Mr. President, I believe

I have time.

I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, I thank my friend

from West Virginia for his eloquence

once again this afternoon. When the

history of our time is written, there

will be many important chapters on

the contributions the Senator from

West Virginia has made, certainly for

his State, but I also think there will be

an important chapter that will be written

about his contributions to our Constitution

as the principal guardian of

the Constitution in the Senate. He has

done this on so many occasions. I have

admired him so much for that effort

and the extraordinary insight he has

brought to all of us as a student of history.

All of us will remember very clearly

the debates which were led by the Senator

from West Virginia some 3 months

ago on the issues of war and peace, and

now once again, as we are coming to

the most significant time, and that is

the decision-making that will be made

at the United Nations about whether

we will continue with a course of inspections

and whether we will try and

galvanize the world community behind

a common purpose, or whether we will

go it alone. The Senator reminds us of

the dangers of going it alone, of the unforeseen

challenges we will be facing,

and draws attention to the importance

that this is a matter that is debated

and discussed in the Senate; that the

people in West Virginia, like the people

in my own State, are eager to have

more knowledge, more awareness, more

understanding as to exactly where we

are going and the circumstances of

that commitment.

I thank the Senator from West Virginia

so much for the thoughtful resolution

which I am proud to cosponsor

and for the comment he has made,

which is that we will be back here

again to talk about this issue of war

and peace.

As he has said on many occasions,

there is no vote that is more important

than a Senator’s vote on war and

peace. There is no issue more important

that we address in the Senate. The

Senator reminds us of that very solemn

obligation and responsibility we have

on that issue and has, in his resolution,

found ways of giving expression to the

concerns of many of our fellow citizens.

I again thank him for all of the work

he has done. I urge him to continue to

lead this body to a better understanding

of exactly what policy we are

undertaking, what the risks are, and

the challenges we face with the real

prospects of a war which may be initiated

by the United States, in which the

United States may be effectively going

it alone with perhaps one or two of our

allies. I thank him so much for his attention

and focus on this issue.

I will be glad to

yield.

Mr. President, may I

be reminded when I have 3 minutes remaining.

Mr. President, last

October 16, President Bush signed Public

Law 107–243 which authorized the

President to use military force, if necessary,

to defend our country.

I voted against that resolution and

war with Iraq because I was not persuaded

that Iraq posed an imminent

threat to our national security and because

of my belief that war with Iraq,

especially without broad international

support, would undermine our ability

to meet the gravest threat to our national

security—terrorism against the

United States by al-Qaida and other

terrorist groups.

Circumstances have changed significantly

since Congress approved that

resolution last October. In the months

that have passed, events have only

strengthened my belief that this is the

wrong war at the wrong time.

In those 3 months, al-Qaida has escalated

its campaign of terror. North

Korea has revived its nuclear weapons

program. And United Nations inspectors

are now on the ground in Iraq.

There is no doubt that Saddam Hussein

is a brutal dictator. He invaded

Kuwait. He oppresses the Iraqi people.

He murders his opponents. He has

gassed his own people. He has defied

the world community.

So I commend President Bush for

going to the United Nations and for

working with our allies to put inspectors

on the ground again in Iraq. The

inspectors are making progress. Rather

than commit American troops to war

with Iraq at this time, we should give

the inspectors our full support and assistance,

including our best intelligence

information, to strengthen

their disarmament efforts.

There are many other questions that

must be answered before we go to war:

Will war increase the chances of injury

and harm to American citizens if

Saddam Hussein, with his back pressed

against the wall, decides to use chemical

or biological weapons? What will a

postwar Iraq look like? Who will govern?

How long will our troops need to

stay? How many will need to stay?

What will be the impact on the war

against terrorism? Will we be increasing

support for al-Qaida?

What will be the impact of our allies

in the region? Will stability be undermined?

How will our Nation be able to manage

three foreign policy crises at the

same time—the war against terrorism,

the crisis with North Korea, and now

war with Iraq?

When Congress voted on this issue in

October, the President had not yet decided

to go to war. The President said

war was the last resort. He said we

would work with the international

community to obtain Iraq’s disarmament.

Clearly, we have not reached

that last resort. Inspectors are on the

ground in Iraq, and the international

community wants the inspections to

continue; yet, the President is poised

to pull the trigger of war.

I am delighted to work with Senator

BYRD on this issue, and I am a cosponsor

of his resolution. We share the goal

of ensuring that war will be the last resort;

that if we do have to go to war in

Iraq, it will be with the support of Congress,

the American people, and the

international community.

In light of the changed circumstances

since the previous votes by Congress, I

am submitting another resolution supporting

the inspection process and requiring

the President to obtain approval

from the Congress before committing

American troops to war.

