Mr. Speaker, the 435 who serve in

this body, and the 100 in the other

body, will shortly cast the most important

vote of our career, should we send

our young men and women to war. It is

a decision not to be taken lightly, and

I highly respect both sides of the argument.

But I stand here today with a

heavy heart because I am not able to

support the resolution before us.

September 11, 2001, the most dastardly

deed ever imagined on a people

was committed in this country. The

terrorist threat is alive and well. It

ought to be the number one priority of

this country, of this President, to root

out terrorism, to make sure we bring

the culprit who planned, organized, and

attacked our Nation to justice. We

have not done that. Nothing should divert

us from that.

There has been no intelligence, no information

given to this Member, and I

might add my ranking member on the

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence,

that would say Saddam Hussein

is an imminent threat to America

at this time. No information to the

highest ranking Democrat on the Permanent

Select Committee on Intelligence.

Does he have weapons? Can he harm?

Yes, he can. The President went to the

United Nations and spoke before 189

nations of the world not long ago, and

the U.N. Security Council, which is

composed of many countries, China,

Russia, Germany, France and others,

whose responsibility it is to act. And if

a unilateral strike were necessary

right now, do any of us believe that

China, Russia, France, Germany, who

are also a part of this world, would join

with the United States? They have chosen

not to do so. Therefore, that leaves

the United States alone.

Yes, we are the most powerful. Yes,

this is a great country, and we want to

remain that. I am very concerned that

a unilateral first strike will upset the

global economy, will upset the world.

And what about the other 20-plus countries

that have weapons of mass destruction?

Can China then attack Taiwan?

Can India then attack Pakistan?

North Korea? South Korea? Where does it stop?

The United States is the leader in the

world, and we must show that leadership;

and we do that by multilaterally

acting with our allies, working together

so we do not have the loss of

50,000, so that we will not have to spend

$200 billion-plus of taxpayers’ money,

and so that we can then use it for

health care and housing and prescription drugs.

Mr. Speaker, I implore the American

citizens to look at the issue and to get

to their Congressperson and Senator.

Yes, we have to disarm Saddam Hussein.

Yes, we have to go after the weapons

of mass destruction. But we are the

leaders of the free world, and we have

no allies with us on this first strike.

We ought to ask some questions here.

What will be the consequences in the

Middle East when America makes this

first strike? What will be the cost to

the world? How many lives will be lost?

What resources are we going to pledge

as we strike and then as we rebuild

that part of the world? What will happen

with Iran and Saudi Arabia? Will they sit idly by?

If we pass this resolution in October

and not go to war until February or

March, what will happen in the interim

to American businesses all over the

world? Will they be safe?

I urge my colleagues to look at some

of these questions. There is no plan.

Attack and then what? We have not

been given a plan for striking nor a

plan for exiting. I think that is wrong.

And as Members of Congress who have

pledged to represent over 600,000 people

apiece, we owe our constituents that

answer, these very same constituents

whose sons and daughters will be on

the front line risking their lives in a

war where there has not yet been proven

to be an imminent threat to our country.

Mr. Speaker, over the next several

hours I ask my constituents to please

listen to the comments of our colleagues.

And, again, I respect both

sides; but I think my constituents sent

this Member here to represent and to

report to them, and what I am reporting

today is that there is no information,

no intelligence presented that either

this Member or our ranking member

on our Permanent Select Committee

on Intelligence that Saddam

Hussein is an imminent threat to our country today.

Let the U.N. process work. Go in with

unfettered inspections, and then let us

make an intelligent response. Then

multilaterally put the coalition together

that we have to have to rid Iraq

of weapons of mass destruction. But

then also invest in America to save our

health care institutions, to build new

schools. I am telling my colleagues,

and America, to rise up, to speak out.

The time is now.