Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Arizona for the

time and for the opportunity to address this issue. Let me make one

statement at the beginning that I think needs to be made on the

political rhetoric that is surrounding this issue. I am not questioning

the patriotism of those who are complaining about, disagreeing with, or

even attacking the President. I question their accuracy. I question

their wisdom. But I am not questioning their patriotism. I think that

needs to be made clear because in the debate over this war, there has

been rhetoric that, in my opinion, has gone over the top.

The former Vice President with the blood rushing to his face and the

veins standing out on his neck screeched before a crowd which has been

repeated on the television that the President has betrayed this

country. You can disagree with George W. Bush. That is legitimate and

proper and in an election year expected. But you should not accuse him

of being a traitor. You should not accuse him of treason.

I want to make it clear again that as I disagree with those who are

attacking the President, I am not attacking their patriotism or their

love of this country. But I do disagree with their wisdom and with

their accuracy.

In the speeches that have just been given, we have had a lot of

conversation about what I would consider past history. I am not going

to get into that; that is, what did we know about weapons of mass

destruction? What did the inspectors know? What should we have done

here? What should we have interpreted there? I will leave that to the

historians themselves to sort out. A debate on those issues becomes an

attempt simply to bash the President and avoid the fundamental issue.

The fundamental issue that we have to face as Senators, as

policymakers, is what do we do now? We are in Iraq whether you voted

for the resolution, as Senator Kerry and Senator Edwards did and as I

did, or whether you voted against it, as Senator Durbin did. Debating

the wisdom of that at this point is merely an exercise in avoiding the

reality of the situation with which we find ourselves faced now. What

do we do now?

The large majority of this body along with a large majority of the

Members of the House of Representatives, and the unanimous vote in the

Security Council of the United Nations took us to war. What do we do

now?

That is the fundamental question that we should be addressing and

that we should be facing.

Oh, say some, no, no. The fundamental question is whether or not

there were weapons of mass destruction. And, since there were not, the

real question is, Did the President lie?

Well, let us look at the situation we are facing now with respect to

weapons of mass destruction. The question is not are there weapons of

mass destruction in Iraq and did the President lie? The question is,

What happened to the weapons that everybody knew were in Iraq, and has

the President taken proper steps to protect us from them?

When I say the weapons that everybody knew were in Iraq, whom do I

include in that? The first person to convince me there were weapons of

mass destruction in Iraq was Madeleine Albright, Secretary of State to

President Clinton. She met with us here in the secure room of the

Capitol; the room where we get top secret briefings from the highest

possible level. It was in that room that Madeleine Albright sat down

with the Members of the Senate and laid out the irrefutable evidence

that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction and justified to

us the Clinton administration's determination that they would go to

war, and they did.

Bombing another country is an act of war, and the Clinton

administration, in 1998, in response to the irrefutable evidence that

Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, took the United States

to war. We did not invade Iraq with troops, but certainly dropping

bombs in the quantity and regularity with which we dropped them in 1998

is an act of war. We did it unilaterally. We did it without consulting

the United Nations. We did it without talking to the French or the

Germans in the way that some of the President's critics say we must. We

did it because we knew Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction.

David Kay and his inspectors have been to Iraq, and they say they

cannot find warehouses full of weapons of mass destruction, which

raises the fundamental question that most people are not addressing.

What happened to them? Where are they? We know he had them. We went to

war to deal with them. What happened to them?

I think there are four possible answers to that question.

First, one that has been raised by President Clinton himself, we got

them all in the bombing. President Clinton said we didn't know how many

we got. We could have gotten all of them. We could have gotten none.

But we did our best to try to destroy them.

One answer to the question of why David Kay was unable to find

weapons of mass destruction when he got into Iraq with his inspectors

is the possibility that we got them all in the bombing and had no way

of knowing that.

No. 2, the second possibility raised by David Kay and others is that

they were trucked out of the country. They went off the border to Syria

or someplace else. They are still in existence. They just aren't still

in Iraq. We don't know the answer to that. But that is a possibility.

Possibility No. 3, they were destroyed by Saddam Hussein himself.

Someone would ask why would he want to do that. Look at the man. Look

at what he did. Look at his record. He believed that the United States

would, in fact, not invade. We had bombed in the first gulf war. We had

bombed in 1998. He believed we would bomb again but that we would not

invade, or, if we did invade, we would not topple him. After all, we

didn't topple him last time.

