Mr. President, the Secretaries

of Defense and State have been

pursuing political support, both in the

Congress and among our allies, for the

use of military force against Iraq.

I come to the floor today to express

my support for a military strike

against Iraq and to urge our colleagues

and our allies to join us in supporting

our troops and our Commander-in-

Chief. The unfortunate impasse which

has precluded a full and conclusive

Senate debate on a formal resolution of

support should not be misconstrued.

Clearly, when and if the time comes, an

overwhelming majority in this body

will support decisive action to end the

threat to our security that Iraq continues

to pose. Saddam Hussein should

have no doubt about that.

We in government are frequently accused

of demonizing our enemies in

order to garner popular support here at

home for the kind of actions we are

currently contemplating with regard to

Iraq. President Bush was accused of

doing precisely that during Operation

Desert Shield. There is a considerable

wealth of information pertaining to

Saddam Hussein’s years in power,

though, that clearly indicates that we

are dealing with as ruthless and brutal

a dictator as exists anywhere in the

world today. That is not demonizing an

individual; it is accurately describing a

man with the moral and ethical foundation

required to employ chemical

weapons against his own population; to

assassinate any and all political rivals;

to have his own sons-in-law executed;

to massacre Kurdish populations in the

north and Shiite communities in the

south; to invade Kuwait and impose a

barbaric occupation of that nation; and

to continue to threaten neighboring

countries despite the open revulsion

with which much of the world has reacted

to his years of rule.

This is a regime that recognizes no

restraint upon its conduct save that

which is imposed by force of arms. As

I have repeatedly stated here on the

floor of the Senate, the actions for

which Saddam Hussein must be held

accountable represent nothing more

than what is expected of any country

that seeks to exist within a community

of civilized nations. The Government of

Iraq has imposed untold hardships on

its people solely so that it can continue

to develop and stockpile weapons of

mass destruction—weapons that it has

no moral compunction about using at

the earliest opportunity and against

any nation or segment of society.

Linkages are repeatedly made between

the U.S. posture toward Iraq and

our role in the Middle East peace process.

Mr. President, that argument cries

out for denunciation at the highest levels

of every government. We may not

like the way every policy of or tactic

by the democratically elected government

in Israel, but the physical pain

and psychological trauma that afflicted

Israel as a result of completely

unprovoked missile attacks by an Iraqi

regime seeking to tear asunder the

multinational coalition arrayed

against it and Tel Aviv’s refusal to retaliate

despite ample justification for

doing so stands in strong contrast to

the Government of Iraq. There is no

basis for comparison, and U.S. policy

toward Iraq should not legitimize the

perception of linkage by deferring to

it.

The United Nations must enforce its

resolutions and do so with conviction.

And this body must acknowledge that

only the United States possesses the

capability to conduct the kind of military

operations most of us agree are

warranted and essential. That means

conveying to the President, to the

American people, and to the world, the

message that Congress stands firmly

behind the Commander-in-Chief in carrying

out his responsibility to ensure

that the threat to regional stability

posed by Iraq is not permitted to endure

in perpetuity.

Mr. President, we should make clear

to the American people and to the

world that the Congress agrees with

the proposition that evil should not be

permitted to triumph. The United

States must respond forcefully, far

more so than it has in the past, to

Iraq’s unceasing provocations and it

must adopt whatever measures will ensure

the removal from power of the ruling

regime in Baghdad.

We must prepare the groundwork for

a process that may take years to bear

fruit and that will certainly entail loss

of life. Opposition forces friendly to

and supported by the United States

were badly decimated by Iraq’s 1996 incursion

into supposedly protected territory

in northern Iraq. Survivors are

understandably bitter and reluctant to

cast their lot with us again. That is

why the air and missile strikes we

launch against Iraq must be decisive

and not the kind of exceedingly limited

response characterized by the 27 cruise

missiles launched against targets unrelated

to that violation of the northern

exclusion zone.

We must support a long-term operation

involving opposition forces

trained and equipped to conduct a successful

revolution. This is not an easy

course that I and others are recommending.

But it is the only viable

approach to removing a threat to the

most volatile region in the world—a

threat that could include the brandishing

of chemical, biological, and some

day, nuclear weapons. That is not a situation

any of us want to see develop.

But develop it will, if we do not act to

prevent it.

Mr. President, I am confident the

Congress will soon have the opportunity

to express formally its support

for the use of force to respond to that

threat. Were there another way, I

would gladly accept it, but experience

teaches that there is not. I would never

want to see myself viewed as beating

the drums of war, but I would rather

live with that image than look into the

mirror and see a Member of Congress

who failed to do his duty of supporting

our troops in harm’s way and our Commander-

in-Chief in taking the kind of

measures I sincerely believe are necessary

to resolve the Iraqi problem

once and for all.

Mr. President, I again express my appreciation

for the courtesy of the Senator

from North Dakota in allowing me

to make this statement.

I yield the floor.