Madam President, as

our nation appears to draw closer to

war, I rise with full consciousness of

the burden that each of us has to help

guide our nation during this time of

peril. It is indeed a heavy burden to

bear, but nothing compared to the burden

of those who serve in our military.

The vote to authorize the use of force

in Iraq is one of the most difficult and

important votes any of us will ever

cast. We need to approach this issue as

if we are sending our very own children

to war because, in effect, we are voting

to send our nation’s children to war.

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld

recently told Congress that ‘‘a decision

to use military force is never

easy. No one with any sense considers

war a first choice.’’ The risks of war

are real but the risks of inaction may

be even greater. As Ronald Reagan put

it in his first inaugural address, ‘‘I do

not believe in a fate that will fall on us

no matter what we do. I do believe in a

fate that will fall on us if we do nothing.’’

The threat posed by Saddam Hussein’s

regime is growing with each

passing day. He has, at this moment,

chemical and biological weapons he

could use against us or share with terrorist

networks that threaten us. He is

pursuing nuclear weapons. He has used

chemical weapons against his own people,

and against foreign forces. He has

invaded two of his neighbors and fired

ballistic missiles at four of his neighbors.

He supports terrorist networks,

and has harbored senior al-Qaida terrorists

in Baghdad since September 11.

He has a long-standing hostility toward

the United States, because we

have denied him his ambition to occupy

the territory of his neighbors and

dominate the Persian Gulf region. He

has openly praised the September 11th

attacks, and his state-run press has

called them ‘‘God’s punishment.’’ He

has warned that Americans should understand

that ‘‘every Iraqi [can] become

a missile.’’

Each of us needs to carefully weigh

the risks posed by his regime the risk

of acting and the risk of doing nothing

in the face of this threat. And Mr.

President, I submit that the risk of inaction

far outweigh the risk of war in

Iraq. Here is why:

For most of our history, America has

been able to rely on our geography to

protect us. Two oceans, and friendly

neighbors, provided a buffer against enemies

who might want to attack us.

After September 11th, we now know

our invulnerability has passed away.

We are not only vulnerable to terrorists

who use airplanes as missiles we

are vulnerable to terrorist networks

and terrorist states that want to use

weapons of mass destruction against

us.

As Secretary Rumsfeld has pointed

out, when the threats came from conventional

weapons, our country could

afford to wait for an attack to happen,

absorb the first blow, regroup, and then

respond militarily. In the age of weapons

of mass destruction, however, we

can no longer afford to wait.

In this new security environment, we

must become more proactive in our efforts

to prevent attacks that have the

potential to be far worse than that of

September 11. We must make sure

when possible that those who have the

desire to attack us are prevented from

having the means with which to carry

out those attacks. We have a right and

an obligation to take anticipatory action

in our own self-defense.

This certainly would not be the first

time that our nation engaged in preventative

military action in defense of

our homeland. During the Cuban Missile

Crisis, President Kennedy ordered

a military blockade of Cuba in 1962, an

act of war under international law.

This was done even though the Soviets

were not engaged in an armed attack,

nor were the missiles an imminent

threat.

Today, Saddam Hussein poses a similar

threat. And we should give this

President the authority he needs to

deal with the Iraqi threat now, before

it reaches our shores.

Saddam Hussein poses a very real

and imminent danger to the United

States. According to the CIA, Iraq ‘‘has

broad capability to attack’’ the U.S.

‘‘with chemical or biological weapons

and could build a nuclear bomb within

a year if it obtains fissile material

from abroad.’’ Iraq ‘‘probably’’ has

‘‘stockpiled more than 100 tons of mustard

gas and other chemical weapons.

Iraq has developed ‘large scale’ capability

to produce anthrax and other

bioweapons in mobile facilities that

are easy to hide and hard to destroy.’’

The longer we wait, the stronger he

becomes, and the harder he will be to

defeat. Saddam Hussein’s regime hosts

terrorist networks and has directly ordered

acts of terror on foreign soil. He

has used weapons of mass murder before,

and would not hesitate to use

them again.

Moreover, Saddam Hussein’s ongoing

defiance of U.N. Security Council resolutions

has made clear that he has no

intention of disarming or discontinuing

his weapons of mass destruction programs.

Remember, our goal is not to get

weapons inspectors back into Iraq. Our

goal is disarmament. And Saddam Hussein

has shown that he is not willing to

disarm. To the contrary, he has proven

willing to pay an enormously high

price to maintain his weapons of mass

destruction aspirations. Under U.N.

sanctions, he has given up about $180

billion in oil revenue to keep his weapons

of mass destruction. As Richard

Butler, a former U.N. chief weapons inspector

has said, ‘‘The fundamental

problem with Iraq remains the nature

of the regime, itself. Saddam Hussein is

a homicidal dictator who is addicted to

weapons of mass destruction.’’

Congress recognized that fact in 1998

when it passed The Iraq Liberation Act

stating that, ‘‘It should be the policy of

the United States to support efforts to

remove the regime headed by Saddam

Hussein from power in Iraq and to promote

the emergence of a democratic

government to replace that regime.’’

We knew then what we know now—that

regime change and disarmament are

inextricably linked.

Just like there are career criminals

there are career criminal regimes. Leniency

only incites them to more violence.

They are driven; they are compulsive.

And unless they are constantly

thwarted they will continue to prey on

the weak and defenseless.

We cannot stake the lives of tens of

thousands of innocent American citizens

on the hope that Saddam Hussein

will never use his weapons of mass destruction

against us. He has already

proven that he cannot be trusted, and

that he poses a great threat to the

peace and stability of the world. This is

a critical moment for the United

States. If Saddam Hussein is appeased

with more talk of weakened, compromised

weapons inspections, which

he has repeatedly defied, we risk leaving

our country open for another catastrophic

attack, one potentially far

worse than the heinous acts of September

11th.

