Mr. President, amidst the

wall-to-wall reporting on Iraq that has

become daily grist for the Nation’s

news media, a headline in this morning’s

USA Today leaped out from the

front page:

The article describes the horrors of

botulinum toxin, a potential weapon in

Iraq’s biological warfare arsenal. According

to the Journal of the American

Medical Association, botulinum toxin

is the most poisonous substance

known. We know that Saddam Hussein

produced thousands of litres of botulinum

toxin in the run up to the Gulf

war. We also know where some of the

toxin came from. Guess. The United

States, which approved shipments of

botulinum toxin from a nonprofit scientific

specimen repository to the government

of Iraq in l986 and l988.

I recently asked Defense Secretary

Donald Rumsfeld about these shipments

during an Armed Services Committee

hearing a week ago. I repeat

today what I said to him then: In the

event of a war with Iraq, might the

United States be facing the possibility

of reaping what it has sown?

The threat of chemical and biological

warfare is one of the most terrifying

prospects of a war with Iraq, and it is

one that should give us serious pause

before we embark on a course of action

that might lead to an all-out, no-holdsbarred

conflict.

Earlier this week, British Prime Minister

Tony Blair released an assessment

of Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction

program which contained the

jolting conclusion that Iraq could

launch chemical or biological warheads

within 45 minutes of getting the green

light from Saddam Hussein.

The British government assessment,

while putting Iraq’s chemical and biological

capabilities in starker terms

than perhaps we have seen before,

closely tracks with what U.S. officials

have been warning for some time:

namely, Saddam Hussein has the

means and the know-how to wage biological

and chemical warfare, and he

has demonstrated his willingness to

use such weapons. By the grace of God,

he apparently has not yet achieved nuclear

capability.

On the matter of biological warfare,

Gen. Richard Myers, Chairman of the

Joint Chiefs of Staff, testified before

the Senate Armed Services Committee

last week that many improvements

have been made to the protective gear

worn by American soldiers and to the

sensors used to detect chemical or biological

agents.

But according to the USA Today article

on botulinum toxin, U.S. troops

would be just as vulnerable to botulinum

toxin today as they were during

the Gulf war.

This is what the article states:

There’s still no government-approved vaccine,

and the only antitoxin is made by extracting

antibodies from the blood of vaccinated

horses using decades-old technology.

Last year’s anthrax attack on the

U.S. Senate gave all of us in this

Chamber firsthand experience with biological

warfare and new insight into

the insidious nature of biological weapons.

And that attack—hear me now—

involved only about a teaspoon or so of

anthrax sealed in an envelope. The potential

consequences of a massive bioweapons

attack against American soldiers

on the battlefield boggle the

imagination.

My concerns over biological warfare

were heightened last week when I came

across a report in Newsweek that the

U.S. Government had cleared numerous

shipments of viruses, bacteria, fungi,

and protozoa to the Government of

Iraq in the mid-1980s, at a time when

the U.S. was cultivating Saddam Hussein

as an ally against Iran. The shipments

included anthrax and botulinum

toxin.

Moreover, during the same time period,

the Centers for Disease Control,

CDC, was also shipping deadly toxins

to Iraq, including vials of West Nile

fever virus and Dengue fever.

This is not mere speculation. I have

the letters from the CDC and the

American Type Culture Collection laying

out the dates of shipments, to

whom they were sent, and what they

included. This list is extensive and

scary anthrax, botulinin toxin, and gas

gangrene to name just a few. There

were dozens and dozens of these pathogens

shipped to various ministries

within the Government of Iraq.

Why does this matter today? Why do

I care about something that happened

nearly 20 years ago when Saddam Hussein

was considered to be a potential

ally and Iran’s Ayatollah Khomeni was

public enemy No. 1 in the United

States? I care because it is relevant to

today’s debate on Iraq. This is not yesterday’s

news. This is tomorrow’s news.

Federal agencies have documents detailing

exactly what biological material

was shipped to Iraq from the

United States. We have a paper trail.

