Mr. President, like all of my colleagues, I went back home

during the Easter recess and listened to the feelings of Oregonians. It

is clearly on the minds of the people of my State and much of the

country the circumstance we find ourselves in Iraq. I thought I would

come and share some of my perspective on where America is, as this one

Senator sees it, in the war on terrorism.

I shared these feelings with many of my constituents. I wanted to

share them with the Senate today as my reflections on the week I have

just had.

When I first came to the Senate 7 years ago, I was privileged to

spend my first term as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations

Committee. I came to the Senate with many preconceived views about the

values of many of our alliances and our involvement in all kinds of

international architecture--the United Nations, NATO, and many

treaties. I have been an advocate of these institutions and treaties on

many occasions. But I find myself now in a position where I am

questioning some of my earlier positions, based upon my experience as a

Senator.

My questioning first began when I watched with dismay the U.N.

essentially stand by as nearly 1 million Rwandans were hacked to death.

I watched with further dismay when approximately a quarter of a

million Bosnian Muslims were murdered in cold blood by Mr. Milosevic

and his minions, and I wondered why they couldn't do anything?

I remember the occasion when a number of us were invited to meet with

President Clinton as our European allies were pleading with the

President to intervene with them as Europeans to help stop genocide on

Europe's backdoor. I remember saying to the President: Mr. President, I

think stopping genocide is a value that I share with the international

community, it certainly is and ought to be an American value. So, Mr.

President, you have my support, but I urge you to seek a resolution

from the Security Council so we go in with the ``legitimacy'' of the

United Nations.

He said to me: Senator, I can't because I have been promised a U.N.

resolution to intervene to stop genocide in Kosovo would be vetoed by

the Russians and the Chinese.

President Clinton believed that was a value high enough that nobody

ought to veto it, and America's hand should not be held back by such a

veto. I could not have agreed with him more.

As a Republican, I voted with President Clinton consistently in our

efforts to bail out our European friends in Kosovo to stop genocide. I

am proud of those votes. I am proud of President Clinton for that. But

I left the experience scratching my head about the United Nations and

its role in the security architecture of our planet and particularly my

country.

Then after 9/11, I heard lots of great speeches and then began to

become aware of lots of wonderful resolutions and was so disappointed

that there was no resolve in the resolutions; that it ended at words.

Now we find ourselves confronted with an investigation in the United

Nations in which an oil for food program is going to be revealed to all

the world as a monstrous corruption. It would be better titled a

``Fraud for Food Program.'' I wonder how well served we are by a

Security Council that would tolerate such a thing.

I am not suggesting we withdraw from the United Nations, but I am

telling you I believe we should question that is the place we go for

legitimacy. I have concluded that the U.N. can do a few things well.

Mr. Brahimi's efforts are to be applauded and gratitude expressed, but,

frankly, to go there for legitimacy, as some suggest, I think is very

misplaced because we cannot get legitimacy from the kind of corruption

that has been engaged in the United Nations in its ``Fraud for Food

Program.''

What happened here, as Mr. Volcker will soon reveal to the world, is

a system of price fixing, price kiting, skimming, bribes, paybacks in

which the United Nations bureaucracy, or at least some members of it,

were deeply complicit. What Saddam Hussein got out of that, according

to the Washington Post, was $4 billion. According to the New York

Times, it is $10 billion. According to other estimates, it could run as

high as $100 billion. Somewhere in that range the truth will be found.

What did he do with the billions, whether it is 4 or 100? He went

about systematically rebuilding his murderous machine to buy weapons

and palaces and to exterminate about 400,000 Shiite Muslims. Then I

wonder why it is we are going to the U.N. for resolutions for

legitimacy.

I tell you these things because, frankly, I was astounded when our

friend and colleague, the Democratic presumptive nominee for President,

was on ``Meet the Press.'' When asked what was the first thing he would

do, he said: I will go back to the U.N.

I remember Dwight Eisenhower, when he became the Republican nominee,

we were in trouble in Korea. He said: I will go to Korea. And John

Kerry is essentially saying: I will go to Paris. For what? Legitimacy?

