Mr. President, as President

Bush prepares to address the Nation

on the state of the Union, we

stand, to state the obvious, at a precipice

of a momentous decision: War, war

with Iraq.

The American people, and the world,

for that matter, are waiting to hear

what the President’s decision is and his

rationale for it. They are waiting to

hear a clear explanation of why war

may be the only remaining alternative

and what will be expected of them not

only in winning the war but what will

be expected of the American people for

us to win the peace.

A generation ago, I and my entire

generation learned a very important

lesson. That lesson was: No matter how

brilliant or how well thought out a foreign

policy may be, it cannot be sustained

without the informed consent of

the American people.

To date, there has been no informed

consent. That is not a criticism; it is

just an objective observation. For the

President, to date, has not had the requirement,

in the hope of avoiding war,

to inform the American people in detail

of what the consequences of war

will be and what will be expected of

them.

To date, the American people only

know that Saddam Hussein is a brutal

dictator, who has used weapons of mass

destruction against his own people, and

that he is the man who invaded Kuwait,

and we expelled him. They are

not sure as to whether or not he is an

imminent threat; that is, a threat to

those security moms, not soccer moms,

who are in their living rooms and are

worried about the health of their children

and the safety of their homes.

The American people are confused, I

would respectfully suggest, by the

President’s talk and the administration’s

talk of a new doctrine of preemption,

and whether or not this is the

basis upon which we are arguing we

should act, or that we are acting to enforce,

essentially, a peace agreement, a

peace agreement signed by Saddam

Hussein at the end of the Kuwaiti war

that said: In return for me being able

to stay in power, I commit to do the

following things.

They are under the impression—the

American people—because of the signals

being sent by the Secretary of Defense

and his civilian subordinates,

that this war will be short, essentially

bloodless, and, just as in 1991, Johnny

will come marching home again in several

weeks, if not several months, after

a decisive, bloodless military victory.

The American people are assuming

we will lead a very broad coalition of

other nations and have the world behind

us in our effort. They further assume,

contrary very much to the hard

evidence, that the defeat of Saddam

Hussein will be a major setback for

Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida and

other terrorist organizations.

In short, they are under the assumption

that one of the reasons we are

moving against Saddam is that we will

literally make terrorists’ actions much

less probable in the United States of

America than they are today. For why

else would we use all this power we

have assembled in the gulf to go after

Iraq rather than using all this power to

go after Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan

and in northwestern Pakistan

where he most probably is according to

our intelligence community?

They put it together. Obviously, the

President would not take 250,000 forces,

invade, if we must, Iraq, if he didn’t

think that would materially affect

what I, as an American man, or woman

thinks is the greatest threat to me, another

9/11. They also assume, contrary

to any hard evidence, that Saddam

Hussein is months away from developing

a nuclear weapon that could

strike American soil, for which he has

no capacity, nor in any reasonable

prospect in the future would he have

any capacity to send a nuclear weapon

airborne from Iraq to the United

States.

Lastly, they seem to think the financial

cost of this war will be manageable

and not cause any further economic

disruption, for why else for the first

time in American history is the President

of the United States calling for

war, the possibility of war involving

250,000 American troops, at the very

same time he is going to call, tonight,

for a $650 billion tax cut? That has

never been done in the history of the

United States of America. Obviously,

they think the President wouldn’t do

that unless this was going to be pretty

costless, this war.

In short, I don’t think the American

people have been told honestly what

will be expected of them and what additionally

may be asked of them if things

don’t go so well. I think they will go

well. I am one who has not been happy

in the way we have proceeded, who

thinks this war will be prosecuted in a

way that will absolutely, to use the expression

younger people use, blow the

mind of the world in terms of our military

prowess. But it may not.

Why is it so critical to inform the

American people? Why, beyond their

democratic right to know, is it so

vital? I will answer that by telling you

a story.

On December 8, 2002, I was in Qatar

being briefed by General Franks, witnessing

the preparation for war, and

the war games were being carried on.

There were assembled in this secure

room—a gigantic hangar with a movie

screen literally larger than the size of

the wall behind the Presiding Officer,

probably somewhere around 30 feet

high and 40 feet wide—200 generals. I

have never seen so many stars in my

life, other than when I was a little kid

lying on my back looking up on a crystal

clear night in the middle of the

summer.

I was asked, after being briefed by

these warriors, whether or not I would

address the assembled crowd, all active

military personnel planning this war.