We not only know that Iraq has biological

weapons, we know the type, the

strain, and the batch number of the

germs that may have been used to fashion

those weapons. We know the dates

they were shipped, and the addresses to

which they were shipped.

We have in our hands—now get this—

the equivalent of a Betty Crocker

cookbook of ingredients that the U.S.

allowed Iraq to obtain and that may

well have been used to concoct biological

weapons. At last week’s Armed

Services Committee hearing, Secretary

Rumsfeld said he has no knowledge of

any such shipments, and doubted that

they ever occurred. He seemed to be a

little affronted at the very idea that

the United States would ever countenance

entering into such a deal with

the devil.

Secretary Rumsfeld should not shy

away from this information. On the

contrary, he should seek it out if he

does not know it. Let’s find out. No one

is alleging that the United States deliberately

sneaked biological weapons

to Iraq under the table during the Iran-

Iraq war. I am not suggesting that. I

am confident that our Government is

not that stupid. It was simply a matter

of business as usual, I suppose. We freely

exchange information and technology

including scientific research

with our friends. At the time, I suppose,

Iraq was our friend. If there is

any lesson to be learned from the Iraq

experience, it is that we should choose

our friends more carefully, see further

down the road and exercise tighter controls

on the export of materials that

could be turned against us. Today’s

friend may be tomorrow’s enemy.

This is not the first time I have advocated

stricter controls on exports. In

fact, I added an amendment to the 1996

Defense Authorization Act that was

specifically designed to curb the export

of dual-use technology to potential adversaries

of the United States.

In the case of the biological materials

shipped to Iraq, the Commerce

Department and the CDC have lists of

the shipments. The Defense Department

ought to have the same lists so

that the decisionmakers will know exactly

what types of biological agents

American soldiers may face in the

field. Doesn’t that make sense?

Shouldn’t the Defense Department

know what is out there, so that the

generals can know what counter-measures

they might need to take to protect

their troops?

I believe the answer to those questions

is yes, and so I am sending the information

I have to Secretary Rumsfeld.

He said he did not have any such

information so I am going to send it to

Secretary Rumsfeld. No matter how repugnant

he finds the idea of the U.S.

even inadvertently aiding Saddam Hussein

in his quest to obtain biological

weapons, the Secretary should have

this information at hand, and should

make sure that his field commanders

also have it.

The most deadly of the biological

agents that came from the U.S. were

shipped to the government of Iraq by

the American Type Culture Collection,

ATCC, a non-profit organization that

provides biological materials to industry,

government, and educational institutions

around the world. According to

its own records, the ATCC sent 11 separate

shipments of biological materials

to the government of Iraq between 1985

and 1988. The shipments included a

witches brew of pathogens including

anthrax, botulinum toxin, and gangrene.

Meanwhile, the CDC was shipping

toxic specimens to Iraq—including

West Nile virus and dengue fever—from

January 1980 until October 13, 1993.

The nexus between the U.S.-approved

shipments of pathogens and the development

of Iraq’s biological weapons

program is particularly disturbing.

Consider the following chain of events:

In May of 1986, the ATCC reported the

first shipments of anthrax and botulinum

toxin to Iraq. A second shipment

including anthrax and botulinum toxin

was sent to Iraq in September of 1988.

At approximately the same time that

the first shipment was sent in April of

1986, Iraq turned from studying literature

on biological warfare to experimenting

with actual samples of anthrax

and botulinum toxin. The turning

point, according a report to the

United Nations Security Council from

the U.N. weapons inspection team,

came when ‘‘bacterial strains were received

from overseas’’ and delivered to

an Iraqi biological weapons laboratory.

In April of 1988, the U.N. weapons inspectors

reported that Iraq began research

on the biological agent Clostridium

perfringens, more commonly

known as gas gangrene. Clostridium

perfringens cultures were among the

materials shipped to Iraq by the ATCC

in both 1986 and 1988.

