



NEWS RELEASE

Congressman Joe Wilson



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For Immediate Release

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The Case Against Iraq Has Been Made

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The following is an Op-Ed written by Congressman Joe Wilson, R-SC, in response to an editorial published in The Beaufort Gazette entitled "Bush Needs Consent of Congress."

Recently, The Beaufort Gazette published an editorial entitled, "Bush Needs Consent of Congress," in reference to a proposed preeminent strike against Iraq. As a member of Congress, a member of the House Armed Services Committee, and currently a Colonel in the Army National Guard with 29 years of service, I must respectfully disagree.

After September 11th, many were quick to wonder what we could have done to prevent the tragic loss of life. We must stop the sworn enemies of America before they kill more innocent civilians. We have this opportunity now. As The Gazette editorial said so rightly, Saddam Hussein is a dangerous dictator who has biological and chemical weapons, and is very likely close to nuclear capabilities. He has proven time and again his willingness to use these weapons of mass destruction even against his own people. Is there any doubt that he would use such weapons against the American people?

I cannot think of one city in America that we could do without. We cannot wait until thousands of American men, women, and children are slaughtered by a nuclear, chemical, or biological weapon before we take swift and decisive action.

As Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld recently stated in comparing this debate over Saddam Hussein to the world's response to Adolf Hitler over 60 years ago, "It was not until each country got attacked that they said 'Maybe Winston Churchill was right. Maybe that lone voice expressing concern about what was happening was right.'"

To be clear, Congress has already had a vote of consent. On September 14, 2001, the House and Senate voted almost unanimously to authorize the President to use military force against those who supported or harbored terrorists, and to do so in order *to prevent any such future attacks*. Iraq has harbored and supported terrorism in the past, and almost every critic of action against Iraq concedes that Saddam Hussein poses a serious threat of future attacks.

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I am concerned that an additional vote of consent in Congress would serve as a forum for partisan Democrats who have a greater interest in bringing down President Bush than confronting Saddam Hussein. This is exactly what occurred the last time we faced a decision on a war in Iraq.

In 1991, the Senate passed a resolution to support then President George H. W. Bush in using military to oust Iraqi forces from Kuwait. After a very contentious debate, 45 Democratic Senators voted against the resolution in an effort to embarrass President Bush. Ridiculous statements predicting horrible consequences for U.S. action were given from the floor, expressing many of the same false arguments we hear today.

Our own Democratic Senator Fritz Hollings, who voted against military action in liberating Kuwait, wrongly said, "If we went into Kuwait, in the next 10 minutes you'd be by yourself. This is not a multinational force. It's a multinational conspiracy." In similar partisanship, Massachusetts Democratic Senator Ted Kennedy used the debate to insult our Commander in Chief, saying, "We have not seen such arrogance in a President since Watergate." These types of statements are not useful dialogue in evaluating the threat of an evil and brutal dictator.

As a member of the National Guard, I fear this unnecessary vote would only serve to tip off Saddam to our intelligence reports, military intentions and capabilities. Prolonged debate would surely center on privileged information that could compromise intelligence efforts overseas, and would also involve information as to our capabilities to respond, putting the lives of our military at further risk. Saddam Hussein does not need to learn about our military intentions through the media.

While a healthy discussion is beneficial, the President has shared all of the necessary information already. Saddam Hussein currently possesses weapons of mass destruction, has shown a willingness to use them, has displayed complete disregard to international laws and inspections, and currently is close to attaining nuclear power. A clear case has been made.

President George W. Bush said that the War on Terrorism would be long, difficult, and would come at a high cost, namely the willingness to sacrifice American lives. Secretary Rumsfeld said it best when he said, "It is less important to have unanimity than it is to be making the right decision and doing the right thing, even though at the outset it may seem lonesome. Leadership in the right direction finds followers and supporters."

By Congressman Joe Wilson (R-SC), member of House Armed Services Committee.

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