Madam President, I rise

to address the most pressing and difficult

issue facing our Nation today.

Over the course of the next few days,

we will be debating in the Senate and

we will vote on the most serious responsibility

the U.S. Constitution delegates

to Congress, which is authorizing

the use of military force against another

nation.

I have only been here for about a

year and a half. I passed in the hallway

the senior Senator from Virginia, John

Warner, who told me, ‘‘This is the first

time you will have to do this.’’ He said

he has been through this experience

seven times. I am sure he takes the

same sort of care and consideration

each time. But for me, this is the first

time I have had to face such a question

and such an issue as to where I stand.

It is my view the use of military

force to resolve a dispute must be the

last of all options for our Nation. Before

entering into such a decision, it is

absolutely necessary Government officials

sincerely and honestly are confident

they exhausted all practical and

realistic diplomatic avenues and understand

the short-term as well as the

long-term ramifications and implications

of such actions.

Exercising our best judgment based

on the evidence of the threat, we must

look at the consequence not only on

the international community, but,

more importantly, on the effect such

action would have on the people of our

country.

In considering the use of military action,

my thoughts immediately turn to

the people of the Commonwealth of

Virginia. While the use of Armed

Forces affects all Americans, it has

traditionally had a significant impact

on Virginia. The Commonwealth is

home to literally tens of thousands of

brave men and women who risk their

lives to defend the freedoms we enjoy.

The prospect of war places the lives of

many of these men and women in jeopardy,

and it means constant anxiety

and fear for their families, wherever

they may be based—whether in the

U.S. or overseas, whether on land or on

the seas.

I know from my experience as Governor

how we rely heavily on the National

Guard and Reserves whenever

military action is necessitated, especially

in the past decade. Military action

will call up more Reserves and

more of the National Guard when they

are protecting our safety. It will disrupt

those families and businesses and

communities all across our great land.

This is not a decision I come to easily

or without prayers for guidance and

wisdom. The use of our Armed Forces

means lives are at risk. The history of

military action shows there are frequently

unintended consequences and

unseen dangers whenever the military

is utilized. Fiscally, military action is

expensive and can cause unrest both in

the U.S. and international markets.

When considering these outcomes, it is

obvious using force to resolve the dispute

is the least desirable and the last

option for our country. But military

action must remain an option for our

diplomatic efforts to have any credibility

or success.

I have listened and read comments

from constituents and people all over

this country, sincere words from the

Religious Society of Friends and Pax

Christi. They are well-meaning in

pointing out their sentiments and the

risks involved. However, we must

weigh these risks and probable outcomes

in the context of the threat Iraq

poses to the U.S. and to our interests.

I agree with the President, and the

CIA, and the Department of Defense,

and the State Department, that Iraq

and Saddam Hussein’s regime are a

credible threat to the United States

and our interests and our allies around

the world. Because that threat is

present and real, I believe the dangers

will become substantially greater with

continued inaction by the international

community, or the United

States acting in concert with allies.

The ‘‘whereas’’ clauses of the resolution

we are debating effectively spell

out good reasons, and reasons I look at

for authorizing the President to use

military action, if necessary. Saddam

Hussein has continually, brazenly disregarded

and defied resolutions and orders

to disarm and discontinue his pursuit

of the world’s worst weapons. To

bring an end to the Gulf War and

Saddam’s violent attempt to occupy

Kuwait, the Iraqi leader unequivocally

agreed to eliminate chemical, biological,

and nuclear weapons programs, as

well as putting severe limits on his

missiles and the means to deliver and

develop them. Since that armistice was

reached in 1991, it has been consistently

and constantly breached by

Saddam’s regime, and has not been enforced

at all by the U.N. for the past 4

long years.

Can one imagine a nuclear weapon in

the hands of Saddam Hussein? Let’s

not forget this is a head of state who

has demonstrated his willingness to

use chemical weapons on other nations

and his own citizens with little or no

reservation.

If the current Iraqi regime possessed

a nuclear weapon, it would drastically

alter a balance of power in an already

explosive region of the world. Such a

capability would renew Saddam’s quest

for regional dominance and leave many

U.S. citizens, allies, and interests at

great peril.

