Mr. Speaker, I yield

myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S.J.

Res. 54. All of us in this Chamber recognize

that we have a very serious

problem with Iraq. It will likely become

more serious in the months to

come. Iraq is violating U.N. Security

Council resolutions, it is engaging in

unacceptable behavior, and it is certainly

appropriate that Congress go on

the record to express its strong objection

to Iraq’s conduct.

The administration, as I understand

it, welcomes the support of Congress

for actions that the President may

have to take to get Iraq to comply with

its international obligations. The administration,

however, is concerned

about the foreign policy implications

of the President signing a joint resolution

stating that Iraq is in material

breach of its international obligations.

Taking such a unilateral position

strains U.S. relations with other U.N.

Security Council members and jeopardizes

a solid U.N. Security Council front

against Iraq.

I do have three concerns with the resolve

clause. First, I share the administration’s

concern over the statement

that the government of Iraq is in material

and unacceptable breach of its

international obligations.

My problem with this formulation is

that, as I understand it, most Security

Council members take the position

that only the Council can make a finding

of material breach of Security

Council resolutions. This is not a determination

that the United States

alone can or should make. There are

implications to making such a statement.

For one thing, our U.N. Security

Council colleagues will interpret this

resolution as the United States getting

ahead of the rest of the Council. If we

make a unilateral determination of

material breach, we make it more difficult

to win international support for

the use of force against Iraq.

For another, a finding of material

breach is a clear signal that the Security

Council is prepared to support the

use of force to bring Iraq into compliance

with Security Council resolutions.

In January 1993, President Bush carried

out a series of successful military

strikes against Iraq shortly after the

U.N. Security Council formally found

Iraq in material breach.

I think our message would be stronger

if we used our own words, such as

‘‘grave violations,’’ and not use the

words ‘‘material breach,’’ words that

signal in the U.N. support for immediate

military action.

Second, and building on my concerns

with the first part of the resolve

clause, the resolution broadly urges

the President of the United States to

take appropriate action.

My problem with this part of the resolve

clause is the Congress identifies a

serious problem, expresses its displeasure

and then punts.

I appreciate the work of the gentleman

from California (Mr. CAMPBELL)

to find compromise language here. He,

like I, was uncomfortable with the

original language urging the President

to act accordingly. He narrowed and, I

think, somewhat improved the resolve

clause. But it still falls short of Congress

fulfilling its legitimate and important

role in foreign policy because

it provides no meaningful guidance to

the executive.

The resolution would have been much

improved if we called on the President

to consult with Congress prior to using

force rather than handing him a blank

check and taking ourselves essentially

out of the picture in case of future action

in the Gulf.

Third, the process for considering

this joint resolution does not measure

up to the importance of the matter at

hand. This resolution goes to the heart

of the most important problem that

government must address, the commitment

of military forces abroad. Yet, we

are debating it under a suspension of

the rules, which we generally avoid

when considering bills that merit serious

and extensive debate.

No one here would dispute that Iraq

has violated its international obligations.

The recitation of Iraq’s misconduct

in this resolution is an important

contribution. It is appropriate and

worthwhile to spell out the record of

Iraqi failure to comply with U.N. resolutions.

This resolution has merit in its expression

of political support for Presidential

action. The President should

get support here for taking prudent

and necessary action to protect U.S.

interests in the Gulf. But this detailed

condemnation of Iraq is followed by a

policy statement that is simply astonishing

in its vagueness.

This resolution is an absolutely classic

example of how Congress deals with

foreign policy. We complain, we point

out the problem, we offer no solution,

and we shift the entire burden to the

President of the United States.

Congress is a coequal branch of government.

We have an equal voice under

the Constitution to set the direction of

American foreign policy. But in this

resolution we do not measure up to our

constitutional responsibilities. In effect,

we say, ‘‘Mr. President, this is a

very big problem, you go figure it out.’’

This resolution endorses the use of

force, but it states no objective for the

use of force. We create trouble for ourselves

when we are imprecise about

policy and about the use of force and

when we fail to articulate what we believe

policy should be based on specific

facts and specific objectives.

It would be better, I think, for the

Congress to call on the President here

to consult with Congress prior to using

force. We would know at that time, and

we do not know now, what circumstances

require use of U.S. military

forces in the Gulf. We would fulfill

our role as a coequal branch of government

if we leave authorization for such

time. I understand this is not an authorization

bill.

I am uncomfortable voting for this

resolution, principally because I think

it does not measure up to the way a responsible

Congress should engage in

foreign policy making. I am even less

comfortable, however, voting against

it.

I do not want to go on record against

the use of force, first, because I think

we are going to come up to this point

again with Iraq in the months ahead;

second, because of the egregious violations

of the U.N. Security Council resolutions

by Iraq and its pattern of

avoidance and duplicity; and, third, because

a vote against the resolution

suggests that we are not prepared to

use force against Iraq, and I think that

would be unwise. Therefore, I will support

the resolution with the reservations

I have suggested.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests

for time, and I yield back the

balance of my time.