Mr. Speaker, as the

previous colleague just said, the decision

of whether or not to send our

young men and women to danger and

to possibly kill or harm others is certainly

the most solemn and serious decision

the Members of Congress will

have to make.

There was no ambiguity between

Congress and the President with respect

to our response to the events of

September 11, 2001, but now the issue is

how to deal with a nation under control

of an undeniably dangerous and

treacherous individual, Saddam Hussein.

The administration seeks to go it

alone, seeks a resolution that would

allow the President alone to decide and

determine whether or not it is necessary

to attack Iraq. It also seeks authorization

to act for reasons beyond

Iraq’s failure to disarm after inspections.

I believe there is a better way, a

way recommended by other past commanders

and present, names like Admiral

Clark, Zinni and others. We should

work within the international framework

to create a consensus to impose

inspections and disarmament and authorize

the United States to participate

in that U.N. Security Council effort

to enforce those inspections and disarmament.

That resolution should also say that

if efforts are honestly and diligently

pursued and they prove unsuccessful,

then the administration should return

to Congress for the determination of

what appropriate action the United

States, and other countries choosing to

act with it, should then take.

If Iraq were attacking the United

States now, Congress would undoubtedly

act with the same speed it did on

September 14, 2001. If Iraq were doing

that, we would act, but it is not attacking

the United States at this point in time.

The administration presents the case

that, as the world’s remaining superpower,

it is justified in using its global

military superiority to preempt perceived

threats before they occur. We

all know that America always knows

that it can act to prevent disaster, but

elevation of that unilateral preemptive

policy to a new norm would mean that

any militarily stronger nation may

perceive a not-yet-established imminent

threat and act preemptively. That

would conjure up thoughts of India and

Pakistan, Russia and Chechnya, and

China and Taiwan.

This would turn decades of international

law and norms on their head,

years in which the United States was a

leader in establishing international entities

and laws, just so that nations

would not act presumptuously and attack

others, and instead we set up an

international system within which differences

could be resolved without preemptive

attacks being the first resort.

The administration says that Hussein

is bad, and no one disagrees, nor

do we disagree with the notion that the

U.N. resolutions must be enforced by

the U.N. Security Council action. The

administration, though, asserts that

the United States must act peremptorily

and right now because Iraq is an

imminent threat, but the truth be told,

it has not met the burden of proof with

respect for that claim.

Yes, Iraq has biological and chemical

weapons and has had them for some

time. Yes, they may have been trying

unsuccessfully to get nuclear capabilities,

but we have stopped them from

doing that. In fact, the inspections

were successful in inhibiting those attempts,

and Iraq does not have nuclear

capability nor does it have the means

to deliver weapons of mass destruction

against the United States.

We have kept those materials from

Iraq and from terrorists. And the irony

is that, while the administration cavalierly

talks about a $100 to $200 billion

cost of attack and rebuilding Iraq, it

fails to come to this body and push for

legislation that would be far less costly

under the Nunn-Lugar cooperative

threat reduction to safeguard weapons

of mass destruction materials from

getting into the hands of terrorists or

Iraq or anyone else; and that simply is

the path we should take.

There is currently insufficient evidence

of Iraq’s complicity with terrorists,

and today we learned through declassified

CIA reports that Iraq is not

likely to use biological/chemical weapons

against the United States unless

we send people in and provoke it in

that region, and a number of reports so indicate.

Given the absence of a direct threat

to the United States and the absence of

an imminent threat to the United

States, we should proceed, but first,

the United States, as a founder and a

leader of the Security Council, should

lead the international council to enforce

inspection and disarmament, and

we should seek further to get rid of

weapons of mass destruction throughout

that Middle East region and not

stop with just Iraq. We should also use

our diplomatic efforts to do that for

every country, particularly in that region.

We should also use the time that we

would have by going the international

route to disclose fully to the United

States the cost of action, if it is necessary,

in people and in treasuries. As

the senior Senator from Massachusetts

said, what casualties would there be if

we fight in the desert or if we fight

door to door in the city or biological/

chemical weapons are used on our

troops? What will happen with Iraqi civilian

victims and what are our intentions

to minimize those victims’ problems?

What about the sacrifice in

terms of our economy? What will people

be asked to forego in terms of education

and health care and prescription

drugs and infrastructure and getting

people back to work? What about our

plans for reoccupying and restabilizing Iraq?

Mr. Speaker, as I close, if we go it

alone, how will we deal with maintaining

the cooperation of other nations,

especially Arab and Muslim countries,

and our number one threat of terrorism,

should we lose our leadership?

Countries look to us for that.