Pressure from the French, pressure from the Germans, said don't go

ahead with this. He could very well have believed that the

international community would put enough pressure on President Bush

that the United States ultimately would stop short of removing him,

particularly if inspectors from the U.N. got into Iraq and discovered

there were no weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, he could have

destroyed them himself on the assumption that he would stay in power

and then, as soon as the inspectors were gone, he could reconstruct his

weapons program, reestablish weapons of mass destruction, and be right

back where he was before we took the action in 1998. That is the third

possibility.

The fourth possibility is that they are still there. There is the

possibility that we haven't been able to find them but they are still

there. That is a very serious question, one that is being ignored by

everybody who is debating the question of whether Bush went to the

United Nations the right way, or whether he said the right things, or

whether he read the right intelligence. Those questions are minor

compared to the consequences of answering this question.

Let me pose it again and go through the four possibilities and give

you my answer.

What happened to the weapons of mass destruction that everybody in

the world knew he had? We destroyed them in the bombing, or they were

taken over the border to someplace else, or Saddam Hussein himself

destroyed them in order to fool the inspectors, or they are still

there.

My answer is I believe all four. I believe we destroyed some in the

bombing. I believe some got over the border. I believe he dismantled

some of his programs, and I believe there are some still to be found.

That means, if I am right, there is work to be done to help make the

world safer that is not being done while we are being distracted by an

irrelevant debate that is best left to historians.

There is possibly still a threat out there that we are not addressing

because we are paying so much attention to the questions of what kind

of intelligence did he read and did he have the right 16 words in the

State of the Union Message. We waste our time on that when we are

facing this far more serious and obvious question.

What happened to the weapons that we knew he had? We should not rest

easy until we have an answer to that question.

Which of the four or combination of the four possibilities really

applies? The real question we are facing as we look ahead to November--

and make no mistake, this debate is all about looking ahead to

November--is what will the United States do after the Presidential

election is over?

How will we proceed in Iraq once the determination has been made as

to who will control our foreign policy for the next 4 years? That is

the fundamental question the American voters need to be debating. That

is the question they need to pay attention to as they make up their

minds as to whom they will support in this election.

The choice is fairly clear. We can only guess about the future, but

the best indication of the future lies in the actions of the past.

President Bush has made it pretty clear what the future would be with

respect to Iraq if he prevails in November. President Bush has made it

clear if he prevails in November, we will stay the course in Iraq. We

will stay in Iraq until we have succeeded in our goal, which is to

plant in Iraq a self-governing, westward-looking, open society where

private property rights are respected, where the rights of individuals

to vote and control their destiny are preserved, and where free market

principles will prevail; an Iraq that will stand as an example to the

rest of the Middle East that freedom, democracy and capitalism can

indeed thrive there. President Bush is an optimist who believes those

things are so fundamental in the human spirit that they can survive in

an Islamic background.

There are pessimists around who say no, the Muslims can never live in

democracy. The Muslims can never live in freedom. President Bush is an

optimist who says, I don't believe that--without trying to change their

religion or attack their culture. I believe they will respond to

freedom and the Americans will stay there until we have achieved the

goal of planting freedom there.

That is the answer to the question of what will happen in Iraq if

George W. Bush wins this election. That is an easy answer to give

because his past resolve and his past determination have been very

clear.

The second question, of course, is what will happen in Iraq if

President Bush loses the election and we get a new steward in charge of

our foreign affairs. That question is a little harder to answer because

we do not have as clear a track record. On the assumption that the

junior Senator from Massachusetts will become the President if

President Bush loses the election, we do have the signposts indicating

what he would do if he inherited the situation we now have. He said on

``Face the Nation,'' the first thing he would do is go to the United

Nations and apologize. I am not quite sure for what he would apologize,

but he has indicated the first thing he would do is to go to the United

Nations and apologize.

If I may quote the columnist for the New York Times, Tom Friedman,

who spoke to a group in Europe. They turned to him after the weapons of

mass destruction question arose and asked, Are you now prepared to

apologize for your defense of Bush and your support for this war? He

said something like this: Well, let me see. We have removed Saddam

Hussein, one of the most brutal dictators of the world, found in the

process that he had slaughtered at least 300,000 of his own people whom

he had buried in mass graves. We know he is responsible for a million

more deaths in the two wars he started with his neighbors over the last

12 years. We know he supported terrorism, down to the detail of paying

$25,000 to anyone who would wrap himself in dynamite and blow himself

up just so long as he could take another human being with him, and that

he

kept his people in absolute degradation and subjugation for 38 years.

Now he is gone with his torture chambers and his secret police and his

brutality, and I am supposed to apologize for that?