These men and women to a person were

ready to go and were secure in their

knowledge that they would successfully

complete their mission if asked to

by defeating Saddam Hussein, if ordered

to do so. What they were unsure

of was us, the politicians, and whether

we were willing to tell the American

people exactly what was likely to be

asked of them and were the American

people willing to continue to give them

the support they were going to need

over a long haul, not the short haul?

And it will be a long haul, regardless of

how quickly and successfully we wage

this war.

For those fighting men and women in

this room know it is going to be necessary

to stay in Iraq for a long time,

to have tens of thousands—I predict

over 75,000 American forces remaining

in Iraq a minimum of a year and a half

and, I predict, 5 years after we secure

victory. And they wanted to know

whether or not the American people

knew that, for they don’t want to be

over there a year from now when the

debate comes up and it is between another

$20 billion to stay in Iraq and $20

billion for education or for a tax cut.

We have no right to put them in that

squeeze again, as happened a generation

ago.

They also wanted to know if Saddam,

as some suggest—and I am revealing

nothing; I am not speaking from classified

reports—and his 120 to 150,000 Republican

Guard, the only ones we are

really worried about, their capacity, if

they retreat to Baghdad, a city, a city

of 5 million people, are the American

people prepared to continue to support

our military when they see the inevitable

happen? Innocent women and

children being killed. We know what

will happen. We know if they retreat to

Baghdad they will retreat to hospitals,

apartment complexes, and our fighting

women and men, if this happens—and

it is not sure it will—would have to go

door to door. They were worried that

the response would be the same response

that occurs seeing Israelis

knocking down a building or seeing a

child killed in the crossfire.

They are worried they will become

the bad guys, particularly, as I said, if

the Republican Guard falls back to a

city of 5 million people. Imagine going

house to house in Philadelphia or

Houston, routing out 2, 5, 10, 20, 50,

70,000 fighters. I told them that I believed

this generation and the American

people would pay whatever price

and pledge its support to them, but

only if they had informed consent. But

that has not been done yet, and it must

be done.

For while it is reasonable to expect

the best, it would be irresponsible not

to prepare for the worst. Iraq could

lash out against Israel, Saudi Arabia

and/or Kuwait in an effort to start a

wider war. It could use weapons of

mass destruction against our troops or

its neighbors. It could destroy its oil

fields and those of its neighbors. It

could start giving away its weapons of

mass destruction to terrorists.

It could create a humanitarian nightmare

among the Kurds in the north and

the Shia in the south, denying them

food or medicine, even using chemical

weapons against them, as Saddam has

done in the past, and as I saw for myself

when I met the survivors a month

ago in northern Iraq.

Maybe none of these unintended consequences

will occur, but there is a decent

chance that one or more will. We

must put every chance on our side and

prepare the American people for what

is bad as well as what is good. Hopefully

that will be done tonight or sometime

soon by the President, but not

after the fact. The world, our allies,

also are waiting for a clearer explanation

of why war.

I just returned from the World Economic

Forum and found myself confronted

with the most uniform and significant

anti-American sentiment I

have ever encountered in my career of

30 years dealing with foreign leaders

abroad. Not a single American diplomat,

elected official, American journalist,

businessman or labor leader

would disagree with the assessment I

just gave you.

It raises several questions that need

to be answered. Why do they feel this

way? Why should it matter? And if it

does matter, what should we do about

it? Why? There are multiple reasons,

and my pointing them out to a predominantly

non-American audience of

hundreds if not thousands of world

leaders was not always appreciated the

last 4 days, let alone agreed with. Let

me give you some of the reasons why

they feel the way they do, not all of

which are legitimate, by any means.

There is a lack of strong leadership

in the respective countries that has

been unwilling to tell their people the

truth about Saddam Hussein and the

commitment their country and the

world made to deal with him when he

sued for peace over 10 years ago. There

are selfish economic motives on the

part of some of our allies with regard

to their favored position with regard to

oil or telecom and scores of other

areas.

Another reason is the resentment of

America’s predominant position as the

world’s most powerful military and

economic nation as well as our cultural

dominance, from Coca-Cola to rap

music to English on the Internet, all of

which they resent in the same way we

would all resent if tomorrow our States

predominantly said, we are going to

switch to a different language because

a predominant number of people in our

State speak that language. This is

compounded by the belief that the

President is being pushed by the right

wing of his administration to further

leverage this predominant position

into an even more dominant position

relative to the rest of the world. It is

also compounded by an inability to

contribute much in the way of a fight,

either by augmenting our military

strength or their own, as well as a

seething resentment at our unwillingness

to use the forces they offered us in

Afghanistan after declaring that an article

5 breach had occurred under our

NATO treaty.

