Mr. President, I

thank the Senator from West Virginia

for his courtesy. By far beyond that, I

thank him for his leadership and his

eloquence and his passion and commitment

to this body and to our Constitution.

I join with the remarks by both

the Senators from Michigan and Maryland,

expressing our appreciation for

the way in which he has waged this

battle on behalf of his convictions. It is

a lesson to us all.

Today, Mr. President, we are asked

whether to give the President of the

United States authority to use force in

Iraq should diplomatic efforts fail to

dismantle Saddam Hussein’s chemical

and biological weapons and his nuclear

program.

I am honored to represent nearly 19

million New Yorkers, a thoughtful democracy

of voices and opinions who

make themselves heard on the great

issues of our day, especially this one.

Many have contacted my office about

this resolution, both in support of and

in opposition to it. I am grateful to all

who have expressed an opinion.

I also greatly respect the differing

opinions within this body. The debate

they engender will aid our search for a

wise, effective policy. Therefore, on no

account should dissent be discouraged

or disparaged. It is central to our freedom

and to our progress, for on more

than one occasion history has proven

our great dissenters to be right.

I believe the facts that have brought

us to this fateful vote are not in doubt.

Saddam Hussein is a tyrant who has

tortured and killed his own people,

even his own family members, to maintain

his iron grip on power. He used

chemical weapons on Iraqi Kurds and

on Iranians, killing over 20,000 people.

Unfortunately, during the 1980s,

while he engaged in such horrific activity,

he enjoyed the support of the

American Government because he had

oil and was seen as a counterweight to

the Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran.

In 1991, Saddam Hussein invaded and

occupied Kuwait, losing the support of

the United States. The first President

Bush assembled a global coalition, including

many Arab States, and threw

Saddam out after 43 days of bombing

and hundreds of hours of ground operations.

The United States led the coalition,

then withdrew, leaving the Kurds

and the Shiites, who had risen against

Saddam Hussein at our urging, to

Saddam’s revenge.

As a condition for ending the conflict,

the United Nations imposed a

number of requirements on Iraq,

among them disarmament of all weapons

of mass destruction, stocks used to

make such weapons, and laboratories

necessary to do the work. Saddam Hussein

agreed and an inspection system

was set up to ensure compliance.

Though he repeatedly lied, delayed,

and obstructed the inspectors’ work,

the inspectors found and destroyed far

more weapons of mass destruction capability

than were destroyed in the

gulf war, including thousands of chemical

weapons, large volumes of chemical

and biological stocks, a number of

missiles and warheads, a major lab

equipped to produce anthrax and other

bioweapons, as well as substantial nuclear

facilities.

In 1998, Saddam Hussein pressured

the United Nations to lift the sanctions

by threatening to stop all cooperation

with the inspectors. In an attempt to

resolve the situation, the U.N., unwisely

in my view, agreed to put limits

on inspections of designated sovereign

sites, including the so-called Presidential

palaces—which in reality were

huge compounds, well suited to hold

weapons labs, stocks, and records

which Saddam Hussein was required by

U.N. resolution to turn over.

When Saddam blocked the inspection

process, the inspectors left. As a result,

President Clinton, with the British and

others, ordered an intensive 4-day air

assault, Operation Desert Fox, on

known and suspected weapons of mass

destruction sites and other military

targets.

In 1998, the United States also

changed its underlying policy toward

Iraq from containment to regime

change and began to examine options

to effect such a change, including support

for Iraqi opposition leaders within

the country and abroad. In the 4 years

since the inspectors, intelligence reports

show that Saddam Hussein has

worked to rebuild his chemical and biological

weapons stock, his missile delivery

capability, and his nuclear program.

He has also given aid, comfort,

and sanctuary to terrorists, including

al-Qaida members, though there is apparently

no evidence of his involvement

in the terrible events of September

11, 2001.

It is clear, however, that if left unchecked,

Saddam Hussein will continue

to increase his capability to wage biological

and chemical warfare and will

keep trying to develop nuclear weapons.

Should he succeed in that endeavor,

he could alter the political and security

landscape of the Middle East

which, as we know all too well, affects

American security.

