Mr. President,

I thank my colleague from Virginia

for the opportunity to be here

today and for his close attention to

these matters of war and these matters

of peace that so often come before us

on the U.S. Armed Services Committee,

and for his counsel and wisdom.

I thank him so much.

I rise today to discuss our Nation’s

Iraq policy, and the resolution we are

now debating. This resolution could

give the President the power to send

the United States Armed Services into

a military conflict with Iraq.

As I am sure most of my colleagues

will agree, for the U.S. Congress there

is no more important debate than one

that involves a decision that may lead

to loss of life of our brave men and

women in uniform.

It is without question that Saddam

Hussein poses a threat to the Middle

East, our allies in the region, and our

international interests that include rebuilding

Afghanistan and making peace

between the Israelis and Palestinians.

Saddam has refused to comply with

United Nations resolutions that were

the basis for a cease-fire during the

Persian Gulf war in 1991. He agreed to

those terms in order to prevent the

multinational coalition from proceeding

into Iraq and removing him

from power by force.

Throughout most of the 1990s Saddam

was held in check through U.N.

weapons inspectors, a naval blockade

and United States and allied air patrols

over the southern and northern areas

of Iraq.

During that time the U.N. inspectors

uncovered Saddam’s chemical and biological

programs and dismantled those

they located. However, since 1998, Saddam

has not allowed U.N. weapons inspections.

Now, nearly 4 years have passed with

no outside reporting on progress made

in Saddam’s chemical, biological, or

nuclear programs. Moreover, we know

that Saddam recently attempted to

purchase aluminum rods used to refine

uranium. These rods could be used to

develop materials for nuclear weapons.

President Bush and his advisers have

determined that Saddam Hussein’s

quest for weapons of mass destruction

must end now. The President said in

his speech before the U.N. that Saddam

poses an immediate, unchecked threat

to our Nation and our allies, and unless

we act now his arsenal will only grow.

Any resolution on action involving

Iraq that the United States Congress

would approve must focus on the imperative

of disarmament of Iraq.

By disarming Saddam and removing

his nuclear, biological and chemical capability,

he will pose no strategic

threat to the United States or our allies.

Saddam would be contained.

If, in order to disarm Iraq, we need to

use military force that results in the

removal of the current regime, then we

should do so. Saddam Hussein must

know that the United States will support

President Bush’s use of force to

remove him, if he does not comply with

orders to disarm and destroy all weapons

of mass destruction.

The President has suggested that

‘‘regime change’’ may be the only way

Iraq will comply with the 16 existing

U.N. resolutions. However, a resolution

whose primary focus is ‘‘regime

change’’ does not address the fact that

the next regime in Iraq, even if it is

more friendly to the United States,

would inherit all weapons systems and

programs that the United States did

not destroy.

Additionally, if we pursue ‘‘regime

change’’ as an objective, we will severely

limit our ability to form a multinational

coalition of support as

President Bush’s father did so successfully

during the gulf war.

Our allies worldwide have expressed

support for disarming Saddam, but little

enthusiasm for regime change.

Alone among President Bush’s advisers,

Secretary of State Colin Powell

has suggested that putting weapons inspectors

back in and making sure they

can do their job is the proper avenue to

pursue.

The heart of this resolution should

outline precisely what access weapons

inspectors should be afforded as they

inspect the Iraqi military capabilities.

It should demand complete transparency

of Saddam’s military inventory,

and unrestricted and unfettered

access to all of Iraq by U.N. weapons

inspectors, including the presidential

palaces.

In concert with a focus on disarmament,

a congressional resolution

should also strongly urge the President

to exhaust all diplomatic efforts within

and outside the United Nations. Total

disarmament of Iraq should be a multinational

effort.

Nevertheless we must reserve the

right, and give the President the authority,

to act unilaterally provided

the presence of an immediate and

grave threat to the United States.

This congressional resolution should

not give the President an immediate

and unconditional pass to wage war,

but should place an emphasis on his

diplomatic effort to resolve the issue of

disarmament without loss of life.

If Saddam’s defiance leads to war, we

must also focus on what will need to be

accomplished after the war in order to

ensure stability in the region.

More thought must be given to the

effort that will be required to maintain

peace and provide for the Iraqi people

in the event that Saddam fails to resolve

this issue peacefully.

We seek no quarrel with the people of

Iraq and the international community

must be prepared to assist them. It is

an endeavor that the United States

should not undertake alone which, in

my opinion, strengthens the need for

any use of force to be multilateral.

As a member of the Armed Services

Committee, I have heard many hours of

testimony from administration officials

outlining their case for war. But I

fear we have not yet heard enough

about what Iraq will look like when

the smoke clears.

I am willing to debate and support a

resolution that has the characteristics

that I have mentioned, but there needs

to be equal debate and thought into

how we will leave Iraq and what kind

of commitment we are willing to give.

