Mr. Speaker, in the conduct

of foreign affairs, every President

deserves the benefit of the doubt.

I am standing here today in an empty

Chamber because these special orders

are simply the time in the House’s

schedule when after legislative business

is concluded Members can gather

or take the time to get something off

their chest, and so I am here today to

get something off my chest about the

coming war with Iraq.

As I said, in the conduct of foreign

affairs, I think every President deserves

the benefit of the doubt, and on

a number of occasions, I have worked

with Presidents, regardless of party, on

foreign policy issues. Sometimes I have

honestly differed.

Iraq, in my view, is a close call.

There is no doubt that Saddam Hussein

is a pathological thug. We have lived

with and contained other sociopaths

before. Example, Joseph Stalin, whose

50-year anniversary of his death we

just celebrated yesterday. It is hard to

believe he has been gone 50 years, but

we did not attack the Soviet Union,

even though Stalin was probably one of

the two greatest sociopaths of all time,

the other being Hitler.

We have also seen groups like the

Khmer Rouge systematically butcher

their own people, and certainly, the administration

has not, in any way, demonstrated

or tried to demonstrate that

Saddam had anything to do with the

attack of September 11.

But it may very well be that we need

to remove him at some point, and that

point may be soon. My purpose today is

not to talk about that. My purpose is

to talk about what condition America

will be in both at home and abroad if

we take on that task, because if we do

it, we have an obligation to go after

Saddam in a way that does not weaken

our ability to lead the world in dealing

with future challenges that will certainly

confront us.

My concern is that this administration

has demonstrated such shortsighted

arrogance that they have made

it more difficult for the United States

to retain its leadership ability and to

see that the U.S. has the support it

needs in this coming endeavor.

Now, it is obvious that President

Bush and Mr. Rumsfeld and Mr.

Wolfowitz and a number of others in

the administration have intended to

attack Saddam since the moment they

took office, but if that is so, you would

think that the administration would

have done anything that they could do

in order to build allies for the coming

effort, both at home and abroad. Instead,

the administration has dealt

with Congress and with the international

community in a my way or

else approach.

At home, after September 11, the

Congress in total bipartisanship fashioned

an initial $40 billion package to

deal with the immediate response

needs of the administration, but then

when Members of the House and Senate

attempted to talk to the administration

about the need to do more to build

up our homeland security efforts in our

ports, on our borders, in our local communities.

We were told, in essence, if

you allocate or if you appropriate one

dime more than I have asked for, I will

veto it.

Again, in June, when Congress tried

again to beef up our ability to protect

communities and ports and other vulnerable

areas from terrorist attack,

the President vetoed more than a billion-

and-a-half dollars in homeland security

money that this House and the

other body voted to provide by 90 percent

margins of both political parties

in both Chambers.

Now, that action by the White House,

in vetoing those funds, raised doubts in

Congress. Were we really willing to do

everything necessary to baton down

the hatches at home, to guard against

retaliatory action if we are going to

take on Saddam? The answer from the

White House, given by its action on the

veto of home security funds, was only

partly.

Internationally, the signals were just

as confusing. Now, I know the French

do not need many excuses to go their

own way in foreign affairs. They have

demonstrated that from the time of

Charles de Gaulle.

But look at the administration’s conduct

the last 2 years on four fronts.

First, in the past 2 years, the administration

has unilaterally announced its

intention to, or its desire to blow up

three international treaties: the nuclear

test ban treaty, the antiballistic

missile treaty, and the global warming

treaty. Then after those actions, the

administration professes surprise when

the French and the Germans feel free

to engage in a little unilateralism of

their own. By example, it seems to me

that, by example, the administration

made it easy for France and Germany

and others to go their own way because

that is what we announced our free

right and intention to do on those

other treaties.

Second, the administration added to

the unraveling of NATO and the weakening

of the Security Council resolve

by announcing twin doctrines of American

unilateralism and preemption.

Now, obviously, the United States and

any other sovereign nation has the

right to undertake a unilateral or preemptive

act to defend its own people.

Obviously. But to announce it and to

trumpet it to the world as a new intellectual

doctrine scared the bejabbers

out of many countries and gave other

countries an excuse to do the same

thing.

Mr. Speaker, whatever happened to

Teddy Roosevelt’s advice, ‘‘Speak softly

and carry a big stick’’? And it did

not help that the administration’s

chest-beating on preemption came at

the same time that our own officials

were worried pea green about a preemptive

military action that might be

taken by either India or Pakistan during

their escalated confrontation.

Third. The administration even let it

be known that nuclear weapons were a

possibility in Iraq under certain circumstances.

That also added to the

world’s jitters. The net result of the

administration’s overblown rhetoric resulted

in pro-American responses in

public opinion polls in Europe declining

by almost 20 percent. And all of

that made it easier for the French and

the German governments to question

the Bush administration and its policy

on Iraq. I think it would have been

much harder for them to do so if the

administration had not spent the last 2

years telling the rest of the world we

we’re going to do everything our way or

suffer the consequences.

And even if we, in the end, obtain the

acquiescence of countries like Germany

and France to proceed on Iraq,

our past rhetoric will make it more difficult

for the U.S. to have their support

in the years ahead when we will be

neck deep in a post-war Iraqi-American

regency of dubious wisdom. So, in my

view, in short, the administration, by

its rhetoric, has written a textbook on

how not to rally support on a controversial

question.

