Mr. President, I oppose

the amendment offered by the Senator

from West Virginia, which would sunset

the authority Congress would grant

to the President in this resolution to

defend American security against the

threat posed by Iraq.

As the Senator has pointed out, the

12-month limit on congressional authorization

for the use of force his

amendment would set could be extended

by presidential or congressional

action. However, these requirements

are onerous and infringe upon the authority

of the Commander in Chief to

meet his obligations to protect American

security.

The concept of imposing a deadline

after which the President loses his authority

to achieve the goals set out in

the Iraq resolution strikes me as losing

sight of the objective of a congressional

authorization of the use of force:

ending the threat to the United States

and the world posed by Saddam Hussein’s

regime, so long as it possesses

weapons of mass destruction and defies

its obligations to the world.

So long as that threat persists, and

with Congress and the President having

agreed that Saddam Hussein’s regime

endangers America, congressional

authority for the President to use force

must remain in force until he has met

our common objective of disarming

Saddam Hussein.

To place a limit on the amount of

time the President possesses this authority,

once Congress has granted it

to him, would only encourage Saddam

Hussein to stall and temporize on his

commitments, knowing that the clock

is working in his favor. Such an incentive

would make us less secure, not

more secure.

If the vast majority of Members of

Congress and the American people

agree upon the threat posed by Saddam

Hussein’s Iraq, and if we accept that

the President will confront this danger

within the parameters we have laid out

in this congressional resolution, what

about that threat would change in 12

months, assuming we have not acted

against it by that time, that would

somehow negate the President’s need

for the authority to meet it?

If anything, the threat posed by Saddam

Hussein’s regime will only grow

with time. Private and public estimates

are that Saddam Hussein could

possess nuclear weapons within six

months to a year were he to acquire

weapons-grade plutonium on the international

market.

That’s why the President has requested

the authority to act now. Saddam

Hussein represents a grave and

gathering danger. I hope he is no

longer in power 1 year from now. But

there is certainly a chance he could be.

Congress cannot foresee the entire

course of this conflict. Acting now to

deprive the President 12 months from

now of the authority we would grant

him in this resolution would be an infringement

on the authority of the

Commander in Chief and a strange way

to respond to the grave threat to

American national security posed by

Saddam Hussein’s regime.

Mr. President, I thank

the Senator from Connecticut for his

thoughtful statement. I want to say in

the few remaining seconds that to view

the cause of the tragedy of the Vietnam

war as being the Tonkin Gulf resolution

is a somewhat, in my view, simplistic

view.

There were a lot of factors that entered

into the beginning and the continuation

of the Vietnam war. The

Tonkin Gulf resolution was simply

window dressing. At any time the Congress

of the United States could have

reversed that resolution and chose not

to.

Madam President, according

to the letter of the Byrd

amendment, a clear threat of imminent,

sudden, and direct attack upon

the United States, its possessions or

territories, et cetera, clearly would

have, would absolutely deprive the

President of the United States of what

he is seeking today. It would deprive

the President of the United States of

the authority he has requested to compel

Saddam Hussein to disarm, so let’s

have no doubt about the impact of this

amendment.

The President has spoken clearly of

the threat Saddam Hussein’s regime

poses to America and the world today—

even though Iraq today clearly does

not meet the Byrd amendment’s standard

of threatening imminent, sudden,

and direct attack upon the United

States of our Armed Forces. To wait

for Saddam Hussein to threaten imminent

attack against America would be

to acquiesce to his development of nuclear

weapons, to ignore his record of

aggression against his neighbors, and

to disregard his continuing threats to

destroy Israel.

Failure now to make the choice to

remove Saddam Hussein from power

will leave us with choices later, when

Saddam’s inevitable acquisition of nuclear

weapons will make it much more

dangerous to defend our friends and interests

in the region. It will permit

Saddam to control much of the region,

and to wield its resources in ways that

can only weaken America’s position. It

will put Israel’s very survival at risk,

with moral consequences no American

can welcome.

Failure to end the danger posed by

Saddam Hussein’s Iraq makes it more

likely that the interaction we believe

to have occurred between members of

al-Qaida and Saddam’s regime may increasingly

take the form of active cooperation

to target the United States.

