

Congressman Ron Paul U.S. House of Representatives October 8, 2002

Statement Opposing the use of Military Force against Iraq

Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution. The wisdom of the war is one issue, but the process and the philosophy behind our foreign policy are important issues as well. But I have come to the conclusion that I see no threat to our national security. There is no convincing evidence that Iraq is capable of threatening the security of this country, and, therefore, very little reason, if any, to pursue a war.

But I am very interested also in the process that we are pursuing. This is not a resolution to declare war. We know that. This is a resolution that does something much different. This resolution transfers the responsibility, the authority, and the power of the Congress to the President so he can declare war when and if he wants to. He has not even indicated that he wants to go to war or has to go to war; but he will make the full decision, not the Congress, not the people through the Congress of this country in that manner.

It does something else, though. One-half of the resolution delivers this power to the President, but it also instructs him to enforce U.N. resolutions. I happen to think I would rather listen to the President when he talks about unilateralism and national security interests, than accept this responsibility to follow all of the rules and the dictates of the United Nations. That is what this resolution does. It instructs him to follow all of the resolutions.

But an important aspect of the philosophy and the policy we are endorsing here is the preemption doctrine. This should not be passed off lightly. It has been done to some degree in the past, but never been put into law that we will preemptively strike another nation that has not attacked us. No matter what the arguments may be, this policy is new; and it will have ramifications for our future, and it will have ramifications for the future of the world because other countries will adopt this same philosophy.

I also want to mention very briefly something that has essentially never been brought up. For more than a thousand years there has been a doctrine and Christian definition of what a just

war is all about. I think this effort and this plan to go to war comes up short of that doctrine. First, it says that there has to be an act of aggression; and there has not been an act of aggression against the United States. We are 6,000 miles from their shores.

Also, it says that all efforts at negotiations must be exhausted. I do not believe that is the case. It seems to me like the opposition, the enemy, right now is begging for more negotiations.

Also, the Christian doctrine says that the proper authority must be responsible for initiating the war. I do not believe that proper authority can be transferred to the President nor to the United Nations.

But a very practical reason why I have a great deal of reservations has to do with the issue of no-win wars that we have been involved in for so long. Once we give up our responsibilities from here in the House and the Senate to make these decisions, it seems that we depend on the United Nations for our instructions; and that is why, as a Member earlier indicated, essentially we are already at war. That is correct. We are still in the Persian Gulf War. We have been bombing for 12 years, and the reason President Bush, Sr., did not go all the way? He said the U.N. did not give him permission to.

My argument is when we go to war through the back door, we are more likely to have the wars last longer and not have resolution of the wars, such as we had in Korea and Vietnam. We ought to consider this very seriously.

Also it is said we are wrong about the act of aggression, there has been an act of aggression against us because Saddam Hussein has shot at our airplanes. The fact that he has missed every single airplane for 12 years, and tens of thousands of sorties have been flown, indicates the strength of our enemy, an impoverished, Third World nation that does not have an air force, anti-aircraft weapons, or a navy.

But the indication is because he shot at us, therefore, it is an act of aggression. However, what is cited as the reason for us flying over the no-fly zone comes from U.N. Resolution 688, which instructs us and all the nations to contribute to humanitarian relief in the Kurdish and the Shiite areas. It says nothing about no-fly zones, and it says nothing about bombing missions over Iraq.

So to declare that we have been attacked, I do not believe for a minute that this fulfills the requirement that we are retaliating against aggression by this country. There is a need for us to assume responsibility for the declaration of war, and also to prepare the American people for the taxes that will be raised and the possibility of a military draft which may well come.

I must oppose this resolution, which regardless of what many have tried to claim will lead us into war with Iraq. This resolution is not a declaration of war, however, and that is an important point: this resolution transfers the Constitutionally-mandated Congressional authority to declare wars to the executive branch. This resolution tells the president that he alone has the authority to determine when, where, why, and how war will be declared. It merely asks the president to pay us a courtesy call a couple of days after the bombing starts to let us know what is going on. This is exactly what our Founding Fathers cautioned against when crafting our form of government: most had just left behind a monarchy where the power to declare war rested in one individual. It is this they most wished to avoid.

As James Madison wrote in 1798, "The Constitution supposes what the history of all governments demonstrates, that the executive is the branch of power most interested in war, and most prone to it. It has, accordingly, with studied care, vested the question of war in the legislature."

Some- even some in this body- have claimed that this Constitutional requirement is an anachronism, and that those who insist on following the founding legal document of this country are just being frivolous. I could not disagree more.

Mr. Speaker, for the more than one dozen years I have spent as a federal legislator I have taken a particular interest in foreign affairs and especially the politics of the Middle East. From my seat on the international relations committee I have had the opportunity to review dozens of documents and to sit through numerous hearings and mark-up sessions regarding the issues of both Iraq and international terrorism.

