Mr. President, I rise in

support of the resolution before the

Senate. There is no more serious vote

we as Senators take than to authorize

war. To do so, we must believe that

there is great cause—a great threat to

America. I cast my vote today with the

great hope that this show of unity from

the American Government and from

the American people, along with the

actions of the international community,

will achieve our stated goal of

disarming Iraq without war.

I will vote for this authorization because,

after great consideration, I believe

Saddam Hussein’s acquisition of

weapons of mass destruction is a great

threat. I believe disarming Saddam is a

great cause. And I believe that moving

to disarm Saddam—in concert with the

international community—is the President’s

great goal.

There is no doubt that the threat

Saddam Hussein and his weapons pose

to this country and to world peace is

real. More than a decade has passed

since we defeated Saddam, but he has

not changed. He is the same repressive

dictator, willing to overrun his neighbors,

and to use weapons of mass destruction

against his own people.

We know that Saddam’s regime has

produced and is continuing to produce

massive quantities of biological and

chemical agents. We know much less

about his current nuclear capabilities.

But there can be no doubt that he is

doing everything in his power to acquire

nuclear weapons.

While there is good reason to believe

that Saddam Hussein is not interested

in jeopardizing his hold on power, we

cannot predict what Saddam will do

with these capabilities should he have

them. The best we can do is to rely on

the past as a guide to what the future

may hold. And, the future is now colored

by the events of September 11 and

the subsequent anthrax attacks of last

year. These have given us a disturbing

glimpse at a possible worst case scenario.

Given Saddam Hussein’s track

record—his ejection of weapons inspectors

and his murderous ways—I believe

the security of our nation depends on

disarming Iraq and containing this regime

notorious for its deceptions and

ruthlessness.

Let me be clear on that point. My

vote today is a vote for disarmament,

not a vote for regime change. While it

is clear that Iraq is a rogue regime of

the worst kind, going into overthrow it

would be enormously destabilizing.

There are many repressive governments

around the world, some of which

have access to weapons of mass destruction.

There are many ruthless and

aggressive nations around the world

that have threatened their neighbors.

Yet, we cannot be the world’s policeman,

offering to make the world safe

by eliminating each and every tyrant.

Should the President choose to use

force against Iraq, it should be for the

purpose of ensuring unfettered weapons

inspections and full disarmament. If

Saddam Hussein no longer rules as a

result of our actions, then I say—find—

but for us to take action with the primary

purpose of overthrowing the Iraqi

government would be wrong.

The President has vowed to seek the

support of the international community

against Iraq, and my vote today is

cast accepting and supporting that position

fully. I Believe we should not

commit U.S. troops abroad without the

support of the international community.

The costs are too great for us to

take unilateral action unless we have

no other choice. International involvement

will strengthen our hand against

Saddam Hussein, increasing the likelihood

that we will be able to resume inspections

and disarm Iraq.

In order for the President to use

force, the resolution requires the President

to make a formal determination

that relying on diplomatic and peaceful

means will not adequately protect

our national security, or lead to the

enforcement of U.N. Security Council

resolutions. I am confident that this

administration is doing everything in

its power to engage the international

community, and to work with our allies

to contain Iraq. I am comforted to

see the Administration working with

the United Nations on a stronger resolution.

The President has rightly challenged

the U.N. to put some teeth in

the Security Council resolutions which

have been flouted by Iraq, and he has

given the international community notice

that there must be accountability

for the U.N. resolutions to have any

meaning.

Mr. President, my vote today is a

vote to support the President in his efforts

to disarm Saddam Hussein. My

vote is not an endorsement of a policy

of preemptive war, whether it is initiated

by the United States or any other

country. My vote today is to authorize

the President to gather a world force

against the threat of a dangerous regime

armed with chemical, biological,

and possibly nuclear weapons, and to

disarm that regime. And finally, my

vote today is to authorize the President

to go to war, in the hope that this

strong statement of our commitment

to disarming Iraq will enable us to do

so without war.