This much is undisputed. The open

questions are: What should we do about

it? How, when, and with whom?

Some people favor attacking Saddam

Hussein now, with any allies we can

muster, in the belief that one more

round of weapons inspections would

not produce the required disarmament

and that deposing Saddam would be a

positive good for the Iraqi people and

would create the possibility of a secular,

democratic state in the Middle

East, one which could, perhaps, move

the entire region toward democratic reform.

This view has appeal to some because

it would assure disarmament; because

it would right old wrongs after our

abandonment of the Shiites and Kurds

in 1991 and our support for Saddam

Hussein in the 1980s when he was using

chemical weapons and terrorizing his

people; and because it could give the

Iraqi people a chance to build a future

in freedom.

However, this course is fraught with

danger. We and our NATO allies did not

depose Mr. Milosevic, who was responsible

for more than a quarter of million

people being killed in the 1990s. Instead,

by stopping his aggression in

Bosnia and Kosovo, and keeping the

tough sanctions, we created the conditions

in which his own people threw

him out and led to his being in the

dock and being tried for war crimes as

we speak.

If we were to attack Iraq now, alone

or with few allies, it would set a precedent

that could come back to haunt us.

In recent days, Russia has talked of an

invasion of Georgia to attack Chechen

rebels. India has mentioned the possibility

of a preemptive strike on Pakistan.

What if China should perceive a

threat from Taiwan?

So, for all its appeal, a unilateral attack,

while it cannot be ruled out, is

not a good option.

Others argue that we should work

through the United Nations and should

only resort to force if and when the

United Nations Security Council approves

it. This too has great appeal for

different reasons. The United Nations

deserves our support. Whenever possible

we should work through it and

strengthen it, for it enables the world

to share the risks and burdens of global

security and when it acts, it confers a

legitimacy that increases the likelihood

of long-term success. The United

Nations can lead the world into a new

era of global cooperation. And the

United States should support that goal.

But there are problems with this approach

as well. The United Nations is

an organization that is still growing

and maturing. It often lacks the cohesion

to enforce its own mandates. And

when Security Council members use

the veto on occasion for reasons of narrow

national interest, it cannot act. In

Kosovo, the Russians did not approve

the NATO military action because of

political, ethnic, and religious ties to

the Serbs.

The United States, therefore, could

not obtain a Security Council resolution

in favor of the action necessary to

stop the dislocation and ethnic cleansing

of more than a million Kosovar Albanians.

However, most of the world

was with us because there was a genuine

emergency with thousands dead

and a million more driven from their

homes. As soon as the American-led

conflict was over, Russia joined the

peacekeeping effort that is still underway.

In the case of Iraq, recent comments

indicate that one or two Security

Council members might never approve

forces against Saddam Hussein until he

has actually used chemical, biological,

or God forbid, nuclear weapons.

So, the question is how do we do our

best to both diffuse the threat Saddam

Hussein poses to his people, the region,

including Israel, and the United States,

and at the same time, work to maximize

our international support and

strengthen the United Nations.

While there is no perfect approach to

this thorny dilemma, and while people

of good faith and high intelligence can

reach diametrically opposing conclusions,

I believe the best course is to go

to the United Nations for a strong resolution

that scraps the 1998 restrictions

on inspections and calls for complete,

unlimited inspections, with cooperation

expected and demanded from Iraq.

I know the administration wants

more, including an explicit authorization

to use force, but we may not be

able to secure that now, perhaps even

later. If we get a clear requirement for

unfettered inspections, I believe the

authority to use force to enforce that

mandate is inherent in the original 1991

United Nations resolutions, as President

Clinton recognized when he

launched Operation Desert Fox in 1998.

If we get the resolution the President

seeks, and Saddam complies, disarmament

can proceed and the threat

can be eliminated. Regime change will,

of course, take longer but we must still

work for it, nurturing all reasonable

forces of opposition.

If we get the resolution and Saddam

does not comply, we can attack him

with far more support and legitimacy

than we would have otherwise.

