Thank you, Madam President.

It is good to be with you today. I

am reassured by your presence. And I

am grateful for the support of the Senator

from Louisiana for our resolution.

It is an honor and privilege for me to

join today with my distinguished colleagues,

Senator WARNER, Senator

MCCAIN, and my good friend, Senator

LIEBERMAN, in support of this resolution

granting the President of the

United States the authority to defend

our country.

Madam President, I support this resolution

not because I favor a resort to

war but because I believe this resolution

gives our country the best chance

to maintain peace.

I support this resolution not because

I favor America acting unilaterally,

unless we must, but because I believe

this resolution gives us the best opportunity

to rally our allies and convince

the United Nations to act with us, and

in so doing give that international institution

meaning for the resolutions

that it adopts.

I favor this resolution because in a

world where we have rogue regimes

possessing weapons of mass death, and

suicidal terrorists who are all too eager

to use them against us, weapons of that

nature in the hands of a regime such as

Saddam Hussein’s represents an unacceptable

risk to the safety and wellbeing

of the American people.

As much as I wish we could ignore

this threat, it is my heartfelt conviction

that in all conscience we cannot.

Finally, along with my colleagues, I

support this resolution because I believe

we must learn the terrible lessons

from the tragedy of September 11, foremost

among which is that we waited

too long to address the gathering danger

in Afghanistan. If we had acted

sooner, perhaps—just perhaps—we

could have saved 3,000 innocent lives:

men, women, and children. We waited

too long to act. Let us not make that

mistake again.

Unfortunately, in dealing with Saddam

Hussein and the regime of Iraq, we

are dealing with a brutal dictator who

understands one thing, and one thing

only: either the threat of force or the

use of force.

We have tried everything else. We

have tried economic sanctions for

years, to no avail. We have tried diplomacy

for over a decade. It has availed

us nothing. We do not have the covert

means presently to deal with this tyrant.

And so as my colleagues have indicated,

there is nothing left to us to

defend ourselves except an ultimatum

to Saddam: Disarm or else.

For those who believe we can remove

the weapons of mass destruction from

this regime without the credible threat

of the use of force, I regrettably must

say they are engaged in wishful thinking.

It is my heartfelt conviction that

the best and only chance we have for a

peaceful resolution to this problem, for

him to give up these instruments of

mass death, is to present him with a

credible ultimatum that the survival of

his regime depends upon doing so, that

any other course of action will lead to

his overthrow, and that alone will preserve

the peace, the safety, and the security

of our country.

I believe this course presents us with

the best opportunity to rally our allies

and convince the United Nations to act

with us. We should make every effort—

as Senator MCCAIN indicated in his colloquy

with Senator LIEBERMAN and as

the President indicated last night—to

convince the United Nations and our

allies of the justice of our cause. We

are stronger when we act together, so

we must seek a consensus for this

course of action.

Unfortunately, the United Nations

has a long history of equivocation

when it comes to taking difficult steps

to enforce even its own resolutions.

Our allies, as much as we cherish their

support, also have a mixed record in

this regard. Need I remind the Senate

that for too long we waited while genocide

was perpetrated on the very doorstep

of Europe in Bosnia and Kosovo?

It was only when the United States of

America demonstrated a willingness to

take action to bring that lamentable

chapter to a conclusion that the United

Nations and our allies demonstrated

the will to act with us.

It is only through strong leadership,

leadership by the United States, that

we will preserve the peace, rally our allies,

and convince the United Nations

to enforce its own resolutions. If these

efforts avail us not, it is my heartfelt

conviction that weapons of mass death

in the hands of a brutal dictator such

as Saddam Hussein, combined with the

presence of suicidal terrorist organizations

that would all too eagerly use

these instruments of mass destruction

against us, represent an unacceptable

risk for the safety and well-being of the

American people.

I hope Saddam will do the right

thing. I pray that he will do the right

thing and give up these weapons of

mass destruction. Regrettably, based

upon the track record of his past behavior,

I believe he probably will not.

