

APPOINTMENT AS MEMBERS TO
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY WORK-
FORCE COMMISSION

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to Section 334(b)(1) of Public Law 105-220 and Section 5 of House Resolution 594, 105th Congress, the Speaker on Friday, November 13, 1998, appointed the following members on the part of the House to the Twenty-First Century Work-force Commission:

Mr. Thomas J. Murrin, Pennsylvania;
Mr. Kenneth Saxe, Pennsylvania;
Mr. Frank Riggs, California; and
Mr. Frank Roberts, California.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE
CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE
ON TRANSPORTATION AND IN-
FRRASTRUCTURE

The Speaker laid before the House the following communication from the chairman of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure; which was read and referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 13, 1998.

Hon. NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
The Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Enclosed please find copies of resolutions approved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on October 9, 1998, in accordance with 40 U.S.C. § 606.

With warm regards, I remain
Sincerely,

BUD SHUSTER,
Chairman.

EXPRESSING UNEQUIVOCAL SUP-
PORT FOR MEN AND WOMEN OF
OUR ARMED FORCES CUR-
RENTLY CARRYING OUT MIS-
SIONS IN AND AROUND PERSIAN
GULF REGION

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, I offer a resolution (H. Res. 612) expressing unequivocal support for the men and women of our Armed Forces who are currently carrying out missions in and around the Persian Gulf region, and ask unanimous consent for its immediate consideration in the House, with the previous question ordered to its adoption without intervening motion or demand for division of the question except 2 hours of debate, equally divided and controlled by the chairman and the ranking minority member of the Committee on National Security or their designees.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 612

Whereas the President of the United States has ordered military action against Iraq in response to its refusal to comply with international obligations under United Nations Security Council resolutions;

Whereas up to 24,000 men and women of the United States Armed Forces are presently involved in operations in and around the Persian Gulf region with the active participation of British Armed Forces and the support of allies in the region;

Whereas additional United States Armed Forces are being deployed to the region;

Whereas Congress and the American people have the greatest pride in the men and women of the United States Armed Forces and strongly support them in their efforts. Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives That:

(a) the Congress unequivocally supports the men and women of our Armed Forces who are carrying out their missions with professionalism, dedication, patriotism, and courage;

(b) the Congress reaffirms that it should be the policy of the United States to support efforts to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq and to promote the emergence of a democratic government to replace that regime.

The SPEAKER. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from South Carolina?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of today, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPENCE) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) each will control 1 hour.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPENCE).

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to inquire, is either gentleman opposed to the resolution?

The SPEAKER. The unanimous consent request did not allocate time on the basis of opposition.

The gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPENCE) is recognized.

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGRICH), the Speaker.

Mr. GINGRICH. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, the gentleman from South Carolina, for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise because I think this resolution offers us a very important opportunity to talk with ourselves and to talk with the world.

The United States represents two enormous burdens that we have to live out: first, that we are the center of freedom, and that we are engaged in the process of self-government; and second, that we must carry the burden of leading the world, and that is an operational day-to-day which never suspends: It does not suspend for elections, it does not suspend for Christmas, it does not suspend under any circumstance. We have an obligation to prove to ourselves and to the world that we can simultaneously govern ourselves in freedom under the rule of law, and provide leadership wherever it is needed around the world.

Let me expand on that for just a moment, because it is a topic I have thought a great deal about since the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The United States has to lead. There is no alternative. There is no other country capable of organizing against an Iraqi dictator who wants to get weapons of mass destruction. There is no other country capable of sustaining freedom against a North Korean dictatorship actively seeking to get nuclear

weapons. There is no other country that can lead the world's financial system when it is under stress. There is no other country capable of bringing together on a global basis people trying to solve problems.

Yes, it would be nice to run and hide. Yes, it would be nice to find some grand isolation in which we could cower behind the walls of the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean if this were 150 years ago.

But today, in the age of the Internet, in the age of worldwide instantaneous financial communications, in the age of weapons of mass destruction delivered by missiles and by terrorists, for the United States to fail to lead is in fact to guarantee chaos and to guarantee pain across the planet, and ultimately, pain here in the United States.

So let me be very clear. I believe the United States has to lead, and I believe, as a practical matter, both under our Constitution and in the nature of how human beings function, the daily leadership has to be an executive function, and the President of the United States has to provide that leadership every day, 365 days a year.

Now, we have a second and in many ways even more important burden, because it is the heart of who we are as a people. We are a Nation under law. We are a Nation of systems. As Ronald Reagan said in 1981, this magic of the transfer of power as a Democratic president yielded to a Republican, and then in 1993, as a Republican, George Bush, yielded to a Democrat, President Clinton, there is a magic to the capacity of the American people to subordinate themselves to the rule of law, and that means we are going to have open debates. It means newspapers are going to have lurid headlines. It means we are going to have television shows that are confusing.

If you are a dictator, it is easy to look at the turmoil and chaos and confusion of a free people and say to yourself, this is the week to hit America, because now they must be divided. So we have a chance today to say to the world, no matter what our constitutional process, whether it is an election eve or it is the eve of a constitutional vote, no matter what our debates at home, we are, as a Nation, prepared to lead the world.

So I support what was done this week. I was briefed on it in advance. I can assure my colleagues that as Speaker of the House, I felt, and I think that the next speaker, Mr. LIVINGSTON, can also report that he felt we were being legitimately consulted. We were not just informed but we had conversations of substance, and this has been an ongoing process.

But let me say two things on the domestic side about my qualified support, because I believe the President has two obligations beyond this week's activities. First, we need to have a clear and decisive commitment to replacing the dictatorship in Iraq, because it has consistently now, from 1990 through

1998, proven that even with 8 years of sanctions, even with 8 years of economic hardship for the Iraqi people, who do not deserve it, they should not be made to suffer because their dictator is irrational, they should not be made to pay the price because their dictator holds them in slavery with an armed Republican Guard and secret police, but for 8 years we have adopted a policy which has punished the people of Iraq while the dictatorship has continued.

The President owes it to this Nation in January and owes it to this Congress in January to provide us with a systematic, thorough, and methodical campaign plan by which the most powerful Nation in the world replaces a dictator who has proven beyond any reasonable doubt that he is desperate to get weapons of mass destruction, and no student of Saddam can doubt that he will either give them to terrorists or use them directly.

So just as in the 1930s there was a magic moment when it would have been easy to have destroyed Adolph Hitler and the democracies didn't take it, this is our last warning, because sooner or later, our allies in the Security Council will falter, and sooner or later Saddam will get weapons of mass destruction, and then the genie will be out of the bottle.

Second, I would say, in addition to a strategy for replacing the dictatorship, this President owes it to the men and women in uniform and to the men and women in our intelligence services to come back to this Congress in the beginning of next year and renegotiate the amount of funding we need for those two.

We cannot lead the planet on the current defense budget, and we cannot get the information to lead the planet on the current intelligence budget. I know that will be unpopular in some quarters, but you cannot lead the world on the cheap. If you are not going to be for isolation, then you need to rely on the distinguished professionals to tell you the truth about what it is going to cost to recruit and build the systems we need.

□ 1015

So I rise today to say to Saddam Hussein and any other dictator who has any doubt the United States can both govern itself and lead the world simultaneously, and I say to our allies across the planet, we have been, since 1941, the bulwark on which your freedom was based, we have been the arsenal on which your freedom has been assured, and we have been the power on which your security has been procured. We will retain those capabilities. And no matter what the temporary arguments, no matter what the temporary issues, no one anywhere on this planet should doubt the will of the American people to support freedom and the will of the American people to provide leadership and our capacity to subordinate our personalities and subordinate

issues to ensure that we as a Nation are strong on this planet.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for the President and our troops in this latest phase of the Iraqi crisis. I urge all Members to join me in voting for this resolution.

It is extremely important that we be here today to support these actions and to support these young men and women who are in the Middle East doing their best to follow the orders of the Commander in Chief in putting an end to this Iraqi threat to the American interests and to the Iraqi neighbors.

I urge all Members to join in this effort today. We, the representatives of the American people, need to express our full support of this measure.

Mr. Speaker, last November the 14, the President called off an attack against Iraq at the very last minute while aircraft were in the air because Iraq promised to allow the United Nations Special Commission to do its job. The President's decision at that time was a tough call. Many individuals, including some of his closest security advisors, disagreed with the choice that he made. I, however, believed that he made the right decision and publicly supported his decision.

I supported the decision because it allowed the United States to show the world that we would give Iraq one last chance. As George Robertson, the British Minister of Defense, said at the time, "Even in the Wild West, when someone put up their hands, did you not shoot them?"

Almost 8 years ago, President George Bush ordered American military forces into action against Iraq. At that time I supported the decision. There was bipartisan support for the action that he took. Yesterday, 8 years later, President Clinton ordered American military forces into action against Iraq. I find myself once again in support of the decision of our President. We gave ample warning one month ago that if Saddam did not comply with the promises he made to the United Nations, that the consequences would be severe. In effect, our national credibility was on the line. Had the President not ordered the attack, many would have bitterly criticized him for not having followed through with the tough words he uttered just one month ago. Others in the world, in North Korea and Yugoslavia and elsewhere, would have come to the conclusion that the United States, though militarily strong, was lacking in will.

As we proceed with this action, we should have a sustained bombing campaign that targets Saddam Hussein's centers of power, especially the revolutionary guard and his security services. We should also hit known chemical, biological and nuclear weapons sites. This effort will help contain Iraq, maybe even spark a coup, but will surely retard his effort to rebuild his ability to produce weapons of mass destruction.

I also hope it will help encourage the internal opposition. There are no good options, but to have done nothing now would have been the worst of all options.

Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly support the President in his decision. I wholeheartedly support those in uniform who are carrying out those orders today, the difficult orders. I respect their determination and their professionalism. They are the cream of the crop. And our heartfelt and best wishes go with them.

This resolution will help let them know that we, the representatives of the people of America, are in their corner today and in the days ahead.

(Mr. SPENCE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This resolution, which I have sponsored, along with my colleague the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), expresses the strong support of the Congress for the courageous, patriotic and dedicated service of our men and women in uniform serving in the Persian Gulf who are currently conducting military strikes against Iraq.

Once again, our soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines have demonstrated that they comprise the finest fighting force in the world today. For years they have selflessly defended America's national security interests in the Persian Gulf at great personal sacrifice. All Americans can be proud of our troops and the way they have performed. They are a credit to our Nation and an inspiration to us all.

Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the situation with regard to Iraq has come to this point. For the past 8 years, since the end of the Gulf War, Iraq, under the leadership of Saddam Hussein, has repeatedly defied the will of the international community and ignored all resolutions of the United Nations Security Council designed to ensure that Iraq could not reconstitute its weapons of mass destruction capability. Saddam Hussein has relentlessly pursued the acquisition of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and the ballistic missiles that can deliver them. He has invaded his neighbors, launched ballistic missiles against Saudi Arabia and Israel, and used chemical weapons against his own people. To prevent international weapons inspectors from further uncovering his prohibited weapons activities, he has obstructed inspections, refused to turn over documents and thumbed his nose at the world. In short, he has worked methodically to undermine the international effort to prevent him from rearming.

