Madam President,

the vote on the Levin substitute

amendment is one of the most important

votes we will cast in this process.

I commend the Senator from Michigan

for his fine work on this alternative.

The Levin amendment urges the

United Nations to take strong and immediate

action to pass a resolution demanding

unrestricted access for U.N.

arms inspectors in Iraq. It also urges

the United Nations to press for full enforcement

of its prior resolutions on

Iraq. The Levin substitute language

makes it clear that the United States

will stand behind the U.N. Security

Council, even authorizing the use of

U.S. military force to support the Security

Council directives if necessary.

At the conclusion of World War II,

the United States had a vision of a

world body that would be a forum for

resolving future disputes with means

other than war. There were many important

initiatives that needed multilateral

coordination by an international

body. For more than half a

century, the United States has poured

diplomatic energy and considerable resources

into the United Nations system.

During the cold war years, the

U.N. languished, weakened by the divisive

United States-Soviet confrontation.

But following the demise of the

Soviet Union, the United Nations has

regained considerable authority, and as

the world’s lone superpower, the

United States is now finding that it

has considerable use for the United Nations.

Our decade-long struggle with Saddam

Hussein is one example of how

working with the United Nations

serves our interests. We partnered with

the United Nations very effectively

during the Persian Gulf War. Sanctions

have prevented any significant rebuilding

of Iraq’s conventional military capabilities.

We maintain U.N. no-fly

zones over Iraq that have restricted

military reprisals against the Iraqi

Kurds and Shiites. United Nations inspectors

on the ground in Iraq learned

a great deal about Iraq’s weapons of

mass destruction program immediately

following the gulf war. But things fell

apart in subsequent years.

Once again, we need a strong United

Nations to step up to Saddam Hussein.

The United Nations must take the lead

in enforcing its demands that Iraq give

up its biological and chemical weapons

stockpiles and production capabilities.

The United Nations also demanded

that Iraq dismantle its nuclear weapons

program. I am pleased that last

month, President Bush decided to take

his case against Saddam Hussein to the

United Nations. The U.N. Security

Council has responded with vigorous

debate, and is considering a strong U.S.

proposal for enforcement of a strict

U.N. inspections regime. I urge the Security

Council to act now, and act decisively.

The Levin amendment puts us

squarely behind this United Nations effort.

It is the only language that does

so. It is critical that we give the U.N.

our full support at this time, and give

the Security Council the opportunity

to take bold action as proposed by the

United States. If we undercut the

United Nations here today, we are depriving

ourselves of the best chance to

peacefully achieve the most important

goal of disarming Saddam Hussein.

As the world’s lone super power, we

need a partner in the United Nations.

Many of the critical tasks before us are

actually international tasks. For instance,

degradation of the environment

is a global problem and requires a global

solution. The crisis of climate

change can hardly be addressed by the

United States alone. Improving the

quality of our water and air requires

internationally coordinated efforts.

Economic, employment and health

problems are increasingly becoming

global issues, as people move across national

boundaries in search of jobs and

opportunity. We need a strong partner

in these efforts, and the United Nations

system is our best hope.

We are becoming increasingly aware

of the disparities in the economic

wealth and use of resources around the

globe. Addressing these problems will

require a great deal of creative thinking

and financial resources. While we

are the world’s strongest nation, we

cannot solve these problems alone. Nor

do we want to. We need a strong partner

in this effort. A reinvigorated

United Nations is the most likely

venue for progress.

The spread of weapons of mass destruction

has clearly become a threat

to our national security. There is much

more that the United States can do to

stop this proliferation. But in order to

have much success at these efforts, we

must work in concert with the international

community. We need a strong

United Nations as a partner in this effort.

The effect of the Levin substitute is

to give the United Nations a chance to

prove it is up to the task. If we are to

have a strong and effective partner in

confronting the many problems facing

the United States, then we must stand

squarely behind the United Nations

today. I urge my colleagues to support

the Levin amendment.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.