when he turned them on the Iranians. We were encouraging him. We did not like this bunch over in Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini and all that bunch. So we said, Hey, Saddam, go get him and we will give you some weapons, and we knew what he was doing.

When this country decides they are going to take out a leader somewhere, one ought to look at history. There was a country called Iran, and the leader was a guy named Mossadegh. He had been elected by the people. He was the Prime Minister elected in Iran. The United States Government did not like him because his politics were kind of a little bit to the wrong direction, whatever that was. So they decided to take him out and install a king. They brought back the Shah of Iran and put him on the throne. So in 1979 things erupted there. Somebody said to me, Well, gee, Jim, we got away with 25 free years. Is that the kind of foreign policy this country wants to pursue? Do we want to say we are going to go to any country and we are going to take out whatever is there and put in our guy and then we will use him? The reason we did not like Mossadegh, the reason we do not like Saddam Hussein, it all has to do with oil, who has control of the oil. Mossadegh was talking about nationalizing. Saddam did. This is not an issue for us to do a regime change, simply on oil. We must be careful.

SEEKING PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PUTNAM). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I think that we all are in agreement that the world and the Iraqi people would be better off if Saddam Hussein were not in power, but I also think we all can agree on the fact that our world would be better off with a peaceful resolution to the current crisis and one which respects the rule of law and the role of the United Nations. That is why I rise tonight, Mr. Speaker, to urge this Congress and our country to renew our commitment to working with the United Nations and our friends and allies to advance peace and security in the Persian Gulf region. We need to act, but we do not have to rush to war. We have alternatives.

We have been told by President Bush and other members of the administration that we have to attack Iraq because our Nation is in imminent danger from Saddam Hussein. However, neither the Congress nor the public have been shown evidence of that or linking Saddam Hussein to 9–11. We have received no proof that Iraq has the means or intent to use weapons of mass destruction against us. We have not been told why the danger is greater today than it was a year or 2 ago or why we must rush to war rather than pursuing other options.

So tomorrow I will introduce a resolution offering a road map to such an alternative. This resolution emphasizes the importance of working through the United Nations to assure Iraq's compliance with U.N. Security Council resolutions and cease-fire agreements and to advance peace and security throughout the region beginning with full unfettered inspections.

During the 1990's, United Nations inspections teams succeeded in destroying tons of weapons in Iraq in spite of Iraq's attempts to obstruct their mission. They were on a search and destroy mission and they accomplished that. Today we need to renew that inspections process in the interest of our own security. We do not know the extent of Iraq's possible development of weapons of mass destruction and thus the extent of risk to us. That is why we need inspections. The President has called on the United Nations to assume its responsibilities. In fact the United Nations was established to deal with just such international crises. So let us work with them to make that happen.

But still on the other hand, the administration and others call for a preemptive first strike against Iraq. The cost of such action would be enormous, starting with a grave risk to American servicemen and women and to Iraqi civilians who will be caught in the crossfire. A preemptive first strike would also seriously damage our relationship with friends and allies, all of whom are strongly opposed to an assault. Statesmen such as Kofi Annan and Nelson Mandela have beseeched us to turn away from this disastrous course. Many Middle Eastern countries that supported the United States in the Gulf War will not support this attack and warn of long-term catastrophic consequences.

Such a war carries enormous cost. The Wall Street Journal estimates that it may cost as much as from 100 to $200 billion. When we have no proof that Iraq was tied to 9–11 and no proof that we are in imminent danger, why would we rush to spend $200 billion that could be invested in health care, education, housing, domestic security, and other vital needs here at home? Why are we rushing into a war with such a huge price tag for our foreign relations and our own budget when we have viable and many more effective alternatives? Why would we set such a devastating precedent?

There are what, eight known nuclear powers in the world? At least two of them, India and Pakistan, have long been on edge with each another. According to the doctrine of preemption, either of those countries could launch an attack because they are afraid of what the other might do. Is that the kind of world we want to live in? Is that the precedent that we want to take? We will be setting that. We will be setting this new standard.

President Bush laid out an axis of evil consisting of Iran, Iraq, and North Korea. Which dictator will be next?

Where does preemption end? So the resolution that I will introduce tomorrow resolves that the United States should work through the United Nations to seek a peaceful resolution to the crisis in Iraq through mechanisms such as inspections, negotiation, and regional cooperation. We do not have to go to war. We still have alternatives. It is up to us to pursue them.

Mr. Speaker, I urge Members to cosponsor my resolution and join us in taking this message to the American people.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS FOR AMERICAN SENIORS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, there is a lot that is important to the American people that is being lost in the current focus on the situation in Iraq and the administration's plans for regime change and a military invasion. And I want to spend this evening talking about one of those issues that is getting less attention than it deserves.

I am talking about the fact that in my home State of Maine and all across this country, seniors who need prescription drugs in many cases simply cannot afford to buy them. In my office, my district office in Maine, people are coming in all the time, calling on the phone or stepping into the office and basically saying, What can I possibly do? I can no longer afford my prescription drugs.

People who have a Social Security check each month of $800 to $1,200 can wind up with $400, $500 a month in prescription drug costs, and the math just does not work. They cannot do it. People are, in fact, giving up food in order to buy their medicine or giving up their medicine in order to pay the rent or buy food.

We have been dealing with this problem for years. Back in 1998 I introduced a bill that would provide a 30 percent discount to all Medicare beneficiaries and the cost of all of their prescription drugs at no significant cost to the Federal Government. But the pharmaceutical industry weighed in, lobbied heavily, described the plan as price controls even though it is one that is widely employed by other industrialized nations and nothing has happened on that front.

The Democratic Caucus year after year has proposed a Medicare prescription drug benefit. That is a benefit for Medicare beneficiaries operating in the way that part B of Medicare does, the way doctors, the expenses for physicians is covered, that is, seniors would pay a certain amount per month and get a significant portion of their expenses covered, both by the amount they pay and by contributions from general revenues. Well, that is what we thought ought to appear here.