The challenge to United States security posed by Saddam Hussein's actions in Iraq is stark. Simply put, the United States cannot allow Saddam Hussein to frustrate the efforts of the international community and to reconstitute his weapons capability. Doing so

would again allow him to threaten his neighbors, United States' friends and allies in the region, and our own interests.

Unfortunately, I am concerned that our military action against Iraq attacks only the symptoms of the problem rather than the problem itself. The root cause of our problems with Iraq is Saddam Hussein himself. The time is long overdue to implement a broader and more aggressive strategy that has as its ultimate goal the replacement of Saddam Hussein's dictatorial regime. The Iraqi people have suffered long enough.

Whatever one's view is on the timing of this latest military strike against Iraq, we are all unified in support of our servicemen and women. We are proud of each and every one of them.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this resolution and urge all Americans to pray for the safety of our sons and daughters, husband and wives and those of our allies who are currently in harm's way in the Gulf. It is important for them to know that the American people and the people's representatives in Congress are behind them 100 percent.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I must comment and say that I wholeheartedly agree with the comments of the chairman, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPENCE), regarding the outstanding young men and women that we have in uniform today. I would like the RECORD to show that I feel as strongly and I support those words of support for them.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES).

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

I rise this morning in support of President Clinton and our military troops dispersed in the Persian Gulf.

Yesterday the United States military began strikes to subdue the chemical, biological and nuclear weapons capability of Iraq. For some time now Saddam Hussein has flaunted the will of the United Nations by impeding the activities of weapons inspectors. Strikes against him, in my opinion, and against his regime have been greatly needed and greatly overdue.

I believe, however, that President Clinton has demonstrated great restraint and patience and has waited the appropriate time to initiate these strikes. Had the United States moved towards strikes at another time, we would have been perceived as a bully and would have been condemned by much of the world.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that in this time of crisis, we must put aside partisan quarrels and show unified support for our troops. We should send our thoughts and prayers to the men and women in uniform who are carrying out this attack. We should also keep in our prayers the families of these fine men and women. It will be especially

difficult for them because this is the holiday season.

In the Middle East today, along with thousands of military personnel, are more than 1100 soldiers from Fort Bliss, Texas. These men and women are manning Patriot missile systems. I am proud to say that these soldiers are led by the first woman ever to command an air defense battalion. The Patriot systems are in place to defend our troops against possible Scud missile launches from Iraq.

We know from our experience in the Gulf War that Saddam is willing to use Scud missiles against our troops. The presence of these Patriots demonstrates how significant our military leaders believe that the threat of ballistic missiles is. Every month we learn of more tests of ballistic missiles that are faster and reach further distances. The countries testing these systems are not our friends and would likely actually use these ballistic missile systems armed with chemical, biological or even nuclear warheads against others, including the United States.

The strikes to Iraq are significant to slow the development of such weapons by that government. But countries like Iraq, Iran, North Korea and Libya will continue to seek the technology to deliver weapons of mass destruction. As such, we must continue to develop as quickly as possible defensive systems like the Army's THAAD missile system, the theater high altitude area defense system. We must ensure that we are capable of meeting the ever growing threat of ballistic missile to our troops and to our allies.

□ 1030

Today we must stand together and support our President and our troops. Once again, our thoughts should be with our men and women in uniform. God bless each one of them and God bless America.

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. HEFLEY).

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and commend the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPENCE) for bringing it to the floor today.

While the American people and the Congress may have some question about the timing of this attack, one thing remains unquestionable, our support for the troops. Once the planes are in the air and the ships are at full steam and the troops are on the ground, we categorically and wholeheartedly believe in the mission and we believe in the wisdom of our military leaders.

The provocations are many and the time for action is long overdue. Saddam Hussein is a psychopathic bully in the international playground. As we all know, the only way to deal with a bully is swiftly, directly, and harshly. It is unfortunate that over 24,000 brave men and women have to be apart from their families during the holiday sea-

son, but the extraordinary task they are performing will allow the United States and its allies to reaffirm that we will not stand idly by while this threat to safety, liberty and freedom exists.

I proudly salute our servicemen and women all over the globe, and our thoughts and prayers are with you and your families and our support will not waiver.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS).

(Mr. HASTINGS of Florida asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my absolute support for the steps that our President has taken to degrade Iraq's ability to terrorize her neighbors and destabilize the Persian Gulf.

The international community has given Saddam Hussein more than enough opportunities to comply with United Nations resolutions. Unfortunately, he has chosen to ignore the United Nations and has repeatedly blocked the ability of U.N. weapons inspectors to access strategic sites. Saddam Hussein clearly has something to hide.

I am appalled that Members of Congress in both bodies could be so crass and thoughtless as to suggest that President Clinton initiated this attack to avoid impending legislation addressing his office. To question the integrity of this decision is insidious, damaging, and can be destabilizing to the presidency and dangerous and demoralizing to our troops.

Those, the leaders of our armed forces, need our support. They do not need doubts as regards their motives. I, for one, am proud of our President, our military leaders, and our men and women on the ground, the air, and the sea who are leading the strike force and showing the world once again that America is not afraid to do the right thing.

I was with the President in the Middle East and witnessed his courageous actions in pursuing peace in that region. I was on Air Force One with the President, the Secretary of State, the National Security Advisor, and Republican and Democratic Members of Congress. The President and Secretary of State briefed us just before landing here at Andrews regarding the circumstances of Iraq's deliberate misconduct.

Confluence of events notwithstanding, the President, with professionalism, dedication, patriotism, wisdom and courage, took the appropriate steps. We stand with the President and our troops and may God bless them and all of us.

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), the chairman of our Committee on International Relations.

(Mr. GILMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the leadership of the House in bringing this bipartisan resolution to us in support of our military initiative in Iraq in response to Saddam Hussein's defiance of U.N. Secretary Council's resolutions pertaining to his cooperation with the U.N. inspectors. I commend, too, the remarks of the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGRICH) in support of this resolution supporting our Nation's military action against Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, in rising in support of this legislation before us today, I am pleased that we understand scoring congressional unequivocal support for the men and women of our armed forces who are now engaged in our Nation's operations against Iraq. We must, as this measure points out, take appropriate action to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein and to promote the emergence of a democratic government to replace that regime.

Mr. Speaker, we must not permit Saddam Hussein to defy the U.N. Security Council. It is the U.N. Security Council that empowered UNSCOM inspectors that are now being denied access to the sites that need to be inspected in Iraq. We cannot permit any suspicious sites to go unchecked when someone such as Saddam Hussein is determined to develop weapons of mass destruction capable of being unleashed on neighboring nations in the Gulf region.

While there has been some debate on whether earlier actions by Saddam should have triggered earlier U.S. military initiatives, the fact remains that we are now involved and we must direct our energies toward making certain that our military efforts are going to be successful and as effective as possible. But we must also make certain that ours is a comprehensive policy that seeks to end Saddam's ability to taunt and endanger the international community.

We must also reach out to those groups within Iraq who are willing to rise up against Saddam Hussein. And I refer my colleagues to the recently enacted Iraq Liberation Act of 1998, which spells out how we can best accomplish that purpose.

My colleagues, Saddam has demonstrated no compunction in reaching out against his own people and nations in the region in reprehensible ways long strongly condemned by the international community. Accordingly, I urge strong support for this measure which underscores the need that military action which can stop Saddam Hussein be effective and continued. We also support and will keep in our prayers the safety and early return of those young men and women who are now securing and fighting for our nation so gallantly at this time of crisis.

Hopefully, then, our response is part of a comprehensive strategy that not only targets Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruc-

tion, but has, as its ultimate objective, the eventual removal from power of Saddam and his regime, a goal that the President himself has iterated.

To that end, the Administration should employ an integrated strategy in which military action is not an end in itself, but part of a larger plan that includes support for the efforts of democratic opponents of Saddam to remove him from power.

Such an approach should include air strikes, not only against facilities related to weapons of mass destruction, but also against elements that Saddam uses to suppress organized democratic opposition, such as military command and control centers, heavy weapons, and installations of the Republican Guard and the Special Security Organization.

The President should also declare no-drive zones in northern and southern Iraq—in addition to the existing no-fly zones—from which Iraqi armor and artillery would be totally excluded by U.S. air power.

Moreover, the President should utilize the authority under the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998, Public Law 105-338, to provide military assistance and training to Iraqi democratic opposition groups fighting to overthrow the Saddam Hussein regime.

In short, U.S. military power needs to be used in a way that will complement and reinforce the efforts of Iraqi democratic opposition groups to remove the Saddam Hussein regime from power.

Such a strategy is more likely to succeed than air strikes alone. While there is no guarantee that such a strategy will succeed in overthrowing Saddam, this approach is more likely to lead to that result than other strategies that presuppose Saddam's continued grip on power.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR), our whip on the Democratic side.

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, I rise today in support of this resolution and in support of our men and women who are engaged in combat as we speak. As I look at this issue that is facing us this morning, I look at it from two perspectives, Mr. Speaker. Number one, the need to deal with Saddam and the production, the sale, the use, the delivery of weapons of mass destruction, the destabilizing influence of these nuclear and biological and chemical agents and the pain and the suffering that they have caused and could cause our community.

The other issue that we will not hear very much about on this floor today or perhaps in the dialogue that we will have over this issue in the coming days and months is the policy that we have with respect to sanctions in Iraq, which I think that policy is wrong. And I will tell my colleagues why I think it is wrong and why it has not worked.

It has been 8 years, Mr. Speaker. We do not read about the fact that there have been over a half a million children in Iraq who have died prematurely as a result of this policy. According to preliminary numbers in a study conducted by Richard Garfield, Columbia

University, an epidemiologist and a specialist on health effects of the embargo, the death rate of Iraqi children age 5 and under has spiraled up nearly tripling since the sanctions were imposed in 1990. At that time, child deaths in Iraq were on par with much of the Western world.

And it is not just children under 5, it is what has happened to the total society. They do not have medicine, anesthesia for operations. They do not have insulin for diabetics. They do not have heart medicine for those with heart problems, and it has caused enormous pain and suffering.

So what we are confronted with today are two real issues here, one affecting the security of our people and the region in which we are now engaged in a very serious way, threatening way, destabilizing way, and the other with a real humanitarian need to address the concerns of the Iraqi people who are suffering unimaginable pain as a result of the policies of Saddam Hussein but also as a result of the policies of these sanctions which have not worked.

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER), the chairman of our Subcommittee on Military Personnel.

(Mr. BUYER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPENCE) for yielding time to me, and to the Speaker-elect, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. LIVINGSTON), let me extend a great compliment to him yesterday. While there were many people who were questioning the President's motives, questioning the President's decision-making process, the gentleman was very thorough, he was very methodical in his decisions approaching the Nation's business, and I extend a compliment to him for having done that. Because I think he made the right decision.

We were facing the impeachment vote and then we have this response to Saddam Hussein. I think many of us here were here last night and we listened to the briefing by the Secretary of Defense and the Director of the CIA and in particular the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

What is difficult here is that the President, as the Commander in Chief, he is always entitled to the benefit of the doubt in his decision-making process as he comes to judgment. His policies and his judgment are always of question. But how he makes the decision, he is given the benefit of the doubt. The benefit gets removed in this case because of the diminished credibility and the self-inflicted wounds that the President has caused himself.