International involvement? We have gone to the U.N. and gotten 17

resolutions. Apparently, another is needed? For what? Legitimacy?

We are going to get people to sanction what we are doing when we will

soon learn who was on the take and providing the money that Saddam

Hussein used for palaces, weapons, and mass murder.

I hope John Kerry runs his new ad in Oregon a lot because he repeats

his ``Meet the Press'' statement in a slightly different version. He

says: The first thing I will do is internationalize this. I will go to

the international community.

I want the people of Oregon to know how vacuous a statement that is.

I want my friend from Massachusetts to know I don't want the

international community defending my family and my country. I know the

American people want a sense of how do we get out of this because we

don't want an open-ended commitment.

I hear it said by some of our European friends: You did it for oil. I

tell the American people, if we had done it for oil, we would have

invaded Venezuela. There is a lot of oil there, and they have no

military. We did it for values. We did it because we believed in a

post-9/11 world that Saddam Hussein was part and parcel of the war on

terrorism. We believed, like all the other intelligence communities in

the world, that he had weapons of mass destruction because he had

declared them but not disclosed them. That is why Bill Clinton bombed

Saddam Hussein for 4 days and nights in 1998. That is why this place,

the United States Senate, under the direction and urging of Bill

Clinton, passed a resolution calling for regime change.

Mr. President, we passed the resolution on regime change.

In a post-9/11 world, with that intelligence that we had from President

Clinton's administration and with that belief that he was a clear and

growing danger to this country, and for all the reasons which President

Bush has articulated, we did what President Clinton said we would

ultimately have to do: Change that regime.

I tell you, my belief is that those who would say the war on

terrorism is here, but Saddam Hussein is somehow exempted from that,

are engaging in a theory because the truth is, he was, by every

measure, a central financier and tormenter of terrorism. Ask the

Israelis.

Where did Hamas get its money? There is a way out. There is a

deadline that is drawing out of the shadows all those who want to

compete for power. A lot of poison is being drained out of

the Iraqi system and America is bearing the burden, but we will see a

gradual transition of power and sovereignty from us to the Iraqi people

because our country does not aspire to the territory or treasury or

oilfields of Iraq. We desire a more peaceful world.

President Bush has concluded, yes, we can swat flies and we can send

cruise missiles here and there, but the truth is, if the fundamentals

on the ground cannot be changed to give the people some democratic

institutions, frankly, nothing is going to be changed in the Middle

East.

Now, there is a very tribal culture there and ultimately Iraq may be

evolving into a three-part state, with Kurds in the north and Shia in

the south and Sunnis in the center, and there may be a very loose

confederacy of Iraq, but to avoid civil war they will have to have some

religious and ethnic elbowroom as Iraqis. We are going to allow that to

happen, I hope.

I say to the people of my State, regard with humor if you can but

great skepticism if you will those who call for internationalizing

America's war on terrorism. They can come in any time. The problem is,

they are complicit in the financing of Saddam Hussein and they run at

the first shot.

Tony Blair recently addressed this body and the House of

Representatives. In conclusion, I share with my colleagues his words.

Said the Prime Minister: I know how hard it is on America. And in some

small corner of this vast country out in Nevada or Idaho, I know out

there is a guy getting on with his life perfectly happy, minding his

own business, saying to you, the political leaders of the country, why

me and why us and why America? And the only answer is because destiny

has put you in this place in history, in this moment of time, and the

task is yours to do.

This world is a better place because of American leadership and

because America's foreign policy is still based on the best values of

our Bill of Rights, democracy, human rights, the spread of freedom and

enterprise through trade, religious freedom, thought, press, assembly.

Things that we are privileged to take for granted are, frankly, unknown

in the Middle East. This is our idealism and it is a centerpiece now of

our foreign policy, but those who would go to the U.N. to establish

those principles, they will do it in vain and they will do it with my

opposition, if to internationalize this means my family and theirs are

protected by institutions which the Russians, the French, the Chinese,

or anyone can veto when it involves the security of the American

people.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.