Mr. President, as we

begin the 108th Congress, I want to talk

about the situation in Iraq and our response

to it, because I believe there

may be a fundamental misunderstanding

as to the process that is underway

to bring about Iraq’s disarmament.

Pursuant to U.N. resolution

1441, the U.N. Inspection Commission

and the International Atomic Energy

Agency are to provide updates to the

U.N. on the results of their inspections

to date. These updates are intended to

be interim reports, not final conclusions.

I think we all, particularly the

administration and the press, need to

be very aware of that fact.

The January 27 report will only be

one of a number of such reports that

will be presented to the Security Council

over the weeks and months to come.

It is not a determining date on the

issue of whether or not Iraq has materially

breached U.N. resolution 1441, or

whether we will use force against Iraq.

We are not in the fourth quarter of

some football game. In fact, we have

just begun to share a small quantity of

the large amount of information that

we have relative to Iraqi suspect sites.

Let us look at the events that led up

to the unanimous decision by the

United Nations Security Council on

November 8 of last year to set up an

enhanced inspection regime to afford

Iraq an opportunity to comply with its

disarmament obligations. Iraq, as we

all remember, invaded Kuwait on August

1, 1990. After numerous demands

and diplomatic, economic, and political

action by the international community,

on November 29, 1990, almost 4

months after the attack, the U.N. authorized

member states ‘‘to use all necessary

means’’ to liberate Kuwait.

Iraq’s defeat at the hands of a United

States-led coalition in 1991 was followed

by a U.N. Security Council resolution

in April 1991 that established a

number of conditions for a cease fire,

notably including a demand for the destruction

of Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction

programs, and Iraq accepted

that resolution.

In the intervening years, Iraq repeatedly

obstructed and failed to cooperate

with the weapons inspectors of the

United Nations and of the atomic energy

agency that were charged with

the responsibility of disarming Iraq.

With this historical background, the

Security Council adopted resolution

1441 on November 8 of last year to set

up an enhanced inspection regime.

Under resolution 1441, Iraq is required

to provide the United Nations inspectors

and the IAEA ‘‘immediate,

unimpeded, unconditional, and unrestricted

access to any and all areas, including

underground areas, facilities,

buildings, equipment, records and

means of transport which they wish to

inspect, as well immediate, unimpeded,

unrestricted, and private access to all

officials and other persons whom the

inspectors of the IAEA wish to interview,’’

and that includes outside of

Iraq. Resolution 1441 also requires Iraq

to provide a complete, accurate, and

full declaration of all aspects of its

weapons of mass destruction and delivery

systems programs.

In order to assist the U.N. Security

Council in its oversight of implementation

of Iraq’s disarmament, resolution

1441 set out a time line of events. Using

November 8, 2000, the date the U.N. Security

Council adopted resolution 1441,

Iraq was required to accept the resolution

within 7 days. It did so. Iraq was

required to provide a full declaration of

weapons of mass destruction within 30

days of November 8. It said that its

declaration was a full one and it did it

on the 29th day.

The inspectors were to start within

45 days of November 8; the inspections

began on November 25th.

The inspectors were to provide an update

on their inspections to the Security

Council within 60 days of the date

that the inspections commenced. They

have announced their intention to provide

these first interim progress reports

on January 27, within that time

limit.

The inspection process was begun

with reasonable speed. The inspectors

have already inspected a Presidential

palace that had heretofore been subject

to special rules, and they are inspecting

on weekends and holidays. Their

principal job right now is to establish a

baseline for future inspections and

testing Iraq’s willingness to cooperate.

This is the key, the inspection process

is at its beginning. As of the end of December,

virtually all of the arms inspections

had taken place in the Baghdad

area as the U.N. inspectors only

had one of its eight helicopters in Iraq

and had just opened a headquarters in

Mosul in northern Iraq.

Again and most significantly, the

United States and other nations with

sophisticated intelligence capabilities

have only just begun to share intelligence

with the arms inspectors and

are proceeding cautiously in light of

the reported Iraqi infiltration of the inspectors

during the 1990s. In fact, today’s

Washington Post reports that

Secretary of State Powell stated in an

interview yesterday that the administration

was holding back much of the

information in its possession, waiting

to see if the inspectors ‘‘are able to

handle and exploit’’ the information

that we did give them.