Turn and give the benefit of the doubt to the Secretary of the Defense, to our military intelligence and to the present circumstances. I support this measured and tempered response to the recalcitrance of Saddam Hussein. Saddam Hussein is a repeat offender. He is

a habitual offender, and he needs to be put back in his place. He is a Third World tyrant who is a prisoner in the border of his own nation. He loves to be elevated and thumb the nose not only to the world but elevated to the superpower status where he attempts to stick the eyes of America.

Now, this is measured. There will be a cease to this. Do not over blow or over play what this is. This is not an equivalency of the House coming to its debate of the use of force during the Gulf War. Do not over play your hand to the House.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS).

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, when our troops are in harm's way, we all support them and we all pray that they will come home safely and as promptly as possible. Having said that, let me express my serious concerns about the current military action ordered by the President.

I am concerned that this action took place with no discussion in the United States Congress despite the fact that the Constitution makes it very clear that it is this body which declares war. I am concerned that while we are ostensibly supporting a United Nations resolution, the U.N. did not vote for this attack, does not support this attack, and that country after country throughout the world are condemning this attack.

This is important because if the United States is to have credibility in the future in terms of condemning aggression, how do we go forward with countries saying, hey, we felt aggrieved, we wanted to do it, that is what you did, you did not come to the United Nations.

This article of war, this act of aggression, is not supported by the Vatican. Let me quote from the Vatican. "The Holy See agrees fully with the Secretary General of the U.N. that today is a sad day for the United Nations and for the world. The Holy See hopes that this aggression will end as soon as possible and that international order is restored."

□ 1045

Mr. Speaker, Saddam Hussein is a brutal dictator who should be overthrown, and his ability to make weapons of destruction must be eliminated. I have serious doubts, however, whether the action that we are taking today will take us one step forward in that direction, and I fear that innocent civilians, that women and children in that country, will be killed.

Mr. Speaker, when American troops are in harm's way we all support them and pray that they will come home safely and promptly. There can be no disagreement over that.

Having said that, let me express my serious concerns about the current military action ordered by the President.

I am concerned that this action took place with no discussion in the U.S. Congress, de-

spite the fact that war making responsibility rests with the Congress under the Constitution.

I am concerned that while we are ostensibly supporting a United Nations resolution, the United Nations did not vote for this attack. Not only was there no vote by the U.N., it appears quite clearly that the Security Council does not support this action. And this is an issue of grave concern. How will the United States, in the future, be able to condemn aggression anywhere in the world when, for all intent and purposes, this country has acted unilaterally and without the force of law? If Russia, China, North Korea, Great Britain or any country on Earth commits unilateral military aggression that we disapprove of, how will we be able, in good faith, to condemn them? They will simply respond that they are doing precisely what the United States did against Iraq.

While I opposed the Gulf War in 1991, the United Nations and the world community supported it. That is not the case now. Today, our attack is opposed by countries throughout the world, including France, Russia, China, India, Pakistan, Sweden, and others.

On Thursday, Arab-League Secretary-General Esmat Abdel-Meguid denounced the U.S. led attack on Iraq as aggression against an Arab country that would not solve Baghdad's dispute with the United Nations over arms inspections. It is also opposed by The Vatican. Let me quote from The Vatican, "The Holy See agrees fully with the Secretary General of the United Nations that 'today is a sad day for the United Nations and for the world.' The Holy See hopes that this aggression will end as soon as possible and that international order is restored."

Mr. Speaker, Saddam Hussein is a brutal and illegitimate dictator who should be removed from office, and his capability to make weapons of mass destruction must be eliminated. In order to do that, we must develop a political strategy and support the democratic forces in Iraq who are prepared to overthrow him. I have serious doubts whether this military action today will take us one step forward in that direction.

For years now, the women, children and innocent civilians of Iraq, whose only "crime" is that they live under the tyranny of Saddam Hussein, have been punished terribly. They lack medicine, adequate food, clean water, and other basic necessities of life. We should not add to their suffering with attacks like this.

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BATEMAN) chairman of the Subcommittee on Military Readiness.

(Mr. BATEMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BATEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to tell Members how strongly I endorse and applaud the decision of our Commander in Chief and his military advisers to take the action which was taken yesterday and which continues today.

Yes, we all ought to recognize the fact that it was a sad day, sad that it had to be taken. But it did have to be taken. I am not one of those who object and point and accuse that there is something peculiar or wrong in the timing of this decision, not in the context of what we expected in terms of

the ongoing debate on the subject of the presidency and its tenure. I object to it on the basis that in the first 2 weeks of November when Saddam Hussein had ceased the opportunity for inspections, the Gulf cooperating states, Syria, Egypt and an alignment of people or nations favorable to our having done so agreed that he was at fault and that military action was justified. But we did not undertake that action until 3 days or more after that had happened with more forces deployed in the Middle East then than there are now. Then at the last moment, as we could have predicted Saddam Hussein would have done, he says, "Okay, I'll cooperate" and in mid flight the planes were called back. That never should have happened. We should have gone forward when we had the circumstances and the window of opportunity to have done it then. If I thought it should have been done earlier, I certainly am in no position to complain that it is being done now.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS).

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak from my perspective as cochairman of the bipartisan House Army Caucus and as the representative of Fort Hood in Texas, the largest Army installation in the world. In 1991 when President Bush sent U.S. forces into Kuwait and Iraq, our Nation stood united in support of our troops. Even congressional Democrats and Republicans who preferred economic sanctions rather than war against Iraq at that time put aside their personal and partisan differences once our armed forces were in harm's way. I can tell everyone here that it meant everything to the morale of our troops in Iraq in 1991, including 25,000 of my own constituents, that Congress and the American people stood together in support of them. That is why I am glad to be here to support this resolution today.

However, Mr. Speaker, a resolution supporting our troops must be backed up by our words on this floor and off this floor, by our words and our deeds. I am saddened that last night a number of Republican Members of this House precipitously and without fact charged that the timing of this action was totally political. One representative was even quoted as saying, without any proof whatsoever, that the President was willing to risk the lives of American service men and women to protect his own political standing. Mr. Speaker, that type of unsubstantiated personal attack against our President at a time when brave American pilots and armed forces are in harm's way is wrong. It is irresponsible. It does harm to the morale of our forces in the Persian Gulf.

This morning former Secretary Henry Kissinger, a Republican, said that political attacks on our Iraqi missions such as some of those made last night by Members of Congress would demoralize our troops in the Persian

Gulf. The truth is the timing of this attack was unanimously supported by the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, and an attack on the integrity of this operation is in effect an attack on the integrity of our Joint Chiefs. Secretary of Defense William Cohen, a Republican who served with dignity and integrity in this House and in the Senate said this yesterday, and I quote: "I am prepared to place 30 years of public service on the line to say the only factor that was important in this decision is what is in the American people's interest. There were no other factors."

Mr. Speaker, today is a time to put partisanship and these kind of attacks behind us. I urge some of my colleagues to reconsider their ill-advised comments of last night. Today we must have two goals: One is to say together, the vast majority of Republicans and Democrats do indeed support our troops. Finally let us send a clear message to Saddam Hussein, do not underestimate the ability of the American Congress and people to come together when our national security interests are at risk.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LIVINGSTON). The Chair must remind all Members that although it is permissible to debate and speak critically of the President or the administration on matters of policy or politics, remarks in debate must not descend to personality by arraigning the President's personal conduct or by charging other Members with having done so off the floor and by detailing those arraignments.

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. FOWLER).

Mrs. FOWLER. Mr. Speaker, I want to rise in strong support of the resolution before us today. While questions have been raised about the unique circumstances under which this attack has occurred, I believe that all Members of this House, Republicans and Democrats alike, need to pull together today in support of the young men and women that are now in harm's way in support of our Nation's vital interests. I hope we will wreak havoc on Saddam's ability to develop weapons of mass destruction, to threaten his neighbors and to repress his own people. But beyond that, I hope that these strikes are only part of a broader strategy by this administration to dismantle this Iraqi regime.

I also want to express my thanks to the government of the United Kingdom which again stands shoulder to shoulder with us in opposition to Saddam's defiance to international law. I know that all Americans join me today in praying that our men and women in uniform in the Gulf, including some 2,000 troops from my northeast Florida area, complete this endeavor safely and return home to their families soon.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SKAGGS).

Mr. SKAGGS. I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, of course we want to support American troops as they carry out this dangerous and important mission. But let us not lose sight of the sad fact that President Clinton has acted in violation of the Constitution in ordering these attacks without authority of Congress. And let us not forget as well that the decision to go to war is vested in Congress and not in the Commander in Chief and that we too share the blame for this violation of the Constitution because we have time and again defaulted in our responsibility and obligation to insist on our proper constitutional role.

The President, to the extent that he relies on a strict reading of the Constitution for other purposes, would be well advised to adhere to a strict reading of the war powers clause as well. But instead this administration engages in a contrived bit of legal sophistry to conjure up a pretext of legality where none exists.

Shame on him. And shame on us for letting other Presidents and this one take away one of the most important powers vested in Congress, which the American people have a right to expect us, here, to exercise in their behalf.

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS), chairman of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

(Mr. GOSS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished chairman of the committee for yielding me this time. There is certainly no question that every Member whether Democrat, Republican, liberal, conservative, moderate, independent, whatever, however we describe ourselves, every Member of this House today stands in unequivocal support of our troops in the Persian Gulf at this time of danger and risk for them. We wish them Godspeed, we wish them good luck, we wish them safe return, we wish them swift return. We express our gratitude to them and to their families for their sacrifice in support of a peaceful world we all want and the security of our Nation that all Americans deserve and demand and expect, especially when these heavy duties come during the holiday season.

Mr. Speaker, the President has outlined a policy of containment with respect to this military action. Degrading Saddam Hussein's program of deadly weapons and fear is a good interim step but it is not the end game. I implore the administration not to be satisfied with an interim result of containment but rather to work toward dismantling Saddam Hussein's destructive regime. Otherwise, we will be doing this again.

We have no quarrel with the people of Iraq. We all know that. They have suffered too long at the hands of a war criminal leader who is ruthless and uses chemistry for genocide in his own

country. We want the Iraqis to have a peaceful chance to live in this world community and that cannot happen as long as Saddam Hussein is the ruler of Iraq. We must stand firm. Saddam Hussein must go. He is a war criminal. We should bring him to justice. If we are going to risk the lives of American troops, that is the purpose that the risk should take place. God bless all of them who are doing this heavy, dangerous work now. Amen.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT).

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, I support our troops like every American. Saddam Hussein deserves this. He earned it. He had it coming. But I do not support this process. What has happened to the backbone of the Congress of the United States? We have allowed the executive branch to usurp nearly all of our authority. If these were political actions, we would send the police. If these were peacekeeping missions, we would send the Peace Corps. Ladies and gentlemen, what we are doing is placing troops on foreign soil in harm's way that could precipitate a major problem and the truth of the matter is we are allowing one person to do this.

We all support our troops after the fact. I say it is time to throw out the War Powers Act. Throw it out. Get back to the Constitution. My God, no one man in America should be able to declare war, and that is where we are.