This resolution will serve as

Saddam’s last chance at a peaceful

conclusion to his years of defiance of

international law if it meets these conditions:

The primary objective of the

United States is the disarmament of

Iraq rather than regime change; the

United States will work to establish

international support and cooperation

and exhaust all diplomatic avenues before

going it alone in Iraq; and the

United Nations weapons inspectors will

be allowed unfettered access to inspect

Iraqi weapons systems and facilities

and they will be supported by armed

U.N. troops.

With these objectives, the United

States will demonstrate that we seek a

peaceful and diplomatic solution, but if

diplomacy fails the United States will

take every measure necessary to defend

our country, our allies, and our interests.

This is our responsibility to

our national security, our international

interests, our citizens, and the

people of the world.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

Madam

President, I compliment the Senator

from Virginia.

While I was in Florida this weekend,

I had a number of people say they had

been listening to the debate in which

the Senator from Virginia and the Senator

from West Virginia had both engaged.

They found the quality of the

debate to be excellent, and they were

looking forward to the continuation of

the debate.

On grave matters of war and peace,

as the Senate is considering this resolution,

I add my comments. They are

addressed to perhaps one of the gravest

things we discuss in a constitutional

body such as this. That is, authorizing

the sending of Americans into harm’s

way—moms and dads, sons and daughters,

brothers and sisters—into combat.

We must determine whether the situation

in Iraq threatens the United

States sufficiently enough to send

Americans into harm’s way, and put

American lives at risk.

I have spoken with many citizens

across Florida. I understand the concerns

and the reservations many of

them have.

We must use force only as a last resort.

That is what this resolution is

about; it is authorizing the use of

force.

I remain convinced that the Saddam

Hussein regime in Iraq poses a clear

and increasing danger to the national

security interests of the United States.

We must disarm its arsenal of chemical

and biological weapons. We must halt

the development of nuclear weapons.

Ultimately, one way or another, those

weapons of mass destruction have to be

taken out. If it means taking out Saddam

Hussein along with them, then so

be it. Our hope is that this threat can

be dismantled by means less than the

use of force, and discussions in the

United Nations toward that goal are

underway now. But if those efforts in

the U.N. are not successful, we cannot

sit and do nothing as the danger grows.

On a regular basis, Saddam’s troops

fire on the United States and British

aircraft seeking to enforce the no-fly

zones created to protect the Kurds in

the north and the Shi’ites in the south.

These no-fly zones exist to keep Saddam

contained and to prevent him

from acquiring technologies aimed at

further enhancing his military capability.

At the conclusion of the Persian Gulf

war in 1991, U.N. Security Council Resolution

687 set forth the conditions for

peace. The cease-fire conditions required

Iraq to disarm all weapons of

mass destruction, fully declare and disclose

all weapons of mass destruction,

and not seek to further acquire weapons

of mass destruction. That was in

1991—11 years ago.

Those terms have been clearly violated

by Saddam Hussein. When a

country willfully violates cease-fire

terms which end war, a state of conflict

continues to exist. The regular

hostilities endured by coalition pilots

in the no-fly zones make that state of

conflict even more acute.

Saddam Hussein seeks regional hegemony.

He seeks control of the oil

supply of the Middle East. That is his

end game. He wants to control all of

those vast reserves so that he can have

his fingers in a stranglehold around the

industrialized world of planet Earth.

He associates with known enemies of

the United States. He has paid compensation

to suicide bombers aimed at

undermining the peace process in the

Middle East. And Saddam seeks at

every turn to flout international law

and the will of the United Nations. His

aggressiveness and thirst for war and

blood are evident by his own actions

and brutality, past and present,

against his own people and against his

neighbors.

It is time now to complete the job

that was left undone in 1991 when we

failed to completely disarm and remove

Saddam. The longer he remains

in power, the longer he delays, obfuscates,

and lies—all the while he

strengthens his arsenal. Weapons of

mass destruction must be removed

from Saddam Hussein, and the Iraqi

people need to be liberated from his

brutal grip. This is not a fight we can

enter alone. We must pursue this cause

with as much international support as

is possible. The revised resolution

makes this clear.

Yesterday, I had the privilege of

speaking to several hundred at Central

Command Headquarters at MacDill Air

Force Base along with the Commander

in Chief, GEN Tommy Franks. I

brought words of a grateful nation to

those men and women in uniform, and

to all of our coalition partners who are

part of this effort in going after the

terrorists. That international support

is critical to our successful prosecution

of the war against terrorism, and that

international cooperation is critical as

we now approach military hostilities in

Iraq.

Our European allies are starting to

come around. It is very important that

our Arab friends in the region do come

around. The United States needs the

world community to support us in

eliminating these threats of weapons of

mass destruction. As we consider engaging

in a military conflict, we need

this international support so as not to

hurt our efforts in the war against terrorists

in 30-some countries, nor hinder

our efforts to try to strike a peace accord

in the Middle East.