We live in a world in which international

terrorists continue to this day

to plot mass murder in America. Saddam

Hussein unquestionably has

strong incentives to cooperate with al-

Qaida. Whatever they may or may not

have in common, their overwhelming

hostility to America and rejection of

any moral code suggest that collaboration

against us would be natural. It is

all too imaginable. Whether or not it

has yet happened, the odds favor it—

and they are not odds the United

States can accept.

Standing by while an odious regime

with a history of support for terrorism

develops weapons whose use by terrorists

could literally kill millions of

Americans is not a choice. It is an abdication.

In this new era, preventive

action to target rogue regimes is not

only imaginable but necessary.

Who would not have attacked Osama

bib Laden’s network before September

11th had we realized that his intentions

to bring harm to America were

matched by the capability to do so?

Who would not have heeded Churchill’s

call to stand up to Adolf Hitler in the

1930’s, while Europe slept and appeasement

fed the greatest threat to Western

civilization the world had ever

known? Who would not have supported

Israel’s bombing of Iraq’s nuclear reactor

in 1981 had we then known, as Israel

knew, that Saddam was on the verge of

developing the bomb?

In the new era we entered last September,

warning of an attack before it

happens is a luxury we cannot expect.

Waiting for imminence of attack could

be catastrophic. Many fear we will not

know of an attack until it happens—

and should our enemies use weapons of

mass destruction in such an attack,

the deaths of thousands or millions of

Americans could occur with no warning—

as happened last September. In

this age, to wait for our enemies to

come to us is suicidal.

In 1962, President Kennedy made the

point that America cannot wait until

we face the threat of open attack without

gravely endangering our security.

In President Kennedy’s words, ‘‘Neither

the United States of America, nor

the world community of nations can

tolerate deliberate deception and offensive

threats on the part of any nation,

large or small. We no longer live in a

world where only the actual firing of

weapons represents a sufficient challenge

to a nation’s security to constitute

maximum peril.’’

The Byrd amendment would overturn

the doctrine announced by the President

of the United States to guide his

administration’s conduct of American

national security policy. The Byrd

amendment would negate any Congressional

resolution authorizing the President

to use all means to protect America

from the threat posed by Iraq. It

would set such a high threshold for the

use of military force as to render the

Commander in Chief powerless to respond

to the clear and present danger

Saddam Hussein’s regime poses to

America and the world.

I urge my colleagues to reject the

Byrd amendment.

Mr. President, at the

outset, let me state that I agree with

the distinguished Chairman of the

Armed Services Committee: U.S. policy

would be stronger if we received the

unequivocal support of the United Nations

Security Council. Of that, there

is no doubt.

But that does not mean that our

country must delegate our national security

decision making to the United

Nations. It is neither morally necessary

nor wise to give the U.N. Security

Council veto power over our security.

I am a supporter of the United Nations.

I have supported efforts to pay

U.S. arrears to the organization. The

U.N. does many good deeds around the

world.

However, we should not kid ourselves:

the Security Council is not a repository

of moral goodness. It is not

some supranational authority on international

law, world peace or

transnational justice. It is a collection

of nation-states, each of whom makes

decisions based on their national interests.

Five nations have veto power. Ten

more can vote up or down, or abstain

on a given matter. Individual states

may cloak their decisions in grand

rhetoric of global interest, but they are

driven by cool calculations of self-interest.

As my friend from Michigan knows,

the atmosphere before a Security

Council vote often resembles a Middle

Eastern bazaar more than it does a

somber courtroom. Deals are cut, resolutions

are watered down, and statements

are made based on the national

interests of the five permanent Security

Council members. That is as it

should be, but we should not fool ourselves

that there is some innate moral

authority once 15 nations negotiate a

deal.

Russia is engaged in vicious human

rights abuses in Chechnya. Russia continues

to undermine the sovereignty of

the Republic of Georgia. Russia is owed

billions of dollars from its ill-advised

arms deals with Saddam Hussein’s

Iraq. Russia has long advocated easing

and even lifting of sanctions against

Iraq. Russia abstained on U.N. Security

Council Resolution 1284 in December

1999, creating the current weapons inspections

regime in Iraq—apparently

because it believed the regime was too

tough.