What is even more problematic today is there are many skeptics out there. Everybody is afraid to say what they feel down here. From patriots to "Wag the Dog" skeptics, people are questioning motives. I blame Congress for this. If we get back to the Constitution, do it the right way, we would never allow doubt and politics to raise their ugly head when our troops are in foreign lands under attack.

God almighty, what has happened to us? Yes, maybe the constitutional process is clumsy, maybe it lacks surprises but you know what? Doing it the right way will not only save lives, it will ensure our great republic and our freedom.

I support our troops but I oppose with every fiber in me this process. The war declaration powers in Congress are clear. Wise up, Congress, before we place America at great risk.

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN).

(Mr. DUNCAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to place a statement in the RECORD in support of this resolution but in strong agreement with the previous speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have always tried to support our men and women in the military, and I support this Resolution.

I supported the original Gulf War, but I must say that I think the situation is very different today.

Eight years ago, Saddam Hussein had what some described then as the largest, most-powerful military in the Middle East.

He was moving into Kuwait, and most analysts felt that if he was not stopped, he would try to take over the entire Middle East.

Today, after major losses in the Gulf War and 8 years of sanctions, Iraq essentially is a defenseless nation in comparison to the U.S.

We have not been told of any overt military action by Iraq, or even of any threatened action, against us on anyone else.

Several nations, including us and some of our strongest allies, have weapons of mass destruction and chemical and biological weapons. We cannot bomb every nation that has such weapons.

We have always prided ourselves as being a peace-loving nation.

War should be our most reluctant action. We should go to war only as a last resort—only if there is no reasonable alternative.

And we should go to war only if there is a serious threat to our national security or there is a vital U.S. interest at stake.

In this instance, as in the bombing a few weeks ago of Sudan and Afghanistan, we have been far too eager to go to war.

We are now bombing innocent men, women, and children who have done nothing to us and have not even threatened us, simply because they are ruled by a mad dictator.

Saddam Hussein is without doubt a horrible tyrant and I would agree with anything bad that is said about him.

But this bombing now is the wrong thing to do, and it is the wrong time to do it. In the long run, it will do far more harm than good.

This Resolution, however, expresses support for our troops in combat and supports the removal of Saddam Hussein. Both of these are things that all Americans can support even if they have questions about the policy and its timing.

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH).

□ 1100

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) for yielding this time to me, and I, too, rise in strong support of our men and women in uniform who find themselves today in harm's way, indeed of all those who wear the uniform of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to note in response to the criticism from my friend from Texas that came earlier that there are many who confuse dissent with lack of resolve. Indeed the tyrant whom we now confront, Saddam Hussein, was heard to brag to the international press that he remained in power while George Bush was deposed. Mr. Speaker, the tyrant does not understand our constitutional republic, and, Mr. Speaker, in that spirit today I rise to celebrate the ability of every Member of this House and of every American citizen to come to this floor and freely express his or her opinion. That is for one of the freedoms we fight, that is one of the freedoms

that must be preserved, that is part of the constitutional process we confront.

Mr. Speaker, let us all remember that and embrace it.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. FURSE).

Ms. FURSE. Mr. Speaker, this resolution has two parts. Of course we support the troops, of course we do. But the second part of this resolution confirms that we should remove a ruler. I cannot believe it is in our best interests to decide who rules in what country. Democracies are not created by attacks from outside.

Mr. Speaker, I know mine might be a minority voice today, but I want us to take a moment, just a moment to mourn, to mourn the thousands of children who will die today and tomorrow. Iraqi children, yes, but they are loved by their parents as we love ours. Those children will die because they are victims of a world problem. No, they are children, they will die.

Mr. Speaker, war is very seldom an answer. But war is always, always a tragedy.

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON), the chairman of our Committee on Rules.

(Mr. SOLOMON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I will not take the 2 minutes, but let me just say that any Member can stand and perhaps be critical of the timing of the attack, but what can not be questioned is the fact that the attack should come. It should have come 90 days ago, 60 days ago, 30 days ago, 2 weeks ago. The truth of the matter is that the attack is needed.

Let me just say that I have stood on this floor and lectured Members for many years about the need for a strong military. This is just one more example of why we have to maintain a strong national defense that will be able to protect the strategic interests of Americans across this world. And in doing so, when we depend on an all voluntary military, it is absolutely imperative that we give these young men and women the best possible weaponry that we possibly can as long as we have to ask them to go in harm's way.

Mr. Speaker, I would just appeal to my colleagues on my way out of here in a couple of weeks that they continue to maintain a level of defense so that the military can continue to attract and recruit the kind of young men and women from a cross-section of America that we have now. They are the finest young men and women that have ever served in the military, going all the way back to my days in 1950 in the United States Marine Corps.

So I praise this body for what they have done, and I certainly support this resolution. I hope it passes unanimously.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and urge its unanimous adoption by the House.

I would have preferred supporting a resolution of this kind 30 days ago, 90 days ago, last February, or at any number of other times over the past several years. On each and every such time, military strikes against Iraq would have been entirely justified.

Since 1992, Saddam Hussein has established a pattern of noncompliance with the international inspection regime, a pattern of outright defiance that is so unrelenting and unmistakable that military action was called for long before now.

Personally, I believe the last straw came this past September, when Major Scott Ritter described the collapse of the inspection regime in such telling detail that we shouldn't have waited another day. The fury and abuse that were heaped on him by the higher-ups served only to confirm the truth of his warnings.

But, we play the cards we are dealt, and later is better than never.

Mr. Speaker, American forces have been committed to action. Troops are in the field. Our pilots are in the skies over Iraq. Now is the time to pull together and give them the unwavering support they deserve. Every one of them is a volunteer—never forget that—and they deserve everything we can give them.

America stands united behind them. Congress stands united behind them. Let there be no doubt in anyone's mind about that.

And as other of our colleagues have said here today, let this present action against Iraq be the first strike in a comprehensive effort to deal with the source of the problem once and for all—not just with the symptoms.

Let us also seize this situation as an urgent reminder that we need to maintain a strong military. General Norman Schwarzkopf has put it so well; "It is better to sweat in peace than to bleed in war."

One of the clearest lessons of history is this: Peace is only secure when the good are strong enough to deter the bad. It is just that basic.

And that is why Congress must continue to be vigilant in making sure that our military is the best-trained, best-equipped, best-motivated fighting force in the world. We must continue to make sure that the incentives we use in recruiting an All-Volunteer Force are the best that America can possibly offer.

Mr. Speaker, standing behind the troops is a full-time obligation. They deserve our support in peace, as well as war. Let's send them that message today and every day.

I urge unanimous support for this resolution.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. McHALE).

Mr. McHALE. Mr. Speaker, I rise as a Member of Congress and perhaps more importantly as a veteran of the Gulf War to strongly support the resolution now before the House. Mr. Speaker, it is my belief that we of this Chamber have a profound obligation to those who fought and died in the Gulf War to resolutely compel Iraq's compliance with the terms of peace negotiated at the end of that conflict.

Mr. Speaker, I remember almost 8 years ago I stood in the chow line, I believe in northern Saudi Arabia, perhaps in Kuwait, behind a young Marine who had written on his helmet cover:

"It's not about oil."

The wisdom of that young Marine was true then, it remains true today. It was not about oil during the Gulf War. The action taken by the President yesterday was also about more strategic and significant concerns.

Mr. Speaker, this is about denying access to one of the world's tyrants to weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical and biological capabilities. The action taken by the President yesterday was fully justified.

Our tactical bombardment must now lead to a strategic objective, the removal of Saddam Hussein from power. For the past 8 years that tyrant has exercised brutal authority in a manner not only adverse to the interests of the United States but detrimental to the peace of the world. I welcome the President's action and urge him to take all necessary steps sufficient to strip Iraq of offensive military capabilities, most especially weapons of mass destruction.

Now I would say to my colleagues:

Regardless of how we may vote on other issues within the next few days, now is the time for nonpartisan national unity in support of our President and our forces overseas.

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL).

(Mr. PAUL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, as a 5 yr Air Force veteran I rise in strong support of the troops: we all do. Everybody supports the troops. But this resolution is a lot more than supporting the troops. Even by the very nature of our debate today, most of the debate has been about the military action. I see this as nothing more than a rubber stamp on a war that has already been started, and it has not been started in the proper way.

Mr. Speaker, it is clearly stated in the Constitution that only Congress has the authority to declare war. It is precisely because of the way we go to war these days that we are continuing to fight the Persian Gulf War. We did not win the Persian Gulf War because we did not declare war since there was no justification to because there was no national security interests involved.

Saddam Hussein is not threatening our national security. This is a concocted scheme to pursue bombing for oil interests and other reasons, but it has nothing to do with national security.

This resolution is an endorsement for war. We are rubber stamping this action.

We should follow the rule of law. The rule of law says that resolutions, to begin war, should come to the House of Representatives and pass by the Senate. But we have been too careless and too casual for many, many decades, and this is the reason we do not win wars any more.

We are in essentially perpetual war. We have granted too much authority to

our President to wage war. Even under the most unusual of circumstances we permit him to wage war. This is wrong. We, as a House, must assume our responsibilities.

I cannot support this resolution because it is a rubber stamp, it is an endorsement for an illegal war. We should argue the case for peace. We should argue the case for national sovereignty. We should not allow our President to use U.N. resolutions to wage war.

First and foremost, the notion that the United States can dictate the political leadership of a foreign policy is immoral. What right have we to determine these things for any nation other than our own? The answer, clearly, is "none," we have no such right.

There is an idea known as sovereignty, and that idea is integral to nationhood. Among other things, sovereignty dictates that a people be responsible for their own leadership, without the interference of other nations. Is it any wonder that the same American leaders who would invade other sovereign nations spend so much time surrendering the sovereignty of the United States? I think not. Simply, their efforts are designed to undermine the entire notion of sovereignty.

One evident outcome of the anti-sovereignty philosophy is our dependence on institutions such as the United Nations. It is an affront to our nation's sovereignty and our constitution that the President presently launches war on Iraq under the aegis of a UN resolution but without the Constitutionally required authorization by the United States Congress.

As Americans we are rightly offended by the notion that the Chinese Government has influenced our domestic elections. However, we are not free from hypocrisy. For recently this Congress passed legislation appropriating money for the sole and express purpose of changing the government of a sovereign nation.

Next, we ought to consider the morality of the means which must be employed to change the government of Iraq. Yesterday I sat on a panel with Harry Summers, a man of considerable military knowledge. Summers stated that it would take ground troops to overthrow Saddam Hussein. Moreover, he unequivocally stated that military history shows that no war has ever been won simply via air strikes. This statement is not only factually accurate, it is also a stark reminder of what the price of this policy will be. Namely, the price of successfully changing the government of Iraq is the blood of many thousands of innocent human beings. And, lest we fool ourselves, many of these people will be American troops, brave young men and women who patriotically agreed to defend the United States but have now been placed like pawns in a chess game, perhaps to remove the leader of Iraq, or perhaps to stave off the removal of the US President. At any rate, these brave young Americans ought not be sacrificed for either of these improper political purposes.