This man has no respect for international

laws or rules of engagement. I

share President Bush’s fear that increased

weapons capability would leave

the fate of the Middle East in the

hands of a tyrannical and very cruel

dictator.

Most dangerous, currently, is not his

desire to have nuclear weapons, but

stockpiling of chemical weapons, the

stockpiling of a variety of biological

weapons; and also his missile range capabilities,

that far exceed U.N. restrictions.

There is another concern not only

that he has stockpiled biological and

chemical weapons and the means of delivering

them, but also the justifiable

and understandable fear that he could

transfer those biological or chemical

agents to a terrorist group or other individuals.

After all, Saddam Hussein is

the same heartless person who offers

$25,000 to families of children who commit

suicide terrorist acts in Israel.

The goal of the United States and the

international community needs to be

disarmament. Saddam Hussein must be

stripped of all capabilities to develop,

manufacture, and stockpile these weapons

of mass destruction, meaning

chemical, biological agents, and the

missiles and other means to deliver

them by himself or by a terrorist subcontractor.

If regime change is collateral damage

of disarmament, I do not believe there

is anyone in the world who will mourn

the loss of this deposed dictator. True

disarmament can only be accomplished

with inspection teams that have the

ability to travel and investigate where

they deem appropriate. To ensure they

have full access to inspections is a key

component of what the President of the

United States is trying to get the

United Nations to do.

We are trying to get full and

unimpeded inspections. It would be appropriate

for us to say noncompliance

would result in forced disarmament.

The U.S. and the world cannot afford

to have this mission undermined by

wild goose chases and constant surreptitious,

conniving evasion and large

suspect areas being declared by Saddam

to be immune from inspection.

I commend President Bush for recognizing

the importance of including all

countries in this effort. His statement

to the United Nations on September 12,

2002, clearly and accurately spelled out

the dangers Iraq poses to the world. By

placing the onus on the United Nations,

the President has given that

international body the opportunity to

re-establish its relevance in important

world affairs, and finally enforce the

resolutions that its Security Council

has passed for the last eleven years.

Passing a new resolution will increase

the credibility of the United Nations,

which has steadily eroded since

the mid 1990s. The Security Council has

an obligation to provide weapons inspectors

with the flexibility to accomplish

their mission. This can only be

realized if a resolution is passed with

consequences for inaction or defiance.

That is why as the United Nations

debates a new and stronger resolution

against Iraq, the United States must be

united in our resolve for disarmament.

Passing a resolution authorizing our

President to use military force in the

event that diplomatic efforts are unsuccessful

sends a clear message to the

international community that Americans

are united in our foreign policy.

I respectfully disagree with the

premise that the President must first

petition the United Nations before asking

Congress for authority. I question:

How can we expect the United Nations

to act against Iraqi defiance if the U.S.

Government does not stand with our

President and our administration’s efforts

to persuade the United Nations

and the international community to

enforce their own resolutions?

It is right for us to debate the resolutions

before the Senate, to voice concerns

and sentiments in support or opposition.

Each Member will take a

stand and be accountable, and when

the debate concludes, I respectfully ask

my colleagues, when a resolution is

agreed to, stand strong with our

troops, our diplomats, and our mission.

From time to time, one sees elected officials

who moan in self-pity about

having to make a tough decision that

may not be popular. Well, I know the

vast majority of the Senators, regardless

of their ultimate position on this

issue, can make tough decisions with

minimal whimpering. Senators have all

been elected by the people of their

States to exercise judgment consistent

with principles and promises.

As the Senate debates the merits of

each resolution, it must be prepared for

the possibility of continued inaction by

the United Nations. Americans cannot

stand by and cannot cede any authority

or sovereignty to an international

body when the lives and interests of

U.S. citizens are involved.

I believe it would be a grave mistake

for the United Nations to shirk its responsibility

regarding Iraq; however, a

consensus might not be reached with

all nations on the U.N. Security Council.

If that circumstance arises, the

United States and the President will

have a duty to garner as much international

support as is realistically possible.

Blissful, delusional dawdling, wishful

thinking, and doing nothing is not an

option for the United States. However,

continuing the diplomatic work in face

of the Security Council veto is necessary

not only for diplomacy, but to

gain allies to help shoulder the

logistical and operational burdens that

would be a part of any military campaign.

