Mr. Speaker, just a few short weeks ago, I believed the President’s

focus on unilateral U.S. action raised

more questions than it answered. Chief among

my concerns were issues such as international

support, the existence of a clear and present

danger to the United States, conditions for

maximizing success and minimizing casualties,

and the effect of unilateral action of Middle

East stability.

I was pleased to see the President listen to

these concerns, work closely with the Congress,

and produce the bipartisan resolution

currently under debate in the House. One

thing is clear, the strength of our Republic, our

commitment to debate, democracy and freedom

is as strong today as in any time in our Nation’s history.

Like most Americans, I have wrestled with

the question of how to neutralize the threat of

Saddam Hussein. During my travels in Michigan,

thousands of constituents have shared

their concerns about a unilateral and full-scale

American invasion of Iraq. In fact, I continue to

share those very concerns.

This week, I will cast the toughest vote of

my time in public service—a vote that may

commit American men and women to a war

against Iraq and its brutal dictator. This is a

war in which lives surely will be lost. The first

time I faced such a tough decision was in giving

the President authority to send troops into

Afghanistan to hunt down the terrorist who attacked

our Nation on September 11, 2001.

As we all are learning, the face of war is

changing. Formal declarations of war by our

enemies are going the way of trench warfare

and cavalry charges—relics of a different era.

The resolution currently before Congress reflects

that changing reality.

Today’s enemies do not distinguish between

civilian and military targets. Today’s enemies

are just as likely to use chemical and biological

weapons as bullets and bombs. These are

the very real threats posed by modern enemies

that do not allow us to wait for an attack

of catastrophic proportions.

Going to war, however, requires more than

recognizing the threat. It is the immediacy of

these threats that pose a clear and present

danger to U.S. citizens. This was underscored

in my recent briefings at the White House with

National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice,

CIA Director George Tenet, and other military

intelligence and foreign policy experts. Their

information, some of it classified, reinforced

the very real threat Saddam poses with nuclear,

biological and chemical weapons, and

his willingness to use them. Even against the United States.

A great deal of soul searching has gone into

the process that began with talk about the

U.S. attacking Iraq and has now come to an

agreement on four very important points:

(1) Multilateral Action. Last month, after returning

from a Middle East trip, it was absolutely

clear that Saddam’s neighbors who

know him best, fear him deeply and would

shed few tears if he were removed from

power. However, the region’s leaders, especially

Saudi Arabia, were concerned about the

fragile future of the Middle East. They want

Saddam removed, but through a strong alliance,

not one-on-one, America versus Saddam.

This bipartisan congressional resolution

authorizes President Bush to ‘‘obtain prompt

and decisive action’’ by the United Nations Security

Council to ensure that Iraq abandons its

strategy of ‘‘delay, evasion and noncompliance’’

with all relevant international resolutions.

(2) Force As Last Resort. The Bush administration

and our allies must exhaust all diplomatic

efforts before resorting to armed force in

Iraq. The resolution provides that President

Bush must certify to Congress, before any

military strike, if feasible, or within 48 hours of

a U.S. attack, that diplomatic and other peaceful

means alone are inadequate to protect

Americans from Saddam’s weapons of mass

destruction. If America must go to war against

a regime that threatens our lives, it will not

happen until all other possible solutions have

been exhausted.

(3) Congressional Oversight. In addition to

the certification to Congress before a military

strike, this resolution requires President Bush

to report to Congress every 60 days on ‘‘matters

relevant’’ to the confrontation with Iraq.

(4) Retaining American Sovereignty. While

the resolution authorizes the United States to

work through a U.N. Security Council resolution,

no American sovereignty is forfeited. If all

efforts fail and the national security of the

United States is under direct threat by Iraq,

the resolution authorizes the President to use

the Armed Forces of the United States as he

determines ‘‘necessary and proper’’ in order to

defend America. God Bless America!