Mr. President, a decision

to send our military personnel

into combat is the most serious policymakers

can make. We do not or should

not cavalierly discuss military options

without losing sight of the human dimension

that people, whether our own

uniformed personnel or innocent civilians

in the country against which we

take action, will die.

We were correct to strike Libya in

1986, although we mourned the loss of

lives of innocent people whose sole

crime was to live in a dictatorship that

provoked us to action. We were correct

to liberate Grenada and Panama, despite

the loss of life that accompanied

those conflicts. And we were correct to

conduct overwhelming airstrikes

against Iraq in order to evict it from

Kuwait, but we regret the deaths of civilians

cynically placed in harm’s way

by that country’s regime. And we have

been correct in the past to launch punitive

missile strikes against Iraq in response

to its violation of the U.N. resolutions.

We now stand on the precipice of yet

another military confrontation with

Saddam Hussein and the military security

forces that protect him. Iraq has

repeatedly, over the span of 7 years, defied

U.N. resolutions and agreements,

negotiated in exchange for the termination

of the Persian Gulf war. The demands

made of Iraq are simple and reasonable

and, if complied with in good

faith, would not have unduly subjected

it to violations of its sovereignty. Iraq

was to destroy its existing stockpiles

of banned weapons of mass destruction

and its capability to reconstitute the

scientific and industrial infrastructure

for their development. It was to repatriate

Kuwaiti prisoners after Iraq’s

brutal invasion and occupation of its

smaller neighbor; and it was to compensate

the victims of its aggression.

Mr. President, it has not done any of

these things. Instead, it has demonstrated

for 7 straight years its contempt

for the United Nations, for the

agreements it has signed, and for the

most simple norms of civilized behavior.

Saddam Hussein has repeatedly

pushed the international community to

the brink and then pulled back just

enough to head off military action. He

has eluded the scale of punitive measures

warranted by calculating the

point at which his actions would result

in serious retaliatory measures by the

United States. He has gotten away

with this because in those few instances

when military action was

taken against him, it was ineffectual.

Nowhere was this more evident than

the September 1996 cruise missile

strikes against Iraqi targets following

the most egregious violation to date:

the large-scale military incursion into

Kurdish territory and subsequent execution

of anti-Saddam activists working

with the United States. At that

time, the forces involved in the incursion

on what was supposed to be protected

territory should have been directly

and forcefully attacked.

The United Nations Special Commission

tasked with verifying Iraqi’s compliance

with U.N. resolutions has been

systematically stymied at every point.

Saddam Hussein has clearly placed a

higher priority on continuing to develop

the means to threaten his neighbors

than on the welfare of children the

fate of which Baghdad purports to

decry. Iraq has received every conceivable

opportunity to comply with legitimate

and lawful demands and to join

the community of nations as a member

in good standing, and has spurned

those opportunities.

The nature of the regime of Saddam

Hussein is impervious to any peaceful

effort at resolution of the ongoing conflict.

There is every reason to believe

that Iraq continues to possess chemical

and biological weapons and the means

to deliver them. There is no indication

that it aspires to live in peace with its

neighbors; on the contrary, I have no

doubt that if the opportunity arose, it

would again attempt to retake Kuwait.

It certainly aspires to participate in

the destruction of Israel.

The time for talk may be over. The

chairman of the U.N. Special Commission

has thrown up his hands in dismay.

The approaching option is the

large-scale and protracted use of military

force. Diplomacy, certainly the

optimal approach, has failed thus far.

Withdrawing our forces and lifting the

sanctions would enable Iraq to fully

rearm and openly threaten to destabilize

the region, brandishing the very

banned weapons at issue. Not only

should sanctions not be lifted, they

should in fact be tightened. Existing

no-fly zones should continue to be enforced

and expanded, perhaps to include

no-drive zones targeted against

Republican Guard armored units.

