Madam President,

I rise to address our policy in Iraq. The

situation remains fluid. Administration

officials are engaged in negotiations

at the United Nations over what

approach we ought to take with our allies

to disarm the brutal and dictatorial

Iraqi regime.

The debate we will have in the Senate

today and in the days to follow is

critical because the administration

seeks our authorization now for military

action, including possibly unprecedented,

preemptive, go-it-alone military

action in Iraq, even as it seeks to

garner support from our allies on a new

U.N. disarmament resolution.

Let me be clear: Saddam Hussein is a

brutal, ruthless dictator who has repressed

his own people, attacked his

neighbors, and he remains an international

outlaw. The world would be a

much better place if he were gone and

the regime in Iraq were changed. That

is why the United States should unite

the world against Saddam and not

allow him to unite forces against us.

A go-it-alone approach, allowing a

ground invasion of Iraq without the

support of other countries, could give

Saddam exactly that chance. A preemptive,

go-it-alone strategy toward

Iraq is wrong. I oppose it. I support ridding

Iraq of weapons of mass destruction

through unfettered U.N. inspections

which would begin as soon as possible.

Only a broad coalition of nations,

united to disarm Saddam, while preserving

our war on terror, is likely to

succeed.

Our primary focus now must be on

Iraq’s verifiable disarmament of weapons

of mass destruction. This will help

maintain international support and

could even eventually result in

Saddam’s loss of power. Of course, I

would welcome this, along with most of

our allies.

The President has helped to direct intense

new multilateral pressure on

Saddam Hussein to allow U.N. and

International Atomic Energy Agency

weapons inspectors back in Iraq to conduct

their assessment of Iraq’s chemical,

biological, and nuclear programs.

He clearly has felt that heat. It suggests

what can be accomplished

through collective action.

I am not naive about this process.

Much work lies ahead. But we cannot

dismiss out of hand Saddam’s late and

reluctant commitment to comply with

U.N. disarmament arrangements or the

agreement struck Tuesday to begin to

implement them. We should use the

gathering international resolve to collectively

confront this regime by building

on these efforts.

This debate must include all Americans

because our decisions finally must

have the informed consent of the

American people who will be asked to

bear the cost, in blood and treasure, of

our decisions.

When the lives of sons and daughters

of average Americans could be risked

and lost, their voices must be heard in

the Congress before we make decisions

about military action. Right now, despite

a desire to support our President,

I believe many Americans still have

profound questions about the wisdom

of relying too heavily on a preemptive

go-it-alone military approach. Acting

now on our own might be a sign of our

power. Acting sensibly and in a measured

way, in concert with our allies,

with bipartisan congressional support,

would be a sign of our strength.

It would also be a sign of the wisdom

of our Founders who lodged in the

President the power to command U.S.

Armed Forces, and in Congress the

power to make war, ensuring a balance

of powers between coequal branches of

Government. Our Constitution lodges

the power to weigh the causes of war

and the ability to declare war in Congress

precisely to ensure that the

American people and those who represent

them will be consulted before

military action is taken.

The Senate has a grave duty to insist

on a full debate that examines for all

Americans the full range of options before

us and weighs those options, together

with their risks and costs. Such

a debate should be energized by the

real spirit of September 11, a debate

which places a priority not on unanimity

but on the unity of a people determined

to forcefully confront and defeat

terrorism and to defend our values.

I have supported internationally

sanctioned coalition military action in

Bosnia, in Kosovo, in Serbia, and in Afghanistan.

Even so, in recent weeks, I

and others—including major Republican

policymakers, such as former

Bush National Security Adviser Brent

Scowcroft; former Bush Secretary of

State James Baker; my colleague on

the Senate Foreign Relations Committee,

Senator CHUCK HAGEL; Bush

Mid-East envoy General Anthony

Zinni; and other leading U.S. military

leaders—have raised serious questions

about the approach the administration

is taking on Iraq.

There have been questions raised

about the nature and urgency of Iraq’s

threat and our response to that threat:

What is the best course of action that

the United States could take to address

this threat? What are the economic,

political, and national security consequences

of a possible U.S. or allied

invasion of Iraq? There have been questions

raised about the consequences of

our actions abroad, including its effect

on the continuing war on terrorism,

our ongoing efforts to stabilize and rebuild

Afghanistan, and efforts to calm

the intensifying Middle East crisis, especially

the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

There have been questions raised

about the consequences of our actions

here at home. Of gravest concern, obviously,

are the questions raised about

the possible loss of life that could result

from our actions. The United

States could post tens of thousands of

troops in Iraq and, in so doing, risk

countless lives of soldiers and innocent

Iraqis.

