Mr. Speaker, I rise

today in opposition to House Joint

Resolution 114, giving authorization for

military force against Iraq. I am determined

to convince my colleagues to

pass the substitute amendment that

will be offered by the gentleman from

South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT). I agree

with my colleague that the resolution

reported by the Committee on International

Relations authorizing the use

of force against Iraq is an amendment

and an improvement over the original

House draft; and, yes, I also agree with

him that we must limit the broad authority

it grants to our President.

While no one in this House believes

that Saddam Hussein should be allowed

to develop weapons of mass destruction,

my fellow colleagues should see

the need to encourage the President to

persist in his efforts to obtain Security

Council approval for any action taken

against Iraq. The President should also

be required to seek a Security Council

resolution mandating a new and tougher

round of arms inspection.

When the Gulf War ended, Iraq

agreed to destroy all of its chemical,

biological, and nuclear weapons; and,

yes, Iraq should be held to that commitment.

The safety of America and

the world depends on Iraq’s compliance

with the United Nations resolutions.

Because the Spratt substitute would

call on the United Nations to approve

the use of force, if necessary, to ensure

that Iraq meets its obligations to disarm,

the United Nations Security

Council’s approval of action in Iraq

would provide several crucial benefits.

It would encourage all allies to fall in

line and support our efforts. It would

allow moderate Arab states to use the

council’s approval as a guide to support

our troops’ presence in Iraq, consequently

enhancing the chances of

post-war democracy and economic success

in Iraq. If Saddam Hussein’s regime

is toppled, a new government will

have to be formed to revive Iraq’s economy

and bring together the various

ethnic factions to form a viable government.

Nation-building should be the work

of the United Nations, not the U.S.

military. As I have said, U.N. approval

of our efforts would improve our ties

with our allies, both European and

Arab, and would likely lead to a fledgling,

yet strong, democracy. If the

United Nations decides not to impose

additional sanctions or to cooperate,

then America should take unilateral

action against Iraq within the guidelines

of the Constitution.

Everyone in this Congress has sworn

to uphold the Constitution. It was in

1787 that the founders of our country

gave Congress, not the President, the

power and the responsibility of declaring

war and sending American troops

oversees. The Spratt substitute would

require the President to come to Congress

and ask for the support through

an expedited process after it is determined

that the United Nations will not

act. I think this is the appropriate

manner in which to conduct such a serious

endeavor as another war. We need

to remind ourselves that we are not

just entering and referring to a congressional

resolution, we are talking

about the potential loss of American

troops and the lives of civilian Iraqis.

Life is too precious a gift to grant

such broad powers even to our President

without a thorough discourse with

the United Nations or with the United

States Congress. I do not question our

President’s authority to protect our

national security. I am asking that our

President work through the United Nations

and consult Congress prior to engaging

in what will become a serious

international conflict.

In closing, over the last few weeks I

have talked to many of my constituents

from all walks of life: farmers,

ranchers, veterans, educators, parents,

students, doctors, businessmen, and

businesswomen. I have listened carefully

to all of their views and concerns;

and as a result, I will vote against

House Joint Resolution 114. I respectfully

urge my colleagues to support the

Spratt amendment.