Mr. Speaker,

the resolution before us requires us to

make an enormously difficult decision. There

are many cases to be made against Iraq and

Saddam Hussein, but the only one that justifies

this debate is the danger Iraq’s weapons

of mass destruction, and particularly its nuclear

program, pose to the United States. Recognizing

this danger, however, does not inform

the appropriate response, and in this extremely

complex situation, finding the right response

is not easy.

A GRAVE DECISION

There is no greater responsibility for a Member

of Congress than voting whether to initiate

war. This is a responsibility I take very seriously.

For the last several weeks I have immersed

myself in the details of the situation

with Iraq. I have consulted with experts and

people whole opinions I value. I have spoken

with Rhode Island veterans and have considered

the opinions of the more than 1,100 constituents

who have contacted me on this matter.

I have received a number of security and

intelligence briefings from Administration officials,

the National Security Advisor, the Director

of Central Intelligence, Defense Department

officials and military leaders. I have been

carefully deliberating, weighing the potential

risks of a war with Iraq against the inevitable

danger of a nuclear-armed Iraq.

In considering the options, I have paid careful

attention to the position of President Bush,

to his speech this week and his other statement

on Iraq. Since September 11, I have

consistently supported the President’s efforts

to safeguard our national security and eliminate

the threat of terrorism. I believe he deserves

great credit for rallying the American

people to a new challenge and building

strength from tragedy.

While giving special consideration to the request

of the Commander-in-Chief, I must also

exercise my own judgment on this most critical

life and death question of war. One of the

great strengths of a democracy is that decisions

that emerge from the marketplace of

ideas tend to be stronger, for they have been

challenged and questioned. If we do not question

and do not challenge, if we do not carefully

deliberate, we weaken rather than

strengthen our nation’s purpose.

It is for this reason that the Framers of our

Constitution, in their wisdom, gave the power

to declare war to Congress. Congress represents

the voice of the people, and it is only

the people of a democracy who should have

the power to send their sons and daughters to

war. I therefore feel that it is incumbent upon

every Member of Congress, indeed on every

citizen, to carefully weigh the factors counseling

for and against war with Iraq and make

a decision accordingly.

After much deliberation, I have concluded

that the dangers of an Iraq armed with nuclear

weapons are so significant that we have no

choice but to act. At the same time, I recognize

that a U.S. war with Iraq could complicate

our struggle against terrorism and create new,

serious risks. It is therefore clear that we must

make every effort to enlist the United Nations

in our effort to disarm Iraq and address that

threat. Whether we accomplish our goals

through diplomacy or by arms, our course will

be less dangerous if the world community is

with us. I will support the bipartisan resolution

negotiated by President Bush and House leaders

because I believe it represents our best

hope for delivering the multilateral coalition we

seek to eliminate the threat posed by Iraq’s

nuclear weapons program.

THE THREAT POSED BY IRAQ

In his address to the nation this week, his

speech to the United Nations, and his other

statements, President Bush has clearly and

forcefully articulated Iraq’s threat to U.S. security.

Saddam Hussein unquestionably is one of

the world’s most detestable tyrants. He harbors

a deep hostility towards the United States

and an unquenchable thirst for conquest and

power. He has demonstrated that he does not

view weapons of mass destruction merely as

deterrents, but rather as offensive weapons to

be used to further his quest for power and

give him leverage over the United States.

Given this record, it is a national security

imperative that he not develop a nuclear

weapon. Nuclear non-proliferation is a longstanding

objective of this country, but nowhere

is it more critical than Iraq. Saddam Hussein

has made clear that he believes a nuclear

weapon would give him the ability to act with

impunity. The experts I have spoken with from

former Middle East envoy Dennis Ross to

former Ambassador to the United Nations

Richard Holbrooke to members of the current

Administration believe that the risk of terrorism

would increase substantially after Iraq obtained

nuclear capability. Iraq would then be

more apt to provide shelter, technology, and

weapons to terrorists targeting the U.S. The

large chemical and biological weapons stockpiles

would pose a much greater risk to our

security at that point then they do now. A nuclear

Iraq would be an enormous danger to

the U.S. and be a major setback in our war on

terrorism.

Not only would the direct threat to the U.S.

be intolerable, but acquisition of nuclear weapons

by Iraq would roil an already volatile region.

