Mr. Speaker, there is no question that Iraq’s President, Saddam

Hussein, is a dangerous individual.

Under his control Iraq has violated

United Nations resolutions on the development

of weapons of mass destruction.

Iraq possesses significant quantities

of chemical and biological weapons

and is attempting to develop nuclear

and radiological weapons all in

contravention of the U.N. resolutions.

Iraq has shown a disposition to use

weapons of mass destruction when the

regime used chemical weapons against

its own citizens. Iraq has had 4 years to

rebuild its weapons of mass destruction

program without U.N. oversight or inspection.

The current regime has also

supported terrorism. It is in the interest

of the United States to take action

against Iraq to enforce the U.N. resolutions,

mandating that Iraq destroy its

weapons of mass destruction. The preferred

course for the United States is

to pursue that action through the

United Nations. The use of force should

be a matter of last resort if all other

diplomatic means prove ineffective.

I support President Bush’s efforts to

secure a resolution in the United Nations

Security Council along with a

time schedule for enforcement. I also

support President Bush’s stated intent

that force should only be used as a

matter of last resort and that it is in

the best interest of our Nation to avoid

the use of force.

The question before Congress is how

we should best address the threat posed

by Saddam Hussein as he seeks to

strengthen his arsenal of weapons of

mass destruction. We all agree that the

United States must exercise leadership

at this critical time in world history.

It is unfortunate that H.J. Res. 114 goes

well beyond the President’s statements.

Under the resolution the President

could take unilateral military action

against Iraq without seeking the

support of the United Nations. The

President could also take unilateral

military action against Iraq to enforce

U.N. resolutions unrelated to weapons

of mass destruction. The President has

indicated that he will use his authority

more narrowly but that it is useful to

have broader legislative authority.

However, the Congress has the responsibility

under the War Powers Act to

be very cautious on the authorization

of the use of force.

The gentleman from Florida (Mr.

DAVIS) and I presented a substitute resolution

to the Committee on Rules.

That resolution was originally proposed

by Senators BIDEN and LUGAR of

the Committee on Foreign Relations.

It would have limited the use of force

to the specific threat against our Nation.

Unfortunately, the Republican

leadership in the House refused to

allow that resolution to be considered.

The only other option on the use of

force to the President’s resolution is

the substitute resolution offered by the

gentleman from South Carolina (Mr.

SPRATT). That resolution allows the

President to use force if authorized by

the United Nations to eliminate Iraq’s

weapons of mass destruction. If the

United Nations does not approve a resolution

authorizing force, then the

President could seek an immediate

vote of Congress if he still believed the

use of force by the United States is necessary.

Mr. Speaker, I shall support the

Spratt substitute resolution because

when compared to the President’s resolution,

I believe it most closely reflects

the proper authorization from Congress.

It is important that we speak as

a united country in our determination

to eliminate Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction.

I urge the President to follow

the path he has announced in seeking

U.N. action, limiting our forces to

the elimination of weapons of mass destruction

and working with the international community.

I have grave concerns about the consequences

of unilateral preemptive

military attack by the United States.

Such a course of action could endanger

our global coalition against terrorism,

particularly from our moderate Arab

allies. It also may increase terrorism

activities around the world. The United

States could also set a dangerous

precedent in international law which

could be invoked, for example, by India

against Pakistan, Russia against Georgia,

or China against Taiwan. In addition,

we must not overlook the massive

cost and effort that the United States

would have to undertake in a post-Saddam

Hussein regime. The United States

will need the help of its allies as it attempts

to transition Iraq from a dictatorship

to a democracy which has the

full respect of religious freedom and

minority rights of the Kurds, Shiites, and Sunnis.

Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, by working

through the United Nations we create

an international coalition that will be

critical in any future military campaign

against Iraq or in any effort to

stabilize and rebuild Iraq.