Mr. President, on this

day in the halls of the United Nations

Security Council and in the distant

lands of the Middle East, the United

States is making a stand for the causes

of freedom and democracy, for order

and peace.

The President and the Congress have

made clear that we will no longer tolerate

Saddam Hussein’s production or

possession of weapons of mass destruction.

Further, it is our solemn belief

that the people of Iraq deserve to live

in freedom. They have suffered long

enough under the tyranny and the oppression

of the day.

As is so often the case, challenging

the status quo is not easy even if that

status quo is a dictator pursuing and

possessing weapons of mass destruction

that are explicitly prohibited by the

United Nations Security Council.

We are fast approaching that moment

of reckoning with Saddam Hussein.

If he were to voluntarily disarm,

it would be welcomed. But he will not.

If he flees his country, the chances for

peace are much better. But he will

never flee unless he is absolutely convinced

that there are no other options

for his survival.

If individuals within Saddam’s regime

rise up and overthrow him, there

will be an opportunity for a new beginning

in Iraq. But none will take this

brave step if they doubt the fortitude

of the United States and the international

community.

Let there be no mistake about our

Nation’s purpose in confronting Iraq.

Saddam Hussein’s regime poses a clear

threat to the security of the United

States, its friends and its allies. And it

is a threat that we must address, and

we must address now.

Recall that in 1991 we were concerned

Saddam would use weapons of mass destruction

to further his expansionist

desires in the Middle East. Now, a decade

later, we live with the reality—the

reality—that terrorists may acquire

and use such weapons on our soil.

I have no doubts that terrorists seek

such weapons to use against this Nation.

I am equally certain that Saddam

Hussein possesses such weapons and

would provide them to terrorists, if he

has not already. And it is this nexus of

a tyrannical dictator, those weapons of

mass destruction, and terrorists who

seek to inflict harm—grievous harm—

upon the American people that compels

us to act now.

The Senate—this body—and the

House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly

last fall to authorize the

President to use force, if necessary,

against Iraq if Saddam Hussein did not

disarm. In those votes, the Congress

stated unambiguously that the United

States will not tolerate the pursuit and

possession of weapons of mass destruction

by Saddam Hussein.

Nothing has fundamentally changed.

I guess one could say the possible exception

to that statement would be we

have even further evidence, because of

the passage of time, that Saddam Hussein

will not voluntarily disarm.

Last fall, to reaffirm the broad international

commitment to disarm Iraq,

President Bush successfully pursued a

United Nations resolution that offered

Saddam Hussein a final chance to meet

the demands of the world community

or face the consequences. Saddam has

missed his final chance.

Now we are told the United States

must pursue a second resolution before

Iraq can be disarmed. The United Nations

Security Council, on 17 separate

occasions, over a 12-year period, demanded

the disarmament of Iraq. For

the record, this will not be a second

resolution, but this will be an 18th resolution

over this 12-year period. Nothing

in history has been made more

meaningful by repeating it 18 different

times.

In the end, it is not a multilateral

approach our opponents seek—for the

United States is already joined by a

multitude of others who share our commitment

to disarm Saddam. No, it is

the false comfort of unanimity to

which they aspire. When everyone is

responsible, no one is accountable.

My friends, the hour has arrived for

democratically elected leaders to stand

up and be counted. Will the free world

tolerate Saddam Hussein’s continued

brutality, his possession of weapons of

mass destruction, and his continued defiance

of the international community,

or will we act to stop it now?

To those who would suggest we are

acting in isolation to confront

Saddam’s evil, I remind you we are not

alone in the conviction. In the past

month, the leaders of 18 European

countries have publicly endorsed the

U.S. call for final action, including

force, if necessary, to disarm Saddam

Hussein.

Over two dozen countries are providing

basing for our troops, access for

our aircraft, and material support in

preparation for a possible conflict with

Iraq. And if it comes to that, with allies

such as the United Kingdom, Australia,

Spain, Italy, Denmark, as well

as many of the new democracies of

Eastern Europe all on our side, we will

not carry this burden alone.

America is at its strongest when it is

standing in common cause with our

friends and allies. The inverse, of

course, is that America’s allies are at

their strongest when they are standing

with the United States.

To those leaders who have spoken

out with us against the threat posed by

Saddam Hussein, I commend your courage.

As America has risen to challenge

the threats posed and supported by

Saddam Hussein, you chose to stand by

her side. And such loyalty and such

leadership will not soon be forgotten.

Some of our erstwhile allies would be

well advised to recall their own freedom

was regained by such courage and

conviction. I remind them their own

liberation in World War II was a less

popular undertaking than a possible

war in Iraq.

What about popular opinion at the

time? If one goes back and looks at

surveys and polls from the time, in October

1939, when asked whether the

U.S. should enter the war in Europe,

only 16.8 percent of Americans responded

yes. And 17.2 percent said yes

in December 1939. In July 1940, 26.9 percent

said yes.

After winning reelection in 1940,

President Roosevelt tried to move public

opinion toward greater U.S. involvement,

while offering significant material

support to the allied war effort.

Yet asked again in January of 1941

whether they would support a declaration

of war, only 14 percent of the

American people responded yes.

And as late as October 1941, President

Roosevelt commented that 70 percent

of Americans wanted us to stay out of

the war in Europe.

Sadly, at that time, many around the

world recoiled at the thought of confronting

Nazi Germany head on. After

all, it was Europe’s war, not ours, and

Hitler was killing foreign Jews, not

Americans. Many leaders of the day demanded

we look after America first.

They called for our country to stay

within its borders, protected by the

false security of two oceans. But then,

as now—on December 7, 1941, and September

11, 2001—we were reminded that

America is most vulnerable to attack

when it is in retreat.

President Roosevelt demonstrated

then, as President Bush does today,

that the essential measure of a world

leader is not in his ability to chase

public opinion—no—but, rather, his

courage to make the country safer by

leading public opinion.

President Bush deserves much credit

for confronting the grave and growing

threat posed by the mad pursuit of a

ruthless tyrant for the world’s most

deadly weapons. The President is right

when he says that neither more time

nor more inspections will stop Saddam.

The consequences of war with Iraq

cannot be certain and those feelings of

uncertainty we felt as the issues surrounding

Iraq and the future have been

discussed on the floor today. But our

goals and our motives must be understood

for what they are. We seek to defend

our own people. We seek the liberation

of the Iraqi people. We seek the

foundation of a democratic government

in Baghdad, and we seek the spread of

peace in the Middle East. These are

worthy goals of a great nation, and

they are goals worth fighting for.