Let me thank the Senator

from Virginia for those comments,

and certainly thank him for his leadership

on this resolution. I also appreciate

the leadership of the Senator

from Arizona.

I am one of those who early on in August,

and into early September, spoke

with some degree of hesitation because

I thought it was important what is

happening today happen; that our

country become fully engaged in this

debate; and that the President make

his case before the world and before the

American people. That has happened.

As we know, for more than a decade

Saddam Hussein has defied the international

community, flagrantly ignoring

and violating dozens of U.N. resolutions.

Today, intelligence has produced

beyond doubt that Saddam Hussein

continues to acquire and produce

chemical and biological weapons. It is

also very apparent this dictator continues

his quest to develop nuclear

weapons.

Last night, our President made that

most important speech to the Nation.

Much of what was spoken last night

was the reality of the risk. We should

make no mistake, the acquiring of

weapons of mass destruction by Saddam

Hussein is a very clear, imminent,

and present danger to the United

States, our allies, and to the stability

of the Middle East. To do nothing in response

to this buildup of weapons and

this threat would be irresponsible on

the part of our Nation and this body.

We cannot sit back and wait on an aggressive

act of terrorism to occur and

consequently be forced into a position

where we must face our fellow Americans

and explain a horrific act that

could have been prevented. It would be

imprudent and irresponsible as a Senator

of the United States, who is sworn

to protect the freedoms of this great

Nation and to defend our fellow countrymen.

In this new century and in a post-9/11

era, it is clear we face a new threat.

Unfortunately, this new threat requires

a course of action previously not

undertaken in order to deter this menace

to our freedoms and to our peace.

However, we must take this new course

to defend our Nation and our allies responsibly

and with assurance. Remember,

this is a regime that ordered the

use of chemical weapons against its

own people; invaded two neighbors;

committed genocide against more than

50,000 northern Iraqis; drove 2 million

refugees into neighboring countries;

launched ballistic missiles into different

countries; destroyed over 4,000

villages in Iraq, and on a daily basis

fires at U.S. and coalition aircraft patrolling

the United Nations no-fly

zones.

As a matter of fact, since the year

2000, Iraq has fired upon U.S. and British

aircraft over 1,600 times. This year

alone, Iraq has fired on the United

States and Great Britain 406 times.

These acts are the tip of the iceberg of

a long list of violations as Saddam

Hussein attempts to provoke the

United States and her allies. As a result,

it is clear and evident we have a

moral obligation to the international

community to halt further threats and

attacks by this dictator. Since September

11, 2001, many in Congress have

asked the question: Why did the events

of this day, September 11, 2001, occur?

And more importantly, how could

these tragedies have been prevented?

Let me say that again. Many Senators,

and I am one of them, have

asked how September 11 could have

been prevented.

As the goal of congressional investigations

into our intelligence communities

is aimed at preventing these incidents

in the future, so, too, is the opportunity

before us to prevent attacks

by a rogue regime. In the future, I am

certain no Senator wants to be placed

in the position where we will have to

call an investigation and ask why a

tragedy has occurred at the hands of

Saddam Hussein, and why it was not

prevented when we knew it could happen

and we had the opportunity to do

something about it.

In order to avoid an ugly predicament,

the option of prevention is in

place today. Today we must ask ourselves,

In the future, do we want, once

again, to pose the same question that

has now haunted us for over a year?

When the civilian population of our

country becomes the target instead of

our men and women in uniform, then

an offensive role of foreign policy is demanded

over what I believe is currently

a defensive or a reactionary

form of foreign policy.

Since World War II, the United

States has been the leader of the international

world. We have made decisions,

taken calculated risks, and engaged

ourselves where no other nation

would. However, at the end of the day,

we have always led and/or brought

along our allies. Once again, it is now

evident the time is here for the United

States to lead. It is prudent for our allies

to follow. I believe most of them

know that.

Had we known the events of last year

were going to occur, we would have

made every effort to stop them, to save

the loss of thousands of American

lives. I am certain the people of this

Nation and this body would have called

for and demanded all types of preemptive

actions to stop the atrocities instead

of, as we did, helplessly watching

them occur. We were locked in what I

believe was a post-cold war mindset

that, in part, denied the obvious and

rested on the false premise it just simply

could not happen in this country.