It is true the United States can disarm

Saddam Hussein alone. However,

as we continue to pursue the venomous,

vile al-Qaida terrorists and

other terrorist supporters, we would

greatly benefit from allied support in

these extended efforts. I believe we will

see more allies join this effort to disarm

Saddam Hussein’s regime. Britain

will not be our sole teammate in this

effort. As other countries begin to understand

the severity of the threat,

they will recognize it is in their best

interest to disarm Iraq.

The UK along with Spain, Italy and

some countries from the Middle East

have supported our position. Kuwait,

Qatar, and the Saudis have also indicated

that maybe they will not send

troops in, but have offered logistical

bases that would be helpful for our tactical

air strikes.

We do not want to make this a war

against a particular group or certain

religious beliefs. We must guard

against any rhetoric or statement that

is targeted against Muslims or Arabs.

Our mission is to protect the United

States, its allies, and interests by upholding

internationally agreed-upon

resolutions to disarm Iraq of biological,

chemical, nuclear, and missile

technologies. I urge the President to

make absolutely clear that in the

event we have to seek support from allies,

that we continue to do so in the

Middle East.

As a member of the Foreign Relations

Committee, I have participated

in committee meetings and top secret

briefings and analyzed this issue very

closely, and with questions. After reviewing

the several resolutions offered

by our colleagues, I believe the best

way to provide the President with the

authority and the support he may need

is by passing the authorization for use

of military force against Iraq.

This resolution, introduced and offered

by Senator WARNER and Senator

LIEBERMAN, as well as Senator MCCAIN

and others, gives the President the authority

and flexibility to ensure the

protection of the United States. I am

particularly pleased that the resolution

will task the President with determining

that diplomatic means will not

adequately protect the national security

of the United States. This determination

will ensure the United States

is exhausting every diplomatic option

before authorizing the use of our

Armed Forces.

I refer to section 2 on page 7 of the

resolution and those clauses therein:

Where the Congress of the United

States supports the efforts of the President

to strictly enforce United Nations

Security Council resolutions applicable

to Iraq and encourages him in those efforts.

It also encourages the President

to obtain prompt and decisive action

by the Security Council to ensure that

Iraq abandons its strategy of delay,

evasion, and noncompliance, and

promptly and strictly complies with all

relevant security resolutions.

I interpret this as also, in dealing not

just with the United Nations, but also

garnering allies in the process.

I will continue to listen intently to

the debate on all the resolutions regarding

Iraq. However, I truly and sincerely

believe that Senate Joint Resolution

46, which I referenced earlier,

will provide a sense of the Senate that

the Congress, and most importantly, in

our reflection in representation, a reflection

that Americans are united behind

our President and we support efforts

to garner allied and U.N. support

in the event that diplomatic options

fail to disarm Saddam Hussein.

We all know that Saddam Hussein is

a vile dictator with regard for only his

own survival. He compromises the wellbeing

of all Iraqis in his efforts to

maintain power and accumulate

wealth. History shows the Iraqi leader

only responds when there is a gun put

to his head. Sweet talking will not do

any good with this man.

Now we are seeing this phenomenon

play out as he allows weapons inspections

to resume only after intense, consistent

pressure from the international

community. But even then what we are

seeing again is the same shell game of

conditions and prevarications that led

to the departure of inspectors 4 years

ago. We must not allow him to continue

with these ploys of deception.

I do not believe any American welcomes

the prospect of deploying our

brave men and women for military action.

However, standing strong and

united as a country, together with our

President, our diplomats, and our defense

forces, and in favor of congressional

authority to use force if it is absolutely

necessary, is the best way to

ensure Saddam Hussein is disarmed

and military conflict is actually avoided.

The greatest responsibility of this

Government and its officials is to protect

and ensure the national security

of the United States and our citizens.

We know Saddam Hussein poses a

threat to our country, and it is incumbent

upon every Member of this body

to help neutralize that threat. I am

hopeful this problem will be resolved

peacefully, through international diplomacy.

But in the event those efforts

fail, I do not want our President to be

hobbled without the authority to protect

the citizens of the United States of

America.

Therefore, when my name is called, I

will stand with President Bush, stand

with our diplomats, stand with our

troops and support this serious and

necessary resolution, which is designed

to save innocent American lives.

I yield the floor.