Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for

yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in an effort to

unite this body behind the Spratt resolution.

I oppose House Joint Resolution

114 because this resolution sets a dangerous

new precedent in foreign policy,

a policy of preemptive first strikes and

go-it-alone unilateralism. This is a radical

departure from long-standing

United States policy of deterrence, diplomacy,

containment and collective

security. We are drifting away from the

successful coalition-building of former-

President George Bush in Desert Storm

and our current President’s administration’s

coalition that is currently

prosecuting the war on terror in Afghanistan.

We are united behind the President

in his continued prosecution of this

war on terror, a mission we need to relentlessly

pursue and not be deterred

from. We are united behind the President

in our efforts before the United

Nations, and strongly support a tough,

new, robust, unfettered weapons inspection

process that is currently being

negotiated by Colin Powell. We are in

unanimous agreement about the brutal

dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, the

atrocities he has perpetuated against

other nations and his own people, and

the need to remove him. We stand

united behind our men and women of

our armed services no matter the outcome

of the vote.

Where we differ is not whether, but

how, we address this threat. As former

Secretary of State Jim Baker points

out it is not whether to use military

force to achieve this, but how we go

about it. While we address the nearterm

danger presented by Saddam Hussein,

we must be equally mindful of the

dangerous long-term consequences of

first-strike, go-it-alone policy. To that

extent, there is a notable divide in past

and current Bush administrations and

within this Congress and amongst people

across this Nation.

This divide stems from those advocating

the abandonment of long-standing

policy in favor of going it alone.

This is not about the use of force. I

voted for the use of force in Kosovo and

in Afghanistan. It is about the preemptive

and unilateral use of force. The

United States is the undisputed preeminent

military, social and economic

leader in the world; but there are many

issues we simply cannot solve alone.

Issues like the environment, disease

and global economic stability are but a

few examples and only further underscore

the problematic concerns of our

ongoing debate about going alone.

There is no question that we have the

military might or that we will prevail

against Iraq or any nation. But what

lingers is whether we have the restraint

as the world’s lone superpower

to lead by the rule of law and use our

terrible swift swords only as a last resort.

The goal of the administration is to

isolate Saddam Hussein and bring

about his demise. In the process we

must make sure that it is not the

United States that is isolated and

alone. For even with all our military

might and resources, we cannot solve

all the global problems by ourselves.

The internationalist wing of the Republican

Party best expressed the perils

of preemption, in going it alone in

Brent Scowcroft, the former National

Security Advisor to both President

Ford and former President Bush, who

has argued that attacking Iraq will

take away from the effort against the

war on terror and do long-term damage

to the stability needed in the Middle

East.

Retired generals like Norman

Schwarzkopf and Secretary of State

Eagleburger, hardly appeasers, come

down on the side of caution and coalition

building. General Zinni, retired

Commander in Chief of U.S. Central

Command, talks about the need to be

intensely involved in the peace process

between Israel and Palestine. In staying

focused on Osama bin Laden and al

Qaeda, he wonders aloud about those in

the administration who have never

served in the military who seem so

anxious to place our troops in harm’s

way; and those in the administration

who characterize heroes like General

Wesley Clark, former Commander in

Chief of the U.S. European Command,

who urged the two-step approach of the

Spratt resolution and calls them

dreamers.

This is a time that the President,

Congress, and the people need to be

united. It is why we have introduced

the Spratt resolution. This resolution

strengthens the President’s hand and

demonstrates national resolve. It preserves

the constitutional authority

that resides with Congress and does not

abrogate our role to the executive

branch.

The people in my district

feel strongly

about this and have spoken out in

town hall meetings. They are deeply

opposed to a go-it-alone policy; and

while understanding the potential

threat posed by Saddam, they want us

to pursue the course the President outlined

before the United Nations.

Make no mistake, there is broad support

for the President and implicit understanding

of the awesome responsibility

he bears as Commander in Chief.

There is also an equal expectation that

elected representatives will ask the

tough questions and will measure the

consequences and collateral damage of

our actions. Our system is one of

checks and balances; and clearly from

my perspective, the use of force preemptively

and unilaterally needs to be

held in check, debated, discussed and

not rubber stamped in a climate of fear

and crisis.

The people’s House must question the

unintended consequences of this new

policy. What are those consequences?

What will be the collateral damage associated

with preemptive unilateral attacks?

I say it can be said no better than our

Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Robert

Jordan, when I asked him if we were

facing a gathering storm in the Middle

East. He replied, no, Congressman, you

are from New England. Surely you

have read the book or seen the movie.

This is not a gathering storm. This has

all the makings of the perfect storm.

Our relationship with our allies in

the Middle East in the prosecution of

the war on terrorist is fragile. There is

great unrest in the region from economic

instability to religious fanatics

spewing hate towards the United

States. A preemptive unilateral attack

on Saddam Hussein could accomplish

what Osama bin Laden failed to do, and

that is unite the Islamic world in a

jihad against the United States. Going

it alone may well bring down a tin pan

dictator, but will the consequences of

that be the recruitment of tens of

thousands of new terrorists bound for

our shores?

Thomas Friedman, noted New York

Times columnist, spoke at a recent

book tour about the long-term consequences

of our doctrine, and I was

struck by the reaction of a man who

simply reached into his wallet and

showed a picture to Friedman of his

children.

Nothing else need be said. Support

the Spratt amendment.