Mr. Speaker, 26

years ago, I was fortunate to be elected

by my constituents to serve in this

House, and I represent today the district

in which I was born. I am proud

that the people of my district trust me

to try to represent them every day. It

is an honor that I feel every day that I

walk into this building, that I am carrying

the hopes and wishes of over a

half a million people in Missouri, and I

know today is a moment of sacred responsibility.

We come into this building hundreds

of times during the year to cast very

important votes, but on days like

today, when we consider how we will

protect our Nation, our people, the districts

we come from and represent,

these are the days when we must look

deep inside and make sure that what

we are doing is right.

Our gravest responsibility as legislators

is authorizing the President to use

military force. Part of the majesty of

our democracy is that we do not entrust

this power to one human being,

the President, but we share it with a

co-equal branch of this government;

and in a democracy, the decision to put

American lives on the line or perhaps

go to war is ultimately a decision of

the American people through their

elected representatives.

No one wants to go to war. No one

wants to put our young men and

women in harm’s way, and I know we

hope that our actions today will avert

war. But our decision is not so simple,

because we must weigh the dangers of

sending our young people into hostilities

against the threat presented by

Iraq to our citizens’ safety.

Every Member of Congress must

make their own decision on the level of

the threat posed by Iraq and what to do

to respond to that threat. I have said

many times to my colleagues that each

Member should be guided by his or her

conscience, free from others trying to

politicize the issue or questioning others’

motives.

This is an issue of life and death, and

the preoccupation by some to ascribe

political motives to the conclusion of

each of us demeans all of us and what

we are here to do.

Let me say to my colleagues and my

constituents in Missouri why I have decided

to vote for this resolution.

First, September 11 has made all the

difference. The events of that tragic

day jolted us to the enduring reality

that terrorists not only seek to attack

our interests abroad but also to strike

us here at home. We have clear evidence

now that they even desire to use

weapons of mass destruction against

us.

Before 9/11, we experienced the terrorist

attacks on Khobar Towers, the

USS *Cole,* on two embassies in Africa,

but we did not believe it would happen

here. On 9/11, it did happen here; and it

can happen again.

September 11 was the ultimate wakeup

call. We must now do everything in

our power to prevent further terrorist

attacks and ensure that an attack with

a weapon of mass destruction cannot

happen. The consequences of such an

attack are unimaginable. We spent 50

years in a Cold War and trillions of dollars

deterring a weapon of mass destruction

attack on the United States

by another country. Now we must prevent

such an attack by terrorists who,

unlike our previous adversaries, are

willing to die.

In these new circumstances, deterrence

well may not work. With these

new dangers, prevention must work.

If my colleagues worry about terrorists

getting weapons of mass destruction

or their components from countries,

the first candidate we must

worry about is Iraq. The 12-year history

of the U.N. effort to disarm Iraq

convinces me that Iraq is a problem

that must be dealt with diplomatically

if we can, militarily if we must.

I did not come to this view overnight.

It has, instead, evolved over time, as

we have learned the facts about the

Iraqi regime with clarity. As you

know, I opposed the use of force

against Iran in 1991 in favor of giving

sanctions more time to work. Others

supported force, but thought that by

dislodging Iraq from Kuwait we would

neutralize the threat. In hindsight,

both of these assessments were wrong.

In 1991, no one knew the extent to

which Saddam Hussein would sacrifice

the needs of his people in order to sustain

his hold on power, deceive the

international community in order to

preserve his weapons of mass destruction

programs, or take hostile actions

against U.S. interests in the region.

Saddam Hussein’s track record is too

compelling to ignore, and we know

that he continues to develop weapons

of mass destruction, including nuclear

devices; and he may soon have the ability

to use nuclear weapons against

other nations. I believe we have an obligation

to protect the United States

by preventing him from getting these

weapons and either using them himself

or passing them or their components

on to terrorists who share his destructive

intent.