Weapons of mass destruction represent

an indispensable part of his

power. Saddam Hussein is a megalomaniac

who has attempted to project that

power around the region. As we all

know, he invaded Kuwait. He has invaded

Iran. He has launched missiles at

Saudi Arabia and Israel. He has killed

hundreds of thousands, including tens

of thousands of his fellow citizens.

I ask my colleagues to anticipate a

world in which we do not act. What

will Saddam do? Can there be much

doubt that he will attempt to develop

the ability to deter our future action

by threatening us with the use of weapons

of mass destruction? I believe there

is not. If he cannot develop this deterrent

on his own, I believe there is little

doubt he will reach out to al-Qaida or

Hezbollah or other international institutions

of terrorism to develop a deterrent

to threaten us, with unacceptable

consequences, if in the future we decide

to restrain his aggressive actions.

If there is only a 10-percent chance or

a 15-percent chance that weapons of

mass death will find their way from

Iraq into the hands of suicidal terrorists,

I believe this is a risk to the

American people that we cannot afford

to run.

The world changed forever on September

11. The principal lesson of that

tragedy is that America waited too

long to address the gathering danger in

Afghanistan. We must not make that

mistake again.

To those who say, what is the rush?

why can’t we wait? I respond by asking

the question: How long must we wait?

Until the missiles have been launched?

Until smallpox, anthrax, or VX nerve

agent has found its way into our country?

Is that how long we should wait?

The consequences of error in this instance

are much too great. The deaths

next time might not be numbered in

the threes of thousands but 30,000 or

300,000.

To respond to the question of my

friend from Connecticut, in all likelihood

Saddam Hussein possesses smallpox.

We are not sure whether he has

weaponized it yet. There is a 50/50 proposition.

But if he has and if that would

find its way into our country, which

would not be too difficult to accomplish,

the consequences would be catastrophic.

We conducted a simulated exercise of

a smallpox attack—I believe it was

called Dark Winter—simulating a

smallpox outbreak put into a ventilation

system in a mall in Oklahoma

City. The consequences were catastrophic:

Tens of thousands of deaths,

hundreds of thousands of illnesses; civil

law broke down. These are the kinds of

consequences that would be all too real

were we to stay our hand.

I remind my colleagues that in a

world of imperfect intelligence—and

there will always be imperfect intelligence—

if we wait, we run the very

real risk of having waited too long. We

have seen the kind of tragedy to which

that can lead.

I ask all of us to consider, if this debate

had been conducted 2 years ago

and my colleagues and I had laid a resolution

upon this desk that said, there

is danger brewing in Afghanistan, it

threatens the United States of America,

we need to take it seriously, and

we must act before it is too late, all of

the arguments that are being made

against the current resolution would

also have been made at that time. As

we now know, the arguments have all

been mistaken. They are mistaken

today as well.

To those who say the threat is not

imminent, after 9/11, how long can we

afford to wait? To those who say regime

change is not an appropriate reason

for acting, I say weapons of mass

destruction and the regime of Saddam

Hussein are one and indivisible. To remove

weapons of mass destruction, we

must remove that regime. To think

anything else is to delude ourselves.

For those who believe the United Nations’

approval is necessary for our action,

I say it is preferential but we cannot

afford to give that great body veto

power on America’s right to defend

itself. To those who say we need allied

support, I agree. But this is an argument

of the chicken and the egg. It is

only with American leadership and

taking a strong hand in this instance

that we will receive the kind of united

allied support we seek.

To those who ask the question, What

will we do after our victory? I say that

is a good question, but can the regime

in Iraq be worse? I think not. We could

begin to rebuild that country in a way

that would provide a positive example

to the people of that region about the

principles and the ideals upon which

America stands.

Our eventual victory in the war

against terror will be won as much by

the values and the principles we embrace

and advocate as by the force of

our arms. This gives us an opportunity

to put those principles and values into

action.