With regard to Iraq specifically,

many don’t see Saddam as a credible

threat to them. Their people don’t believe

our assertions. They say he no

longer has the weapons of mass destruction

that we know he has. They

believe in the aftermath of victory, we

will not stay until there is a stable

Government in Iraq—as we have not

stayed in Afghanistan sufficiently—and

they believe the resulting power struggle

within Iraq, in their region, will

have disastrous consequences for their

Governments because they have all

heard this administration say it will

not be engaged in nation building. And

they all know, and everyone knows, we

are going to have to be engaged in nation

building after we win the war.

All of this is compounded by the obvious

discussion within the administration:

The announcement of a new doctrine

of preemption that has yet to be

explained to us, let alone them; the appearance

of a great power being petulant

when a President stands before the

world and says ‘‘I am growing impatient,

I am getting tired’’; the apparent

contradiction in the rest of the world’s

mind of the treatment of the threat

from North Korea, which has weapons

of mass destruction, including nuclear,

has a record of proliferation, and has

violated international agreements, and

we are talking to them; whereas, Iraq,

which has no nuclear weapons—we cannot

find the weapons of mass destruction,

and there is scant evidence of

similar proliferation—they say we

speak with two different voices—the

feeling that the administration has

acted, without serious consultation,

unilaterally in unceremoniously withdrawing

from further negotiations,

from international structures, such as

climate control, criminal courts, ABM,

and others.

Isn’t the only thing that matters

whether we make it work in the long

run, which is what they hear from

some in this administration? Won’t it

all disappear when we succeed, as we

hear some in this administration say,

because everybody loves a winner,

right? Wrong. It matters what other

nations think because our most basic

immediate interests cannot be fully secured

without a longer term cooperation

with these other nations because

we must convince them and not coerce

them.

Let me give a few examples of what

our most immediate vital interests are.

Crushing international terror: How can

you do that without cooperation from

the intelligence services from Jakarta

to Berlin, from Paris to Beijing, from

Moscow to Rio? Preventing North

Korea from escalating its nuclear programs

and proliferation of weapons of

mass destruction, and doing so without

a war: How can we succeed without the

cooperation of Russia, China, Japan,

and South Korea, other than through

war? All of this leads to the perception

that some within the administration

argue that it is better to go it alone.

They have a belief that is the President’s

position. I don’t believe it is his

position, but what do they hear? They

hear the theories proffered by some in

the civilian Defense Department saying,

if we move in the face of world

public opinion, the rest of the world

knows we will mean business and the

more we do it alone, the more we will

impress upon the rogue nations that

they better change or they are next.

They also hear us saying that Europe is

tired, indecisive, and ultimately unwilling

to do what is necessary to keep

the peace and commands too much of

our resources and attention, particularly,

as the Secretary of Defense said,

France, and Germany.

They keenly resent these characterizations.

I think this is an inaccurate description

of where President Bush is, but I

do believe, though, that his choice of

words and failure to clearly explain his

choices and basis for action when we do

act has been dangerous to our standing

in the world, which leads me to a second

question.

Why should it matter what our

standing is—what the rest of the world

thinks of us? I believe it matters a lot.

Preventing a nuclear war on the subcontinent

between India and Pakistan

matters. But as we announced a unilateral

pronouncement of a ‘‘new’’ doctrine

of preemption—whatever that

means is yet to be explained—that

leads to the conclusion in India and

Pakistan that if we can act preemptively,

why can they not act preemptively

against one another? Conveying

our values to the rest of the world so as

to diminish the misunderstanding of

our motives runs constantly into some

of the assertions that come from some

in this administration.

Let me get right to it, Mr. President.

It matters what other nations think,

and it matters that although we can

force other nations to do things, it

matters how we do it. Here is an example.

There is a new Government in Turkey—

newly elected represented by an

Islamic Party. That Islamic Party recently

won the election, and the Prime

Minister is a guy named Gul. The real

operator is a guy named Erdogan. They

were leading this Islamic Party and

they have decided they want to have

Turkey remain a secular state and

they want to be integrated into Europe

with regard to the EU. It is very much

in the interest of the United States of

America—very much—that that happens.

We do not want an Islamic state;

we want a secular state looking west.

So what is the problem? We can offer

$5 billion and essentially buy the support

to allow us to launch from Turkey.

But if we do that in the absence of

a worldwide consensus that what we

are doing is right, we may meet our

immediate goal and lose a heck of a

lot. Here is an example. Right now, in

Turkey—which I recently visited and I

know the Presiding Officer knows

this—over 85 percent of the Turkish

people are unalterably opposed to a

war with Iraq and unalterably opposed

to Turkey cooperating with us in being

able to successfully prosecute that war.

