In cases where other nations are unwilling to mete out justice, we must do so. I would urge my colleagues to enlist as cosponsors of this important legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GINGREY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MALONEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ACTING UNILATERALLY NOT IN BEST INTEREST OF UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOEFFEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to state that unilateral military action by the United States against Iraq at this time is not in our best national interest.

Certainly Saddam Hussein must be disarmed and Iraq must be rid of weapons of mass destruction. Equally clear is our power to act unilaterally and successfully against Iraq, or any other country for that matter. I am proud we have that power, and we must sustain it. But the question is not whether we will prevail against Iraq. We will, with or without help. The real question is whether it is in our best national interest to unilaterally use our awesome power against Iraq. I believe it is not.

We may not need help to win a war, but we will need help the day after the war is won, and that help must come from a multinational or a United Nations effort. We need our friends to help with peacekeeping, with rebuilding and with international credibility, and that support will be absent if we take unilateral action.

This is not about winning United Nations permission to protect ourselves. We do not need that permission. This is about winning United Nations support to protect all civilized countries from the Iraqi threat. President Bush must forge a strong coalition through continued diplomacy before using American military power. If he does not, we will be isolated and less secure, and that is not in our national interest.

President Bush very skillfully won unanimous Security Council support last fall to restart the arms inspections, and he deserves great credit for that. After the initial success, however, the administration has not been able to maintain that unity and cannot even muster unity today among the five permanent nations of the Security Council.

What is the problem here? We are talking about an isolated country with a fourth-rate military and a leader who is a murderous tyrant that has no support and no friends in the United Nations. Yet the Security Council is split. Why is that? I believe it is because of the inept, bungled, cowboy diplomacy of the President of the United States and his senior advisers.

Six months ago, after a great deal of soul searching, I voted to give the President military authority to use force to rid Iraq of the weapons of mass destruction. The President asked for that authority and said he would exhaust all diplomatic options before using it. And his strategy worked. The inspections were restarted.

I am convinced that while those inspections have not been met with enough cooperation, the inspectors' presence in Iraq has made Saddam Hussein less dangerous for the time being.

The administration has had much less success since then, and the root cause is simple: cowboy diplomacy from this administration. Every diplomatic thrust has been met with rhetoric that belies and often contradicts the diplomatic efforts. Administration spokesmen speak nearly every day with rhetoric that implies we are bent on war, with or without U.N. support, with or without our traditional and closest allies. The implication is that diplomacy is just something to take up time and distract attention until all of our troops are in place.

The Bush administration spent much of its pre-9–11 days acting unilaterally on a variety of fronts, the environment, the ABM Treaty and many other ways, even though promising a new foreign policy run with humility during the 2002 election campaign.

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In that broader sense, it comes as no surprise that so many of our allies are not joining us now.

Then last week, in the middle of this diplomatic standoff, the administration released its plans for a post-Saddam Iraq, which included the possibility of a civilian American government. I think that is a great mistake. It will certainly be necessary, if we invade Iraq, for there to be military occupation to keep people from murdering each other for a time. That occupation will be essential; but we should not impose an American civil government.

We should be looking for a multinational or a United Nations program to provide an interim civil government, and certainly our goal has to be to establish a representative and stable Iraqi government itself. The Bush plan smacks of colonialism, and could give ammunition to those who question our motives in seeking to disarm Hussein in the first place.

It is dangerous to conduct a unilateral invasion of Iraq. It will undermine our credibility and legitimacy that this country has built up over decades of global leadership. We must realize that when we question the motives of countries like Germany and France, they question ours. We must work with them.

I call on the Bush administration to renew its efforts to secure a broad multinational coalition or U.N. mandate to disarm Iraq.

NATIONAL SOLUTION NECESSARY FOR CRISIS OF MEDICAL LIABILITY COSTS AND OVERREACHING LAWSUITS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BISHOP of Utah). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to protest the increase of medical liability costs in an environment where it has become all too commonplace to name the innocent in lawsuits, drive good doctors from the practice of medicine, and play games with the health care of vulnerable patients.

This crisis has reached my home State of Texas, and even reached the cities and towns that I now represent in Congress. For instance, my neighbor, Dr. John Marsden, a vascular surgeon in my district, must pay $6,600 per month for his medical liability coverage. That is nearly $80,000 a year just to purchase insurance to stay in business. I do not think we would find it acceptable if other kinds of businesses had to absorb that kind of overhead.

After being named in numerous unfounded lawsuits where there has been no affirmative finding in favor of the plaintiff, Dr. Marsden notes that if he sustains another increase in his medical liability rates, he will be forced to leave his medical practice. If he ceases his surgical practice, the city of Lewisville and the outlying areas of my county would no longer have ready access to a vascular surgeon, severely impacting the health of Dr. Marsden's elderly and institutionalized patients. They would then have to travel a longer distance to receive health care, or perhaps even a life-saving operation.

Another surgeon in my district, Dr. Hatton, has an equally similar situation. Dr. Bill Hatton is a surgeon at the Medical Center of Lewisville. In 1994, he performed an operation, a gall bladder operation, on a pregnant woman. At the time, he found she also suffered from appendicitis. The appropriate operation was done and the woman was sent home to recover from her surgery.

Four weeks later, the same woman was admitted to the hospital. She had signs and symptoms of infection. She had a very high fever. It was feared that she could be suffering from peritonitis, an inflammation of the lining of the abdominal cavity, and that the cause was a breakdown of the surgical site inside her abdomen. The symptoms were so severe the patient was in what was called high output congestive heart failure. If nothing was done, the