China also abstained from supporting

U.N. Security Council Resolution 1284.

China has good reason to be concerned

about international opinion. China has

engaged in serious proliferation activities.

China severely represses its own

people. Gaining the diplomatic acquiescence

of the People’s Republic of China

may be desirable but it does not add

any moral stature to our position.

And then there is France. France has

armed Saddam Hussein for years.

French President Chirac was Prime

Minister when France sold a nuclear

reactor to Iraq. In the words of the

former head of Iraq’s nuclear program,

Khidhir Hamza, Saddam ‘‘knew Chirac

would eat old tires from the Tigris if it

got him our nuclear deal, worth hundreds

of millions of dollars, along with

the prospect of cheap oil.’’

For years, French businessmen have

been regular visitors to Baghdad, seeking

commercial advantage despite U.N.

sanctions. No one in this body should

be under any illusions about French

motivations.

If President Bush and his team can

gain French, Chinese and Russian support

for a strong U.N. Security Council

resolution, I applaud them. Recent

signs are promising. Their support will

help in the political and diplomatic

realms. But their support will not

make our case more just, or more

right.

In fact, the U.S. position in making

progress at the U.N. precisely because

of our determination. If this body were

to pass the Levin amendment, we

would set our cause back in New York.

We would send a signal of indecision

that would embolden those who oppose

a tough resolution. They would see

that the U.S. Senate is deferring judgment

to them, virtually inviting them

to harden their opposition to the U.S.

position.

Let me address some real concerns I

have about the amendment offered by

my distinguished colleague. It urges

the U.N. Security Council to adopt a

particular resolution—one limited solely

to inspectors’ access to Iraq’s weapons

of mass destruction programs. I

don’t think we should try to put the

U.S. Senate in the role of drafting the

parameters of U.N. Security Council

resolutions. Such a unilateral position

by one legislative body in one U.N.

member state seems a little bit out of

keeping with his oft-stated desire for

multilateralism.

The U.N. Security Council resolution

urged by the Levin amendment is silent

on the real issues facing the U.S.

government in New York right now.

Does the amendment accept or reject

the U.N. Secretary General’s 1998 deal

with Saddam Hussein to leave huge

swaths of Iraqi territory under separate

rules? Does the amendment take a

position on the need to interview Iraqi

scientists outside of Saddam’s control—

and with their families so the regime

cannot hold them hostage?

The Levin amendment is silent about

many issues raised in U.N. Security

Council resolutions—issues that the

U.N. Security Council may see fit to

address in the future as they have in

the past: support for terrorism; threatening

conventional military moves

against Kuwait, and protection of the

Iraqi people from Saddam’s tyranny.

Each of these has been addressed by

U.N. Security Council resolutions in

the past. Each of these has been addressed

by the United States in the

past. Why are they ignored in the

Levin amendment.

Even more troubling is the narrow

authorization for the use of force in the

Levin amendment. Right now, American

and British pilots are risking their

lives enforcing the northern and southern

no fly zones in Iraq. They are being

shot at. They are defending themselves

by attacking Iraqi radar and SAM sites

that target them. These zones were

erected to prevent Saddam from continuing

to slaughter the Iraqi people—

not to engage in search and destroy

mission for weapons of mass destruction.

They are authorized by U.N. Security

Council Resolution 688, passed

on April 5, 1991. By omitting any reference

to the ongoing Operation Northern

Watch and Operation Southern

Watch, one could construe the Levin

amendment to not authorizing no fly

zone enforcement. I am sure that is not

its intent, but it could be its effect.

The same is true of U.N. Security

Council Resolution 949, passed on October

15, 1994, which prohibits Saddam

from reinforcing his conventional

forces in southern Iraq. This resolution

was necessitated by Saddam’s massing

of thousands of troops—including at

least two Republican Guard divisions—

near the Iraq-Kuwait border. By limiting

the authorization to only weapons

of mass destruction, the Levin

amendment’s silence on the conventional

threat to Kuwait could send the

wrong signal to Iraq and undermine existing

U.N. Security Council resolutions.

