Mr. President, I

appreciate very much the leadership

that Senator LOTT has provided in the

ongoing discussions that we have had

in Congress on the situation with Iraq.

I was very pleased that in the 2

weeks previous to this, when the President

came to consult with Congress,

that Senator LOTT stated that we needed

a plan, that it was important that

the President have, indeed, in an aftermath

certainly the acknowledgment

that there might be a retaliation, and

asking the President to tell us what

the response would be. I think this set

in motion, on the part of the President

and the President’s advisers really the

awareness and the reality of the situation—

that it is not an immediate situation

that is going to be set aside and

not visited again. In fact, I think all

the indicators point to the fact that we

are going to revisit this again—that

perhaps we have a reprieve, that we

have a window of opportunity. And this

window of opportunity should be taken

to lay out a long-term strategy—a

long-term strategy that would, once

and for all, make clear what our policy

is in dealing with Saddam Hussein.

For whatever else you say about Saddam

Hussein, his objectives are clear.

He has been very clear in his actions

and in his words that he intends to

make weapons of mass destruction,

that he intends to abuse his people to

be able to keep them, that he does not

intend to be part of the community of

nations. And I think it is time that

America be just as clear with Saddam

Hussein as he has been with us and

with the world.

It crystallized I think for the American

people a higher-stake universe—

not the rabble rousing by the people

who were protesting the war. They

would protest the war, no matter what.

The people who would protest the war

for the integrity and the security of

the United States are not the mainstream

of America. But who was the

mainstream of America? It is that veteran,

who spoke with a cracked voice,

who said, ‘‘I fought in a war. My son

fought in a war.’’ And he asked the

question that the American people and

the Congress ask. And that is: What are

you going to do? What is the plan? If

you are going to put our troops in

harm’s way, are we going to have the

guts to stick with it when the going

gets tough? That was his question. He

was so sincere. He captured the heart

of America in that moment. And he

captured the essence of what Congress

has asked the President to do; that is,

to submit a plan. If our troops are

going into harm’s way, if we are going

to have an altercation with another

country, let’s be specific about what

the mission is.

The time has come to stop status quo

with Saddam Hussein. The majority

leader just mentioned that Saddam

Hussein has quite a record. He plotted

the assassination of our former President

Bush. He used chemical weapons

on his own people. He used chemical

weapons on the Iranian people. He went

into Kuwait, and tried to take over another

country. This is not a man that

we can deal with very easily. And business

as usual has not worked for the

last decade with Saddam Hussein.

So I believe that the time has come

for Congress and the President to work

together to address this issue of Saddam

Hussein. I hope the President will

continue to consult with Congress, because

I think in the last 2 weeks there

has been a good understanding of where

Congress is and where the American

people are. Now is the time to put forth

a plan. A group of our former Secretaries

of State and Secretaries of Defense

have made some suggestions. This is

not to say that this is the only thing

we could do. But certainly having a

strategy is something that America

has been able to do in the past, and

should be able to do today.

I think it is important that we look

for another Iraqi Government that we

could support—one that wants to be

part of the community of nations. We

could look at lifting sanctions in liberated

areas of Iraq and communicate directly

with the Iraqi people. Let them

know the dangers of the chemical

weapons that are being housed in their

country and tell them there is another

way. We want to help the Iraqi people.

We want to give them the food and

medicine for their children that we

would like for them to have that every

parent in the world wants for his or her

children.

We should target relief supplies to

those Iraqi people who are in need. We

need to delegitimize Saddam Hussein.

And we need to be ready with enough

troop force to make the threat and live

up to it. That, if Saddam Hussein does

not live up to this potential agreement

that is laid before the Security Council

today, we will be ready to act with

force swiftly and go for what will be a

destabilization of Saddam Hussein;

that is, the military regime.

That brings up another question. Are

we ready to lead the forces we need for

that kind of strength in the area of the

Persian Gulf? Are we ready? That

brings up the issue of what we are

doing in other parts of the world. Is

that bringing our forces down to the

extent that we are not going to be able

to do what we need in the Persian Gulf

where everyone I think would agree we

have a security interest? Right now we

have some pretty alarming statistics.

Last year the military had its worst recruiting

year since 1979. The Army

failed to meet its objectives to recruit

infantry soldiers—the single most important

specialty in the Army. More

than 350 Air Force pilots turned down

the $60,000 bonuses they would have received

to reapply for the Air Force for

5 more years. That was a 29 percent acceptance

rate. Mr. President, 59 percent

of the pilots offered that bonus accepted

last year and 81 percent in 1995.

This is an alarming trend. This is

something that we must address as we

look at the issues of the use of our

force and where they are.

I come back to the need for a policy

of when we are going to send American

troops into harm’s way. I think we

must be very careful, because they are

stretched so thin, that they are not

going to be able to establish in the Persian

Gulf a major presence in addition

to our responsibilities in Korea and in

Europe, and then with responsibilities

that we have taken on for the United

Nations in places like Haiti and Somalia.

We have to have a policy. I would

ask this administration to look very

clearly at drawing down our readiness

at the same time we are asking our

troops to do more.

So, these issues are before us. I think

the administration should step back

and use the window of opportunity to

have a clear policy in Iraq. As we go

into the discussion of Bosnia, I hope

the President will also look at the fact

that we have 500,000 fewer soldiers

today than we did in Desert Storm, and

that we are having a tough time keeping

our good people in the military.

Let’s have a policy that will use our

military when there is a U.S. security

interest, but be very careful about dissipating

our resources in places where

we do not. That is causing us to lose

many of our best people in the military.

The young men and women who sign

up to protect our freedom deserve the

support of the U.S. Congress and the

President—the support, the training,

the quality of life, the equipment to do

their job—because their job is protecting

our freedom, and there can be nothing

as important.

I ask the administration to address

these issues as we are looking at Iraq,

as we are looking at Bosnia, as we are

looking at our responsibilities in a

global sense. Let’s start acting like the

superpower that we are and target our

defense dollars for our readiness and

our national security. Let’s have policies

where, when the United States

speaks, everyone knows that we will be

a reliable ally and a formidable enemy.