Saddam Hussein’s hegemonic ambitions

for the Gulf region virtually ensure that he

would resume his military adventurism if he

believed he had a deterrent to U.S. action.

Hussein said after the Gulf War that his greatest

regret was not waiting to invade Kuwait

until after he had acquired a nuclear weapon.

Experts like Jim Steinberg, former Deputy

National Security Advisor to President Clinton,

have predicted an arms race in the Middle

East in response to the threat of a resurgent

Iraq. Countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran, and

Turkey would feel a need to counter Iraq’s

new strategic advantage.

In a region as unstable as the Middle East,

the prospects of a nuclear arms race should

make us all shudder.

Of course, the most ominous threat is that

Iraq would pass nuclear technology to terrorists.

September 11th showed us that there are

people willing to do the unspeakable. The

spectre of nuclear terrorism, which previously

seemed remote and only theoretically frightening,

has suddenly become a real and horrible

possibility. We can no longer count on

those Cold War limits that we assumed even

our enemies shared. With this new, visceral

understanding, who is willing to take the risk

that a nuclear-armed Iraq will not share its

weapons? The degree of cooperation between

Iraq and al Qaeda, and other terrorists targeting

the U.S. is unclear, but if we wait for

that unholy alliance to form, we will have waited

too long.

Unfortunately, the possibility that Iraq might

develop a nuclear weapon is not remote. Its

nuclear program has been disrupted but never

fully dismantled. Current intelligence suggests

that Iraq could have a functional bomb within

a year of acquiring a sufficient quantity of

highly enriched uranium or plutonium. Given

the potential of acquiring these materials from

the crumbling infrastructure of the former Soviet

Union’s arsenal, we cannot assume that a

willing buyer will find no seller.

The people with whom I have spoken who

know the region best, from the current Administration,

from the Clinton Administration, and

those who have spent lifetimes studying the

Middle East, are nearly unanimous in concluding

that we simply cannot allow Iraq to acquire

nuclear capability. The risks of nuclear

terrorism, of the potentially catastrophic destabilization

of a Middle East arms race, and of

future nuclear war in the region are all too

real. Our national security will be severely

compromised if we do not prevent Iraq’s development

of nuclear weapons.

Many have asked, why now? For eleven

years we have relied on containment and deterrence

to respond to Iraq. But Kenneth Pollack,

a former CIA analyst of Iraq, has explained

that Saddam Hussein’s history suggests

a streak of irrationality that makes these

policies unreliable given the stakes. Whether

because he is sheltered from the facts by

underlings who tell him what he wants to hear

or simply unbalanced, Hussein has repeatedly

and dramatically misjudged the reactions his

actions would generate. From his 1974 attack

on Iranian-supported Kurds that provoked a

military response by Iran leading to Iraqi territorial

concessions, to his ill-fated war with Iran

in 1980, to the invasion of Kuwait, he has consistently

miscalculated. Deterrence is predicated

on rational actors operating with similar

sets of assumptions. These examples raise

serious questions about whether we can expect

Hussein to make rational choices, and

that is a risk we cannot take when the use of

nuclear weapons hang in the balance.

President Bush has convincingly articulated

the danger that Saddam Hussein poses and

his long history of undermining security in the

Middle East and throughout the world cannot

be denied. We must act to disarm Iraq, and

we must act soon, before he acquires nuclear

weapons and before he writes the next chapter

in a long history of irrational and highly destructive

aggression. The question is how we

act.

FREEDOM IS NOT FREE

The first choice is, of course, a diplomatic

solution. The goal is a new U.N. resolution

that will convince Saddam Hussein that he

cannot avoid complying with international law.

We must appreciate, however, that given Hussein’s

history, this process may well end in

confrontation. And so we also need to understand

the many implications of a war in Iraq.

We know, as is inscribed at the Korean War

Memorial, that freedom is not free. There are

times that we are called upon to sacrifice to

protect our values, our homeland, and our way

of life. When our national security is at stake,

we will not hesitate to make the necessary

sacrifice. But we know from painful experience

the consequences of launching a war without

first establishing the political will to see it

through, and the American people have to

know what sacrifices they may be called upon

to make.

Obviously, the risks of war would be most

directly borne by the courageous men and

women who were our Nation’s uniform. I know

that they stand prepared to go and fight wherever

their Commander-in-Chief sends them. I

have made it a priority during my eight years

in Congress to ensure that they are the best-trained,

best-equipped, most effective fighting

force in the history of the world, so that if we

have to send them into harm’s way, we know

they will be victorious.