Again, I am sure that is not its

intent but it may be the effect.

Finally, there is the issue of what to

do if the U.N. Security Council does

not act. It may be, at the end of the

day, that the individual nations making

decisions in the U.N. Security

Council do not agree with the compelling

case that President Bush has laid

out. It may be that they will decide

that U.N. Security Council resolutions

are not to be enforced, that the worst

violator of U.N. Security Council resolutions

should not be confronted. It

may be that other nations choose to

appease, accommodate, or ignore the

clear and present danger posed by Iraq.

Under the Levin amendment, what is

the United States to do if the U.N.

proves to be as unable to deal with Iraq

as it was to deal with genocide in

Rwanda and mass murder in Bosnia

committed under the nose of U.N.

peacekeepers?

Under the Levin amendment, Congress

would reconvene to ‘‘consider

promptly proposals relative to Iraq if

in the judgment of the President, the

U.N. Security Council fails to adopt or

enforce the resolution’’ called for in

the amendment. It is not sufficient to

claim the Levin amendment affirms

the U.S. right of self-defense and,

therefore, there is not U.N. veto. If the

U.N. vetoes action on Iraq, Congress

will come back to ‘‘consider proposals.’’

Why? Why should we not decide

now about the issue? Why should

we wait and see?

Does the Senator believe the administration

is pursuing the wrong resolution

in New York? If he does, he should

say so. Does the Senator believe the

administration is not seriously committed

to pursuing a resolution? If he

does he should say so. But if he believes

the U.S. is seriously pursuing a

serious resolution in New York, there

is no need for this amendment. Unless

he wants to grant bargaining power to

those who oppose the U.S. position in

the U.N. or unless he disagrees with the

U.S. position, there is not need for his

amendment. The diplomatic process

will continue. We may succeed. We

may fail. But I believe we have enough

information to act now. I believe we do

not need to wait for the U.N. to act. I

believe that even if the U.N. does not

act, America should—as we did in

Kosovo in 1999.

The case of NATO’s preventive attack

in Kosovo is instructive. I supported

the NATO intervention. It was

an intervention designed to stop ethnic

cleansing and mass murder by a government

against its own people.

Milosevic had no weapons of mass destruction.

The threat he posed was to

citizens in his country, not his neighbors.

In Kosovo, the U.N. Security

Council could not pass a resolution because

of Russian opposition. Yet

NATO, under U.S. leadership acted. Indeed,

in 1998, Senator LEVIN noted with

approval the Administration’s position

‘‘that the Security Council’s authorization

was desirable but not required for

NATO action to intervene in Kosovo.’’

Remarks on the Senate floor, July 8,

1998. This was 8 months before hostilities

began. This was before any serious

effort had been made at the U.N.

This was before any veto was cast. It

seems to me that if my distinguished

colleague from Michigan could reach

that kind of judgment that far in advance

concerning the use of force

against a far less threatening adversary,

he should be able to do the same

today.

In summary, the Levin amendment

sends the wrong signal at the wrong

time. It could give a green light to Saddam

to repress his own people or use

conventional forces to Kuwait while

giving a red light to our diplomatic efforts

at the U.N. This body should

allow the executive branch the leeway

to conduct diplomacy at the U.N.—not

try to micromange it from the Senate

floor. I urge the rejection of the

amendment.

I reserve the remainder of my time.

Madam President, I believe

I have 3 minutes remaining. In all

due respect to the Senator from Michigan,

as Paul Harvey would say, ‘‘Let’s

hear the rest of the story.’’ The reason

I said in 1991 that the U.N. Security

Council should approve it is because

the U.N. Security Council had already

acted and approved. Never, at any time

in my entire history, would I believe

we are dependent upon the good will or

the approval or disapproval of the U.N.

Security Council. So I resent, slightly,

the Senator from Michigan taking me

out of context there.

The fact is, in Kosovo, if we took the

same course of action the Senator from

Michigan is contemplating now, when

butchery and genocide was going on

there, we would have waited until the

Security Council acted, or didn’t act,

and then we would have gone back into

session to determine what we should do

about Kosovo.