The only viable military option is to

inflict serious damage on the Iraqi Republican

Guard and destroy the compounds

and ‘‘palaces’’ Saddam has

sought to protect. Ineffectual cruise

missile and air strikes such as characterized

past punitive actions, particularly

in 1996 when 27 cruise missiles

were launched against largely insignificant

targets, will once again prove

counterproductive. Domestic communications

links should be targeted as

well as military ones, in order to sever

Saddam’s ability to communicate to

the Iraqi people. The expansion of our

own broadcasting into Iraq aimed at

influencing public opinion there should

have been a higher priority all along.

And we should be prepared to act

alone if necessary. While Britain has

stood by us and prepared to act with

us, for which we should be grateful, it

is disconcerting to witness the paucity

of public support for enforcing legitimate

U.N. resolutions. While some of

us were in Germany this past weekend,

it was gratifying to hear the German

government come out in support of our

efforts, but European support is less

important right now than attaining

the open support of the Middle Eastern

governments that will play a vital role

in dealing with the political ramifications

within that region of any military

actions we take against Iraq. In

that respect, Saudi Arabia’s decision to

permit only the use of support aircraft

from its territory is deeply disturbing.

I understand Saudi, and all Arab, concern

for the welfare of the Iraqi populace.

And I am aware of the domestic

and regional implications for the Saudi

government of openly supporting air

strikes against Iraq. The threat posed

by Saddam Hussein against Saudi Arabia,

as well as every other country in

the region, however, argues forcefully

for the government in Riyadh to be

more openly supportive of our measures

and to communicate to their people

the simple fact that measures

against Iraq occur solely because of

that country’s belligerent and unlawful

stance.

The military option, should it be chosen,

must be designed to accomplish

meaningful military objectives. Restraints

on targeting intended to minimize

criticism from other nations,

whether friends, allies or potential

foes, will have the effect of reducing

the likelihood that objectives will be

accomplished. It is clear that the

United States will be widely criticized

by many parties should we launch an

attack against Iraq. As stated, it is of

little comfort that some of those governments

that criticize us publicly applaud

us privately, as their populations

take their cue from the public posture.

Iraq has provided every incentive for us

to strike, and we must not squander

the opportunity to eliminate its weapons

of mass destruction from the region

by tailoring military actions to

minimize the political outcry that will

follow. Leadership and responsibility

often entail unpopular actions, and the

prosecution of actions that lead to

deaths of many is a horrible burden to

bear. But bear it we must.

The key to a long-term resolution of

the Iraq problem lies largely in one

man, or, to be more precise given what

is known about his sons, one family.

The United States should adopt stronger

measures aimed at undermining the

ruling regime through greater support

of dissident elements both within and

outside of Iraq. Saddam’s internal security

apparatus has proven enormously

effective at defeating such elements

in the past, and I am under no

illusions about the scale of the effort

required to get the job done. It is an effort,

however, that must be made. Considerable

opposition to Saddam and his

family exists inside Iraq and, particularly,

among exiled dissident groups.

The Administration should organize a

more concerted effort at unifying these

dissident elements and providing the

logistical support needed to bring

about the collapse of Saddam’s regime.

Financial support toward this end is already

at hand in the form of Iraqi assets

frozen after its invasion of Kuwait.

The current and future Administrations

should budget appropriately for

the costs of such an operation within

the international operations discretionary

portion of the federal budget—

not out of a defense budget already suffering

the effects of seeing resources

diverted to various contingency operations.

I do not adopt this stance lightly. On

the contrary, I wish there were another

way, but I know there is not. I regret

very much that American personnel

may lose their lives in any military operation

we conduct against Iraq and I

mourn the loss of those innocent Iraqis

who want nothing more than to live in

peace. But Saddam Hussein has left us

no choice.

Mr. President, it is imperative that

this body convey to the President the

support he needs in this time of domestic

political crisis to employ the level

of force necessary to bring closure to

the situation with Iraq. For that to

happen, though, the President should

ask Congress for its support, not just

welcome it if and when it comes. Politics

stops at the water’s edge, it is

often said in discussions of foreign policy.

We are at the water’s edge, and the

currents are threatening to sweep away

U.S. credibility in the very region

where we can least afford for that to

happen. Vital U.S. interests are at

stake, and it is time to act.

I yield the floor.