Mr. President, last

Thursday the Armed Services and foreign

Relations Committees held a joint

hearing to hear testimony from a courageous

and dedicated American—

Major Scott Ritter. Major Ritter began

his opening statement by saying,

For nearly three hours, Major Ritter

responded to Senators’ questions, describing

how U.S. policies in support of

United Nations Security Council resolutions

were not being honestly implemented.

He also expressed his views regarding

the dangers associated with

Iraq’s continuing pursuit of weapons of

mass destruction and how this Nation’s

victory in the Persian Gulf war was

being squandered.

Major Ritter served as an intelligence

officer in the Marine Corps during

the Persian Gulf War to liberate

Kuwait from Iraq. He became a United

Nations inspector in 1991 and acted

under international law created by the

United States and the United Nations.

His job as an inspector was to plan and

conduct inspections to eliminate illegal

weapons of mass destruction in

Iraq. Major Ritter was deeply dedicated

to his duties. He explained that his

duty as a weapons inspector represented

a vital continuation of what

many Americans had fought and died

for during the Gulf War. Finding and

destroying these dangerous weapons is

critically important to the United

States and our allies. These weapons of

mass destruction could one day be used

again by Saddam Hussein to attack his

neighbors, dominate the region and

threaten vital interests of the United

States. Major Ritter was dedicated to

reducing the threat from such weapons.

He earned a reputation as a tough, demanding

inspector. Saddam Hussein

feared his perseverance and tried to get

him removed from UNSCOM and Iraq. I

regret that he has resigned. I felt better

knowing Major Ritter was on the

job. However, Major Ritter found that

he was repeatedly and systematically

hindered from performing his duties.

The very laws he was asked to enforce

were not now being supported by the

U.N. Security Council nor his own government.

Major Ritter’s resignation from his

position as an UNSCOM inspector was

a selfless and patriotic act. However,

his resignation and the reason for his

resignation deserve our immediate attention

and action. I hope that his personal

sacrifice will spur the Congress

and the Administration to act with the

same courage and urgency as Major

Ritter.

During the hearing, Major Ritter was

asked all the most difficult questions

to challenge his judgment and veracity.

His challengers were unsuccessful.

He simply told the truth, and the truth

is a National embarrassment. Although

Major Ritter had the courtesy not to

say it, his message was clear. ‘‘Congress,

I have done my job. It is now

time to do yours.’’ Our job in Congress

requires the same courage Major Ritter

displayed last week and for the past

nine years as a weapons inspector for

the United Nations. I am deeply disappointed

that such a brave and bright

young American was forced into choosing

to resign from his duties because of

his principles. His actions clearly send

us a message. ‘‘This Nation’s actions

must be consistent with its policies.’’

I believe that our Nation and the

world are far less safe as a result of

Saddam Hussein’s programs of weapons

of mass destruction. We must insist

that UNSCOM be allowed to do its job.

We in government must say what we

mean, and do as we say. We have not

been doing this recently in our foreign

and national defense policies.

Mr. President, it is now Congress’ responsibility

to ensure that this happens.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence

of a quorum.