Mr. Speaker, the Constitution

of the United States reserves

to the Congress of the United States

the authority to declare war. That is as

it should be, for no more weighty matter

confronts a nation, and it is fitting

in a Republic that a decision such as

this be made by the people’s representatives.

Let us be clear. Saddam Hussein is a

dangerous, malicious dictator. He has

committed multiple atrocities, both

towards his own people and others in

the Middle East. He has refused to

comply with U.N. resolutions or to

allow weapons inspectors to fully identify

and destroy his arsenal of chemical,

biological and potential nuclear

weapons. He has circumvented economic

sanctions and has spent money

from oil sales on weapons systems and

personal luxuries for himself and his

political cronies, rather than on the Iraqi people.

Given those facts, I believe we must

increase the pressure on Iraq and insist

on expanded weapons inspections with

much greater resources and no restrictions.

This should be done through a

multinational effort coordinated

through the United Nations and with

the support of allies and other nations

throughout the world.

The United States is absolutely right

to insist on this and to take the lead in

this effort. With international support,

the United States stands the greatest

chance for a successful outcome; and if

military intervention is necessary, the

number of casualties will be reduced

and the regional repercussions will be lessened.

That is why I will support the Spratt

amendment authorizing the President

to seek international support for expanded

inspections; and if Saddam Hussein

refuses to comply with such inspections

and an international coalition

exists, the President would be authorized

to commit U.S. military resources

under U.S. command.

If, however, it is not possible to

achieve a multinational coalition, in

those circumstances the risks, the

costs, and the international implications

of a unilateral attack will be far

more severe. Such an attack may be

necessary, but before taking that step,

the President should return to the Congress,

explain why agreements have

not been reached. And if in his judgment

force is still necessary, he should,

consistent with Article I of the Constitution,

seek the authorization of the

Congress for military force.

Throughout the discussions of war

with Iraq, I have asked fundamental

questions: What threat is posed by Iraq

now and in the future? What is the

military strategy for reducing that

threat? What will the cost of that

strategy be in human casualties on all

sides? What are the international implications

and potential regional scenarios

that might be developed, and

what is our long term strategy for the region?

I believe the first question has been

answered. It is apparent that, while the

threat to our own Nation may not be

imminent, if allowed to go on Saddam

Hussein will eventually develop even

more dangerous weapons. Beyond that,

however, the remaining questions have

not been fully addressed. For each of

the issues I have raised, and many others

have as well, the potential risks

and costs would be dramatically greater

if the U.S. acts unilaterally rather

than in a multinational effort.

Even some of our strongest allies

have indicated they would not support

us militarily or financially if we go it

alone. Yet the risks, costs and consequences

of unilateral action have not

been adequately explained to the

American people. Whatever course is

chosen, I believe we will not solve the

problem of international terrorism or

weapons of mass destruction solely by

attacking Saddam Hussein or solely

through the broad use of military

force. I understand well the impulse

and the desire to do something and do

it now to reduce the threat and fear

created by September 11, and I believe

it may yet be necessary to disarm Saddam

Hussein, but we must all recognize

that there is no course of action without

risk or that we will eliminate all risk in the future.

Ultimately, we must look at the

source of international conflicts; and

we must work to reduce the perceptions

and the real conditions that

allow terrorists and others to foment

hatred toward our Nation. If we do not

understand and deal with how our actions

are perceived internationally, we

will run the risk of defeating Saddam

Hussein only to foster new threats and

new hatreds elsewhere.

We can and must dedicate ourselves

to the battle against terrorism, and we

can and must hope the pressure applied

to the Iraqi regime will bring about

change and greater security. But as we

seek that end, we must not neglect the

challenges we face here at home; and

we must not neglect our responsibility

to address those challenges with honesty,

forthrightness, and a sense of justice,

fairness and a sense of shared sacrifice

befitting a truly great Nation in times such as these.

The President of the United States

and all Members of Congress have dedicated

their hearts, minds and souls to

protecting the safety and well-being of

the American people. There are legitimate

differences about how to achieve

that in these times; but whatever the

result of this vote, let no one question

the motives, the courage, or the patriotism

of those who will make this fateful decision.