There are other questions about the

impact of an attack in relation to our

economy. The United States could face

soaring oil prices and could spend billions

both on a war and a years-long effort

to stabilize Iraq after an invasion.

The resolution that will be before the

Senate explicitly authorizes a go-italone

approach. I believe an international

approach is essential. In my

view, our policy should have four key

elements.

First and foremost, the United States

must work with our allies to deal with

Iraq. We should not go it alone, or virtually

alone, with a preemptive ground

invasion. Most critically, acting alone

could jeopardize our top national priority,

the continuing war on terror. I

believe it would be a mistake to vote

for a resolution that authorizes a preemptive

ground invasion. The intense

cooperation of other nations in relation

to matters that deal with intelligence

sharing, security, political and

economic cooperation, law enforcement,

and financial surveillance, and

other areas is crucial to this fight, and

this is what is critical for our country

to be able to wage its war effectively

with our allies. Over the past year, this

cooperation has been the most successful

weapon against terrorist networks.

That—not attacking Iraq—should be

the main focus of our efforts in the war

on terror.

As I think about what a go-it-alone

strategy would mean in terms of the

consequences in South Asia and the

Near East and the need for our country

to have access on the ground, and cooperation

of the community, and get

intelligence in the war against al-

Qaida and in this war against terrorism,

I believe a go-it-alone approach

could undercut that effort. That is why

I believe our effort should be international.

We have succeeded in destroying

some al-Qaida forces, but many

operatives have scattered. Their will to

kill Americans is still strong. The

United States has relied heavily on alliances

with nearly 100 countries in a

coalition against terror for critical intelligence

to protect Americans from

possible future attacks. Acting with

the support of allies, including, hopefully,

Arab and Muslim allies, would

limit possible damage to that coalition

and our antiterrorism effort. But as

General Wes Clark, former Supreme

Commander of Allied Forces in Europe,

has recently noted, a premature, go-italone

invasion of Iraq ‘‘would supercharge

recruiting for al-Qaida.’’

Second, our efforts should have a

goal of disarming Saddam Hussein of

all his weapons of mass destruction.

Iraq agreed to destroy its weapons of

mass destruction at the end of the Persian

Gulf War and to verification by

the U.N. and the International Atomic

Energy Agency that this had been

done. According to the U.N. and the

IAEA, and undisputed by the administration,

inspections during the 1990s

neutralized a substantial portion of

Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction,

and getting inspectors back to finish

the job is critical. We know he did not

cooperate with all of the inspection regime.

We know what needs to be done. But

the fact is we had that regime, and it is

important now to call on the Security

Council of the U.N. to insist that those

inspectors be on the ground. The goal

is disarmament, unfettered access. It is

an international effort, and with that

Saddam Hussein must comply. Otherwise,

there will be consequences, including

appropriate use of force. The

prompt resumption of inspections and

disarmament, under an expedited timetable

and with unfettered access in

Iraq, is imperative.

Third, weapons inspections should be

enforceable. If efforts by the U.N.

weapons inspectors are tried and fail, a

range of potential U.N. sanctions

means, including proportionate military

force, should be considered. I have

no doubt that this Congress would act

swiftly to authorize force in such circumstances.

This does not mean giving

the United Nations a veto over U.S. actions.

Nobody wants to do that. It simply

means, as Chairman LEVIN has observed,

that Saddam Hussein is a world

problem and should be addressed in the

world arena.

Finally, our approach toward Iraq

must be consistent with international

law and the framework of collective security

developed over the last 50 years

or more. It should be sanctioned by the

Security Council under the U.N. charter,

to which we are a party and by

which we are legally bound. Only a

broad coalition of nations, united to

disarm Saddam Hussein, while preserving

our war on terror, can succeed.

Our response will be far more effective

if Saddam Hussein sees the whole

world arrayed against him. We should

act forcefully, resolutely, sensibly,

with our allies—and not alone—to disarm

Saddam Hussein. Authorizing the

preemptive go-alone use of force right

now, which is what the resolution before

us calls for, in the midst of continuing

efforts to enlist the world community

to back a tough, new disarmament

resolution on Iraq, could be a

very costly mistake for our country.

Madam President, quite often at the

end of debates on amendments, we

thank our staffs for the work they have

done and appreciate their hard work.

At the end of my statement today on

the floor of the Senate as to why I am

opposed to the resolution before us

that we will be debating today and in

the days to come, which is too openended

and would provide the President

with authority for preemptive military

action, including a ground invasion in

Iraq, I would like to thank my staff. I

would like to thank my staff for never

trying one time to influence me to

make any other decision than what I

honestly and truthfully believe is right

for the State I represent, Minnesota,

for my country, and for the world in

which my children and my grandchildren

live. To all of my staff, I

thank you for believing in me.

I yield the floor.