Mr. Speaker, I thank

the gentleman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, today the Members of

this body are called to face an awesome

challenge and a very perplexing dilemma.

We must decide whether or not

to authorize the President to use the

Armed Forces of the United States as

he determines to be necessary and appropriate

to defend the national security

of the United States against the

continuing threat posed by Iraq and enforce

all relevant United Nations Security

Council resolutions regarding Iraq.

The measure requires that before

military action is begun or as soon

thereafter as feasible, but not later

than 48 hours, the President must report

to Congress that all diplomatic efforts

to protect the security of the

United States against the threat posed

by Iraq or to enforce all relevant U.N.

resolutions regarding Iraq have been

exhausted.

The resolution also requires that the

President must report to the Congress

that military action against Iraq is

consistent with our continued actions

against international terrorists, including

those responsible for 9/11.

The resolution states that it is consistent

with the War Powers Act and

constitutes specific authorization within

the meaning of the War Powers Act.

It states that Congress supports the

President’s efforts to strictly enforce

through the United Nations Security

Council all relevant Security Council

resolutions applicable to Iraq and encourages

him in those efforts, supports

his efforts to obtain prompt and decisive

action by the Security Council to

ensure that Iraq abandons its strategy

of delay, evasion, noncompliance and

promptly and strictly complies with all

of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

It requires the President at least

once every 60 days to report to the

Congress on the matters relevant to

this resolution, including the use of

force and on efforts to support Iraq’s

transition to democracy after Saddam

Hussein is gone.

I intend to support the resolution. It

is a fact, Mr. Speaker, that Saddam

Hussein has produced thousands of tons

of chemical agents and used them

against Iran and 40 Iraqi villages. He

has rebuilt facilities that were used to

manufacture chemical and biological

weapons in violation of the truce that

ended the Persian Gulf War. He possesses

ballistic missiles with a range

great enough to strike Saudi Arabia,

Israel, Turkey and other nations in the

region, where more than 135,000 American

civilians and service personnel

now live and work.

He has a fleet of manned and unmanned

aerial vehicles that could be

used to disperse chemical and biological

weapons across broad areas. It

would not take sophisticated delivery

systems to deliver these chemical and

biological agents to harm the 135,000

Americans I have cited.

We do not know the extent of his nuclear

weapons development since he

threw out the inspectors 4 years ago,

but we do know he was just months

away from success; and in spite of U.N.

prohibitions, he has continued his

quest. He has had 4 years of unrestricted

freedom to pursue his nasty

goals.

We know that, as good as our intelligence

community is, 9/11 and numerous

inquiries thereafter have proven

that our intelligence community is not

perfect. We need unfettered, unrestricted

international inspections to

get accurate information on compliance

or noncompliance.

History is replete with evidence that,

without a show of force, Saddam will

not respond. I believe that empowering

the President to use Armed Forces to

assure that Saddam has no weapons of

mass destruction to threaten the lives

of American civilians and service members

and innocent neighbors or to give

terrorists, this will give Secretary

Powell the strength that he needs to

get a strong U.N. resolution.

When he goes to the Security Council,

he needs to be carrying a big stick,

speaking with unquestioned resolve of

the Congress and the American people.

I do not take lightly the risks that

our sons and daughters will be sent

into harm’s way. I do not take lightly

the unprecedented probability of unilateral

action by the United States,

but we live in a new and different and

dangerous time, and the threat of

weapons of mass destruction demand

that we take unprecedented actions to

protect America, her people and civilized

nations from the death and destruction

of a Saddam Hussein.

Mr. Speaker, I support the adoption

of the resolution. I support the Spratt

substitute, but there must be

verification, there must be inspections;

and the time to assure the safety of

Americans, and the safety of the world,

is now.