How many thousands of people would

have been murdered, butchered, and

ethnically cleansed had we taken the

same route that the Senator from

Michigan is advocating on this issue,

as far as Iraq is concerned?

All I have to say about this amendment

is—well, you can just read it:

Et cetera, et cetera. If that isn’t a

dictate by the action of the U.N. Security

Council, nothing is.

We have come a long way. John F.

Kennedy, on October 22, 1962, said this:

The Levin amendment limits our

freedom of action and contradicts the

words of John F. Kennedy at the time

of the Cuban missile crisis.

I reserve the remainder of my time.

Madam President, I

may be in the debate on the Durbin

amendment. We can discuss the comparison

between this situation and

Kosovo. The United Nations Security

Council never acted in Kosovo. The

United States of America was not imminently

threatened—was not threatened—

but genocide was going on in

Kosovo where thousands of people were

being ethnically cleansed. If we had

passed the Levin amendment at the

time of Kosovo, when those of us supported

then-President Clinton, we

would have waited to find out whether

the Security Council acted or not and

then we would have come back and

considered whether Kosovo was a

threat to the United States of America.

Kosovo is not today, was not then, and

will not be tomorrow a threat, but the

United States of America had an obligation,

and because the United Nations

Security Council did not act did not

hamstring us.

The reading of this amendment says

the Congress will come back into session

in case of certain Security Council

actions. There is no other way to read

it. This amendment should be resoundingly

defeated.

I yield the floor.

Madam President, I

will proceed with my statement. If

Senator BYRD arrives on the floor, I

will interrupt it and yield to Senator

BYRD.

In the history of nations, greatness is

forged, or opportunity squandered, not

by natural evolution or by the hand of

mysterious Fate, but by decisions leaders

make in times of potential or imminent

peril. A common view in America

is that these decisions are thrust on

us—the world wars, Iraq’s invasion of

Kuwait, the attacks of September 11—

and we find meaning, and honor, in our

response. As Americans, that response

is guided by faith in our founding principles,

in our love of freedom, and the

blessings of justice.

Yet leaders always have choices, and

history teaches that hard choices deferred—

appeasing Hitler, choosing not

to deter Saddam Hussein in 1990, failing

to act sooner against al Qaeda—

often bring about the very circumstances

we wished to avoid by deferring

action, requiring us to react in

freedom’s defense.

America’s leaders today have a

choice. It will determine whether our

people live in fear behind walls that

have already been breeched, as our enemies

plan our defeat in time we have

given them to do it. It will answer the

fundamental question about America’s

purpose in the world—whether we perceive

our beliefs to be uniquely American

principles or universal values, for

if they are so dear to us that we believe

all people have the right to enjoy

them, we should be willing to stand up

for them, wherever they are threatened.

It will reveal whether we are brave,

and wise or reluctant self-doubting,

and in retreat from a world that still,

in its cruelest corners, possesses a merciless

hostility to our values and interests.

It will test us, as did September

11, except that we can choose to engage

the enemy on our terms rather than

wait for the battle to be brought to us.

Our choice is whether to assume history’s

burden to make the world safe

from a megalomaniacal tyrant whose

cruelty and offense to the norms of civilization

are infamous, or whether to

wait for this man, armed with the

world’s worst weapons and willing and

able to use them, to make history for

us.

It is a question of whether preemptive

action to defeat an adversary

whose designs would imperil our vital

interests is not only appropriate but

moral—and whether our morality and

security give us cause to fire the first

shot in this battle. It will help determine

whether the greater Middle East

will progress toward possession of the

values Americans hold to be universal,

or whether the Arab and Islamic worlds

will be further influenced by a tyrant

whose intent is to breed his own virulent

anti-Americanism in all who fall

under his influence, and use that influence

to hurt us gravely.

The government of Saddam Hussein

is a clear and present danger to the

United States of America. Would that

he were just another Arab dictator,

pumping oil and repressing his people

but satisfied with his personal circumstances

within the confines of his

country’s borders. That situation alone

would offend our sense of justice and

compel us to militate for a regime

change, but buy means short of preemptive

military action. But Saddam

Hussein has shown he has greater ambitions.