Finally, even by the amoral measure of "realpolitik" the policy of Saddam's removal is unwarranted. The reason that the US has hesitated to actually complete successful enactment of its stated policy is because the result of such enactment is fraught with uncertainty. Iraq is a country made up of many different factions. And many of its neighbors are

interested in increasing their influence and control over areas which are now within Iraqi territory. Hence, if Saddam ever were to be removed by force of US efforts, we would face a very real risk to regional stability. Stability being the key concern of those who practice "realpolitik" this points to the fact that by the measures established by the "pragmatists" the stated policy of Saddam's removal is wrongful. Let me be clear, while I reject the notion of divorcing politics from moral considerations, I do believe we should understand that our current policy is not only devoid of morals, but is also doomed to failure from any practical viewpoint.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SISISKY).

(Mr. SISISKY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SISISKY. Mr. Speaker, I support the President's decision to attack Iraq. The cat and mouse game with inspection has gone on far too long. It is clear that Saddam Hussein does not intend to comply with the agreement made at the end of the Gulf War. Our best evidence is that Saddam has continued to focus resources on weapons of mass destruction. The problem is that chemical and biological weapons are relatively unsophisticated. It is relatively easy to produce them and hide the production facilities.

In addition, evidence indicates Saddam continues to produce an array of conventional weapons, but the possibility of chemical, biological and even nuclear weapons and delivery system production is clearly the most troubling issue. Our certainty about what is happening in these areas is clouded by Iraq's mistreatment of inspection teams, and this is what has precipitated this crisis.

I was with the President and the congressional delegation, both Democrats and Republicans, to the Middle East. We came back Tuesday night. There was a paradox here. In the West Bank and in Gaza, instead of seeing American flags being burned we saw American flags being waived, and we saw the Palestine Committee raise their hands and knock out a covenant in their charter that says Israel will be destroyed. The President of the United States really was the King of Peace in the Middle East, and then on the way back the paradox is that unfortunately he had to order an attack on Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, we are the luckiest people in the world by having young men and women ready and willing to serve. I would add that they deserve our undying support.

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BURR).

Mr. BURR of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the resolution.

The men and women of the United States Armed Forces have once again been called on to defend our country's interests abroad. We can no longer stand idly by while Saddam Hussein flaunts the will of the world and

thumbs his nose at the inspectors. This action was not only necessary, Mr. Speaker, it was long overdue. Our military personnel currently serving their Nation in the Persian Gulf should know that this Congress and this country is fully behind their new mission.

One of those sailors is a former intern from my staff, and today I would like to tell her that we are thinking about her. The relatives and friends of our officers and our enlisted men and women should know that their mission is a just one and is clearly in our national security interests. While the prospects of their absence over the holiday season is discouraging, they should take heart from the knowledge that their service today preserves the future for tomorrow's generation.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution, and of our men and women in the Armed Services and of our Commander in Chief, the President who has made a courageous and correct decision. This action has been undertaken for strategic reasons and pursuant to tactical judgments of our military and civilian leaders in the Pentagon. The President has taken appropriate action to confront and weaken one of the world's most dangerous tyrants who has savaged his own people and threatened Iraq's neighbors and the world with weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Speaker, too often we have historically learned the lesson of failing to act in the face of eminent dangers. Saddam Hussein, through his policies of dissembling and lack of cooperation and following the promises he made following his loss in a war that he precipitated, has made the Middle East a more dangerous region and the world a more dangerous place.

□ 1115

The world is a safer place because of the courage and willingness of our brave men and women in our armed forces, willing to go in harm's way to protect, not only this country, but the interest of international stability.

I hope that all of my colleagues will stand with the President, stand with our brave young men and women in the armed services, and stand, yes, indeed, with our allies in confronting this, one of the world's most dangerous tyrants.

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from San Diego, California (Mr. DUNCAN HUNTER), the chairman of our Subcommittee on Military Procurement.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, the President has decided to take this action that should have been taken any time over the last several years. We have gathered today to commend the troops and to pledge our loyalty to them. We know they have a very difficult task. I hope that they finish the job. It is going to be a very, very difficult job in rooting out and destroying

these sites where Saddam Hussein is building weapons of mass destruction.

But we are going to have an obligation to them. I hope that all my colleagues who are coming to the floor to pledge undying loyalty to the troops will join us on the Committee on National Security in moving to increase the defense number to close the 13 percent pay gap that right now exists between the civilian sector and the uniform sector, to buy that \$1.6 billion worth of ammunition that the Army is presently short of, to buy the \$193 million worth of ammunition that the Marine Corps is short right now, and to increase the defense budget by at least \$28.5 billion a year. Because that is what the Joint Chiefs of Staff tell us we are going to have to spend if we want to fill all those unfunded requirements that they have been giving this President over the last several years and that he has not been responding to.

So let us reciprocate to these troops in the next several weeks. We will have a chance to demonstrate our commitment to them. I hope everyone will join with me and other members of the Committee on National Security in seeing to it that we, in fact, do reciprocate and do rebuild our national defense.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN).

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from South Carolina for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, the President is doing the right thing at the right time, for the right reasons. I hope that we give him the support necessary so that this campaign continues until we achieve our objectives. The President's action have the support of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, the Republican Secretary of Defense, and the British Prime Minister, none of whom would risk the lives of American and British troops for the President's political purposes.

We needed to act now, while the reports of the inspectors still provide limited but fresh intelligence; now, before Saddam can complete hiding his weapons; now, before the commencement of the holy month of Ramadan; now, before the reason for the bombing—Tuesday's U.N. report—becomes old news rather than the final straw justifying immediate action; now, before the world concludes that America has lost its nerve.

Some critics say that the President should have bombed Iraq on November 14th. Mr. Speaker, if the President had done so, those same partisan critics would have savaged him, claiming that he was merely trying to distract us from the November Judiciary Committee Hearings. And if the President had not commenced the bombing yesterday, those same critics would be attacking him today for inaction.

Mr. Speaker—Never underestimate a desperate partisan whose lust for the President's blood causes him to make

statements which unintentionally give aid and comfort to the enemy.

Those that have made such statements should apologize to our troops, to the President, and to the nation.

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT).

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this resolution and in support of our troops overseas. We as a Nation and a Congress must focus now on the servicemen and women who are risking their lives and standing bravely in the days of adversity to ensure safety for all Americans.

Iraq will continue to be a threat to the United States and the rest of the world as long as Saddam Hussein is in power and has the ability to manufacture weapons of mass destruction. Saddam Hussein has been given too many chances to comply with United Nations inspections. We cannot continue to play this dangerous game of cat and mouse.

I support the use of force in this region to ensure the safety of America and global interests. In what should be a season of peace, my thoughts and prayers are with our servicemen and women and their families as they help make the world a safer place. God bless them.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND).

(Mr. KIND asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, now is the time for all of us to join together, not as Republicans and Democrats, but as Americans, to express our support and offer our prayers to the young men and women in American uniform who are responsible for carrying out the current military operation against Saddam Hussein.

Whatever our troubles and conflicts may be at home at this time, I submit that they are rather unimportant compared to the sacrifice these young men and women and their families are making at this time.

Last night, Secretary of Defense Cohen and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Shelton came to this chamber and provided an excellent briefing to us Members of Congress about the military operations, their objective, and their timing. I am convinced now more than ever that this was the right decision at the right time and for the right reason.

I want to just take a moment to thank our British friends and allies who have been partners in peace with us standing together against tyranny to help ensure peace and stability, not only in the Persian Gulf, but throughout the world.

This partnership has grown out of commonly held principles of democracy, freedom, security and peace.

Let me conclude by offering my heartfelt thanks and prayers to the military personnel and their families

for the sacrifice they make to their country. This is especially true this time of year when everyone would prefer to be home during the holidays and with their loved ones.

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS).

(Mr. CHAMBLISS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks, and include extraneous material.)

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman of my committee, along with the ranking member, for bringing this resolution to the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this resolution in the strongest terms. I rise to support the two-part resolution which supports our military men and women now engaged in the Gulf region. Once again, our military has been called upon to beat back an over-aggressive Hussein regime in Iraq, a regime that, against the will of the global community, has perpetrated the development of weapons of mass destruction.

We have been down this road before. Time and again, we have threatened to use force against Hussein's indiscretions. Time and again, we have failed to send an adequate message of our resolve. This time, we must not fail to punctuate our interest in the region and our commitment to peace in the Middle East.

I would like to highlight the participation of the many brave men and women deployed from Robins Air Force Base in Warner Robins, Georgia. One hundred forty representatives of the 5th Combat Communications group and another 15 from the 78th Security Forces Squadron have been deployed since our last buildup in the region. They will be joined by 150 members of the JOINTSTARS unit and a yet-to-be-determined number of our aircraft.

May God go with them in this holiday season as they carry out their duties on behalf of every American to bring peace in the world.

Mr. Speaker, I include the following for the RECORD:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

February 26, 1998.

The Honorable WILLIAM J. CLINTON,
The President of the United States, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: In September, 1996, I wrote you with my thoughts and concerns about U.S. policy toward Iraq (see attached), particularly with regard to the Iraqi government's suppression of the Kurd rebels in the north. I write again to express my concerns about this nation's policy toward Iraq and to urge that you make the overthrow of the current Iraqi government a central element of U.S. policy.

In late 1996, Saddam Hussein and his regime moved aggressively to ensure that anti-Hussein elements in northern Iraq would not pose a political challenge to his authority. In that effort, 2,500 were arrested or murdered by the government. At the same time, some 7,000 of the rebels were evacuated by the U.S. to Guam, and all financial and arms support that had been given to a group of exiled former Iraqi military and political figures

(the Iraqi National Accord) was discontinued. The net effect of U.S. policy then was that nearly 10,000 members of the anti-Hussein movement were neutralized in Iraq and all financial backing dried up.

As an indication of how concerned Hussein is about an internal revolution, intelligence indicates that when a U.S. attack became imminent some weeks ago, Hussein immediately moved to consolidate ground forces toward northern Iraq to deal with a possible uprising. Hussein is clearly concerned about the Kurds. Unfortunately, this nation has done little to promote that threat from within Iraqi borders. In my view, the anti-Hussein element represents the best opportunity for internal change in Iraq. Hussein's regime, which operates as a Republic in name only, is guilty of human rights violations, political oppression and crimes against other nations. This, together with a track record of developing weapons of mass destruction make the restoration of a true Republic in Iraq within the national security interests of the U.S. government.

Rough parallels may be drawn to long-standing U.S. policy in Central America where this nation's anti-Communist policy not only prevented the spread of Communism in our hemisphere, but also promoted democracy to the extent that only one non-democratic government remains. Parallels may also be drawn to our policy late in the Cold War toward the Soviet Union and Poland.

Your administration's policy that has recently placed little or no emphasis on internal Iraqi resistance has left the U.S. with very few options in the frequent cases when Hussein has sought to challenge the authority of the U.N. resolutions. Without a credible resistance force to support, the proposition of U.S. military strikes leaves the U.S. in the perceived position of "global bully."

On the other hand, if the U.S. does not move to enforce U.N. sanctions, we abandon a situation that is clearly in the national security interests of this nation. Neither position yields acceptable results.

