Madam President, I

come before the Senate this evening to

join in this debate, to express my support

for our Nation’s effort to address

the threat Saddam Hussein poses, and

to lay out the concerns that I believe

must be addressed if we are to succeed

in disarming Iraq. The President has

called upon Congress and the American

people to support his administration in

its effort to eliminate Saddam Hussein’s

hold on weapons of mass destruction.

The Congress has responded by

taking up this resolution authorizing

the use of force, if needed, to strip Iraq

of those weapons and the ability to deliver

them. A number of serious questions

have been raised in this historic

debate. It is critical that President

Bush and the Congress fulfill our obligation

to all Americans, and to the

international community, by ensuring

that those questions are faithfully addressed.

Saddam Hussein has shown himself

to be an implacable foe of the United

States. It is essential that we confront

the threat that he represents. The

question is not whether we confront it,

but how we confront it. We must make

every effort to build a multilateral coalition.

If we do so, we raise the likelihood

of bringing a measure of stability

to a turbulent part of the world. If we

do so, we can minimize the impact of

any conflict on the Iraqi people, on

Iraq’s neighbors and on American and

allied forces. And if we do so, we will

serve to strengthen, not undermine,

the international laws and institutions

that have served us well in the years

since World War II.

Leadership is a responsibility that

cannot be taken lightly. Leadership in

deciding whether to resort to military

force requires the greatest deliberation

and consideration. Secretary of Defense

Donald Rumsfeld, in recent testimony

before the House Armed Services

Committee, said that ‘‘no one with any

sense considers war a first choice—it is

the last thing that any rational person

wants to do. And it is important that

the issues surrounding this decision be

discussed and debated.’’

It is clear to me that millions of

Americans are discussing and debating

the issues (that are before us this

evening. I have heard from Delawareans

throughout my state. I have

heard from veterans who know the

harsh realities of war. I have heard

children who can scarcely imagine it. I

am comforted by the fact that the

American people, and their representative

in Congress, have been thoughtful

and deliberate in discussing the challenges

that we face and how we might

confront those challenges.

This is not the first time that I have

faced the question of how we ought to

deal with Saddam Hussein’s intransigence

in the facet of international

law. As a Member of the House of Representatives,

I voted in 1991, along with

many members of this body, to authorize

President George Herbert Walker

Bush to use military force to expel the

armed forces of Iraq from Kuwait. I am

proud of that vote, and I am prouder

still of the American and allied forces

that went on to liberate Kuwait.

Having engaged in that debate, and

witnessed Saddam Hussein’s refusal to

yield except when confronted with the

threat of force, I have no illusions

about the danger he poses to regional

stability and international security

today. I am concerned that Iraq remains

in violation of more than a

dozen Security Council resolutions. I

am alarmed that the regime of Saddam

Hussein continues to develop weapons

of mass destruction in violation of the

international agreements it promised

to comply with at the end of the gulf

war. Above all, I feel strongly that we

must not allow Saddam Hussein to develop

the capacity to acquire or deploy

nuclear weapons.

This past Monday night, President

Bush addressed our Nation. He reminded

us that there are significant

risks to the United States both in acting

and in not acting. If we choose not

to act, we must remember that, in Saddam

Hussein, we are talking about a

man who has invaded his neighbors,

showing a reckless disregard for the

stability of a volatile region. We are

talking about a man who has risked his

own survival, and that of his regime, to

indulge his own vengeance. Finally, we

are talking about a man who has used

weapons of mass destruction before,

even against his own people.

The need for action, however, does

not preempt the need for an objective

and open debate on the course of action

we choose and the consequences of our

subsequent actions. Bringing the

weight of the world’s disapproval to

bear on Iraq; demanding unfettered inspections

of every potential weapons

site; and preparing for any military or

diplomatic contingency offers us the

best chance to face down our foe now

and to ensure his permanent disarmament.

Like many in this chamber, I believe

that it is essential for us to work closely

with the international community

to reinstate inspections that will lead

to Iraq’s disarmament. But it’s imperative

that such inspections be

unhindered. Inspectors must have the

freedom to go where they want, when

they want. They must have the right to

talk to whomever they wish and to provide

immediate amnesty to any Iraqis

who provide information that might

place them at risk of reprisal from the

regime. Inspections are only valuable if

they are truly a means of stripping

Saddam Hussein of his weapons of mass

destruction and his ability to deliver

them. If Saddam Hussein’s regime is

unwilling to accept this level of intrusion,

both he and Iraq must be prepared

to accept the consequences, including

the likelihood of a war they will lose.