These are only a few examples of the

pathogens that Iraq is known to have

imported from the United States. It is

not known how many of these materials

were destroyed following the Persian

Gulf war, or how many Iraq continues

to possess, whether they are

still viable, or whether in its pursuit of

biological weapons, Iraq has developed

ways to extend the shelf life of toxic biological

agents. There is much that we

do not know about Iraq’s biological

warfare program. But there are two important

facts in which we can have

great confidence: Iraq has biological

weapons, and Iraq obtained biological

materials from the United States in

the 1980s.

I asked Secretary Rumsfeld, at last

week’s Armed Services Committee

hearing, whether we might be reaping

what we have sown in Iraq, in terms of

biological weapons. The question was

rhetorical, but the link between shipments

of biological material from the

United States and the development of

Iraq’s biological weapons program is

more than just an historical footnote.

The role that the U.S. may have

played in helping Iraq to pursue biological

warfare in the 1980s should

serve as a strong warning to the President

that policy decisions regarding

Iraq today could have far reaching

ramifications on the Middle East and

on the United States in the future. In

the 1980s, the Ayatollah Khomeni was

America’s sworn enemy, and the U.S.

Government courted Saddam Hussein

in an effort to undermine the Ayatollah

and Iran. Today, oh, how different.

Saddam Hussein is America’s

biggest enemy, America’s greatest

enemy, America’s most dangerous

enemy, and the U.S. is said to be making

overtures today to Iran.

The Washington Post reported today

that the President is expected to authorize

military training for at least

1,000 members of the Iraqi opposition

to help overthrow Saddam Hussein.

The opposition groups include the

Kurds in the north, and the Shiite Muslims

in the south.

The decision to provide military

training to Iraqi opponents of Saddam

Hussein would mark a major change in

U.S. policy, ending a prohibition on lethal

assistance to the Iraqi opposition.

It is not a decision that should be undertaken

lightly.

Although administration officials

told the Post that initial plans called

for modest steps that would allow

members of the Iraqi opposition to provide

liaison to the local population and

perhaps guard prisoners of war, the officials

did not shut the door on providing

training and equipment for more

lethal activities.

one official was

quoted as saying.

Has the administration adequately

explored the potential ramifications of

creating ethnic armies of dissidents in

Iraq? Could the U.S. be laying the

groundwork for a brutal civil war in

Iraq? Could this proposed policy change

precipitate a deadly border conflict between

the Kurds and Turkey? Could we

perhaps be setting the stage for a Shiite-

ruled Iraq that could align itself

with Iran and result in the domination

of the Middle East by hard-line Shiite

Muslims along the lines of the Ayatollah

Khomeni?

These are legitimate questions. They

are troubling questions. And they

should be carefully thought through

before we unleash an open-ended attack

on Iraq. We had better think

about these questions. We better ask

these questions. The administration

had better listen and so had the American

people.

There are many outstanding questions

that the United States should

consider before marching in lockstep

down the path of committing America’s

military forces to effect the immediate

overthrow of Saddam Hussein.

The peril of biological weapons is only

one of those considerations, but it is an

important one.

Has it been thought out? Has it been

discussed? Has the administration said

anything to Congress about this,

whether or not the administration has

explored these questions? Here are the

questions. Don’t say they were not

asked. The more we know now, the better

off our troops will be in the future.

Decisions involving war and peace—

the most fundamental life and death

decisions—should never be rushed

through this Senate. I say that again.

Decisions involving war and peace—the

most fundamental of life and death decisions—

they affect your sons and

daughters out there, your blood. Such

decisions should never be rushed

through, never be rushed through or

muscled through in haste.

Our Founding Fathers understood

that and they wisely vested in the Congress—

not in the President, not in any

President, Democrat or Republican—

the power to declare war.

We are going to discuss this. There is

going to be a discussion of it. It is not

going to be rammed through all that

fast.

Congress has been presented with a

Presidential request for authorization

to use military force against Iraq. We

now have the responsibility to consider

that request, consider it carefully, consider

it thoroughly, and consider it on

our own timetable. I urge my colleagues

to do just that and avoid the

pressure—avoid the pressure to rush to

judgment on such an important and

vital and far-reaching and momentous

matter.

I yield the floor.