Mr. President, I rise,

one, to compliment my colleague, Senator

MURKOWSKI from Alaska, for his

speech in talking about the United Nations

and their increase of the flow of

oil. I want to make a couple comments

about the administration’s handling of

the latest crisis with Iraq and express

my very strong displeasure with the

administration, because I do not think

they were very open with Congress.

I met with Secretary of State

Albright, Secretary of Defense Cohen,

National Security Adviser Sandy

Berger, and Chairman of the Joint

Chiefs of Staff General Shelton on numerous

occasions when we were debating

what our reaction should be to

Iraq’s noncompliance with the U.N.

resolutions allowing arms control inspectors

to investigate whether or not

they were building up munitions of

mass destruction. I know the Senator

from Arizona sat in on several of these

meetings.

As you know, we were in the process

of building up armed forces. We were

very close to having a military strike.

Some people were suggesting different

alternatives. The Senator from Alaska

said, ‘‘Well, maybe we should curtail

the flow of oil. We have a program that

is called oil for food that has been

going on for years now. Maybe if we

tighten that up, it would put an economic

squeeze on the Iraqis and maybe

they would change their behavior and

maybe we wouldn’t need to drop bombs

to have Saddam Hussein realize the errors

of his way and that he needs to

comply with the U.N. resolutions.’’

I told the Secretary of State that I

was upset about the fact that our international

coalition has dissipated, if not

disappeared. The only real strong supporter

we had in this entire venture

was Great Britain. We did not have

strong, at least visible support, or audible

support from the Saudis or from

Turkey. We did not have access to the

bases in those countries for bombing

purposes if there was an airstrike. That

bothered me a lot.

But what bothers me as much now,

when we were discussing different options

in lieu of a military strike, and

one of the options was curtailing the

flow of oil that was discussed in this

Capitol with leaders of our Government,

our leaders did not tell Congress

that they had already agreed in the Security

Council, or they were working

on an agreement in the Security Council,

on February 20, to more than double

the amount of oil that would be

used in this oil-for-food program—more

than doubled.

Actually, they go from $2 billion

every 6 months to $5.2 billion. They did

not tell us that. Most people were not

aware of the fact that before the Secretary

General flew to Baghdad for his

effort to avert or stop the airstrikes

and achieve compliance, 2 days before,

the U.N. Security Council had raised

the amount of the oil-for-food program

and more than doubled it. We had those

sanctions on since 1991. We restricted

the flow of oil to that specific amount

of $2 billion for every 6 months, and

then all of a sudden, just when we are

getting ready to maybe have airstrikes

and the U.N. Secretary General was

going to go to Baghdad to negotiate a

deal—he did not use it for leverage, we

basically gave them the carrot—we

gave him that incentive before he went

to negotiate.

It just happens to be a coincidence? I

do not think so. And why wasn’t the

administration forthcoming to Members

of Congress and say, ‘‘Well, we’ve

already done this,’’ or ‘‘We are now negotiating

the U.N. Security Council to

do this.’’ They did not do that. They

did not tell this Senator, they did not

tell other Senators that they were in

the process of doing it, and that bothers

me. It bothers me a lot.

I for one had serious misgivings, as I

know other Members of this body did,

on how far we should go in response

and how much of a blank check this

Congress should give this administration

in dealing with Saddam Hussein,

but for them to not tell the Congress or

the American people, and the fact that

the increase in this oil-for-food program

was going forward at this very

critical time—just a coincidence, I

guess—is more than an oversight. It is

a very serious mistake. A very serious

mistake in dealing with Congress and a

very serious mistake in our foreign policy

as well.

So I compliment my colleague from

Alaska for bringing this to our attention.

And I wish to bring it to the administration’s

attention that some of

us might have been willing to say, hey,

let us use the oil-for-food program as

an incentive to get him to comply. I do

not think we would have said, let us

give it to him, and then hope that

maybe he would agree with the Secretary

General. Maybe the deal was already

cut before the Secretary General

left. We have not heard that, but

maybe that was the case. But in any

case, I think the administration was

not very forthcoming with Congress.

And that is not a very positive sign.

I yield the floor.