In light of the recent agreement negotiated by the United Nations, it seems that we may be averting our current course of conflict with Iraq. This offers you an opportunity to reassess your policy in the region. I have supported, and continue to support, American troops in the Middle Eastern theater as well as your authority as Commander-in-Chief. For this reason, I strongly encourage you to adopt a long-term policy that includes the following tenets: maintains as its ultimate priority the elimination from power of the Hussein regime, and the restoration of a true Iraqi republic, or even democracy; fosters internal resistance to the Hussein regime within Iraq to include financial, political, and physical support; if necessary in the short term, limited tactical airstrikes focusing on Iraq's ability to produce weapons of mass destruction; and institution of a comprehensive, nationwide no-fly/no-troop movement zone while the above initiatives are pursued.

If the U.S. is truly the world leader you and I know it to be, we must act within the accepted rule of law and lead by example. I believe the above-described policy directive meets such a standard. As always, I stand ready to work with you to meet these very real global challenges.

Very truly yours,

SAXBY CHAMBLISS,
Member of Congress.

Enclosure.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

September 5, 1996.

The Honorable WILLIAM J. CLINTON,
The President of the United States,
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, DC

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: I write to express my sincere concern over recent events in northern Iraq and to ask your consideration of potential policy changes. As a Member of the House Committee on National Security, let me make very clear at the outset that I will firmly and unconditionally support the troops of the United States when they are deployed anywhere in the world. The lessons of history have taught us that irrespective of the debate over policy priorities, our troops must be absolutely certain that they act with the support of our entire nation.

In addition, let me make it clear that I support your authority as the Commander-in-Chief of our Armed Services. Your recognition of strife in northern Iraq is well-founded, and U.S. action in response is entirely warranted. However, allow me to make several observations about subsequent military action you have taken.

First, President Reagan's leadership in this nation's defeat of communism has left us a very different world than the one we faced for over 40 years. Today, we alone stand as the world's superpower, yet we are surrounded by countless areas of ethnic strife and political insurrection around the globe. Iraq is only the latest example.

As a result, we have involved our military men and women in more places and more often than ever before. It is critical that while every situation has its individual circumstances, we must maintain a predictable and identifiable set of criteria that guides this nation's military intervention and involvement around the world. In Iraq, I am concerned that our strategic objectives have not clearly been delineated. As a result, it is impossible to determine whether Iraqi military movements satisfy the demands of the United States.

Second, I am more concerned about the lack of international support for our current military operations in Iraq. While I do not assume international support to be required for this nation's military intervention abroad, I do believe it should be obtained when and if time and circumstances permit. Our efforts in Operation Desert Storm should serve as a blueprint for dealing with hostile aggressors.

Consequently, I would like you to consider the following courses of action:

Issue a short-term ultimatum to Saddam Hussein calling for the removal of all soldiers and tanks from the lands around and north of Irbil, Iraq—a "no troop zone" north of the 36 degree north parallel. In the event that the troops are not removed, Iraq will face the destruction of military targets selected from a predetermined list created by our intelligence sources.

Extend the current "no-reinforcement zone" from the 32 degree north to the 33 degree north parallel in accordance with the "no-fly zone" extended earlier this week.

In advance of the issuance of the "no troop zone" deadline, increased diplomatic efforts should be made to garner the support of the western powers and at the very least a sampling of the Arab world.

As I am certain you are aware, this regional instability in Iraq has the potential for blossoming into a full-blown regional conflict involving friend and foe, alike. Reports today indicate the interest of Turkey and Iran to involve their militaries in the region. Clearly, this is a situation that must remain in the control of U.S. forces in the region.

I appreciate your time and consideration of these concerns. I look forward to working

with you as we attempt to resolve this very difficult situation in this very critical region of the world. If there is anything I can do to assist in your efforts to achieve success, please do not hesitate to call on me.

Very truly yours,

SAXBY CHAMBLIS.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FROST).

(Mr. FROST asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and the steps our President has taken in ordering military strikes against Iraq. Almost 8 years ago, on January 12, 1991, I, along with 86 other Democrats, supported President Bush in going to war against Iraq.

I strongly believed then that it was important to support the President in a bipartisan spirit, and I strongly believe now that we need to support our President in the same manner. We need to express our full support of the President's decision and the American troops.

We cannot tolerate Saddam Hussein's actions any further. Iraq refuses to live up to its promise to allow the United Nations to conduct on-site inspections for weapons of mass destruction. Iraq has repeatedly blocked Unscm from inspecting suspect sites. Saddam Hussein has continued to thumb his nose at the United Nations and has no intention in keeping his word, and the United States is right to strike.

This military action serves to protect the interests of the United States and the interest of people throughout the Middle East. This was a difficult decision for the President. The United States is never eager to use force. But with the advice of the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the President acted appropriately.

Our prayers go out to the men and women of the military. We need to show our utmost support of the troops during this difficult time. Their courageous acts will not be soon forgotten by the American people.

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. COOK).

Mr. COOK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from South Carolina (Chairman SPENCE) for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the resolution. I believe this military action is absolutely necessary. I believe that it should have been undertaken well before now.

Like others, I am troubled by the timing of yesterday's bombing. I do not think it is coincidental that the bombs began falling on Iraq only a short hour before caucuses were convening here in Washington to discuss the impeachment vote.

I understand those that believe the public, Congress, the judiciary, and now even the military may have been manipulated. But while the timing may be offensive, the action is abso-

lutely necessary. We must support it as a Congress and as a Nation.

This vote today sends a strong signal to the world and to our troops that, while we will investigate our President when he flaunts the law, we stand united behind him when he acts to protect our national security.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind all Members that it is not in order to engage in personalities toward the President. Although remarks in debate may include criticism of the President's official actions or policies, it is a breach of order to question the personal conduct of the President whether by actual accusation or by mere insinuation.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEXLER).

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution supporting our troops in the Persian Gulf. But, Mr. Speaker, it should not have taken a formal resolution to articulate our unwavering support for our brave men and women and our military operation. It should have been instinctive as it was for most persons.

For one day, we should have been patriots, not partisans. Politics should have stopped at the water's edge. I pray that this resolution undoes the damage done yesterday by the majority leader of the Senate and others who questioned the judgment of the President, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Defense, and our British allies who outlined the urgency for this action against Iraq.

They risk handing Saddam Hussein his only hope, a divided America. Our troops and this operation deserve our unqualified support.

□ 1130

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. DUKE CUNNINGHAM), our Top Gun.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, one day I was fortunate enough to shoot down a MIG 21 over Vietnam, and all 5,000 men and women were up on the flight deck. And as they crowded around the airplane, my plane captain, Willy White, an African-American, broke through the crowds. He knocked over Admiral Cooper. He jumped up on the left wing, just as I am trying to get the ejection seat pin, and he reaches over and grabs me by the arm and he says, Lieutenant Cunningham, Lieutenant Cunningham, we got our MIG today, didn't we?

What was Willy telling me? That every single member of the armed service is a part of a team, and they feel very, very much a part of each of those victories and those losses. I saw plane captains cry when their pilots didn't come back; cry, it is that tight.

We don't need any L.A. protesters, the Tom Haydens, the Jane Fondas,

and Americans protesting in foreign countries. What we need is to be 100 percent behind our troops. Regardless if we agree or disagree politically, we need to get behind the President. We need to fly his wing on this. We need to go in and take care of Saddam Hussein. That is important. It is not important to you and I, it is important to those men and women that are serving.

I would ask my colleagues, some on the other side of the aisle that continue to want to cut defense, our kids are operating at 300 percent above the op tempo level of Vietnam. Our procurement is down 70 percent. We are only keeping in 23 percent of our enlisted. Our experience is gone. We have 1970s technologies in the F-14s, F-15s, and F-18s.

We want to support our kids, not just in our speeches, but support our kids in deed, and make this country the strongest country, with peace through strength, not walk softly and carry a big stick of candy.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ).

(Mr. MENENDEZ asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, a few feet from where I stand is a portrait of George Washington. He reminds all of us that our Nation was founded in a fight for freedom, and that the price for freedom is eternal vigilance. Therefore, the President was right to take this action, and to take it now.

Today in this hallowed hall, surrounded by reminders of that heritage, our troops are in the Gulf risking their lives to preserve freedom, to preserve our way of life, standing against a tyrant who has invaded and bombed his neighbors, murdered his own citizens, threatened world peace, and refused to comply with international law.

To our brave troops, I say, we stand with you. Our hearts, our prayers, our thanks, our admiration is with you, and we will do all that is necessary to support you.

But the one clear message from the Congress today to Saddam Hussein should be, we are at one with our president, the Commander in Chief, in support of this military action in order to protect the world from Iraq's chemical and biological weapons, and no domestic issue will deter or divide us in this resolve.

Yesterday's actions are the result of Iraq's refusal to grant access to UNSCOM inspectors. The United States, the international community, and the President have shown great restraint in the past in dealing with Iraq.

The United States has always viewed the use of force as a final option, but international aggressors like Saddam Hussein should not misinterpret that as a sign of weakness in our resolve to demand that Iraq comply with international law and destroy its weapons of mass destruction.

The battles may change, the times may change, the ships may be called by

different names, but the fight remains the same, the fight for liberty, peace and security; the fight we began more than 200 years ago for freedom.

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY).

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Let me take strong umbrage to a comment by the gentleman from California, who suggested if we question the motives of the President, somehow we are aiding and giving comfort to the enemy; followed by the gentleman from Texas, who said on this floor that he was among 86 who signed a resolution supporting President Bush. What does he say about the rest of Congress at that time, they were unpatriotic?

Mr. Speaker, we are debating about the lives of men and women in the field, and I ask that this House conduct themselves appropriately, and discuss that very essential and vital task they have in front of them.

I want to strongly thank the gentleman from Louisiana (Speaker-elect LIVINGSTON) and the gentleman from South Carolina (Chairman FLOYD SPENCE) for calling together Congress last night to hear our defense leaders discuss the grave dangers our men and women would face and the importance of this mission, because at a time like this, we must rally ourselves for those same people.

I rise in support today of the resolution commending our troops in the Persian Gulf. With everything else going on here and the world over, too often as a Nation we neglect to note the sacrifices performed by our men and women in uniform. As we are reminded last night with the sobering images of antiaircraft fire in Baghdad, our brave service men and women put their lives on the line to preserve peace and democracy in this world.

Whatever any of us think of the effectiveness of our U.S. foreign policy in the Persian Gulf, no one can question the performance of our armed forces in carrying out their duty in the Gulf. Time and time again our troops have mobilized in response to Saddam Hussein's provocations, and each time their professionalism, dedication, and courage have inspired fear in the enemy, awe in our allies, and pride in our country.

Let us never forget, when we take to the floor of the House Chamber, that it is our men and women in uniform who preserve our right to debate what is best for our Nation. In expressing my gratitude to those noble men and women, I also want to thank their families, many of whom are in my district, and want them to know that our thoughts and prayers are with them at this perilous time.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ROTHMAN).

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to affirm my unconditional support for our troops involved in the mis-

sion against Saddam Hussein, to affirm to the world and to Saddam Hussein that the American people and America's elected representatives are united behind the work of our Armed Forces.