Like previous warning signs seen

throughout history, we are again witnessing

the ominous warnings that

Saddam Hussein intends to threaten

the Middle East region of the world and

the United States. In light of this, I

cannot sit back, in good conscience,

and wait for Saddam Hussein to improve

his weapons of mass destruction

before he occupies and threatens foreign

countries, or worse, harms Americans

and American interests and American

friends.

As a free and democratic Nation, we

have a responsibility that requires a

thoughtful, open approach. As we embark

on a new path to defend this Nation

currently, we are, as the President

did last night and, of course, a few

weeks ago, addressing the United Nations,

consulting with Congress and

now working with and having had the

resolution just presented to the Congress,

forced or helped produce the debate

in the Senate. It is evident by this

process and by the steps taken, any decision

we make will not be in haste. I

am confident the manner in which our

citizens will be informed will set a new

precedent for future Congresses and for

future administrations.

This body, this Nation, and this

President are methodically weighing

the options on the table and assessing

the threats we face. We have to include

we want and need international support.

Fortunately, we currently have

the support of some of our closest allies.

I do not want to stray from working

with the United Nations, of course.

We will work with them, and we are.

Right now, Colin Powell is pursuing a

new resolution out of the Security

Council. At the same time, I recognize

in the end, in the defense of this Nation,

it is the responsibility of this

President and of this Congress to make

sure that happens. It is critically important

that in the end, if you abide by

the concept written in the book, ‘‘The

Law of Nations,’’ then we have no recourse

but to act ourselves, if we believe

a failure to act would cost lives,

put our freedoms at risk, and put our

citizens at risk.

While Article 51 of the United Nations

charter is not so clearly defined,

we have seen in recent history preemptive

action taken by nations that were

upheld by the U.N. For example, in

1962, President Kennedy took preemptive

measures during the Cuban missile

crisis by swiftly imposing a naval quarantine

on Cuba to halt the delivery of

offensive weapons by the Soviet Union.

In 1967, Israel launched preemptive attacks

on several Arab States after Iraq,

Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Syria began

moving troops to the Israeli border.

In 1991, the United States committed

to liberate Kuwait. In 1991, the United

States was then, as we are now, leading

an effort. By the time the conflict in

Iraq began, we had the support of the

international community to carry out

our objective.

I am confident, should we decide to

use force, by the time the United

States and her closest allies engage

Iraq, we will again have the support of

the international community.

It is called the responsibility of leadership.

It is recognized as the role we

play in the world today. I say this because

the international community realizes

the evidence is clear when it

comes to Saddam Hussein. In addition,

Saddam Hussein will once again violate

U.N. resolutions, further invalidating

that body, and denying weapons

inspectors access in a way that should

be open and complete and without any

form of restriction.

I do not take this vote lightly when

it comes, as men and women across the

State of Idaho and across the country

are put in harm’s way. For those who

have decided to wear the uniform of

our armed services, I want to assure

the people of Idaho and the United

States, any decision made regarding

the use of force will be made with confidence,

in consultation with Congress,

and with the interests of the security

of this great Nation; foremost in all of

our minds.

I believe the justification for engagement

has been made and the option to

use force will be granted. I believe we

must still have as an end game, an exit

strategy, a recognition of the role we

play in a post-Saddam-Hussein Iraq, if

that is to occur, and I believe this

President, along with quality people he

has placed around him, will continue to

consult with this Congress as those

strategies are developed. I am confident

we will pursue all means, as is

evident today by the efforts of this administration.

But in the end, there is

the most important responsibility for

the Senate of the United States to

play. That is to do what we are doing

here, to speak out on it, to allow the

American people to know all the differences

that occur as it comes to facing

a most important issue like this.

I thank my colleague from Virginia

for the leadership he has demonstrated.

He recognizes the significance and the

importance of this debate and the decision

that will ultimately be made in

the course of this week as we stand in

support of the Commander in Chief and

the President of the United States, in

full consultation with the Congress, as

we shape a foreign policy that is a policy

of decades to come, in recognition

that for the first time in this Nation’s

history, it is the citizen, not the soldier,

who becomes the target of the

new wars. With that, a new form of foreign

policy, a new relationship, and a

new dialog for this country has just

begun.

I yield the floor.

Madam President, I

thank the Senator from Virginia.

I agree. This country, this Commander

in Chief, and we as Senators

cannot be denied the right to take preemptive

action when clear evidence indicates

that the citizens of our country

are at risk.