The inspection process is estimated

to take months, not weeks, and this

timetable was understood by the Security

Council from its inception. That is

why the U.N. resolution refers to the

January 27th reports from the inspectors

as ‘‘updates,’’ and that is why January

27 is not a deadline for deciding

whether to use force.

British Foreign Secretary Straw

noted on December 19, with respect to

the declaration filed by Iraq on its

weapons of mass destruction and delivery

systems: that [‘‘What we’ve got

today is a further step in a very calm

and deliberate process to try by every

means possible to get Iraq to comply

with its international obligations

peacefully and therefore and thereby to

resolve this crisis in a peaceful manner.’’]

In an interview at Crawford, TX, on

December 31, President Bush seemed to

agree with the British Secretary when

he stated that he hoped the Iraqi situation

will be resolved peacefully. And in

answer to a reporter’s question, President

Bush said: ‘‘You said we’re headed

to war in Iraq—I don’t know why you

say that. I hope we’re not headed to

war in Iraq.’’ On that same day, U.N.

Secretary General Kofi Annan said

‘‘Obviously they [the inspectors] are

carrying out their work and in the

meantime Iraq is cooperating and they

are able to do their work in an

unimpeded manner, therefore I don’t

see an argument for a military action

now.’’ And, in a press conference at the

Pentagon just yesterday, Secretary of

Defense Rumsfeld said ‘‘I don’t know

why anyone would use the word ’inevitable.’

It clearly is not inevitable.’’

The arms inspections in Iraq are at

an early stage. The United States has

just begun to provide information to

the inspectors about suspect sites. Barring

a dramatic development, the interim

progress reports that the inspectors

will make to the U.N. Security

Council on January 27 will only be one

of a number of such reports that will be

presented to the council over the

months to come.

Earlier today, Mohamed ElBaradei,

Director General of the IAEA, at a

press conference at the United Nations

stated ‘‘We will provide an update report

on the 27th of this month. However,

that report, we should emphasize,

is an update report, it is not a final report.

It’s a work in progress. And this

simply would register where we are on

the 27th of January, but we obviously

continue to we’ll our work afterward,

and we still have a lot of work to do.’’

In the absence of the U.N. inspectors

finding that Iraq currently possesses or

is developing weapons of mass destruction

or that Iraq is not cooperating

with the inspections, we need to give

the inspectors the needed time to complete

their work. In the meantime, we

need to provide targeted intelligence to

inspectors to facilitate their effort,

without disclosing sources and methods,

of course. That is our best chance

of bringing about Iraq’s voluntary disarmament

or, failing that, obtaining

broad international backing, including

U.N. authorization for a multilateral

effort to forcibly disarm Iraq.

If we prejudge the outcome of the inspections

or if we don’t furnish the

arms inspectors with targeted intelligence,

we will not be able to obtain

the international support, as represented

by U.N. authorization for the

use of force, that is so highly desirable

and advantageous to us. Forcibly disarming

Iraq without international support

would be perceived as a unilateral

attack by the United States and a few

allies. International support is critical

to reducing the short-term risks, such

as a loss of regional cooperation with

resulting increased probability of U.S.

casualties and reduced likelihood of

international contributions in a

postconflict environment.

International support is also important

to reducing long-term risks, such

as a loss of international cooperation

in connection with the war against al-

Qaida, and increased probability of terrorist

attacks against us.

In summary, January 27 is the first

interim report. It is not D-Day, decision

day, as to whether to attack Iraq.

We must not prejudge the outcome of

the very inspection process that we

worked so hard to put in place as being

highly relevant to the question of

whether we launch attack on Iraq. We

must share all the information we can

on suspect sites. And finally, if we

don’t share our information with the

U.N. inspectors, or if we prejudge the

outcome of these inspections, we will

increase the likelihood that we will go

to war and increase the risks, short

term and long term, to our troops and

our Nation in doing so.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.