Madam President, the President has

asked the Congress to authorize the

use of American troops in Iraq for

these purposes. He presented his case

to the American people last night.

As it exists now, the Lieberman resolution

clearly has been improved enormously

from the draft resolution sent

to us several weeks ago by the White

House which, in essence, was nothing

more than a blank check. Now it requires

that the President must certify

that diplomatic and other peaceful

means will not adequately protect the

national security interests of the

United States, or that diplomatic and

other peaceful means will not lead to

the enforcement of the United Nations

Security Council resolutions on Iraq.

The President must certify those conditions.

It also has language regarding the

United States’ responsibility in planning

for a post-Saddam Hussein Iraq—

an Iraq that the United States, after

Saddam Hussein, had best not abandon,

as we did after the Soviets got licked

in Afghanistan and tucked their tail

between their legs and left—and we left

also. That created a vacuum in Afghanistan

and allowed the terrorists to fill

that vacuum. In the post-Saddam Hussein

Iraq, we don’t want that same

thing to occur. The United States must

be there for the long run to give military,

diplomatic, and economic security

assistance to ensure that the Free

World’s interests are clearly protected

in an Iraq after Saddam Hussein.

It was good that President Bush addressed

the United Nations on September

12, and sought broad-based support

from the international community.

Secretary Powell will and must

continue efforts at getting strong language—

strong language—in a United

Nations Security Council resolution

that clearly spells out the actions Iraq

is required to take and the consequences

if it fails to do so. Such a

resolution would strengthen the U.S.

position and help us gain support from

our Arab friends in the region. We

must keep the focus on Saddam Hussein

and the resolutions regarding

weapons of mass destruction that he

has ignored.

The Lieberman resolution also requires

the President to report regularly

to the Congress on ongoing operations

in Iraq and the administration’s

plans, specifically, as I mentioned, for

the post-Saddam Hussein Iraq and ensuing

reconstruction. All of the additions

that have been included in the

Lieberman resolution have clearly improved

upon the blank check that was

sent here early on as a draft from the

White House.

Having detailed plans in place will be

crucial to ensuring that after Saddam

Hussein, Iraq does not disintegrate into

a permanent source of instability in

the Middle East which would pose a serious

threat to U.S. national security

interests.

The current resolution also is improved

from earlier drafts because it

also makes reference to Navy CAPT

Scott Speicher of Jacksonville, FL, the

American pilot still missing since the

first night of the gulf war when he was

shot down over Iraq. Through a series

of mistakes, the United States walked

away from a downed pilot.

We have kept at this, over and over,

in the Armed Services Committee and

the Foreign Relations Committee, and

have been talking to world leaders asking

them to task their intelligence apparatus

for word on Captain Speicher.

He is still considered Missing In Action.

He was first declared Killed In Action.

The Department of Defense

changed that to Missing In Action. The

Department of Defense is reportedly

considering a change in status even

from Missing In Action.

He is the only American among the

thousands who are still unaccounted

for at the hands of Saddam Hussein—

thousands, I might say, going back to

the Iran-Iraq war.

I appreciate the fact that the majority

leader worked to ensure that the

request of Senator PAT ROBERTS and

myself to make reference to Captain

Speicher was honored. It is honored in

this resolution. It is my hope that our

upcoming efforts and actions in Iraq

will make progress towards resolving

the fate of Captain Speicher.

You can just imagine what it is like

for that family back in Jacksonville—

a family with children that has not

heard the fate of their father for the

last 11 years.

This resolution, in my view, asserts

the role of Congress granted by the

Constitution and the War Powers Act.

We have heard hours of testimony from

senior administration officials and outside

experts representing many different

views on the subject. I have sat

through hours of testimony in the two

committees I have the privilege of

serving on—the Foreign Relations

Committee and the Armed Services

Committee—that have delved in detail

into this subject in preparation for our

coming to this floor in this debate.

We have heard those hours of testimony

in both classified and unclassified

form. My office, as well as all of

our offices, has received thousands of

calls, letters, and e-mails. I have heard

those voices. I share those concerns.

The threat posed by Iraq grows with

each passing day. Since September 11

of a year ago, we can’t wait to protect

ourselves against the threats of weapons

of mass destruction and regimes

hostile to the United States with their

links to terrorism. We must not leave

ourselves exposed to an attack, which,

after it comes, we will wish we had

acted to prevent.

That is why I come to this floor to

announce my support of the

Lieberman-Warner-McCain-Bayh resolution

authorizing the President to use

force in Iraq. It is the right thing to do,

and it is in the vital national security

interests of the United States.

I thank the Chair for allowing me

this time. I yield the floor.