His ambitions lie not in Baghdad, or

Tikrit, or Basra, but in the deserts of

Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. They lie in

Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, where he

sponsors suicide bombings by Palestinians

he calls ‘‘martyrs’’ and the civilized

world calls terrorists, using murder

by proxy to advance his aspirations

to lead the Arab world and fan hatred

of Israel, America, and the universal

ideal of freedom. These ambitions have

led him to attack his sovereign neighbors—

Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Israel,

Iran and Bahrain. His will to power has

so affected his judgment that he has

started two major wars and lost them,

each time imperiling his own grip on

power.

His moral code is so spare that he has

gassed his own people—horror the

world thought it had left behind at

Auschwitz and Treblinka. We are told

that he enjoys watching video of his

opponents being tortured, for fun. He

kills not just his political opponents

but their families, cruelly.

He has developed stocks of germs and

toxins in sufficient quantities to kill

the entire population of the Earth multiple

times. He has placed weapons

laden with these poisons on alert to

fire at his neighbors within minutes,

not hours, and has devolved authority

to fire them to subordinates. He develops

nuclear weapons with which he

would hold his neighbors and us hostage.

No, this is not just another self-serving,

oil-rich potentate. He is the worst

kind of modern-day tryant—a

conscienceless murderer who aspires to

omnipotence who has repeatedly committed

irrational acts since seizing

power. Given this reality, containment

and deterrence and international inspections

will work no better than the

Maginot Line did 62 years ago.

He has unrepentantly violated sixteen

United Nations Security Council

resolutions, defying the will of the

international community so consistently,

so compulsively, so completely

that no leader who professes allegiance

to the values the United Nations was

formed to uphold can sanction his audacity.

His defiance, if not ended, is a

threat to every nation that claims

membership in the civilized world by

virtue of its respect for law and fundamental

human values.

Because Saddam Hussein respects

neither law nor values, advocating inspections

of his weapons facilities as an

alternative to war posits a false choice

between ending the threat he poses

peaceably or by force of arms. His character,

his ambition, and his record

make clear that he will never accept

the intrusive inspections that, by depriving

him of his arsenal of dangerous

weapons, would deprive him of his

power. This power gives him international

stature, feeds his fantasy of

being a Saladin for our time, and sustains

his ability to repress his people

and thus remain the rule of Iraq.

Saddam Hussein is on a crash course

to construct a nuclear weapon—as he

was in 1981 when Israel preemptively

destroyed his reactor at Osirak, enabling

U.S. forces to go into Iraq a decade

later without the threat of nuclear

attack, and as he was in 1990, when he

thought development of such a weapon,

if completed in time, would have deterred

American military action

against him, allowing him to secure his

control over his neighbors and dominate

the region.

Saddam has masterfully manipulated

the international weapons inspections

regime over the course of a decade, enabling

him to remain in power with his

weapons of mass destruction intact,

and growing in lethality. He knows

how to play for time, and how to exploit

divisions within the international

community, greased by the prospect of

oil contracts for friendly foreign powers.

His calculated ambiguity about his

willingness to accept a new inspections

regime are intended to stave off military

attack until such time as he is

able to deter it through deployment of

an Iraqi nuclear weapon. He is using

opponents of war in America, including

well-intentioned individuals who honestly

believe inspections represent an

alternative to war, to advance his own

ends, sowing divisions within our ranks

that encourage reasonable people to believe

he may be sincere.

He is not. He has had ten years to

prove otherwise, and he has transparently

failed. His regime would be secure

if he would only acquiesce to the

international community’s demands to

disarm, but he has not. It is Saddam

Hussein who puts his own regime at

risk by developing these weapons. The

burden is not on America to justify

going to war. The burden is Saddam

Hussein’s, to justify whey his regime

should continue to exist as long as its

continuing existence threatens the

world.