I am not quite sure what Senator Kerry might say to the U.N. when he

goes to apologize, but apparently what he will say, as I try to gather

from the speeches he has given, is the United States should no longer

act unilaterally, that we should get international support before we go

forward in an event like this, and presumably he would then say to the

U.N. we are where we are, the responsibility now of building the kind

of Iraq George W. Bush envisioned--I give Senator Kerry the credit of

assuming he is in favor of that kind of Iraq--the responsibility for

building that kind of Iraq now lies with you, United Nations. We in

America are going to show a little humility--that is another word he

used--show a little humility on this issue and turn it over to you and

let you take over the responsibility of producing the results we all

want in Iraq.

If that is, indeed, his program--and I assume we will find that out

as the election goes forward--I make these observations. Number one,

the United Nations has no force with which it can provide security to

the Iraqis. There is no United Nations army. There is no United Nations

police force. There are no United Nations federal marshals or any other

kind of enforcement facility you might think of. The only force the

United Nations can ever use is the force that would be provided to it

by its member states. The United Nations can pass resolutions, the

United Nations can threaten people, but the threats carry no force

unless the member states of the United Nations respond to the U.N.

resolutions and can go forward.

That is the point President Bush made when he spoke to the United

Nations and said to them, if you won't enforce your resolutions, we

will. I don't think we need to apologize to the United Nations for

enforcing their resolution 1441 that passed by a unanimous vote in the

Security Council and which David Kay has now said Saddam Hussein was in

complete violation of. That is something we should remember as we have

this debate.

The history is not all that comforting to me. Koffi Annan sent a

group of U.N. folk into Iraq to help with the nation building and here

is the series of events that occurred. The head of the U.N. mission

showed up and took possession of a building where he was going to

operate. The Americans showed up and put their armored vehicles around

the building. He came out and said, No, that is too militaristic. You

Americans are too quick to show force. We are the United Nations. We

come in peace. Get rid of the armored vehicles.

The American commander, after arguing with this fellow, said all

right, and he got rid of the armored vehicles, but he spread concertina

wire through the courtyard, and the U.N. head of the group came out and

said, get rid of that. You are too militaristic. We are the United

Nations. We are not the United States. We are not here to show military

force. We are here to help build the country.

Finally, the Americans took away the concertina wire and the next day

a truck bomb drove across the courtyard, blew up the building and

killed the man who had said, I don't need this kind of protection.

After this, Koffi Annan said, get them out of there. We can't provide

their security. We can't keep them safe.

I welcome the United Nations involvement. I hope we get the United

Nations involvement, but I don't think that track record speaks very

well for the idea that the first thing we should do about dealing with

the problem in Iraq is to go to the United Nations and show some

humility and apologize. The number one civil right which all of us

desire more than anything else and that is most essential in Iraq is

the right to walk down the street without being shot, the right to walk

out in public without being beaten over the head. To establish security

is the first responsibility of civilization. Security in Iraq is being

provided by the American military and its allies in the Iraqi forces.

George W. Bush, for all of the mistakes that have been made, and all

of the difficulties that have been encountered, has demonstrated

America's resolve to provide this civil right to Iraqis. The United

Nations has fallen short in this category.

This is the fundamental question all of us should look at: Instead of

debating whether the President looked at the right piece of

intelligence, whether the committees had the right information, whether

this or that or the other was looked at and was not, the real question

is, where do we go from here. We are where we are, regardless of how we

got here. Where do we go from here--the question the American people

will decide in November.

I close with this anecdote or comment from Bernard Lewis. Bernard

Lewis probably knows more about this region than any other academic in

America. He has spent more time studying it, and has written books on

it. He spoke to a group of us, and he was an optimist. He agreed with

President Bush that democracy could be planted in the region and we

should stay the course until we do it. He made this comment. He said:

Listen to the jokes. In the Middle East, the only form of expression

that is not censored is the jokes. And this is the joke that is going

around in Iran, right next to Iraq. Two Iranians are talking. The first

Iranian is complaining about how bad the government is, how bad things

are. The second Iranian says: Yeah. They go back and forth, saying:

What are we going to do? Where are we going to turn? Finally, the

second Iranian says: I know. What we need is an Osama bin Laden. The

first Iranian says: Are you crazy? That would make things that much

worse, and the second Iranian says: Nope. If we had an Osama bin Laden,

then the Americans would come and save us.

There are hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people in the

Middle East who are watching what we are doing in Iraq in the hope

that, in the words of the joke, the Americans will ``come and save

us.''

We have set our hand to the plow to that particular assignment. We

should not turn back now. We should back our President and his resolve

to see this through until freedom, prosperity, and self-determination

are established in Iraq, from which it will then spread, change the

Middle East, and ultimately transform the world.