Fourth. As a result of the

unilateralist rhetoric, the administration

has also raised the cost of this endeavor

to U.S. taxpayers. President

Bush’s father was able to work the

world by telephone, sort of in a dialingfor-

dollars operation, in which he was

able to convince other countries to pay

their share for the cost of attacking

Iraq in 1991. This President has brought

a new wrinkle to diplomacy. He has offered

to pay other countries for their

share of the cost associated with this

war. That really is an interesting

wrinkle. Meanwhile, the administration

has steadily hidden the potential

range of costs and the duration of our

occupation of Iraq from the American

people.

Now, I have no doubt that we are

going to war; and when we do, I, like

every other Member of this body, will

rally around the troops in the field, because

they are doing their duty under

the Commander in Chief and we have

no choice and no desire to do anything

but to support them. I know my daughter-

in-law’s brother is one of those

patchy helicopter pilots who will be

stuck with heavy duty over there. But,

please, Mr. Speaker, spare us the rhetoric

about how this operation is going

to transform Iraq into a beacon of democracy.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard such overblown

rhetoric about how this action

will unleash the forces of sweetness

and democracy in Iraq, but I fully expect

that the next thing we are going

to hear is that we ought to replace New

Hampshire with Iraq on the Presidential

primary cycle.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the die

is cast, and I am not going to continue

to chew the same old argument. This

House has already voted. But before

this operation moves ahead, I want to

express my dismay at the shortsighted

and thoughtless manner in which the

administration, through its careless

and arrogant unilateralist rhetoric, has

mishandled relations with the same

NATO allies that we will need in the

Security Council. And I would ask

some of the same questions I asked on

this floor before we went to war

against Iraq in 1991. And I would say

parenthetically that I was privileged to

chair that debate for a considerable period

of the time in which it occurred

back then. But I want to ask some of

the same questions I asked then.

Now, the administration clearly expects

this war to go swiftly, and they

expect it to go well. And they are probably

right. I think they are, and I hope

that they are. But my concern is what

about afterwards. Do we really believe

that we will not create thousands of

new recruits for al Qaeda and other terrorist

organizations in the Arab world?

Do we really intend to continue the

policy of benign neglect and drift that

has characterized our policy toward

the moribund peace process between

the Israelis and the Palestinians? How

long will U.S. military presence be in

the Middle East after the war is over,

and how do we intend to handle that

presence that we do not become a

hated occupying power in a radicalized

region of the world?

And I would ask this: While we are

focusing on Iraq, is the administration,

by default, going to acquiesce in North

Korea’s becoming a permanent member

of the nuclear club? It appears from

what we see in the papers that that is

very likely on the part of the administration.

And then I would ask, bringing the

issue closer to home, what are we going

to do to protect our own economy from

the cost of both this war and its 10-year

aftermath? So far the administration’s

answer is we are going to go to war and

so we need to cut your taxes.

Can you imagine President Teddy

Roosevelt or President Woodrow Wilson

or FDR or Harry Truman saying we

are going to go to war and your country

needs you to accept a tax cut?

Should we really be saying, we are

going to go to war and so you should

have a tax cut and your kids should

pay the bill, not just for the war but

for the 10 years afterwards? We are already

being asked to borrow money to

pay for this war, and the scuttlebutt is

that the minute the war begins we are

going to get a bill from the administration,

a request for about $100 billion.

And Lord knows what it is going to

cost in the next 10 years.

And my simple and last question

would be: Should we, at the same time

that we are borrowing money to pay

for this war, should we also be borrowing

money to take millionaires off

the tax role, as the White House tax

and budget request in fact is asking us

to do? I would hope that the political

leadership of this country would be

more mature than that and more fair

than that. I cannot believe that we are

going to put this war on the cuff; that

we are then going to proceed with tax

action that will take another more

than $1 trillion out of the Federal

Treasury in the next few years and

then go to the American people with a

straight face and say we have strengthened

the economy for the long term.

I think Americans expect to do their

duty in a time of crisis, and I think

Americans do not expect that while we

are having several hundred thousand

troops abroad prepare to make the ultimate

sacrifice in defense of what the

President has concluded is in our national

interest, I do not believe that at

a time when those soldiers are doing

that, that the best we can do back

home is to say to everyone on the

home front, folks, you are going to

have to sacrifice by taking a tax cut,

even though it is going to load billions

and billions of dollars of debt on future

taxpayers, including the kids that we

say this war is being fought to help

protect.

So, Mr. Speaker, this country is

going to war. It is obvious. But I would

hope that the next time that we do so

we have not ahead of time, as the administration

has done, that we have

not ahead of time looked for ways to

antagonize the very allies that we are

going to need in this case, like we need

support in the Security Council today

if we are to have unity in the world

when we take on Saddam. I hope we

learn from this experience that if you

intend to ask the support of the world

in a military endeavor of this nature

that you do not spend the first 2 years

saying, by the way, everything we are

going to do in the world, we are going

to do it our way or no way. I do not

think that is an intelligent or a

thoughtful way to run foreign policy.

And I certainly do not think that adding

over $1 trillion to our budget deficit

and our national debt over the next

few years is a way to run the economy

at a time when we are contemplating

going to war.