Regarding a war with Iraq, we have not

been told what to expect in the way of call-ups,

casualties, length of combat, and the like.

Some experts predict that the Iraqi military will

overthrow Hussein rather than face destruction

and possible war crimes prosecutions. It is my

greatest hope that they prove correct. But we

need to be prepared for the possibility of combat

involving chemical or biological attacks.

We may face block-by-block, building-by-building

combat in Iraqi cities that, in the words of

General Joseph P. Hoar, the former commander-

in-chief of the U.S. Central Command

whose area of responsibility includes Iraq,

could resemble the last fifteen minutes of

‘‘Saving Private Ryan.’’ Planning conservatively,

we have to assume that we may face

a months-long guerrilla campaign and that

casualties may be far higher than in the Gulf

War.

Our armed forces are unquestionably prepared

to carry out this and any mission they

might be given. Should they be called upon,

they will have my unconditional support for the

duration of any armed conflict. I will do my utmost

to give the men and women who put

their lives on the line to defend our nation

whatever they need to accomplish their mission.

We should not send them into battle,

however, until the American people have been

fully prepared for the cost in American lives

that we may pay for victory.

The American people must also be better

prepared for the long-term consequences of

action in Iraq. Even if the war goes quickly

and the worst-case scenarios do not play out,

there is a consensus that an extended American

presence in Iraq will be required to maintain

stability in that ethnically and politically divided

country. It is critical that a centralized,

unified Iraq emerge, and we cannot leave that

outcome to chance. If we win the war but do

not win the peace, the great risks we take and

blood we shed will be for naught.

American troops will, at least initially, be responsible

for protecting Iraq’s borders with

Iran and Syria, governing tinder-boxes on the

brink of civil war, like the city of Kirkuk, and

preventing revenge-induced massacres in the

Shiite south. The economic costs will be high

and the risks to our troops serious. Although

specifics may vary depending on the breadth

and impact of the war, under virtually any scenario

we face the prospect of a major, long-term

reconstitution of Iraq in dollars, energy,

attention, and most importantly, lives.

I know that we are capable of meeting the

challenge of rebuilding Iraq, just as we are capable

of meeting the military challenges. Like

possible economic and budgetary implications,

these are not considerations which will deter

us from acting to protect our national security,

but they are consequences of war that we

must be prepared to realize.

WAR IN IRAQ AND THE IMPACT ON ANTI-TERRORISM

EFFORTS

As great a danger as Iraq represents, we

should not pursue military action there without

considering its impact on the wider war on terrorism

that we are currently fighting. As many

thoughtful commentators have noted, a war in

Iraq carries its own dangers above and beyond

the immediate risks to our soldiers, sailors,

and airmen.

The fight against Al Qaeda is not only a

military engagement at this point, but even

more so, a law enforcement and intelligence

operation. Unilateral war with Iraq runs the risk

of drying up critical support in the war on terrorism.

We need the cooperation of foreign

governments in countries like Yemen and

Pakistan to find and detain Al Qaeda’s leadership.

The arrest of Ramzi Binalshibh in Pakistan

last month is the perfect example. A suspected

ringleader in the planning of the September

11th attacks, he is now providing us

with valuable intelligence. If what is perceived

to be an American imperialistic attack on Iraq

costs us allies in our struggle against terrorism,

it could become much more difficult for

us to thwart future terrorist attacks.

While an Iraqi war could cause some governments

to stop working as closely with us,

more troubling is the prospect that I could

cause massive destabilization in the Middle

East and surrounding areas. The first President

Bush’s National Security Advisor, Brent

Scowcroft, and others have cautioned that a

war in Iraq could metastasize into a regional

war. If Iraq attacks Israel and Israel responds

as promised, the smoldering Israeli-Arab conflict

could explode. Turkey, Syria, and Iran all

have substantial Kurdish populations and

could be drawn into war.

A geopolitical nightmare scenario is President

Musharraf’s government in Pakistan toppling

and a radical Islamic regime taking control

of Pakistan’s nuclear arsenal. Experts

have said his grip on power is somewhat

shaky. Could an American attack on Iraq

prompt large street demonstrations in Pakistan?