Back in 1997 and 1998 I publicly spoke out against the actions of the Clinton Administration, which I believed was moving us once again toward war with Iraq. I believe the genesis of our current policy was unfortunately being set at that time. Indeed, many of the same voices who then demanded that the Clinton Administration attack Iraq are now demanding that the Bush Administration attack Iraq. It is unfortunate that these individuals are using the tragedy of September 11, 2001 as cover to force their long-standing desire to see an American invasion of

Iraq. Despite all of the information to which I have access, I remain very skeptical that the nation of Iraq poses a serious and immanent terrorist threat to the United States. If I were convinced of such a threat I would support going to war, as I did when I supported President Bush by voting to give him both the authority and the necessary funding to fight the war on terror.

Mr. Speaker, consider some of the following claims presented by supporters of this resolution, and contrast them with the following facts:

Claim: Iraq has consistently demonstrated its willingness to use force against the US through its firing on our planes patrolling the UN-established "no-fly zones."

Reality: The "no-fly zones" were never authorized by the United Nations, nor was their 12 year patrol by American and British fighter planes sanctioned by the United Nations. Under UN Security Council Resolution 688 (April, 1991), Iraq's repression of the Kurds and Shi'ites was condemned, but there was no authorization for "no-fly zones," much less airstrikes. The resolution only calls for member states to "contribute to humanitarian relief" in the Kurd and Shi'ite areas. Yet the US and British have been bombing Iraq in the "no-fly zones" for 12 years. While one can only condemn any country firing on our pilots, isn't the real argument whether we should continue to bomb Iraq relentlessly? Just since 1998, some 40,000 sorties have been flown over Iraq.

Claim: Iraq is an international sponsor of terrorism.

Reality: According to the latest edition of the State Department's Patterns of Global Terrorism, Iraq sponsors several minor Palestinian groups, the Mujahedin-e-Khalq (MEK), and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). None of these carries out attacks against the United States. As a matter of fact, the MEK (an Iranian organization located in Iraq) has enjoyed broad Congressional support over the years. According to last year's Patterns of Global Terrorism, Iraq has not been involved in terrorist activity against the West since 1993 – the alleged attempt against former President Bush.

Claim: Iraq tried to assassinate President Bush in 1993.

Reality: It is far from certain that Iraq was behind the attack. News reports at the time were skeptical about Kuwaiti assertions that the attack was planned by Iraq against former President Bush. Following is an interesting quote from Seymour Hersh's article from Nov. 1993:

Three years ago, during Iraq's six-month occupation of Kuwait, there had been an outcry when a teen-age Kuwaiti girl testified eloquently and effectively before Congress about Iraqi atrocities involving newborn infants. The girl turned out to be the daughter of the Kuwaiti Ambassador to Washington, Sheikh Saud Nasir al-Sabah, and her account of Iraqi soldiers flinging babies out of incubators was challenged as exaggerated both by journalists and by human-rights groups. (Sheikh Saud was subsequently named Minister of Information in Kuwait, and he was the government official in charge of briefing the international press on the alleged assassination attempt against George Bush.) In a second incident, in August of 1991, Kuwait provoked a special session of the United Nations Security Council by claiming that twelve Iraqi vessels, including a speedboat, had been involved in an attempt to assault Bubiyan Island, long-disputed territory that was then under Kuwaiti control. The Security Council eventually concluded that, while the Iraqis had been provocative, there had been no Iraqi military raid, and that the Kuwaiti government knew there hadn't. What did take place was nothing more than a smuggler-versus-smuggler dispute over war booty in a nearby demilitarized zone that had emerged, after the Gulf War, as an illegal marketplace for alcohol, ammunition, and livestock.

This establishes that on several occasions Kuwait has lied about the threat from Iraq. Hersh goes on to point out in the article numerous other times the Kuwaitis lied to the US and the UN about Iraq. Here is another good quote from Hersh:

The President was not alone in his caution. Janet Reno, the Attorney General, also had her doubts. "The A.G. remains skeptical of certain aspects of the case," a senior Justice Department official told me in late July, a month after the bombs were dropped on Baghdad...Two weeks later, what amounted to open warfare broke out among various factions in the government on the issue of who had done what in Kuwait. Someone gave a Boston Globe reporter access to a classified C.I.A. study that was highly skeptical of the Kuwaiti claims of an Iraqi assassination attempt. The study, prepared by the C.I.A.'s Counter Terrorism Center, suggested that Kuwait might have "cooked the books" on the alleged plot in an effort to play up the "continuing Iraqi threat" to Western interests in the Persian Gulf. Neither the Times nor the Post made any significant mention of the Globe dispatch, which had been written by a Washington correspondent named Paul Quinn-Judge, although the story cited specific paragraphs from the C.I.A. assessment. The two major American newspapers had been driven by their sources to the other side of the debate.

At the very least, the case against Iraq for the alleged bomb threat is not conclusive.

Claim: Saddam Hussein will use weapons of mass destruction against us – he has already used them against his own people (the Kurds in 1988 in the village of Halabja).