Giving peace a chance only gives

Saddam Hussein more time to prepare

for war—on his terms, at a time of his

choosing, in pursuit of ambitions that

will only grow as his power to achieve

them grows. American credibility,

American security, and the future of

the United Nations Security Council

rest on the will of the United States to

enforce the legitimate demands of the

international community for Iraq’s disarmament,

by means that match the

menace posed by his ambitions.

Saddam Hussein’s regime cannot be

contained, deterred, or accommodated.

Containment has failed. It failed to

halt Saddam’s attacks on five sovereign

nations. The sanctions regime

has collapsed. As long as Saddam remains

in power, he will be able to deceive,

bribe, intimidate, and attack his

way out of any containment scheme.

Some say we can deter Saddam Hussein,

even though deterrence has failed

utterly in the past. I fail to see how

waiting for some unspecified period of

time, allowing Saddam’s nuclear ambitions

to grow unchecked, will ever result

in a stable deterrence regime. Not

only would deterrence condemn the

Iraqi people to more unspeakable tyranny,

it would condemn Saddam’s

neighbors to perpetual instability. And

once Iraq’s nuclear ambitions are realized,

no serious person could expect the

Iraqi threat to diminish.

As for accommodation, I am reminded

of Winston Churchill’s characterization

of appeasement: continually

feeding the alligator in the hope that

he will eat you last.

I do not believe the threat posed by

Saddam Hussein’s regime will be eliminated

until he is removed from power.

Congress made the same point in 1998

when we passed the Iraq Liberation

Act, which made regime change in

Baghdad a priority of American policy.

Our regional allies who oppose using

force against Saddam Hussein warn of

uncontrollable popular hostility to an

American attack on Iraq. But what

would really be the effect on Arab populations

of seeing other Arabs liberated

from oppression? Most Iraqi soldiers

will not willingly die for Saddam Hussein.

Far from fighting to the last

Iraqi, the people of that tortured society

will surely dance on the regime’s

grave.

I wish the Bush administration and

its predecessor had given more serious

support to internal and external Iraqi

opposition than has been the case. But

it’s a safe assumption that Iraqis will

be grateful to whoever is responsible

for securing their freedom. Perhaps

that is what truly concerns some of our

Gulf War allies: that among the consequences

of regime change in Iraq

might be a stronger demand for self-determination

from their own people.

I commend the President for making

a strong case for bringing Iraq into

compliance with its international obligations

to the United Nations. The Security

Council bears the responsibility

for enforcing the obligations it has imposed

on Iraq in order to uphold international

peace and security. The President

was right to tell our friends and

allies on the Council that if it does not

act, America will.

Diplomacy is important, and I welcome

the diplomatic campaign the administration

is waging to solicit the

support of other nations. At the end of

the day, we will not wage this war

alone. Many nations are threatened by

Saddam Hussein’s rule, and many nations

have a stake in the new order

that will be built atop the ruins of Saddam

Hussein’s fascist state. Our friends

and allies will help us construct this

new order, and we should welcome

that.

Our friends and allies must know

that we do not target Saddam’s regime

simply because he is a bad man, although

his continuation of his tyranny

is a rebuke to every decent value of humanity.

We contemplate military action

to end his rule because allowing

him to remain in power, with the resources

at his disposal, would intolerably

and inevitably risk American interests

in a region of the world where

threats to those interests affect the

whole world.

For the United States to accept

Saddam’s continued rule is to acquiesce

to the certain prospect of strategic

blackmail when, soon, Saddam

wields a nuclear weapon and threatens

the destruction of Israel or the invasion

of Saudi Arabia, or demands the

withdrawal of all American forces from

the region, and America finds itself

forced to respond at much more terrible

cost than we would pay today.

Failure now to make the choice to

remove Saddam Hussein from power

will leave us with few choices late,

when Saddam’s inevitable acquisition

of nuclear weapons will make it much

more dangerous to defend our friends

and interests in the region. It will permit

Saddam to control much of the region,

and to wield its resources in ways

that can only weaken America’s position.

It will put Israel’s very survival

at risk, with moral consequences no

American can welcome.

Failure to end the danger posed by

Saddam Hussein’s Iraq makes it more

likely that the interaction we believe

to have occurred between members of

al Qaeda and Saddam’s regime may increasingly

take the form of active cooperation

to target the United States.