Looking back, one of the principal

reasons we were so successful in the

gulf war was because former President

Bush and his administration did the

hard work necessary to build a broad,

strong international coalition before

unleashing our military might. Our

current President and his aides similarly

did the hard work necessary to

build such a coalition after the attacks

on our country last fall. This up-front

investment has paid off in the arrests

of Al Qaeda operatives throughout the

globe, as well as in the elimination of

the regime that was harboring them in

Afghanstan—though the war on terror

is far from over. These are prime examples

of America’s global leadership in

action at its very best. They are examples

that we should emulate now.

If we fail to uphold our international

leadership responsibilities, and act

without regard to the views and interests

of our allies, we invite our isolation

in the world. We undermine our

position as a preeminent force in global

policy and order. We make more difficult

the task of securing the assistance

of the international community

in helping Iraq to return as a responsible

member of the community of nations.

We invite additional terrorist attacks

on Americans at home and

abroad, as well as put the fragile governments

of many Muslim nations further

at risk. Moreover, if we are perceived

to act without the sanction of

international law or authorization of

the United Nations, we further fuel

anti-American resentment in the Arab

world, thereby increasing the threat to

Israel. On the other hand, if we make

an effort to work in concert with our

allies, we have the opportunity to

strengthen the international institutions

that will be critical in addressing

future threats.

At a time when 24-hour news networks

have made the images of war instantly

accessible, our nation’s recent

military successes have made the awful

realities of war appear ever more remote:

images of laser-guided bombs

falling on indistinguishable targets;

missiles lighting up the night sky. For

an entire generation of Americans, our

military efforts have come to be seen

almost as a casualty-free video game,

where no one gets hurt and few families

face the knowledge that their son

or daughter will not be coming home.

But like a handful of my colleagues

here in the Senate, I have known a different

side to war, having seen if firsthand.

During my 23 years in the Navy,

including service in Southeast Asia, we

witnessed soldiers, sailors, and airmen

leaving for missions from which they

would never return. I’ve met countless

veterans who left part of themselves on

the battlefield. Some of those heroes

serve in this very body today.

War can—and often does—enact a

terrible price. It should be entered into

as a last resort. So, the decision we

face this week, which may lead to war,

is not one that I take lightly. Nor do

any of us.

For the past 11 years, people in this

country and elsewhere have second guessed

the decision of former President

Bush to stop short of entering

Baghdad in 1991. I have never criticized

that decision. That flat, open sands on

which our soldiers fought and won is a

far different—and less dangerous—terrain

than the streets of major Iraqi cities.

There, our enemy’s tactical advantage

likely would have enacted a far

heavier toll on American lives.

If the course of events in this decade

ultimately leads to another conflict

with Iraq, and I hope it does not, the

risks associated with urban warfare

may well become a reality this time.

Before they do, it is critical that we

prepare ourselves, and the American

people, for the losses we may endure in

a military campaign of that nature.

We must also face head-on the fact

that, if war should occur, liberating

Baghdad from Hussein’s power will not

solve every problem in the region. It

will, however, force us to find answers

to a difficult set of new questions.

Among them, how will we operate in

Iraq after a military victory? A number

of competing factions will vie for

control if Saddam Hussein is removed

from power. Who will we support? How

will we convince them to work together?

We will need a coherent policy

to help Iraq make the transition to political

and economic stability. We will

also need a great deal of patience and

fortitude. Otherwise, we risk creating a

less stable and more explosive Iraq

than we face today and, worse yet, an

even more volatile region.

We have learned from our missions in

Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan that

bringing meaningful change to unstable

nations requires enormous time, resources,

and effort. We have been relatively

successful in restoring stability

in Bosnia and Kosovo, but it has not

been without a painstaking commitment

over many years. Indeed, the U.S.

and our NATO allies continue to maintain

a significant troop presence in

both of those nations.

