Mr. Speaker, we

are about to set the course for our nation’s

foreign policy that will impact the rest of this

century, and we are about to decide the destiny

of many of our young men and women.

There is not doubt in my mind that Saddam

Hussein poses a real threat to the United

States. He has violated every U.N. Security

Council Resolution and has committed unspeakable

atrocities against his own people. If

there is an axis of evil, then Saddam Hussein

is its lynchpin. However, the question before

the Congress today is not whether or not Saddam

Hussein is a threat. The question is what

do we do about it? And when? And how?

To begin, war must be the last option, not

the first solution. We must demonstrate to the

world that we will continue to exhaust diplomatic

and peaceful options to protect our security

and national interests.

As a permanent member of the U.N. Security

Council, we must demand a Resolution

that allows unhampered—any time any

place—access to any and all areas within Iraq

for inspection, and we must equip the inspection

teams with thousands of coalition forces

to ensure both their protection and the United

Nations’ commitment to peace.

A preemptive strike will have serious repercussions

on the entire Middle East region.

While the threat posed by Saddam Hussein is

obvious, it is equally obvious that any aggressive

actions taken by the United States will

prompt Saddam Hussein to strike back not

only on the U.S. directly, but also on our allies

and interests in the region, and specifically,

Israel.

The provocation of an Iraqi strike by the

U.S. is the last thing we should be doing as

Israel continues to seek peace with the Palestinians,

Syria, and Lebanon. Should Iraq attack

Israel, as it did in 1991, Israel will respond—

and who can blame them?

This won’t be a war that Israel has asked

for, but it may well be one they are forced to

engage in. I do not want to have to explain to

my constituents why I voted for a war that

guarantees the injury or death of Israelis.

While there is not doubt in my mind that the

U.S. can prosecute a war to successful conclusion,

I remind the Commander in Chief that

the men and women of our Armed Forces are

already fully engaged in a war on terrorism.

In addition to that war, we have military

commitments in Japan, Germany, and South

Korea. We also have over 3 thousand troops

in Bosnia and Herzegovina, almost 5 thousand

in Saudi Arabia, over 4 thousand in Kuwait,

and another 5 thousand in Serbia, to name a

few. How will a war with Iraq, and make no

mistake, this will be a full-fledged war, affect

our peacekeeping and peace enforcement obligations

in these and other parts of the world?

H.J. Res 114 lacks even the barest essentials

for good foreign policy and is bereft of

any consideration of global politics. It does not

include any short or long term planning. I submitted

an amendment in the nature of a substitute

that authorized the use of U.S. Armed

Forces against Iraq, and my Resolution included

a number of preconditions that the

President would have been forced to follow,

prior to receiving authority from Congress to

engage U.S. troops in war.

Those preconditions included verification

that all peaceful means to obtain compliance

with U.N. Security Council Resolutions have

been exhausted, a commitment that the war

on terrorism remain the nation’s highest priority,

a plan for stabilizing a free Iraq, and a

commitment to protect the health and safety of

the Iraqi people. I am sorry that the full House

was not to permitted to vote on my proposal.

We are about to determine the destiny of far

too many of our nation’s young men and

women. We must be absolutely certain that

peaceful options have been exhausted and

that we have achievable goals for stability in

the region.

I am not yet certain that we have these

plans or have exhausted these options. I will

not support H.J. Res 114, or any other Resolution

that authorizes a preemptive military

strike against another nation, until these preconditions

have been met. I urge my colleagues

to adhere to these same standards.