We live in a world in which international

terrorists continue to this day

to plot mass murder in America. Saddam

Hussein unquestionably has

strong incentives to cooperate with al

Qaeda. Whatever they may or may not

have in common, their overwhelming

hostility to America and rejection of

any moral code suggest that collaboration

against us would be natural. It is

all too imaginable. Whether or not it

has yet happened, the odds favor it,

and they are not odds the United

States can accept.

To those who argue that America’s

threat to Saddam’s rule makes it more

likely that he would collaborate with

terrorists to attack our homeland, I

would ask: how can we sanction the

continuing existence of a regime whose

ruler has the capability to inflict such

damage on us and would even consider

doing so?

Standing by while an odious regime

with a history of support for terrorism

develops weapons whose use by terrorists

could literally kill millions of

Americans is not a choice. It is an abdication.

In this new era, preventive

action to target rogue regimes is not

only imaginable but necessary. Who

would not have attacked Osama bin

Laden’s network before September 11th

had we realized that his intentions to

bring harm to America were matched

by the capability to do so? Who would

not have heeded Churchill’s call to

stand up to Adolf Hitler in the 1930s,

while Europe slept and appeasement

fed the greatest threat to Western civilization

the world had ever known?

Who would not have supported Israel’s

bombing of Iraq’s nuclear reactor in

1981 had we then known, as Israel

knew, that Saddam was on the verge of

developing the bomb?

Opponents of this resolution offer

many questions that are designed to

persuade the President to wait before

moving against Saddam Hussein. They

have every right to do so. But there is

one question I don’t want to be asked

in the months and years ahead: ‘‘Why

did you give Saddam Hussein time to

harm us?’’

Weighing the costs of inaction is an

important as chronicling the costs of

action in blood and treasure as we prepare

to confront Iraq in 2002. In an age

of weapons of mass destruction and

global terrorists bent on acquiring

those weapons, the costs of inaction

could well be catastrophic.

As we hold this debate today, this future

is not preordained. We have

choices. I hope we make the right one.

Politics has no place in this debate.

Voting for a course of action that will

send young Americans off to fight and

die for their country is the most solemn

responsibility every member of

this Congress will undertake. Those of

us who have the honor of bearing that

responsibility must weigh our words,

and consult our consciences carefully.

By voting to give the President the authority

to wage war, we assume and

share his responsibility for the war’s

outcome. Others have neither that burden

nor that privilege.

We have a choice. The men and

women who wear the uniform of our

country, and who might lose their lives

in service to our cause, do not. They

will do their duty, as we see fit to define

it for them.

We have a responsibility to these

men and women to judge responsibly

when our security is so threatened that

we must call on them to uphold their

oath to defend it. When we call them to

serve, they will make us proud. We

should strive to make them proud by

showing deliberation, judgment, and

statesmanship in the debate that will

determine their mission.

There is no such thing as a Democrat

or a Republican war. We vote on this

resolution in the same way brave

young men and women in uniform will

fight and die as a result of our vote-as

Americans. The freedom and security

Americans will continue to enjoy as

history’s greatest nation will be their

legacy, and their honor.

They will do their duty. Ours lies before

us. Its outcome will determine

America’s course in this century, in an

age when waiting for imminence of attack

is catastrophic.

In this age, liberating oppressed peoples

from the tyranny of those who

would do us harm serves not only narrow

American interests but the ordered

progress of freedom. The global success

of liberty is America’s greatest strategic

interest as well as its most compelling

moral argument. All our other

interests are served in that cause. In it

rests our faith in the greatness of

America, the last, best hope of earth.

What ensures our success in this long

struggle against terrorism and rogue

leaders who conspire against us is that

our military strength is surpassed only

by the strength of our ideals. Our enemies

are weaker than we are in men

and arms, but weaker still in causes.

they fight to express an irrational hatred

for all that is good in humanity, a

hatred that has fallen time and again

to the armies and ideals of the righteous.

We fight for love of freedom and

justice, a love that is invincible. We

will never surrender. They will. All we

must do is stay true to our faith.