As I stated in a speech in June, I believe

we must confront the threat

posed by the current Iraqi regime directly.

But given the stakes involved,

and the potential risks to our security

and the region, we must proceed carefully

and deliberately. That is why I

felt it was essential to engage in negotiations

in order to craft an effective

and responsible authorization for the

use of force, if necessary, so we can defend

our Nation and enforce U.N. resolutions

pertaining to Iraq.

At the insistence of many of us, the

resolution includes a provision urging

President Bush to continue his efforts

to get the U.N. to effectively enforce

its own resolutions against Iraq. I have

told the President directly, on numerous

occasions, that in my view, and in

the view of a lot of us, he must do everything

he possibly can to achieve our

objectives with the support of the

United Nations. His speech to the U.N.

on September 12 was an excellent beginning

to this effort.

Exhausting all efforts at the U.N. is

essential. But let us remember why. We

started the U.N. over 50 years ago. We

remain the greatest advocate of the

rule of law, both domestically and

internationally. We must do everything

we can to get the U.N. to succeed.

It is in our own self-interest to do

that. In 1945, Harry Truman told the

Senate that the creation of the U.N.

constituted, in his words, an expression

of national necessity. He said the U.N.

points down the only road to enduring

peace. He said let us not hesitate to

start down that road, with God’s help,

and with firm resolve that we can and

will reach our goal: peace and security

for all Americans.

Completely bypassing the U.N. would

set a dangerous precedent that would

undoubtedly be used by other countries

in the future to our and the world’s

detriment. It is too high a price to pay.

I am glad the President said in his

speech Monday that diplomacy is the

first choice for resolving this matter.

This resolution also limits the scope

and duration of the President’s authority

to use force. It requires Presidential

determinations before our

Armed Forces may be used against

Iraq, including assurances to Congress

that he has pursued all diplomatic

means to address this threat and that

any military action will not undermine

our ongoing efforts against terrorism.

Finally, the bill provides for regular

consultation with and reporting to

Congress on the administration’s diplomatic

and military efforts and, of great

importance to all Americans, the planning

for assistance, reconstruction, and

regional stabilization efforts in a

postconflict Iraq.

The efforts we must undertake in a

postconflict Iraq could be the most enduring

challenge we face in this entire

endeavor, which is another reason for

doing everything humanly possible to

work through the U.N. to reach our

goals.

Now a word on what this resolution,

in my view, is not. In my view, it is not

an endorsement or an acceptance of the

President’s new policy of preemption.

Iraq is unique, and this resolution is a

unique response. A full discussion of

the President’s new preemption policy

must come at another time. But the

acceptance of such a momentous

change in policy must not be inferred

from the language of this resolution.

It is also important to say that, thus

far, the President’s predominant response

to 9–11 has been the use of military

power. Obviously, self-defense requires

the use of effective military

force. But the exercise of military

power is not a foreign policy. It is one

means of implementing foreign policy.

In the post-9–11 world, we must motivate

and inform our citizens about how

we construct a foreign policy that promotes

universal values, improves living

standards, increases freedom in all

countries and, ultimately, prevents

thousands and thousands of young people

across this world from deciding to

become terrorists. We will never defeat

terrorism by dealing with its symptoms.

We must get to its root causes.

In anticipation of the serious debate

and vote that we have finally reached

today, I have had many conversations

with my colleagues and friends in this

body, friends and colleagues that I respect

deeply. I know for many of you

this resolution is not what you want,

and it is true for Democrats and some

Republicans. And in some ways it is

true for me. Many of my colleagues

have had compelling arguments and

important differences with this language.

These differences do not diminish

my respect or my trust for my colleagues

as the true representatives of

the people in this great Nation.

I believe, as a whole, the resolution

incorporates the key notion that we

want to give diplomacy the best possible

opportunity to resolve this conflict,

but we are prepared to take further

steps, if necessary, to protect our

Nation. I have heard in this debate

some Members say they love America.