If we try and fail to get a resolution

that simply calls for Saddam’s compliance

with unlimited inspections, those

who oppose even that will be in an indefensible

position. And, we will still

have more support and legitimacy than

if we insist now on a resolution that includes

authorizing military action and

other requirements giving other nations

superficially legitimate reasons

to oppose Security Council action.

They will say, we never wanted a resolution

at all and that we only support

the U.N. when it does exactly want we

want.

I believe international support and

legitimacy are crucial. After shots are

fired and bombs are dropped, not all

consequences are predictable. While

the military outcome is not in doubt,

should we put troops on the ground,

there is still the matter of Saddam

Hussein’s biological and chemical

weapons. Today he has maximum incentive

not to use them or give them

away. If he did either, the world would

demand his immediate removal. Once

the battle is joined, with the outcome

certain, he will have maximum incentive

to use weapons of mass destruction

and give what he can’t use to terrorists

who can torment us with them

long after he is gone. We cannot be paralyzed

by this possibility, but we would

be foolish to ignore it. According to recent

reports, the CIA agrees with this

analysis. A world united in sharing the

risk at least would make this occurrence

less likely and more bearable and

would be far more likely to share the

considerable burden of rebuilding a secure

and peaceful post-Saddam Iraq.

President Bush’s speech in Cincinnati

and the changes in policy that have

come forth from the administration

since they first began broaching this

issue some weeks ago have made my

vote easier.

Even though the resolution before

the Senate is not as strong as I would

like in requiring the diplomatic route

first and placing highest priority on a

simple, clear requirement for unlimited

inspections, I take the President

at his word that he will try hard to

pass a United Nations resolution and

seek to avoid war, if possible.

Because bipartisan support for this

resolution makes success in the United

Nations more likely and war less likely,

and because a good faith effort by

the United States, even if it fails, will

bring more allies and legitimacy to our

cause, I have concluded, after careful

and serious consideration, that a vote

for the resolution best serves the security

of our Nation. If we were to defeat

this resolution or pass it with only a

few Democrats, I am concerned that

those who want to pretend this problem

will go way with delay will oppose

any United Nations resolution calling

for unrestricted inspections.

This is a difficult vote. This is probably

the hardest decision I have ever

had to make. Any vote that may lead

to war should be hard, but I cast it

with conviction. Perhaps my decision

is influenced by my 8 years of experience

on the other end of Pennsylvania

Avenue in the White House watching

my husband deal with serious challenges

to our Nation. I want this President,

or any future President, to be in

the strongest possible position to lead

our country in the United Nations or in

war. Secondly, I want to ensure that

Saddam Hussein makes no mistake

about our national unity and support

for the President’s efforts to wage

America’s war against terrorists and

weapons of mass destruction. Thirdly, I

want the men and women in our Armed

Forces to know that if they should be

called upon to act against Iraq our

country will stand resolutely behind

them.

My vote is not, however, a vote for

any new doctrine of preemption or for

unilateralism or for the arrogance of

American power or purpose, all of

which carry grave dangers for our Nation,

the rule of international law, and

the peace and security of people

throughout the world.

Over 11 years have passed since the

UN called on Saddam Hussein to rid

himself of weapons of mass destruction

as a condition of returning to the world

community.

Time and time again, he has frustrated

and denied these conditions.

This matter cannot be left hanging forever

with consequences we would all

live to regret. War can yet be avoided,

but our responsibility to global security

and the integrity of United Nations

resolutions protecting it cannot.

I urge the President to spare no effort

to secure a clear, unambiguous demand

by the United Nations for unlimited

inspections.

Finally, on another personal note, I

come to this decision from the perspective

of a Senator from New York who

has seen all too closely the consequences

of last year’s terrible attacks

on our Nation. In balancing the

risks of action versus inaction, I think

New Yorkers, who have gone through

the fires of hell, may be more attuned

to the risk of not acting. I know I am.

So it is with conviction that I support

this resolution as being in the best

interests of our Nation. A vote for it is

not a vote to rush to war; it is a vote

that puts awesome responsibility in

the hands of our President. And we say

to him: Use these powers wisely and as

a last resort. And it is a vote that says

clearly to Saddam Hussein: This is

your last chance; disarm or be disarmed.