We offer each member of our Armed Forces, over 20,000 strong in the Gulf, this united support, and we want to tell them that the American people stand shoulder to shoulder with them. Their mission, Operation Desert Fox, is a continuation of President Bush's efforts to stop a dangerous and evil madman who threatens his neighbors and all the world with his continuing efforts to manufacture, stockpile, and use political, chemical, and nuclear weapons.

The President's decisive action was the right move at the right time. We have given Saddam Hussein enough chances. With or without allies, it was time to act, to stand up for our national interests, and to stand up for what is right. God bless our service men and women, and God bless America.

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HUTCHINSON).

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution. I commend the House leadership for suspending the scheduled business to set aside this time for a bipartisan expression of support for our Armed Forces. This is in the finest tradition of the United States Congress, and sends a signal to the enemies of the United States that we are united in the protection of our national interest.

I have advocated publicly the development of a clear long-term strategy in our dealings with Iraq, but despite this wish on my part, I certainly support the military strikes, and believe that they are justified. I fully support the actions by our President at the recommendation of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs.

But most importantly, today, I rise to support our troops that are overseas. I understand that there are men and women from the Arkansas National Guard and other areas of the service serving in the Persian Gulf region. I want to express my support for them and recognize their service to our country, as well as the men and women from all parts of the country.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO).

(Mr. DEFAZIO ASKED AND WAS GIVEN PERMISSION TO REVISE AND EXTEND HIS REMARKS.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me. I rise in support of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, of course I support our troops and I will support this resolution. But I have profound concerns about not only long term United States policy toward Iraq, but about the lack of congressional authorization for the President's use of force.

Congress, not the President, has the constitutional authority to declare war or initiate

broad, non-defensive hostilities against foreign nations. Yet every Congress in modern times has failed to protect its prerogatives. As a result, Presidents from Harry Truman to Ronald Reagan to Bill Clinton have run roughshod over weak-kneed congressional leaders, and spent the Nation's wealth and the lives of its young people in overseas entanglements. During my time in Congress, I have consistently opposed Presidential war-making, whether it was initiated by Republican Presidents or Democrats.

Saddam Hussein is a brutal dictator and a war criminal who threatens the long-term peace and stability of the Middle East. His continuing efforts to build weapons of mass destruction cannot be tolerated. The United States needs to continue to work with its allies and the international community to nullify this threat.

But after being briefed by the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff last night, I am not aware of any immediate threat that justifies this nearly unilateral action by U.S. forces—an action that has not been authorized by the U.S. Congress and an action that is opposed by a number of our allies. There was no reason in this instance that the President could not have come to Congress for its support in this action. There is no reason that we could not have taken the time to garner more support from our allies.

Ultimately, it is up to Congress and its leaders to insist that this and future Presidents seek and gain the approval of Congress when U.S. Armed Forces are sent to war. Otherwise we can look forward to an endless series of foreign entanglements and overseas wars.

So, while I support this resolution supporting our troops, I will continue to oppose Presidential wars and question United States policy toward Iraq.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, over the last couple of weeks I have been dealing a lot with the Constitution of the United States, which starts, "We, the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union," and which has, as one of its responsibilities, to ensure the common defense.

I am glad we are governed by a Constitution that lives and breathes, so it is very important for me to come today to express the abundant confidence that I have in the United States military, our men and women, who now go to fight for freedom. Freedom is what they fight for, for I am sure that as we stand together as a Nation, that we stand with them in our prayers and our support as they conduct this vital operation.

The United States and its international partners have long tried to preserve a fragile peace, but at every corner in this long road the international community has been met with defiance by the leader of Iraq.

Saddam Hussein has refused to live up to the agreements which Iraq agreed to at the end of the Gulf War. The weapons inspectors have been repeatedly denied access to several suspect sites. I would hope that we as a body

would stay away from irresponsible remarks, and realize that we must stand together.

Despite these exhaustive efforts to bring peace, Saddam Hussein's regime, by its own conduct, has abused every opportunity for peace that was granted by the international community. As our president and Commander in Chief said last night, this situation presents a clear and present danger to the stability of the Persian Gulf and the safety of people everywhere. Hussein, if unchecked, would use these weapons again. We must ensure that nuclear arms, poison gas, or biological weapons.

I also say that we in this body, along with the Commander in Chief, must have a definitive policy to protect the suffering women and children, and to make sure that democracy comes to that region. So I join this Congress in supporting our Commander in Chief, and staying away from ugly words and bringing our Nation together. God bless our troops and God bless America.

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. PACKARD).

(Mr. PACKARD asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, not thinking that there would be sufficient time, I have already submitted my statement for the RECORD, but I would like to simply say that it is refreshing to have a bipartisan across-the-board support of this resolution that calls for us to support our troops.

I also think it is wise that we use this opportunity to indicate how important it is that we increase the defense budget to allow us to meet these kinds of crises. We have pared away on the defense budget to where it is almost impossible for us to meet these kinds of crises and still do what is needed to strengthen our support for the troops with equipment and with facilities.

I hope that every one of those that are supporting this resolution will come to support an increase in the defense budget when the time comes. I certainly have great love and respect for the servicemen that are serving, I wish them well, and certainly pray to God that they will be protected as they serve.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN).

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and the underlying decision to strike military targets in Iraq. Since the end of the gulf war, Saddam Hussein has done everything in his power to continue to amass and produce weapons of mass destruction. He is a threat to our country, and indeed, the world.

Ambassador Richard Butler has now concluded that UNSCOM can no longer

effectively conduct weapons inspections in Iraq because of the obstacles Saddam has placed in its path. Clearly Saddam's defiance of the international community knows no bounds. He has left us with no choice but to use force.

To my colleagues who have questioned the President's motives in the midst of this crisis, shame on them. Shame on them for breaking the long-standing tradition that leaves party politics at our Nation's shores. They have set yet another dangerous precedent.

□ 1145

Shame on you for playing into the hands of Saddam, who clearly staged his latest act of defiance to coincide with the impeachment process. You have empowered our Nation's enemy.

Instead of playing petty partisan politics, I hope my friends across the aisle heed the words of JOHN MCCAIN, a war hero and a leading expert on national security: I believe it was essential to support the President. Here, domestically, I think the American people have the ability to divide the two issues because they are very separate.

Mr. Speaker, a majority of the American people not only support the President's decision but also discount the reckless and irresponsible accusations of an ulterior motive. I hope that we can do the same in this Chamber.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. CLEMENT).

(Mr. CLEMENT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Speaker, as a veteran National Guardsman and member of the Committee on International Relations, I stand in strong support of this resolution to support our men and women in uniform.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this resolution. As a member of the House International Relations Committee, I commend the President and his top military advisors for their decision to launch Operation Desert Fox and I support the brave service men and women charged with carrying out this important mission. Our thoughts and prayers are with them all.

Yesterday, the U.S. military took strong, decisive, and necessary action to degrade Saddam Hussein's capabilities to produce chemical, biological and nuclear weapons of mass destruction and the strikes continue today. Yet again, Saddam Hussein rebuffed efforts by the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) to conduct thorough inspections of possible weapons manufacturing sites. Enough is enough. After Chief Inspector Richard Butler reported of continued acts of Iraqi non-compliance with the UNSCOM team, the United States was left with no choice but to take such strong actions.

The United States has done everything it can to diplomatically find solutions to the situation in Iraq. Saddam has done everything he can to thwart the efforts of UNSCOM, ignore diplomatic remedies and has left no alternative but military force. His shell games and decep-

tion of the UNSCOM inspectors must stop. I look forward to the day when there is a new Iraqi government in place, rid of the horrors of Saddam's dictatorship. We must do everything in our power to once and for all totally eliminate Saddam's capabilities to threaten regional and world peace.

No matter what party divisions, differences in opinion, or domestic circumstances we face, now is the time we must unite. We must support our troops, support the mission of Desert Fox and support our President. May God bless our troops in the Persian Gulf and God bless America.

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS).

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues in full support of the resolution at hand. I not only support the troops in all of their endeavors but I support the decision of the President to take this action. There are those, some puzzling developments that I want to make clear at least from my own satisfaction in the days to come.

One is this, the President and later the Secretary of Defense emphasized the fact that this strike had to occur now because of the advent of Ramadan, the holy period in the Iraqi and Middle Eastern world. And that was understandable until the Secretary of Defense went on further to say that plans were being implemented for further action down the road to include continuous bombing, perhaps after the advent of Ramadan.

If that is the case, then there might be a rationale more consistent to wait until more intelligence had been gathered to find out where the dispersements could occur of the Republican guard, et cetera. So these questions are still unanswered. But this will not deter us from full support of the resolution at hand.

However, the other pausing factor in my appraisal of this entire situation is this, that if indeed we did not have to take the first strike before the advent of Ramadan, because some of the plans called for bombing after the advent of Ramadan, then perhaps we could have had a full congressional approval of any forthcoming action so that the President would be armed with a resolution from the Congress, as George Bush was so armed before launching Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

In that regard, these are only remarks meant for the record so that I, myself, can pursue them. I support this resolution.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI).

(Ms. PELOSI asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, recognizing the need to halt Saddam Hussein's proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, concerned about the harm to Iraq's children but eternally grateful to our young people, to American troops, I rise in strong support of the resolution.

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House Intelligence Committee, I am keenly aware that the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons is an issue of grave importance to all nations. Saddam Hussein has been engaged in the development of weapons of mass destruction technology which is a threat to countries in the region and he has made a mockery of the weapons inspection process.

The responsibility of the United States in this conflict is to eliminate weapons of mass destruction, to minimize the danger to our troops and to diminish the suffering of the Iraqi people. The citizens of Iraq have suffered the most for Saddam Hussein's activities; sadly, those same citizens now stand to suffer more. I have supported efforts to ease the humanitarian situation in Iraq and my thoughts and prayers are with the innocent Iraqi civilians, as well as with the families of U.S. troops participating in the current action.

I believe in negotiated solutions to international conflict. This is, unfortunately, not going to be the case in this situation where Saddam Hussein has been a repeat offender, ignoring the international community's requirement that he come clean with his weapons program. While I support the President, I hope and pray that this conflict can be resolved quickly and that the international community can find a lasting solution through diplomatic means.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL).

(Mr. ENGEL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the resolution, our troops and our President making the decision. I was one of the Democrats 8 years ago to support President Bush. I urge my friends on the other side of the aisle to support President Clinton in this endeavor.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN).

(Mr. GREEN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GREEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the resolution and our troops.

Mr. Speaker, it is important for this Congress and this country to show unity and support for the service men and women who are risking their lives to protect our freedom. I rise in strong support of the resolution.

I am deeply disappointed in my colleagues who have chosen to question the President's motives to launch this attack. Keep in mind that Operation Desert Fox has the full support of this nation's entire national security team, which includes a former Republican Senator. It is also being coordinated with our international allies who are equally concerned about Saddam Hussein's willingness to ignore the will of the world. Finally, this military action was launched after the UN inspectors reported Iraq had once again prevented them from doing their jobs to make our country and our citizens safe.

This is not an attempt to avoid the impeachment debate. This is not an attempt to delay the impeachment debate. This is the President of the United States acting in the interests of the country he was elected to lead.

