

Rothman Statement On Iraq Resolution

October 10, 2002

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Washington, DC - Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ9) today released the following statement regarding the Iraq resolution.

“On September 11, 2001, America’s view of the world changed. On that day, many Americans learned for the first time that there were people in the world who hated America so much, that they would cross the oceans to come here to kill thousands of American men, women, and children, even if it meant they would die themselves.

“In considering the resolution before us, I have weighed all the pros and cons, all the risks of action and the risks of inaction, with September 11th very much in my mind. I believe that any close question on matters of national security, must now be resolved in favor of erring on the side of being proactive and not reactive in protecting our people and our homeland.

“I have spent a tremendous amount of time and study over the past several months on what to do about Saddam Hussein. I have engaged in dialogue with many of my constituents, spoken with experts on every side of this issue, and read literally thousands of pages of analysis. I can delineate as well as any opponent of this resolution, all of the possible and considerable risks of military action against Saddam Hussein.

“However, in the end, I conclude beyond any reasonable doubt, that America must join forces with our allies, hopefully under the express authorization of the United Nations, but that we must take action to prevent Saddam Hussein from using his weapons of mass destruction against us.

“Now, especially in the light and shadow of September 11th, there is a new immediacy and power to Saddam Hussein’s longstanding and oft-stated threats against America. For years, Saddam Hussein has been a well-known patron and financier of some of the world’s most lethal anti-American terrorists and terrorist organizations. Now, al Qaeda has joined him.

“After being driven from Afghanistan, al Qaeda has now sought and received safe-haven from Saddam Hussein. Saddam is now training al Qaeda in bomb-making and the manufacture and delivery of poisonous and deadly gases.

“We know that for years, al Qaeda has been trying to get their hands on chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons to use against America and Americans. The thought of Saddam Hussein now infecting willing al Qaeda “martyrs” with his smallpox virus and sending them into America’s major cities, causing hundreds of thousands of Americans to die of smallpox, is truly terrifying. The thought of Saddam Hussein sending these same al Qaeda “martyrs” to America to spray chemical or biological poisons over America’s reservoirs or in our most populated cities, is a thought so horrifying, yet so real a possibility, that I cannot in good conscience, especially after the surprise attack of September 11th, permit this to happen.

“I therefore endorse this resolution. I do so, however, with a heavy heart. I do so yet without any reasonable doubt that preventing Saddam Hussein from using weapons of mass destruction against us is necessary now if we are to avoid another 9/11 or worse.

“I pray that military action is not necessary and that alone, passage of this resolution will result in Saddam Hussein’s compliance with all existing U.N. resolutions to disarm and to permit unconditional inspections, but in the end that is Saddam Hussein’s choice.

“As we pass this resolution, let us pray for the safety of all Americans, including the brave men and women in our military, law enforcement, and all branches of government who are today protecting us here at home and in countries around the world, and who will be called upon to do so tomorrow or in the days ahead. God bless them, and God bless America.”

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