I begin by complimenting

the majority leader on his

remarks and on the manner in which

he has conducted himself and his leadership

with regard to this issue. He has

noted the strong desire on the part of

all four leaders in Congress to demonstrate

with absolute clarity the need

for bipartisanship when it comes to

sending as clear a message as we can.

His remarks and his actions have demonstrated

that, and I support fully his

decision not to bring the resolution to

the floor today.

Obviously, there are times when matters

of this import need to be fully discussed

and must by their nature involve

every Senator. Two of the most

important Senators to provide contributions

to this debate are traveling

on one of the most important missions

related to this whole exercise and cannot

be with us today.

In addition to that, we continue to

consult with colleagues on both sides

of the aisle in an effort to come up

with the clearest and most accurate

statement with regard to the position

to be expressed by the Senate. So for

all of those reasons and many others,

Senator LOTT and I will continue to

work with our colleagues and schedule

a time that will provide for the opportunity

for all Senators to be heard and

for debate to take place on this very

important matter.

But, so that there will be no misunderstanding,

we come to the floor

today jointly—and we will be joined by

several others—to speak with one voice

to condemn in the strongest possible

terms Iraq’s refusal to comply with

international law. To condemn Iraq’s

refusal to fulfill its commitments to

the international community. To send

a clear message to Saddam Hussein

that American resolve to force Iraqi

compliance with international law and

their own commitments is unwavering;

to make clear that U.S. national interests

are threatened if Saddam Hussein

is allowed to thwart the international

community’s efforts to shut down his

development of weapons of mass destruction

programs.

Although Senator LOTT and I come

from different political parties and

may differ on issues from time to time,

there ought to be no mistake about our

position today. We stand united in

sending the message to Iraq that it has

no option other than to comply with

the terms of the U.N. Security Council

resolutions.

We have chosen to speak together

today to send this important message

as the President and members of his

Administration work diligently to

demonstrate to Iraq and the world the

strength of our commitment to international

security. It is a demonstration

of our resolve—which is shared by

the American people—that Iraq shall

not be permitted to develop and deploy

an arsenal of frightening chemical and

biological weapons under any circumstances.

U.N. Security Council Resolution 687

requires Iraq to disclose and destroy its

weapons of mass destruction capabilities

and to commit unconditionally to

never reviving those programs. Resolution

687 established the United Nations

Special Commission (UNSCOM) to verify

Iraqi compliance with these provisions

and required that international

economic sanctions against Iraq remain

in place until those conditions

are met.

The Iraqi government has repeatedly

and deliberately impeded UNSCOM’s

attempts to ensure that Iraq’s weapons

of mass destruction programs are destroyed.

The Iraqis have consistently

thwarted UNSCOM’s efforts to conduct

their inspections unhindered—despite

clear concerns about Iraq’s remaining

chemical and biological weapons capabilities.

UNSCOM personnel have

served admirably under extremely difficult,

and often dangerous, conditions.

In the face of concerted Iraqi intimidation

and deception, UNSCOM has discovered

numerous violations of U.N.

Security Council resolutions requiring

an end to Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction

programs. In fact, more Iraqi

chemical and biological weapons have

been destroyed as a result of

UNSCOM’s inspections than during all

of Operation Desert Storm.

Iraq’s actions pose a serious and continued

threat to international peace

and security. It is a threat we must address.

Saddam is a proven aggressor

who has time and again turned his

wrath on his neighbors and on his own

people. Iraq is not the only nation in

the world to possess weapons of mass

destruction, but it is the only nation

with a leader who has used them

against his own people.

It is essential that a dictator like

Saddam not be allowed to evade international

strictures and wield frightening

weapons of mass destruction. As

long as UNSCOM is prevented from carrying

out its mission, the effort to

monitor Iraqi compliance with Resolution

687 becomes a dangerous shell

game. Neither the United States nor

the global community can afford to

allow Saddam Hussein to continue on

this path.

Secretaries Albright and Cohen, in

their trips to the Persian Gulf and elsewhere,

are sending the important message

that, while the United States certainly

prefers a diplomatic course, we

are willing to use force to block Iraq’s

ability to develop and use an arsenal of

chemical and biological weapons if diplomatic

efforts do not achieve this result.

While there are clear differences

among the leaders they have talked

with, they have found unanimity on at

least 2 issues.

First, U.N. weapons inspectors must

have unfettered access to suspect Iraqi

sites. Second, Saddam Hussein is solely

responsible for creating this crisis by

not adhering to the Security Council

resolutions in the first place.

The foreign ministers of the 6-member

Gulf Cooperation Council—Saudi

Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, United

Arab Emirates, and Qatar—stated this

most clearly just yesterday:

The United States continues to exhaust

all diplomatic efforts to reverse

the Iraqi threat. But absent immediate

Iraqi compliance with Resolution 687,

the security threat doesn’t simply persist—

it worsens. Saddam Hussein must

understand that the United States has

the resolve to reverse that threat by

force, if force is required And, I must

say, it has the will.

Secretary Albright sent the message

in its purest form: ‘‘Saddam does not

have a menu of choices, he has one:

Iraq must comply with the U.N. Security

Council resolutions and provide

U.N. inspectors with the unfettered access

they need to do their job.’’

We are here today to affirm that we

and the American people stand with

the President and the international

community in an effort to end Iraq’s

weapons of mass destruction programs

and preserve our vital national and

international security interests.

The Senate has been working on a

concurrent resolution expressing

Congress’s concern about Iraq’s refusal

to cooperate with U.N. weapons inspectors

and urging the President to respond

to this threat. In doing so, the

Senate has grappled with some of the

very difficult issues surrounding

Congress’s role in the decision to use

military force. Perhaps too much had

been made of the differences among

Members of Congress about exactly

how to approach this problem. That is

understandable. There are always ways

in which to change the wording. But

there is no way in which to change the

message. The message is fundamentally

and unequivocally clear, the most

important message of all. Iraq must

comply. There is no choice. We stand

united in our determination to do

whatever is necessary to achieve our

goal. Iraq must comply. The United

States has the resolve to ensure that

compliance and we stand united today

in an effort to articulate that very

clear message as loudly, as unequivocally,

and in as much of a bipartisan

way as we can.