Mr. Speaker, I would like to, first of all, commend both sides

on this very important issue and the

manner in which this discussion has

moved forward for close to 12 hours.

From about 1 p.m. to 1 a.m. on yesterday

we had all views expressed, and

that is really what makes this a great

House, and that is what makes this a

great country. That is what makes me

proud and privileged to be a part of this institution.

I would like to certainly commend

the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE)

who has conducted himself with tremendous

leadership, a true gentleman

from Illinois who has shown his leadership

in so many capacities. During the

14 years I have been in Congress, this is

certainly one of the most important

issues that I have been involved in, and

it will be a very important vote.

I would also like to commend the

gentleman from California (Mr.

CUNNINGHAM), because all of us feel

proud of what he has done to make our

Nation a stronger place, and it is great

to have heroes in our body.

Also, let me commend again the gentleman

from California (Mr. LANTOS)

who continues his eloquence, his vision.

He is one of the most expressive

persons that I know in the House, and,

for that, this place is a better place.

Let me say that I would like to briefly

share with my colleagues a front

page article in today’s Washington

Post which states that unprovoked by

a U.S. military campaign, Saddam Hussein

is ‘‘unlikely to initiate a chemical

or biological attack against the United

States.’’ This was contained in a report

provided by intelligence agencies to

senators last week. If a U.S.-led attack

could not be stopped, Saddam might

launch a chemical/biological counterattack,

the analysts forewarned.

The report said that Saddam might

decide that the extreme step of assisting

Islamic terrorism in conducting a

war, in conducting a weapons of mass

destruction attack against the United

States would be his last chance to

exact vengeance by taking a large

number of victims with him.

This appears to suggest that an attack

on Iraq could trigger the very

thing that our President has said that

he is trying to prevent, the use of

chemical or biological weapons by Hussein.

In view of this report, the policy of a

preemptive strike is troublesome.

Haste in attacking Iraq would place

untold numbers of people in harm’s way.

In Ecclesiastes it says that there is a

season for all things; there is a time to

laugh and a time to cry, a time to plan

and a time to pluck up that which has

been planted, a time of peace and a

time of war. The question before us is

whether this is a time for peace or a

time for war. The question is whether

we can continue to use diplomacy,

whether we have exhausted all means

to try to have peace, whether we have

maximized the use of the United Nations

and other international agencies.

Let us give peace a chance. Let us

try to get our inspectors in, identify

weapons of mass destruction, have

them destroyed and then move forward.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the

gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms.

DELAURO) a very key leader in our

Democratic Caucus, a person who has

served her people in Connecticut so

well, a member of the Committee on

Appropriations.

Mr. Speaker, I yield myself

the remaining time.

Let me conclude by thanking the majority

for the kindness and the

thoughtfulness that they have given

us. The gentleman from Illinois (Mr.

HYDE) should be commended, as I mentioned

earlier, a gentleman always, but

to allow everyone to have a word to say.

The past 2 days with over 24 hours of

debate has been an historic time in this

House. A debate has endured that will

be noted and will be long-remembered

what was said here. We have debated

fundamental changes in the manner in

which this country operates, first

strike preemptive. Definitely a new

course of action for this Nation.

Of course, first strikes are nothing

new. In the medieval times there were

many, France into Germany, Spain

into Italy. In 1918, Germany entered

France. December 7, Japan attacked

the United States. So there has been

preemptive strikes but never the greatest

Nation in the world taking a decision

to make first strikes preemptive,

and so this is a new day for this great Nation.

The Framers of the Constitution, the

Jeffersons and the Adams and Washingtons

and Hamiltons, said let us be careful

about power. We do not want a king

or emperor or dictator, and, therefore,

let us give the power of war to the Congress.

Here we are abdicating that responsibility

and giving the right to declare

war to one person, to say it is his decision

to do what he wants and he has 48

hours to tell us later what he has done.

Another principle that we have changed.

We jeopardize a coalition because I

believe right now our number one fight

is the battle against terror. The al

Qaeda cells that are in this country

and in 50 other countries and a false

feeling of security will emerge when we

attack Iraq if that is done, and Americans

will, therefore, believe that there

is a sense of security now and al Qaeda

is gone. There is definitely a difference

between the al Qaeda cells and the government

of Iraq, and so we are leading

people down a wrong path to believe

that a defeat of Iraq, therefore, eliminates the war on terror.

We have heard recently that there is

a connection between al Qaeda and the

government of Iraq. This only was revealed

in the last week or so. Many

wonder where this information is coming

from and whether, in fact, it is indeed

true. And, once again, we should

not lull our people into a false feeling

of security when we look over there

and say Iraq is done, we are safe again,

when the war on terror will still be here.

So we talk about a new concept, regime

change, Saddam Hussein should

go. This is a tall order. How do we do

it? How long do we stay? How dangerous

will it be? How costly will it be?

How are we going to rehabilitate Afghanistan?

We have not drilled the

pumps to reach the low water tables as

we promised. We have not started construction

of schools as we said. We

have not built the hospitals as we

promised, but now we will go into Iraq

and for how much? What will the cost

be? $100 billion? $200 billion? No one really knows.

As the DOW has dropped from close

to 11,000 down to close to 7,000, almost

a 40 percent drop, how can we fund

this? We spend $1 billion a day today

on a $350 billion defense budget, with

another couple of hundred billion dollars

on the side. How can we do it with

the unmet needs of PELL grants and

student loans, the needs for prescription

drug benefits for seniors and section

8 housing, vouchers funding for elementary

and secondary schools in the

leave no child behind legislation? How

do we deal with that?

So as we move to vote we should engage

the U.N., we should encourage

them and support the inspectors to find

and destroy those biological and chemical

weapons of mass destruction. We

should leave no stone unturned. We

should go unfettered. We should demand

that, and I believe then we can

have the avoidance of war. We should

attempt to avoid war at any cost. I do

not believe that the United States is

eliminating the danger of the al Qaeda

cells in this country by us having a war and attack on Iraq.

I would like to say that we are a

mighty powerful country. Let us use

our power and might. We love this

country. In school I used to recite the

poem, This is my country, land of my

birth; this is my country, the grandest

on earth; and I pledge thee my allegiance,

America the bold, because this

is my country to have and to hold.

Let us not misuse the power that we

have, but let us be sure that Saddam

Hussein is contained, that this world is

free of tyrants like that. Let us support

the inspectors going in.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests

for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.