When the lives of American service men and women are at stake we owe it to them and their families to put our partisan differences aside.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Maine (Mr. BALDACCI).

(Mr. BALDACCI asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BALDACCI. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the President's decision to strike Baghdad. It is in our country's best interest. We have to ensure that these biological and chemical weapons no longer pose a threat.

Mr. Speaker, the United States and the United Nations have shown a great deal of restraint by choosing to first deal with Iraq through many rounds of negotiations and diplomacy. However, Iraq's most recent actions to prevent weapons inspectors from investigating its weapons of mass destruction program have left the world community with no choice but to respond with force.

While I regret that this is the situation, I support the President's decision to strike Baghdad. It is in our country's best interest that we do all that we can to ensure Saddam's biological and chemical weapons no longer pose a threat to his neighbors and the world.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER).

(Mr. TURNER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a member of the Committee on National Security in support of this resolution and in support of the President's decision to act swiftly and decisively in response to Saddam Hussein's defiance of the United Nations resolution requiring Saddam to grant permission to the inspection team for full and unfettered access to suspected sites as well as to documentation relating to the production of chemical and biological weapons.

Just one month ago, Saddam Hussein was given a second chance to demonstrate his willingness to comply with the United Nations resolution. In spite of the President's record of noncompliance, the President agreed to withhold the use of force. However, the President stated unequivocally that the trigger would remain cocked and if Saddam failed to keep his word, there would be no further delay in our actions.

When Saddam refused to keep his word and the U.N. inspection team leader, Mr. Butler, withdrew his inspectors and filed his report, the United States had no option but to carry out military action. Our credibility, our Nation's word and our credibility as a leader of world peace was at stake.

May God be with our Nation and with our troops as they defend liberty and freedom on this day.

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS).

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the time of my distinguished colleague.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I rise today as always to support the American military personnel. In fact, we may give the administration the benefit of doubt on the timing. But I question his overall long-term foreign policy in dealing with Iraq. The Clinton administration has carried out for 6 years the most feeble policy against Iraq. Saddam Hussein has done everything in his power to block full weapons inspections.

Do not take my word for it. On August 14 of this year, the Washington Post reported, "the Clinton administration has intervened secretly for months, most recently on August 7, 1998, to dissuade the United Nations weapons team from mounting surprise inspections in Iraq because it wished to avoid a new crisis with the Baghdad government, this is according to knowledgeable American and diplomatic accounts."

Mr. President, I hope you will inform the American people why the administration did all it could to block secret weapons inspections by the United Nations team for months, if not for years. And now that Iraq predictably continues to block weapons inspections, explain to us the timing of this launch.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I support the American troops. But I question the overall long-term policy of the administration in dealing with Saddam Hussein.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the article from the Washington Post of August 14, 1998.

U.S. SOUGHT TO PREVENT IRAQI ARMS INSPECTIONS; SURPRISE VISITS CANCELED AFTER ALBRIGHT ARGUED THAT TIMING WAS WRONG

(By Barton Gellman)

The Clinton administration has intervened secretly for months, most recently last Friday, to dissuade United Nations weapons teams from mounting surprise inspections in Iraq because it wished to avoid a new crisis with the Baghdad government, according to knowledgeable American and diplomatic accounts.

The American interventions included an Aug. 4 telephone call between Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright and Richard Butler, executive chairman of the U.N. Special Commission responsible for Iraq's disarmament, who spoke on a secure line from the U.S. Embassy in Bahrain. As a team of specialists stood poised in Baghdad, according to persons acquainted with the call, Albright urged Butler to rescind closely held orders for the team to mount "challenge inspections" at two sites where intelligence leads suggested they could uncover forbidden weapons components and documents describing Iraqi efforts to conceal them.

After a second high-level caution from Washington last Friday, Butler canceled the special inspection and ordered his team to leave Baghdad. The disclosure was made yesterday by officials who regarded the abandoned leads as the most promising in years and objected to what they described as the American role in squelching them.

U.S. efforts to forge a go-slow policy in Iraq have coincided with the announcement by the Baghdad government that it would halt nearly all cooperation with the U.N. commission, known as UNSCOM, and the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Administration. The two panels are responsible

for ridding Iraq of ballistic missiles and biological, chemical and nuclear weapons.

The behind-the-scenes campaign of caution is at odds with the Clinton administration's public position as the strongest proponent of unconditional access for the inspectors to any site in Iraq. Led by the United States, and backed by American threats of war, the U.N. Security Council has demanded repeatedly since 1991—most recently in Resolution 1154 on March 2—that Iraq give “immediate, unconditional and unrestricted” cooperation to the inspection teams. That last resolution, at U.S. insistence, promised “the severest consequences for Iraq” for further defiance and was voted under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, which is legal grounds for use of military force.

Last week, as Albright reportedly sought to rein in Butler, the administration was retreating from the vows it made six months ago to strike immediately and with significant military force if Iraq failed to honor a Feb. 23 agreement that resolved the last such crisis over inspections. At that time, administration spokesmen described a “snap back” policy of automatic military retaliation if Iraqi President Saddam Hussein violated his agreement with U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan.

Now the administration argues, as White House spokesman P.J. Crowley said yesterday, that Iraq is proposing “a cat-and-mouse game” and “we’re not going to play.” He said the United States would continue its “encouragement” of Iraq’s compliance with its obligations and would not allow economic sanctions to be lifted until it does so.

Albright, in a one-sentence statement issued through a spokesman, said last night: “U.S. policy has been to fully support UNSCOM in its inspections and I have never told Ambassador Butler how to do his job.” She said those speaking for her declined to answer further questions about her Aug. 4 “private discussions” with Butler and would not address specifically whether she had advised him to cancel the planned raids.

Butler, reached by telephone yesterday, said any suggestion that he received orders from Albright would be “a very considerable distortion of what took place.” He added, “No member of the [Security] Council, including the United States, has purported to give me instructions. They all recognize that their job is policy, my job is operations.”

Asked whether Albright urged him or advised him not to go forward, Butler said any answer “would be a very slippery slope” in which “I’d have to tell you what the Russian ambassador said, what the French ambassador said. Forgive me, but I won’t get into that.” Asked to confirm he spoke to Albright last week, he said, “I’m becoming concerned now about this line of inquiry.”

Beginning in June, according to knowledgeable officials, the U.N. inspectors developed secret plans—withheld from most members of their own staff—for surprise raids at two sites where they believed they would find evidence of forbidden chemical and biological weapons and the ballistic missiles capable of deploying them. The officials declined to describe the sites further, noting that they are still in operation.

In a little-known practice that all parties are loath to acknowledge, Butler dispatched senior lieutenants to London and Washington in late June to provide highly classified briefings on the intended inspection “targets,” the sources said. Formally, Butler reports equally to all members of the Security Council and does not give them advance operational plans. But one official said he understands “it’s suicide to go forward with an inspection like this” without informing his principal sponsors, the United States and Britain.

The two governments, according to knowledgeable officials, acknowledged to Butler’s deputies that UNSCOM had the right to make its own decisions. But they worked in concert in the weeks that followed to dissuade Butler from going forward with the inspection plan.

After consultations in Washington, Derek Plumbly, director of the British Foreign Office’s Middle East Command, flew to New York for a July 15 meeting with Butler. He told the Australian diplomat in no uncertain terms that the time was not ripe for a provocative challenge to Iraq, in part because Baghdad was still cooperating, ostensibly, on a “schedule of work” intended to resolve open questions, the sources said.

Shortly after that meeting, U.S. Ambassador Peter Burchill, the second-ranking delegate to the United Nations, called in Butler for a consultation in which he raised a long list of U.S. questions and concerns about the planned raids. Reading from prepared guidance, he told Butler the decision was UNSCOM’s but left the inspection chief with the plain understanding that the United States did not support his plan, according to a knowledgeable account of the meeting.

Butler canceled the raids in July but laid contingency plans to reschedule them this month after meetings on Aug. 3 and 4 in Baghdad with Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz. Aziz announced late on the first day that Iraq would answer no further questions about its forbidden weapons, asserting that all the answers had long since been made.

Butler had brought a senior inspection team led by Scott Ritter, who heads UNSCOM’s efforts to penetrate Iraqi counterintelligence efforts against the inspectors. Included on Ritter’s team, officials said, were language and computer experts, experts on import and export records, and scientists knowledgeable about missiles, chemical and biological weapons.

On Aug. 4, Butler notified the U.S. government that he had authorized Ritter’s team to conduct the raids on Aug. 6. That same day, he got word that Albright wished to speak with him and traveled to the U.S. Embassy in Bahrain for a secure discussion. Albright argued, according to knowledgeable accounts, that it would be a big mistake to proceed because the political stage had not been set in the Security Council.

Butler agreed to a three-day delay, to Aug. 9, in hopes that he could build broader support for UNSCOM during informal consultations with the Security Council. But after he briefed the council governments in New York, he got another high-level American call on Friday urging him to have the Ritter team stand down. The same day, he ordered them home.

In a letter to the council Wednesday, Butler said Iraq’s new restrictions “bring to a halt all of the disarmament activities” of his inspectors. On Tuesday, Mohamed Baradei, director general of the IAEA, sent a similar letter to the council saying he could no longer give confident assurance that Iraq is not attempting to reconstitute its nuclear weapons program.

Both men are awaiting further instruction from the Security Council, which is scheduled to take up the matter Tuesday. Yesterday in Baghdad, U.N. special envoy Prakash Shah said he conveyed a message from Annan that “Iraq should continue its cooperation” with the weapons inspectors. He announced no results from what he described as a “cordial” meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The Chair would advise all

Members to address their comments to the Chair.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HINOJOSA).

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

I stand here today to say I wholeheartedly support the decision of our President and Commander in Chief to launch a series of air strikes against Iraq and that I support 100 percent the resolution we will be voting on shortly.

While it is a sad day, this action was necessary. It is an action that is justified. Every avenue has been exhausted to prevent this, but ultimately, it is action prompted by Saddam Hussein and his contempt for complying with the international rule of law.

Now the consequences for that disdain must be realized. In a closed door session in this House last night, all Members, Republicans and Democrats, met with Defense Secretary Cohen. I think any reservations with regard to timing were put to rest at that time. But if further questions linger, I should point out that important congressional and Senatorial voices of support are strongly behind the President’s actions. These voices include House Committee on International Relations member, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), incoming Senate Committee on Armed Services chairman, JOHN WARNER, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations chairman, JESSE HELMS, Senator DASCHLE and Senator RICHARD LUGAR, who said the attack came at exactly the right time, that any other decision would have severely damaged the credibility of our United States.

I wish to conclude by saying to our men and women in uniform, you have our undivided support. You represent our Nation’s finest. You defend not only our freedom but also the ideals of democracy across the globe. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind all Members that they should not make reference to Senators’ comments.

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCHREST), a Vietnam veteran.

Mr. GILCHREST. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

I want to make two quick points on the floor this morning. The first point is that this is a representative body, based on constitutional provisions that provide for differences of opinion. The strength of this country is that we, as Representatives, critically analyze the decisions of other elected officials and even the President. So for us to discuss the issue of an invasion of Iraq is totally proper.

The other issue I want to bring up is that all of us, regardless of our party