

October 08, 2002- Sanchez Urges Congress to Consider Spratt Substitute to 'Use of Force' Resolution

October 8, 2002 Rep. Sanchez Joins Colleagues in Urging Congress to Consider Spratt Substitute to 'Use of Force' Resolution in Iraq

Dear Colleague:

As members of the national security committees in the House, we share the concern over the threat posed by Saddam Hussein and his regime. We agree that the Security Council should enforce its resolutions mandating that Iraq destroy its weapons of mass destruction and its means of producing such weapons. For these reasons, some of us will vote in the end for the use of force language agreed to by the White House and House leadership, some will not.

But we all agree that while the U.S. may ultimately need to act alone to disarm Iraq, we should do so only if it is absolutely necessary. That is why we strongly support the Administration's effort to gain approval of a new U.N. Security Council resolution that would disarm Iraq through beefed up inspections, if they work, but by armed force, if it is necessary. If this effort fails, we may have to face the prospect of unilateral military action, and we should do so with awareness of the risks.

We have learned a lot about those risks since early September, as we have heard from a host of experts on policy and military options toward Iraq. Virtually all of these witnesses - from retired General Wesley Clark, former Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, former Central Command commanders General Joseph Hoar and General Anthony Zinni, to several former weapons inspectors, Iraqi defectors, and a host of others - agreed on two things:

- In any conceivable military confrontation with Iraq - with or without allies - the United States will win. But having allies, including allies in the region like Turkey and Saudi Arabia, will make victory more certain and less costly in American lives.
- Far less certain is the outcome of the post-conflict phase. We do not want to win the war, then lose the peace, and in so doing swell the ranks of terrorists. International support will enhance our chances of success, especially in the post-war period, by minimizing the resentment our unilateral military presence would foster.

To address these concerns, Congressmen John Spratt, Tom Allen, Vic Snyder, David Price, Jim Clyburn, John Larson, Sandy Levin, Robert Matsui and Jim Moran will offer a use of force resolution that fully supports the U.S. position at the Security Council. It authorizes the use of U.S. military force in pursuit of a Security Council-sanctioned effort to disarm Iraq, by force if necessary. Their alternative, however, also recognizes that if the Security Council does not approve the U.S. resolution or one like it, or if inspections fail, then the landscape changes dramatically. If the U.S. chooses to use military force then, we will be going it alone.

The Spratt resolution makes clear that the United States is prepared to use force to back up arms inspectors and to use even greater force to disarm a recalcitrant Iraq if the action is sanctioned by the Security Council. If Saddam Hussein balks at unfettered inspections and the Security Council fails to take action, the resolution clears the way for quick approval of unilateral force. If the Security Council does not act, our resolution leaves no doubt that Congress will act; and it assures the President that he can count on Congress to act swiftly. With this resolution, we would demonstrate our resolve that we not go it alone if we can possibly avoid it.

We urge you to give careful consideration to the alternative offered by Representatives Spratt, Allen, Snyder, Price, Levin, Larson, Matsui, Moran and Clyburn. Its thoughtful, balanced approach to demonstrating the resolve of the United States will enhance Secretary of State Powell's leverage as he works for passage of a tough new Security Council resolution.

Respectfully,

Ike Skelton

Nancy Pelosi