I love America. I think every Member

of this body loves America. That is not

the issue. The issue is how to best protect

America, and I believe this resolution

does that.

I want to say a final word to those

watching beyond our borders. To our

friends around the world, I say thank

you for standing with us in our time of

trial. Your support strengthens the

bonds of friendship between our people

and the people of the world.

To our enemies, who watch this

democratic debate and wonder if America

speaks with one voice, I say have

no doubt. We are united as a people in

defending ourselves and we debate the

best means for doing that. Do not mistake

our resolve. Do not underestimate

our determination. Do not misunderstand

that we stand here today not as

arguing Republicans and Democrats

but as Americans, using the sacred

right of free speech and thought and

freedom to determine our collective

course.

Finally, I thank God for those who

have gone before us and used their freedom

wisely, for those who have died to

protect it and have created a stronger

Nation and a better world because of

their bravery. I pray that we may act

today as wisely and courageously as

those who have gone before. God bless

this House. God bless America.

Mr. Speaker, as a co-author of H.J. Res.

114, I would like to take this opportunity to address

certain elements of the joint resolution in

order to clarify their intent.

As I stated in a speech I delivered in June,

I believe we must confront the threat posed by

the current Iraqi regime directly. But given the

stakes involved and the potential risks to our

security and the region, we must proceed

carefully and deliberately.

That’s why I felt it was essential to engage

in negotiations in order to craft an effective

and responsible authorization for the use of

force if necessary—so we can defend our nation

and enforce U.N. resolutions pertaining to

Iraq.

At the insistence of many of us, the resolution

includes provisions urging President Bush

to continue his efforts to get the U.N. to effectively

enforce its resolution against Iraq. I have

told the President directly, on numerous occasions,

that in my view of a lot of us, he must

do everything he possibly can to achieve our

objectives with the support of the United Nations.

His speech to the U.N. on September

12 was an excellent beginning to this effort.

Exhausting all efforts at the U.N. is essential.

Completely bypassing the U.N. would set a

dangerous precedent that would undoubtedly

be used by other countries in the future to our

and the world’s detriment. That is too high a

price to pay. I am glad the President said in

his speech Monday that diplomacy is the first

choice for resolving this critical matter.

This resolution also limits the scope and duration

of the President’s authority to use force,

unlike the Administrations original proposal.

The resolution and its accompanying report

define the threat posed by Iraq as consisting

primarily of its weapons of mass destruction

programs and its support for international terrorism.

They also note that we should continue

to press for Iraqi compliance with all outstanding

U.N. resolutions, but suggest that we

only contemplate using force to implement

those that are relevant to our nation’s security.

As for the duration of this authorization, this

resolution confines it to the continuing threat

posed by Iraq; that is, its current and ongoing

weapons programs and support for terrorists.

We do not want Congress to provide this or

subsequent Presidents with open-ended authority

to use force against any future threats

that Iraq might pose to the United States that

are not related to its current weapons of mass

destruction programs and support for international

terrorism. The President would need

to seek a new authorization from Congress to

respond to any such future threats.

Third, this resolution requires important

presidential determinations to Congress before

our Armed Forces are used against Iraq.

These include assurances by the President

that he has pursued all diplomatic and other

peaceful means to address the continuing

threat posed by Iraq, and that any military action

against Iraq will not undermine our ongoing

efforts against terrorism. These determinations

ensure that the Executive Branch remains

accountable to Congress if it resorts to

military force, and stays focused on the broader

war on terrorism that must remain of highest

priority.

Finally, the bill provides for regular consultation

with and reporting to Congress on the Administration’s

diplomatic and military efforts

and, of great importance to all Americans, on

the planning for assistance, reconstruction and

regional stabilization efforts in a post-conflict

Iraq. The efforts we must undertake in a postconflict

Iraq could be the most enduring challenge

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