Mr. Speaker,

I rise in support of the Spratt substitute to H.J.

Res. 114, the Hastert/Gephardt resolution authorizing

military action against Iraq. Nearly all

of us agree that Saddam Hussein is a mass

murderer who is in control of biological and

chemical weapons of mass destruction—and

reaching for nuclear weapons as well. The

Spratt substitute recognizes the grave threat

that Saddam Hussein poses to security in the

Middle East and around the world. The Spratt

substitute authorizes the use of force through

a prudent multinational approach. In contrast,

the Hastert/Gephardt resolution, which I will

oppose, authorizes unilateral military action on

the part of the United States without first making

sure that all possible steps have been

taken to organize multinational, world-wide

support against Saddam Hussein.

I also note that I am opposed to the substitute

amendment offered by Representative

LEE of California, but for the opposite reason.

That resolution does not re-enforce our commitment

to wage the critically important War

on Terrorism, nor does it set out any path that

would require Saddam Hussein to rid his regime

of weapons of mass destruction. While it

is clearly a mistake to act in haste, it would be

an even worse mistake to not act at all.

As Connecticut’s senior member on the

House Armed Services Committee, as well as

a member of the Committee’s Special Oversight

Panel on Terrorism, I want to share my

deep concern regarding four key issues relating

to the Hastert/Gephardt resolution on Iraq.

First, it would be a fundamental abdication

of American leadership if, before taking action

against Iraq, we don’t make every effort to

bring the family of nations with us, just as we

did in the first Gulf War, and have done in the

War on Terrorism. Unilateral action by this nation

against Iraq raises very disturbing issues,

including the reaction of other Arab states,

which could further destabilize the Middle

East, incite further terrorist hatred against us,

and even potentially metastasize the Middle

East conflict into the ongoing nuclear standout

between Pakistan and India. Only a cohesive

multinational approach, most preferably under

the authority of the United Nations, would minimize

these risks.

Second, it seems unlikely that unilateral war

with Iraq can be carried out without an adverse

impact on the War on Terrorism. America

certainly has the ability to do militarily almost

anything it wants. The issue is prudence

not capability. As President Abraham Lincoln

said during the middle of the American Civil

War, when England was looking to pick a fight

with the United States, it is best to fight ‘‘One

war at a time.’’ We have successfully built a

global coalition to fight terrorism. Many nations,

some even traditionally hostile to our interests,

have assisted in our efforts to destroy

the al Qa’ida network, and bring to justice the

perpetrators of the September 11 attacks. This

work should remain the first priority of national

security. A unilateral attack on Iraq will destroy

that coalition, and make it much more difficult—

perhaps even impossible—for us to

complete our anti-terrorism efforts. Many Arab

nations would break with our coalition, and nations

like Russia and China, even France,

might well follow suit.

Third, a less than fully multinational approach

increases the chance that Saddam

Hussein will use weapons of mass destruction

against us. In a letter dated October 7, 2002,

to the Senate Intelligence Committee, the Director

of the Central Intelligence Agency said,

Should we act unilaterally, the United States

would expose ourselves to the greatly increased

likelihood of a weapons of mass destruction

attack. Saddam Hussein cannot

achieve the same kind of ‘‘vengeance’’ in attacking

a coalition that includes fellow Arab

states. We can best mitigate the threat of Saddam

Hussein using weapons of mass destruction

against us by having our actions endorsed

by the U.N. Security Council and by operating

in cooperation with the nations of the region.

That is also the strategy that appears to be

most likely to produce a resolution of the matter

without Saddam Hussein using force of

any kind. Saddam Hussein, facing a united,

determined opposition coalition of nations

would be more likely to assent to real inspections

and disarmament if his only alternative

was total defeat, including his being stripped

of the ability to single out the United States for

vengeance.

Fourth, and finally, we need a clear exit

strategy for any military engagement. The

commitment to disarm Iraq and oust Saddam

Hussein brings with it, according to the best

military estimates, at least a decade of occupation

and engagement in the stability and security

of that country. I have great pride and

confidence in our military and its capabilities,

but there is a large danger in devoting them

to such a huge task while other major threats

still persist around the world, including North

Korea and Iran, the other two nations of the

‘‘Axis of Evil.’’ Operating in conjunction with

the United Nations will provide our forces with

such a clear exit strategy. Specifically, U.N.

peacekeeping forces will be put in place following

the liberation of Iraq. The U.N. can

then help bring Iraq back into the community

of law-abiding nations, which is a task properly

and fully within its mission.

I have based these decisions on the series

of briefings I have attended as a member of

the House Armed Services Committee, numerous

conversations with constituents and my

colleagues, and my own best judgment of

what is patriotically both in the long and short-term

interests of our country. I have listened

intently to all sides in the debate, most recently

meeting this morning with Secretary

Rumsfeld at the Pentagon.

Having carried out the due consideration

that this issue demands, I conclude that I cannot

support the Hastert/Gephardt resolution

that would allow a pre-emptive unilateral attack

without requiring that every effort at a

multinational approach had been exhausted. I

therefore urge my colleagues to join me in

supporting the strong, but prudent and responsible,

Spratt substitute that authorizes the use

of force, but assures that such force (1) is carried

out in concurrence with the community of

nations, or (2) failing to secure such concurrence,

is specifically authorized in the cold

light of a future day reserved for that purpose.

Any more open-ended resolution, including

that offered by Speaker HASTERT and Leader

GEPHARDT, does not provide the thorough,

specific review and deliberation that the authorization

of war demands of the Congress of

the United States.

I conclude by expressing my heartfelt appreciation,

shared by my colleagues on all sides

of this debate, for our men and women in uniform.

Whatever the decision made today, I

stand in full support of our dedicated and courageous

service men and women who may

well soon find themselves in harm’s way. As

a member of the Armed Services Committee,

I re-affirm to them, and all Americans, my

commitment to make sure that they continue

to be the best trained, best equipped, and

best led military force in the world. I pray them

God’s speed and protection in all that they do.