Could that in turn lead to Musharraf’s

downfall?

Middle East experts are even more concerned

about the impact of a war on the moderate

government of Jordan’s King Abdullah.

Not only could a change of governments there

cost us a reliable ally in the fight against terrorism,

but it could lead to a cataclysm whose

ripple effects would harm us in other ways.

Jordan is one of the few countries that has

signed a peace treaty with Israel. But half of

its population is made up of Palestinian refugees.

If Jordan were to fall into the hands of

a radical government, the Israeli-Palestinian

conflict could explode into a multi-front war.

An Arab-Israeli war is the surest way to inflame

Islamic militants.

Even without a deterioration of the Israeli-

Palestinian situation, General Wesley Clark,

the former Supreme Allied Commander of

NATO, warned the Senate Armed Services

Committee that a unilateral war by the United

Sates on Iraq would ‘‘supercharge’’ Al

Qaeda’s recruitment. There are a billion Muslims

in the world, some of whom unfortunately

harbor a great distrust of the United States.

Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda and their sympathizers

would portray a U.S. attack on Iraq

as an attack on Islam, and many would view

it that way.

We can assume that in the event of war,

Hussein will place anti-aircraft guns and other

military targets in mosques, schools, hospitals,

and residential neighborhoods. In order to win,

the U.S. military may be forced to strike these

sites, and al-Jezeera would likely broadcast

daily images of U.S. bombs destroying important

cultural, religious, and other apparently civilian

buildings. Military victory could well

come at the cost of an enormous public relations

defeat, one which make us an army of

new enemies willing to take their own lives to

inflict pain on Americans.

It is also far from clear that war with Iraq will

reduce the threat of Iraqi chemical and biological

weapons being used against Americans or

our allies. A newly released CIA report details

the danger that an attack on Iraq could lead

Hussein to aid terrorists in chemical or biological

attack as a way to exact a last measure

of revenge.

We know that Iraq has mobile labs producing

these potentially devastating weapons.

Can we be sure that our troops would eliminate

them before he had a chance to launch

weapons at Israel or put them in the hands of

terrorists? For that matter, can we be sure

they are not already in the hands of Iraqi

agents or other terrorists outside of Iraq,

awaiting a signal to use them? When you corner

a dangerous animal, you have to expect it

to lash out. A war to disarm Hussein may

paradoxically increase rather than decrease

Americans’ vulnerability to those very weapons.

If there is one lesson of warfare that has

been true throughout human history, it is that

wars have unintended consequences. Writing

2400 years ago, the Chinese military strategist

Sun Tzu, called this uncertainty the ‘‘fog of

war.’’ We ignore this timeless truth of warfare

at our peril. It would be the hubris of the

world’s lone superpower to assume that our

plans will be carried out exactly as we foresee

them.

MINIMIZING THREATS IN IRAQ AND ELSEWHERE

While these dangers are real and caution us

against war, inaction still leaves us with the

prospect of a nuclear Iraq in the relatively near

future. Through no choice of our own we have

entered a minefield. On one side lies the danger

of Iraq with nuclear weapons. On the

other, an unfinished war against fanatics who

hide in shadows and who may be inadvertently

strengthened by our actions in Iraq. We

need to pick our way carefully through this

minefield, making every effort to minimize the

risks on both sides.

Obviously, our best option is to disarm Iraq

without resort to war. This outcome can only

happen if the world unites in pressuring Iraq to

comply with UN resolutions. For this reason, I

am pleased that the President has brought our

case to the United Nations and has been aggressively

pursuing a new, forceful resolution

in the Security Council. The Security Council

should pass a new resolution, giving weapons

inspectors truly unfettered access to any site

in Iraq at any time with no conditions. I believe

any new resolution should be backed up with

the realistic threat of force.

But it must act quickly. If the UN is to remain

a credible international agent of stability,

it must, as the President has insisted, begin

disarming Iraq in a matter of days and weeks

not months and years. Sandy Berger, President

Clinton’s National Security Advisor, has

told me that we can expect an inspections and

disarmament regime to take several years.

Given the timeline for Iraq’s development of a

nuclear weapon, the window for diplomatic action

is therefore very small. If we want a

peaceful option to prevail, we must set down

that road immediately.

We can hope that Saddam Hussein will recognize

that he has lost the battle for world

opinion and will capitulate to international law

by giving up his weapons of mass destruction.

