HON. RON PAUL OF TEXAS IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES July 21, 2003

The Justifications for War

Madam Speaker, the truth about whether or not Saddam Hussein sought to buy uranium from Niger has dominated the news for the past several weeks. Many of those challenging the administration on this issue are motivated more by politics than by policy. Some of today's critics were strongly in favor of going to war against Iraq when doing so appeared politically popular, but now are chagrined that the war is not going as smoothly as was hoped. I am sure once the alleged attempt to buy uranium is thoroughly debunked, the other excuses for going to war will be examined with a great deal of scrutiny as well. It is obvious that the evidence used to justify going to war is now less than convincing. The charge that Saddam Hussein had aluminum tubes used in manufacturing nuclear weapons was in error. A fleet of unmanned aerial vehicles capable of dispensing chemical and biological weapons did not exist.

The 63,000 liters of anthrax and botulism have not been found, nor have any of the mobile germ labs. There are no signs of the one million pounds of sarin, mustard, and VX gasses alleged to exist. No evidence has been revealed to indicate Iraq was a threat to the security of any nation, let alone America. The charge that Saddam Hussein was connected to the al Qaeda was wrong. Saddam Hussein's violations the UN resolutions regarding weapons of mass destruction remain unproven. How could so many errors have occurred? Some say it was incompetence, while others claim outright deception and lies. Some say it was selective use of intelligence to promote a particular policy already decided upon. This debate, I am sure, will rage on for a long time, and since motivations are subjective and hard to prove, resolving the controversy will be difficult. However, this should not diminish the importance of sorting out truth from fiction, errors from malice.

One question, though, I hope gets asked: Why should we use intelligence cited by a foreign government as justification for going to war? One would think the billions we spend would produce reliable intelligence-gathering agencies.

Since we lack a coherent foreign policy, we see support for war from different groups depending on circumstances unrelated to national defense. For instance, those who strenuously objected to Kosovo promoted war in Iraq. And those who objected to Iraq are now anxious to send troops

to Liberia. For some, U.N. permission is important and necessary. For others, the U.N. is helpful provided it endorses the war they want. Only a few correctly look to the Constitution and to Congress to sort out the pros and cons of each conflict, and decide whether or not a declaration of war is warranted.

The sad fact is that we have lost our way. A legitimate threat to national security is no longer a litmus test for sending troops hither and yon, and the American people no longer require Congress to declare the wars we fight. Hopefully, some day this will change.

The raging debate over whether or not Saddam Hussein tried to buy uranium, as important as it is, distracts from the much more important strategic issue of the proper foreign policy in a republic.

Hopefully, we will soon seriously consider the foreign policy approach advocated by our Founding Fathers, a policy of nonintervention in the affairs of other nations. Avoiding entangling alliances and staying out of the internal affairs of other nations is the policy most conducive to peace and prosperity. Policing the world and nation building are not proper for our constitutional republic.