Mr. Speaker, although

we all know this war resolution

will pass, I nevertheless must question

the wisdom and morality of an

unprovoked attack on another foreign

nation. The guiding principle of our

foreign policy for over 50 years has

been one of containment and deterrence.

This is the same strategy that

kept the former Soviet Union in check,

a power whose possession of weapons of

mass destruction had been proven and

not speculated, and in fact led to its downfall.

The administration asserts that this

time-tested policy is not sufficient to

deal with this, yes, dangerous but

small, economically weakened Middle

Eastern nation. Instead, they support a

new policy of a unilateral preemptive

attack against Iraq, citing the

unproven possibility that Saddam Hussein

might be a risk to the security of the United States.

The long-term effects of this go-italone,

shoot-first policy will be to lose

the high moral ground we have exercised

in the past to deter other nations

from attacking militarily when they

felt their security was at stake. The

next time Pakistani and Indian troops

mass at their borders with both nations’

fingers on nuclear triggers, what

moral authority will we have to prevent

a potential catastrophe? They

would justifiably ignore our pleas for

diplomatic or negotiated approaches

and instead simply follow our lead.

The administration continues to assert

that Iraq is an urgent threat to

our national security and that we are

at risk of an Iraqi surprise attack. But

the resolution before us offers no substantiation

of these allegations, speaking

only of hunches, probabilities, and

suspicions. That is not sufficient justification

to start a war.

Further, there is reference to the 9/11

terrorism we suffered and the assertion

that members of al Qaeda are in Iraq.

After extensive investigation, our intelligence

community could find no

link between the Iraqi regime and the

plot that led to last year’s deadly terrorist attacks.

Also it has become reported that al

Qaeda members are in Iran, Pakistan

and Saudi Arabia. Do we attack them next?

The resolution further asserts also

without any evidence that there is a

great risk that Iraq could launch a surprise

attack on the United States with

weapons of mass destruction. It is fact

that Saddam does not possess a delivery

system that has the throw power of

8,000 miles or anything even close. And

if there is such a great risk that he has

and will use biological and chemical

weapons against us, why did he not do

so in the Gulf War? The answer is because

he knew that our response would

be strong, swift, and fatal. Hussein is

not a martyr; he is a survivalist.

Similarly, the evidence does not

show that Iraq has any nuclear capabilities.

General Wesley Clark, former

commander of NATO forces in Europe,

contends that ‘‘despite all the talk of

‘loose nukes,’ Saddam does not have

any,’’ or the highly enriched uranium

or plutonium to enable him to construct them.

Air Force General Richard B. Myers,

chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,

recently concurred, admitting that the

consensus is that Saddam Hussein

‘‘does not have a nuclear weapon, but he wants one.’’

One of the goals of the President is to

force a regime change in Iraq. Who are

we to dictate to another country that

their leadership must be changed?

What would be our reaction if another

country demanded or threatened to remove

President Bush? All of us, Republicans

and Democrats alike and each

and every American, would be infuriated

by such an inference and rise up

against them. Changes in regimes must

come from within.

The result of voting for this resolution

will be to give the President a

blank check with broad authority to

use our Armed Forces to unilaterally

attack Iraq. He merely has to tell us

why he believes that continued diplomatic

efforts will fail and does not

have to give that information to Congress

until 48 hours after he has begun the war.

The more meaningful provision

would be to provide for a two-step process

where after all diplomatic efforts

have failed, the President would come

back to Congress and make the case

that military force is now necessary.

Our colleague, the gentleman from

South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT), has that

provision in his alternative and it deserves

our careful consideration. Let us

make no mistake about it, Hussein is a

brutal dictator who has flagrantly defied

the will of the world community.

But the case has simply not been made

either by this resolution or by the administration

that there is a clear and

present danger to the security of the

United States which would warrant

this Nation embarking on its first

unprovoked preemptive attack in our 226-year history.

The President must continue to work

together with our allies in the U.N. Security

Council to ensure that the Iraqi

regime is disarmed. Mr. Speaker, war

should always be the last resort and

not the first. For all these reasons, I

cannot support this resolution and

must vote ‘‘no.’’