. We

will pay any prices to protect the

American people, but is this the right

way to go, to jeopardize in a serious

way our young people when that can be

avoided?

We respect the judgments of our

military leaders. It is a civilian decision

to go to war, but the military

leaders present us with options which

they know are to be a last resort.

These costs to the war on terrorism,

the loss of life, the cost to our economy,

the cost in dollars to our budget,

these costs must be answered for. If we

go in, certainly we can show our power

to Saddam Hussein. If we resolve this

issue diplomatically, we can show our

strength as a great country, as a great

country.

Let us show our greatness. Vote no

on this resolution.