Reality: It is far from certain that Iraq used chemical weapons against the Kurds. It may be accepted as conventional wisdom in these times, but back when it was first claimed there was great skepticism. The evidence is far from conclusive. A 1990 study by the Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army War College cast great doubts on the claim that Iraq used chemical weapons on the Kurds. Following are the two gassing incidents as described in the report:

In September 1988, however – a month after the war (between Iran and Iraq) had ended – the State Department abruptly, and in what many viewed as a sensational manner, condemned Iraq for allegedly using chemicals against its Kurdish population. The incident cannot be understood without some background of Iraq's relations with the Kurds...throughout the war Iraq effectively faced two enemies – Iran and elements of its own Kurdish minority. Significant numbers of the Kurds had launched a revolt against Baghdad and in the process teamed up with Tehran. As soon as the war with Iran ended, Iraq announced its determination to crush the Kurdish insurrection. It sent Republican Guards to the Kurdish area, and in the course of the operation – according to the U.S. State Department – gas was used, with the result that numerous Kurdish civilians were killed. The Iraqi government denied that any such gassing had occurred. Nonetheless, Secretary of State Schultz stood by U.S. accusations, and the U.S. Congress, acting on its own, sought to impose economic sanctions on Baghdad as a violator of the Kurds' human rights.

Having looked at all the evidence that was available to us, we find it impossible to confirm the State Department's claim that gas was used in this instance. To begin with. There were never any victims produced. International relief organizations who examined the Kurds – in Turkey where they had gone for asylum – failed to discover any. Nor were there ever any found inside Iraq. The claim rests solely on testimony of the Kurds who had crossed the border into Turkey, where they were interviewed by staffers of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee...

It appears that in seeking to punish Iraq, the Congress was influenced by another incident that occurred five months earlier in another Iraqi-Kurdish city, Halabjah. In March 1988, the Kurds at Halabjah were bombarded with chemical weapons, producing many deaths. Photographs

of the Kurdish victims were widely disseminated in the international media. Iraq was blamed for the Halabjah attack, even though it was subsequently brought out that Iran too had used chemicals in this operation and it seemed likely that it was the *Iranian* bombardment that had actually killed the Kurds.

Thus, in our view, the Congress acted more on the basis of emotionalism than factual information, and without sufficient thought for the adverse diplomatic effects of its action.

Claim: Iraq must be attacked because it has ignored UN Security Council resolutions – these resolutions must be backed up by the use of force.

Reality: Iraq is but one of the many countries that have not complied with UN Security Council resolutions. In addition to the dozen or so resolutions currently being violated by Iraq, a conservative estimate reveals that there are an additional 91 Security Council resolutions by countries other than Iraq that are also currently being violated. Adding in older resolutions that were violated would mean easily more than 200 UN Security Council resolutions have been violated with total impunity. Countries currently in violation include: Israel, Turkey, Morocco, Croatia, Armenia, Russia, Sudan, Turkey-controlled Cyprus, India, Pakistan, Indonesia. None of these countries have been threatened with force over their violations.

Claim: Iraq has anthrax and other chemical and biological agents.

Reality: That may be true. However, according to UNSCOM's chief weapons inspector 90-95 percent of Iraq's chemical and biological weapons and capabilities were destroyed by 1998; those that remained have likely degraded in the intervening four years and are likely useless. A 1994 Senate Banking Committee hearing revealed some 74 shipments of deadly chemical and biological agents from the U.S. to Iraq in the 1980s. As one recent press report stated:

One 1986 shipment from the Virginia-based American Type Culture Collection included three strains of anthrax, six strains of the bacteria that make botulinum toxin and three strains of the bacteria that cause gas gangrene. Iraq later admitted to the United Nations that it had made weapons out of all three...

The CDC, meanwhile, sent shipments of germs to the Iraqi Atomic Energy Commission and other agencies involved in Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs. It sent samples in 1986 of botulinum toxin and botulinum toxoid — used to make vaccines against botulinum toxin — directly to the Iraqi chemical and biological weapons complex at al-Muthanna, the records show.

These were sent while the United States was supporting Iraq covertly in its war against Iran. U.S. assistance to Iraq in that war also included covertly-delivered intelligence on Iranian troop movements and other assistance. This is just another example of our policy of interventionism in affairs that do not concern us — and how this interventionism nearly always ends up causing harm to the United States.

Claim: The president claimed last night that: "Iraq possesses ballistic missiles with a likely range of hundreds of miles; far enough to strike Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey and other nations in a region where more than 135,000 American civilians and service members live and work."

Reality: Then why is only Israel talking about the need for the U.S. to attack Iraq? None of the other countries seem concerned at all. Also, the fact that some 135,000 Americans in the area are under threat from these alleged missiles is just makes the point that it is time to bring our troops home to defend our own country.

Claim: Iraq harbors al-Qaeda and other terrorists.

Reality: The administration has claimed that some Al-Qaeda elements have been present in Northern Iraq. This is territory controlled by the Kurds — who are our allies — and is patrolled by U.S. and British fighter aircraft. Moreover, dozens of countries — including Iran and the United States — are said to have al-Qaeda members on their territory. Other terrorists allegedly harbored by Iraq, all are affiliated with Palestinian causes and do not attack the United States.

Claim: President Bush said in his speech on 7 October 2002: " Many people have asked how close Saddam Hussein is to developing a nuclear weapon. *Well, we don't know exactly, and that's the problem* ..."



Reality: An admission of a *lack* of information is justification for an attack?