This decision may well be one of the

most important that any of us will

make.

So much has happened since Congress

voted to authorize force last October.

On November 8, the United Nations Security

Council unanimously approved a

resolution that demanded unprecedented

access to suspected weapons

sites in Iraq. The passage of this resolution

demonstrated the resolve of the

international community to disarm

Saddam, and was soon followed by the

arrival of several hundred weapons inspectors

in Iraq.

On January 27, the inspectors submitted

a report to the Security Council

about Iraq’s cooperation with weapons

inspections. Chief weapons inspector

Hans Blix stated that Iraq has so far

cooperated ‘‘rather well’’ but that additional

cooperation is necessary. The director

general of the International

Atomic Energy Agency said inspectors

‘‘have found no evidence that Iraq has

revived its nuclear weapons program

since the elimination of the program in

the 1990s’’ and that inspectors ‘‘should

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be able within the next few months to

provide credible assurances that Iraq

has no nuclear weapons program.’’

The U.N. report demonstrated that

the inspection process is working. The

inspectors are building their case, and

Saddam Hussein is feeling the pressure

of the international community. Nothing

in the report suggests that war now

is the only option to disarm Saddam.

Clearly, the inspections should continue.

It is wrong for the administration to

beat the drums of war. There is time

for thoughtful deliberation about

whether war now is the right priority

for our Nation and we in Congress have

a responsibility to the Constitution

and the American people to act again

on this all-important issue of war or

peace.

The administration has totally failed

to make the case that Saddam Hussein

is an imminent threat to our security.

No evidence, no proof, no ‘‘smoking

gun,’’ no intelligence has ever been released

to suggest we must launch a preemptive

strike in order to defend

America from an unprovoked attack.

Instead of making its case, the administration

simply says, ‘‘Trust us. We

know more than you do.’’

Many experts believe that Iraq—especially

without provocation—does not

represent an imminent threat to our

security. In fact, it may well be just

the opposite. On October 7, CIA Director

George Tenet released an unclassified

assessment in a letter to the Senate

Select Committee on Intelligence

that suggested Iraq would only be a

threat if the United States attacked it

first.

The letter said, ‘‘the probability of

[Saddam Hussein] initiating an attack

[on the United States] would be low.’’

It also said, ‘‘should Saddam Hussein

conclude that a U.S.-led attack could

no longer be deterred, he probably

would become much less constrained in

adopting terrorist actions. Such terrorism

might involve . . . [chemical

and biological weapons].’’

In spite of U.S. assertions that we

have secret evidence of Iraq’s WMD

program, we have been transferring

this information at a painfully slow

pace. It is only this month, that we finally

began to hand over ‘‘significant

intelligence.’’ The administration

promises the release of new information

and all of us hope that it will be

more convincing than what has been

made available so far.

Secretary Powell will go to the Security

Council to share intelligence on

Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction program

on February 5. But if the United

States has significant intelligence, we

should share it with the U.N. inspectors

today. We should not wait a further

week. If our goal is disarmament,

we should do everything possible to assist

the inspectors.

The disarmament of Saddam Hussein

is essential. But the administration

has not made a persuasive case that

the threat from Iraq is so immediate

that it justifies resort to war now when

the inspections process is obviously

making progress. Clearly, we have not

reached the last resort.

Our Nation faces another threat that

is much more immediate: the possibility

of new al-Qaida terrorist attacks.

A unilateral invasion of Iraq

would not advance our war against terrorism—

it would undermine it. Our

highest national priority is to wage the

unfinished war against al-Qaida and

wage it effectively.

In the last 4 months there have been

deadly new al-Qaida attacks worldwide,

which have slaughtered hundreds. A

French tanker was attacked in Yemen,

a nightclub bombed in Indonesia, a

hotel destroyed in Kenya, missionaries

murdered in Yemen. The frequency and

ferocity of these attacks is increasing.

It is only a matter of time before they

strike America again.

The administration would like us to

believe that Saddam Hussein is public

enemy No. 1, ignoring the fact that

Osama bin Laden is still at large.

Chilling new evidence has arisen suggests

that he is planning new attacks.

At home, we still remain vulnerable.

Last October, a Council of Foreign Relations

task force chaired by former

Senators Gary Hart and Warren Rudman

warned that ‘‘America remains

dangerously unprepared to prevent and

respond to a catastrophic attack on

U.S. soil.’’

Another Task Force representative

told a Senate Judiciary Subcommittee

that ‘‘a war with Iraq . . . elevates the

risk in the near term of an attack on

the United States . . . [and] will likely

consume virtually all the nation’s attention

and command the bulk of the

available resources, leaving little left

over to address our many domestic

vulnerabilities.’’