So what happens if we go to war and we

launch from Turkey with the support

of the new Islamic leadership without

having changed the minds of the people

in Turkey and/or the world, to suggest

that this is not merely us, but that it

is sanctioned by the world that we do

this? Well, the roughly 35 to 40 percent

of this Islamic Party that is radical Islamic

will play to its populist instincts

and cause incredible trouble for the existing

administration in Turkey and, I

believe, force them to move away from

their commitment to a secular state.

So that old biblical proverb, what

does it profit a man if he gains the

world and loses his soul—paraphrasing

it—what does it profit us to move prematurely

on Iraq from Turkey if the

end result is that we radicalize a government

that is represented by the Islamic

Party.

What have we gained?

I will answer the third question, and

then conclude. So what should we do? I

have argued that out of our self-interest

it matters what other nations

think. So what should we be doing? I

begin by saying, given where we are

now, coupled with Saddam Hussein

being in material breach—that is a

fancy phrase for saying not explaining

what he has done with the weapons of

mass destruction we know he has—

those two things may force us to

choose between the better of two notso-

pleasant options.

The option I would choose in this circumstance,

if we do not get world support,

is that Saddam is in material

breach of the latest U.N. resolution.

Yesterday’s damning report by the

U.N. inspectors makes clear again

Saddam’s contempt for the world and

it has vindicated the President’s decision

last fall to go to the U.N.

The legitimacy of the Security Council

is at stake, as well as the integrity

of the U.N. So if Saddam does not give

up those weapons of mass destruction

and the Security Council does not call

for the use of force, I think we have little

option but to act with a larger

group of willing nations, if possible,

and alone if we must. Make no mistake

about it, we will pay a price if that is

the way we go. We will have no option,

but we will pay a price, a price that

could be significantly reduced if from

this moment on we act, in my humble

opinion, more wisely.

What should we be doing from this

point on? I will be very brief now and

expand on this later. One, we should

lower the rhetoric. We should not appear

to be the petulant nation, wondering

why the rest of the recalcitrant

world will not act with us, showing our

impatience. It does not suit a great nation

well. It would not suit my father

well, were he alive. It does not suit

someone of stature well—and we are a

nation of stature.

Two, we should make the case not

only privately to our partners by sharing

more proof of Saddam’s crimes and

possessions, but also to our people and

in turn to the whole world. Legally, he

is in breach, but going to war based on

that legal breach will cost us in ways

we would not have to pay if we go to

war with the rest of the world understanding

that there is something there

beyond the failure to account.

The third thing we should do is give

inspectors more time, for their very

presence in Iraq diminishes the possibility

of sharing weapons of mass destruction

with terrorists or continuing

their quest for nuclear weapons. Inspectors

are not a permanent solution.

We know from our experience of the

last decade that Iraq will try to make

their mission impossible. We also know

that sustaining a massive deployment

of troops is expensive and hard on our

men and women in uniform. But right

now the inspectors are helping us build

support for our policy, both at home

and abroad, and we should let them

keep working in the near term.

The fourth thing we should do is articulate

clearly and repeatedly not

only the legal basis for our action, if

we must move, but our commitment to

stay until we have a stable Iraq, and

that means the following: The President

should state clearly tonight, we

are not acting on a doctrine of preemption,

if we act. We are acting on enforcement

of a U.N. resolution that is

the equivalent of a peace treaty which

is being violated by the signatory of

that treaty, and we have a right to do

that and it is the world’s problem. It is

not what we hear out of the civilian

Defense Department, this cockamamie

notion of a new doctrine of preemption

which no one understands.

Two, our objective has to be clearly

stated as eliminating weapons of mass

destruction and not the destruction of

Iraq, for that is the President’s purpose.

Thirdly, we will in fact participate in

nation building; we will seek U.N. support

and we will tell the American people

what we are asking of them and

why, for they have no idea now what is

expected of them. They do not know

what the costs will be to remove Saddam

and they should. They do not

know how many troops will have to

stay in Iraq to secure the country, and

we have estimates, and what it will

take to get a representative government

that lives up to its international

obligations.

Can we count on our friends and allies

to share the burden? Can we afford

to attack Iraq, fully fund homeland security,

cut taxes for the wealthiest

Americans, and finish the unfinished

war on terrorism in Afghanistan and

other places?

These questions should never be excuses

for inaction, but they must be

answered if we want the American people’s

support and we want to avoid the

mistakes of the past.

I yield the floor.