Mr. Speaker, I thank the

gentleman from New Jersey for yielding

time to me.

Mr. Speaker, the Congress is now debating

the most serious and sobering of

issues, whether we go to war, war

against Iraq. We do this as we stand on

the threshold of a new century.

I believe this debate is as much about

voting to declare war as it is about

what kind of country we are and what

we want our country to be in the future.

This resolution of war is an extraordinary

and unwise departure from

our history of a principled American

tradition, that we stand foursquare

against unprovoked attacks and for a

foreign policy of deterrence.

The Bush doctrine reverses this policy

and sets forth that the United

States of America has the unrestricted

right to attack other nations. This resolution

trades deterrence for preemption.

This resolution trade

multilateralism for unilateralism.

This go-it-alone policy has become

the imprimatur of this administration.

We have witnessed their abrogation of

nearly every international treaty they

inherited from previous Republican and

Democratic administrations.

This administration has allowed the

underfunding of the Nunn-Lugar law,

leaving the tools of terrorists unprotected

and up for grabs across the

former Soviet Union.

This administration has withdrawn

from the ABM Treaty, withdrawn from

the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty,

withdrawn from START II, rejected the

Biological Weapons Convention, and

rejected the International Criminal

Court.

This administration makes war the

first and only option, rather than a last

resort. It has, in one brief summer and

fall, upended decades of our time-tested,

tenacious foreign policy of deterrence,

which has served our Nation and

the world so well.

The President has not answered the

haunting questions of thousands of my

constituents and the American people.

Why now? How many troops will we

need to wage this war? What will it

cost? How long will we be there? What

is the plan to manage the chaos in the

aftermath of regime change; and, finally,

how will it affect the

war on terrorism?

Respected military leaders and

statesmen have testified to Congress

about their deep concerns with preemption

and unilateralism. These experts

have seriously undercut the President’s

case of what Saddam Hussein has and

the President’s remedy to deal with it.

And classified briefings have raised

more questions than answers.

Today’s newspapers were filled with

the information that our own intelligence

agencies have concluded that

Saddam Hussein is unlikely to initiate

a chemical or biological attack against

the United States. Not one of us carries

a brief for Saddam Hussein. We know

what he has done and we know how he

rules. We know about his accumulation

of chemical and biological weapons and

the other weapons that threaten his

neighbors and us.

Our answer today, send a thousand

troops of weapons inspectors to Iraq.

This time they must have unrestricted

access to everything and with deadlines

to achieve disarmament. The

world community will watch and as we

disarm him. He will loosen the noose

he holds.

We can be tough and principled as we

have been in the past. We can bring

other nations with us and when we do,

Saddam will know he cannot dodge or

be deceitful any longer. That is why I

support the Spratt resolution which

calls for action only if the U.N. determines

action is required and the President

seeks approval from the Congress.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, when the framers

wrote our Constitution, their vision

spoke to the innermost yearnings of

every human being, then, over the centuries,

and now. They created what I

have called the best idea that is ever

been born: democracy. Their call is the

same today in this new century that we

lead through the enduring strength of

our democratic principles backed by

the might we possess. Today our Constitution

and my conscience beckon me

to oppose the President’s resolution for

war. I shall vote against the resolution

and I urge my colleagues to do so as well.