For some time, the administration

engaged in a complicated spin job to

convince the American people that

Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden

are co-conspirators. According to this

view, waging war on Iraq is part of the

war against terrorism. Last September,

our Secretary of Defense went so far as

to claim publicly that he had ‘‘bulletproof

confirmation’’ of links between

Iraq and al-Qaida.

But the administration has never

presented any of this ‘‘bulletproof’’ evidence.

Most regional experts believe it

is highly unlikely that fundamentalist

al-Qaida leaders would ever find much

common cause with the secular dictator

Saddam Hussein. Last October,

CIA Director George Tenet even conceded

that the administration’s understanding

of the al-Qaida Iraq link was

‘‘evolving’’ and based on ‘‘sources of

varying reliability.’’ The administration

claimed again this week that they

have new evidence of those ties, but so

far we have only seen a rehash of old

allegations and unreliable anecdotes.

As the administration emphasizes

the threat from Iraq, it gives less attention

to other countries that pose an

even more immediate threat to our security.

The greatest proliferation threat

comes not from Iraq, but North Korea.

North Korea is much more likely and

capable to develop, use and sell these

weapons. But unlike Iraq, North Korea

probably already has nuclear weapons.

Unlike Iraq, North Korea has no nuclear

inspectors on the ground to verify

disarmament.

North Korea has a long and well-documented

history of selling its military

technology, especially ballistic missiles,

to whoever will pay the highest

price. Desperate and strapped for cash,

it is the country most likely to sell or

transfer weapons of mass destruction

to terrorists or nations that support

terrorism.

In its single-minded focus on Iraq,

administration officials at first refused

to acknowledge that a nuclear crisis

even existed. Only very recently has

the Administration begun to devote

the attention this crisis deserves.

Nevertheless, the administration

continues to focus on Iraq. They are

now suggesting an easy war, with few

casualties. But our military leaders,

especially those with significant combat

experience are skeptical. On December

18, a press report said that the

commandant of the Marine Corps is

concerned that civilian leaders in the

Pentagon are underestimating the

risks of war, and that military chiefs

have challenged the optimistic view

that Saddam Hussein’s government

will collapse soon after a military campaign

begins.

In December, we heard dire new forecasts

about what war with Iraq would

actually be like. U.S. intelligence officials

warned that Saddam Hussein may

pursue a ‘‘scorched earth’’ policy if the

war goes badly. They said that Hussein

may try to destroy Iraq’s oil fields,

power plants and food facilities.

In the Armed Services Committee,

we heard testimony from General Hoar

and others about the dangers to our

troops of urban guerilla warfare.

War will be a disaster not just for the

soldiers who suffer and die, but for the

vast numbers of innocent civilians who

will be affected. In December, the

media reprinted a confidential U.N.

planning document predicting a humanitarian

crisis in the wake of war

with Iraq. U.N. officials also predicted

a halt to Iraqi oil production, serious

degradation of Iraqi transportation,

sanitation and power facilities, and the

‘‘outbreak of diseases in epidemic if

not pandemic proportions.’’ The document

also predicted a flow of up to

900,000 refugees.

War will not be as easy as the administration

would like us to believe. It

may well turn into the first great humanitarian

catastrophe of the 21st century.

remaining.

Mr. KENNEDY. The debate giving

the President authority to use force

against Iraq occurred over 3 months

ago. Since then, circumstances have

changed so significantly that Congress

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must consider the issue of war and

peace again.

The administration is also not adequately

considering the massive political

commitment that will be required

to Iraq’s long-term reconstruction. If

we wage this war without allies, the

United States will assume a massive

and lonely responsibility to rebuild

Iraq, preserve its territorial integrity

and prevent chaos. Going to war alone

will impose massive new responsibilities

that could extend for years, if not

decades.

The Senate debated giving the President

authority to use force against

Iraq over three months ago. Since

then, circumstances have changed so

significantly that Congress must consider

the issue of war and peace again.

Since our debate last fall, we have finally

implemented, with our allies, an

active process to verify Iraq’s disarmament.

That process is working and

should be allowed to continue. We must

help this process along and give persuasive

intelligence information to U.N.

weapons inspectors.

It is possible that the inspections

process will fail or that new evidence

will be uncovered about the threat

from Saddam Hussein. But under the

current conditions, I continue to believe

that this is the wrong war at the

wrong time.

If we rush to pull the trigger against

Iraq, we will invite catastrophe and

condemnation. America, which has

long been a beacon of freedom for people

around the world, will turn into a

symbol of brute force and aggression.

The world may come to see us as a dangerous

rogue state, needing to be contained

and deterred. This is not the

America that Abraham Lincoln called

‘‘the last, best hope of mankind.’’ War

now would be alien to our values, contrary

to our interests, and must not be

waged.