Even if diplomacy fails, however, our national

security would be much better protected if we

forcibly disarm Iraq at the head of a multilateral

coalition rather than on our own.

As the first President Bush realized, perceptions

are critically important in global diplomacy.

A number of the dangers war poses to

our efforts against terrorism are exacerbated

by a perception, warranted or not, that the

United States is using its military dominance

to bully Arabs or Muslims. If, on the other

hand, the U.S. is seen exhausting diplomatic

efforts and any conflict is between Iraq and

the community of nations rather than just the

sole superpower, a war at that point is less

likely to undermine American efforts to combat

terrorism.

A multilateral war with Iraq would do less to

diminish the support we have received from

Muslim nations in the war on terrorism. It

would be less risky to our fragile allies in the

region. It would be harder for the terrorists and

anti-American propagandists to use to inflame

young Muslims to attack the United States.

We seek the auspices of the United Nations

not because we must, but because doing so

is in the nation’s best interest. As President

Kennedy said forty years ago during the

Cuban Missile Crisis,

We will not defer decisions of our national

security to the United Nations, but where it is

useful we should take advantage of the international

structures that our nation was instrumental

in creating. In this case, it is in the

overwhelming best interest of the United

States to push the UN to disarm Iraq, and I

therefore stand foursquare behind President

Bush’s efforts to push the Security Council to

address Iraq’s lawlessness.

THE DEBATE IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

These are the considerations I have been

weighing over the past several weeks and

upon which I will cast my vote in Congress.

My decision is based on grave concerns about

the prospect of a nuclear-armed Iraq and

equally serious fears that a war with Iraq will

create new, highly dangerous risks of terrorism.

I will vote for the resolution I feel is

most likely to lead to a multilateral disarmament

of Iraq, which is the best route to

safeguard our national security.

I was troubled by the first draft of the resolution

sent to Congress because it was an extremely

broad mandate that authorized any

action not only to disarm Iraq and enforce UN

resolutions, but to ‘‘restore peace and stability

in the region.’’ The process of deliberation has

worked, however, Bipartisan, bicameral negotiations

have subsequently improved the resolution

and led to a more thorough discussion

of the complex factors that must inform this

decision.

The new resolution now requires the President

to exhaust diplomatic efforts before resorting

to force. Equally important, it authorizes

the use of force in Iraq only upon certification

by the President that such action will

not undermine the international war on terrorism.

We walk a fine line between the risks

of a rogue Iraq on one side and hindering our

war on terrorism on the other. These two features

of the new resolution ensure that our

Iraq policy walks that line if at all possible.

President Bush has made it clear that his

preferred option is to lead the United Nations

in enforcing its own resolutions. Secretary of

State Colin Powell and others in the Administration

are working to convince a reluctant Security

Council that a new resolution with teeth,

authorizing unconditional access by inspectors

to any site in Iraq is the surest way to avoid

armed conflict. Secretary Powell, his predecessor,

Madeleine Albright, the U.S. ambassador

to the UN in the Clinton Administration,

Richard Holbrooke, and others have told me

that to persuade the international community

to follow us, the President needs as strong a

hand as possible.

Those of us who strongly believe that America’s

safest path among the dangers that confront

us is a multilateral approach and who

want to avoid war must show the world that

our nation is resolute in its determination to respond

to the threat in Iraq. We know that Saddam

Hussein will capitulate only if he senses

that the only alternative is destruction. A clear

declaration of our unity and our determination

to eliminate the Iraqi threat to our own security

and that of the community of nations is the

best way to the multilateral, diplomatic solution

that we seek.

I remain convinced that a unilateral attack

by the United States on Iraq creates grave

threats to the security of our people, even

while it eliminates others. But I also agree with

the President that a failure to confront Saddam

Hussein now, before he has nuclear capabilities,

would be a colossal mistake. To

maximize our national security, we must balance

these two dangerous and uncertain possibilities.

The resolution before the United

States Congress ensures that, to as great an

extent possible, that precarious balance is

struck. Through its focus on diplomacy, its

concern for the broader war on terrorism, and

the resolve it communicates to the rest of the

world, it is the most likely vehicle to the multilateral,

diplomatic disarmament of Iraq that I

and most Americans seek. I will, therefore,

vote for the resolution in the most fervent

hope that the force it authorizes should never

have to be used.