Afghanistan, on the other hand, has

demonstrated how minimal troop commitments

can impair efforts to restore

peace in a war-ravaged nation. Hamid

Karzai and his coalition government

continue to express Afghanistan’s ongoing

need for adequate support and resources

from the U.S. and other nations

if the Afghan people are to realize

the peace and democracy of which they

dream.

In a post-war Iraq, the need for ongoing

U.S. and allied intervention is likely

to be far greater and far more costly.

Experts in military operations

maintain that creating a more stable

Iraq will require the continued presence

of between 50,000 to 100,000 troops.

Not for a few weeks or months, but for

several years.

There is another question that I believe

must be addressed as we move forward:

How will we bear the financial

burdens of such a mission? It is impossible

to place a price tag on the lives

that might be saved by disarming Saddam

Hussein. At the same time, it

would be fiscally irresponsible to take

on such an operation without at least

considering the impact of a potential

war on our already fragile economy.

Over the past 2 years, we have watched

the stock market plummet, making its

sharpest decline in 70 years. The budget

surplus that we worked so hard to

achieve in the 1990’s is gone. All the

while, current estimates project the

likely cost of U.S. military action in

Iraq to be in the range of $100 billion.

These estimates do not include the

prospect of long-term peacekeeping operations

in the event of a regime

change. The presence of tens of thousands

of U.S. troops for months—

maybe years—once the fighting has

ended will cost billions more. This is a

cost we should not bear alone.

I believe the principles and questions

I have laid out today were best embodied

in, and addressed by, the bipartisan

resolution drafted earlier this

month by Senate RICHARD LUGAR and

my fellow Senator from Delaware, JOE

BIDEN—two Senators of intellect and

skill in the area of international diplomacy.

The Biden-Lugar draft resolution

focused on the most critical task

at hand—disarming Saddam Hussein.

Senators BIDEN and LUGAR carefully

crafted this resolution to give President

Bush the flexibility he needs to

garner international support now for a

tough, new U.N. Security Council resolution.

Their draft resolution also provided

the President with the authority

to unleash U.S. military force against

Iraq should he determine that Iraq’s

continued intransigence makes such

action necessary. I’m disappointed that

we will not have the opportunity to

vote on that alternative this week.

Having said that though, I do believe

that the Biden-Lugar proposal contributed

appreciatively to the change in direction

that this debate has taken in

recent weeks, particularly in its emphasis

on acting together with our allies.

That change in tone was clearly

evident in the address of President

Bush to the American people this past

Monday night. What he said encouraged

me and served to reassure much of

our nation.

The President spoke of the importance

of working with the United Nations

to craft a tough inspection regimen

in Iraq. I agree with him. The

President said that the U.N. must be

‘‘an effective organization that helps

keep the peace.’’ I agree with him. The

President told the American people

that our primary goal in this endeavor

is to strip Saddam Hussein of his ability

to manufacture and deploy weapons

of mass destruction. Again, I agree

with him. We also heard the President

state that he hopes the policy he has

laid out will not require military action,

although he acknowledged that it

might. I hope it will not. We all share

that hope in the Senate as members of

this body prepare to cast our votes and

to authorize the use of force if certain

conditions are met.

In closing, let me say for much of our

Nation’s history, the United States has

been an instrument for peace and justice

and a better life for the people of

many nations throughout the world.

That is our heritage. It is one of which

we can be proud.

There have been times in our history

when we have had to go it alone. But

history has shown that we have been

most successful when we provided the

leadership that compelled other nations

to join us in a just cause—two

World Wars, the Cold War, the Persian

Gulf War, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan,

and the war on terrorism. Stripping

Saddam Hussein, once and for all, of

the weapons that would enable him to

create havoc and great loss of life is a

just cause. Other nations know that,

too.

If we make the case to them forcefully,

skillfully, and persistently in the

weeks ahead, they will join us. I am

certain of it. The burden before us—disarming

Iraq—is one we should not bear

alone. If the President uses the powers

inherent in this resolution authorizing

the use of force with great skill and diplomacy,

we will not have to bear this

burden, and face this challenge, alone.

An armada of nations, again, will join

us, and together we will make this

world, at least for a little while, a safer

and saner place in which to live.

I yield back my time.