To those who say we must exhaust

all of our alternatives before acting, I

simply say that we already have. In

conclusion, let me summarize by saying

this: I and my colleagues support

this resolution not because we desire

war but because it is our heartfelt conviction

that this is the best and only

path to preserve the peace. My colleagues

and I support this resolution

not because we favor the U.S. acting

alone, but because we know that, by

taking a strong stand, it gives us the

best opportunity to garner U.N. support

and to rally our allies to our side.

We support this resolution because

we believe that the lesson learned, very

painfully and so tragically by our

country on September 11 of last year,

is that we wait in an era of mass terror

at our peril. We were mistaken then;

let us not be mistaken again. Let us

act to protect our country and, in so

doing, discharge our constitutional

duty. It is my privilege and honor to do

so in such esteemed company.

I yield the floor.

I thank my colleague.

Our State is known as the crossroads of

America. With my colleagues’ States, I

believe we represent the common sense

and wisdom of the American people.

On my visits home, and in communications

from constituents, there has

been an expression of concern about

our present set of circumstances. I

must say to my friend that it is a concern

that I share.

I did not come easily to the conclusion

that we have collectively reached.

There is reluctance in my heart, as I

know there is in the other Senators’, to

contemplate the use of force. But I

reached the conclusion that we were

simply left with no other credible alternative

to protect the safety and

well-being of the American people.

As you indicated in your colloquy

with Senator LIEBERMAN, and as I indicated

in my own remarks, and the

President spoke to last evening, I hope

beyond anything else that this does not

come to war; that the use of force will

not be necessary. But I also believe

that the best chance to achieve that

outcome is the credible threat of the

use of force. Saddam Hussein responds

to nothing else. If he does not disarm

voluntarily—as I hope he will, and we

all pray he will—I have also concluded

that his possession of weapons of mass

death, and the real likelihood that he

will develop the capability for using

them against us to deter us from restraining

him at some future point, or

the risk of those weapons—nuclear, biological,

chemical weapons—falling

into the hands of suicidal terrorists

represent too great a risk to our country.

As I tried to outline in my remarks,

I believe the principal lesson—and I

asked this question to the head of the

CIA: What is the principal lesson we

learned from 9/11?

He responded directly and said the

principal lesson was that we waited too

long to address the gathering threat in

Afghanistan.

So I am convinced we should act

sooner rather than later to defend our

country because we have seen the terrible

consequences that can result. For

all those reasons, I have reached the

conclusion that this resolution is necessary.

Madam President, I would

say three things to my colleague.

First, I believe he is correct. I think

there was an initial impression that

our Government had a preference for

unilateral action, perhaps without exhausting

every other alternative. I do

not believe that to be true. We have

begun to correct that. I should compliment

my colleague from the State of

Indiana, Senator LUGAR, who played an

important role in convincing the administration

to reach out and pursue

other alternatives with the U.N. and

our allies.

The Senator from Arizona has raised

two very good points. When I go home,

people say to me: We understand the

danger and we wish it didn’t have to

come to war.

That is a reluctance that I share. My

response would be, looking at the brutal

nature of his regime, and Saddam

Hussein’s history, I believe the best

chance to remove the weapons, without

coming to war, is to present him with

a credible ultimatum. That is what we

are doing here.

People also say: Senator, we wish we

were not in it alone, and that we had

the U.N. with us and more allies with

us.

As my colleague knows—and I think

we share this belief—my strong conviction

is that our best chance to gather

that support is through strong American

leadership. Only then will the U.N.

and our allies rally to our side, when

we show our own determination.

So the best chance for a peaceful outcome,

the best chance for a united

front with our allies and with the imprimatur

of the U.N., I believe, is by

giving a strong hand to the President

to present Saddam Hussein with no alternative;

and when I have a chance to

relay that to the people of Indiana,

they understand.

Nobody wants war, but they understand

this is the best avenue to avoid

that, while also ensuring the security

of our country.