As we debate how to deal with the

Iraqi threat, we must never forget that

in Saddam Hussein we are dealing not

just with a homicidal dictator; we are

confronting Evil that is akin to Stalin

and Hitler.

Just ask former Iraqi general, Najib

Salhi. He defected from Iraq and was

living in Amman, Jordan when one day

he came home to find a package from

Saddam Hussein’s intelligence service.

He opened it to find a video tape.

When he put it into the VCR, he saw

what he thought was a pornographic

film—till he realized, to his horror,

that he was watching the rape of one of

his closest female relatives. The message

was clear. They wanted to blackmail

him into silence.

That is the face of Evil.

Or consider the fact that Saddam

Hussein’s regime has admitted to having

weaponized aflotoxin—the only

country in the world known to have

done so. As former CIA Director Jim

Woolsey has stated, ‘‘The only use of

aflatoxin is that it creates cancer,

long-term cancer, especially in children.’’

Aflatoxin has no military value. It

has no battlefield use. It takes tens of

years to kill its victim. It is a weapons

whose only purpose is to kill innocent

people for murder’s sake. Richard

Spertzel, the former chief biological

weapons inspector for UNSCOM, declared

that aflatoxin is ‘‘a devilish

weapon. From a moral standpoint,

aflatoxin is the cruelest weapon—it

means watching children die slowly of

liver cancer.’’

That is the face of Evil.

Look at the attacks Saddam Hussein

has ordered on his own people—on

thousands of innocent men, women,

and children—in Halabja, using a

chemical weapons cocktail. Those attacks

are causing cancer and genetic

mutations that will be felt in this generation

and the next.

That is the face of Evil.

Saddam Hussein is a man who has

personally shot and killed members of

his own cabinet; who has ordered his

opponents to be burned alive in vats of

acid; who forces those suspected of disloyalty

to watch the gang rape of their

mothers, daughters, wives, and sisters;

who not only tortures dissidents, but

tortures their children in front of

them.

He is the living incarnation of an

Evil that cannot be appeased and cannot

be deterred, and must be confronted

and defeated.

He has murdered hundreds of thousands

of innocent people—and is pursuing

weapons that will allow him to

extend his deadly reach across oceans

and continents—that will give him the

capability to kill our people—our children,

our families.

The President has rightly called Saddam

Hussein ‘‘a student of Stalin.’’

And I applaud him for his resolve in

confronting the dangers posed by the

Iraqi Regime.

The President has awakened the

world to the existence of evil in our

midst—and challenged the world to

confront that evil before it confronts

us, at the cost of millions of lives.

It is a natural reaction to flee in the

face of evil. It is little wonder that

much of the world has been reluctant

to stand its ground and face down Saddam

Hussein, which is why the President’s

leadership has been critical, and

why it is so important for the United

States Congress to show similar resolve,

and demonstrate our unity with

the President.

In showing steadfastness and steely

determination, the President made

clear to the Iraqi regime, and the

world, that we were not going to repeat

the tired old pattern of meeting Iraq’s

threats with inaction. And that leadership

has had an impact. One by one we

have seen nations join the U.S. in recognition

that Saddam must go. Some

have said so publicly, others privately.

Let there be no doubt: if we go to war,

we will not be going it alone.

Thanks to our President, the world

understands that there is a price to be

paid for defying the United States

when our survival is at stake. And I believe

that a strong show of support by

Congress will strengthen the President’s

hand at the United Nations.

While we greatly value the support of

our allies in the war on terror, we must

never give other nations the authority

to stop us from defending our freedom

or from acting in our own self-defense.

We must do what we feel is right in

protecting America, whether or not we

have the approval of France, Russia,

China or any of the other nations

which currently sit on the U.N. Security

Council.

None of us takes the prospect of war

lightly. War is difficult and dangerous,

and lives will be lost. I understand the

concerns many Americans have about

war in Iraq, and I fully appreciate the

sacrifice American families make when

they lose a loved-one in the fight to

keep America and the rest of the world

free from tyranny and oppression.

This country lives, freedom lives, because

brave men and women were willing

to die for it—willing to risk their

lives, and give their lives, for a cause

greater than themselves. As scripture

teaches ‘‘there is no greater love than

this: that a man lay down his life for

his friends.’’ We are all concerned for

the well being of our troops, and we

thank them for their willingness to

keep America safe from the evil that

has been made so apparent in the last

year.

While I value diplomacy and rhetoric,

there comes a time when force is

inevitable—when our choice is not between

war and peace, but between war

today, when our enemy is weaker, or

war tomorrow, when our enemy is

stronger. That is the choice we face

today.

We have tried diplomacy. We have

imposed sanctions. We have sent inspectors.

All attempts to reason with

the Iraqi Regime have failed. The only

language Saddam Hussein understands

is force.

Indeed, in a way, we are already at

war with Iraq. Since hostilities ended

in 1991, Iraq has repeatedly violated the

ceasefire conditions which were set out

at the close of the Gulf War. Just ask

our brave pilots who are being shot almost

every day as they patrol the nofly

zones over Iraq.

After President Bush’s speech to the

U.N., Saddam Hussein sent a letter to

the U.N. promising to ‘‘allow the return

of United Nations weapons inspectors

to Iraq without conditions.’’ He

went on to say that Iraq ‘‘based its decision

concerning the return of inspectors

on its desire to complete the implementation

of the relevant Security

Council resolutions and to remove any

doubts that Iraq still possesses weapons

of mass destruction.’’

Hours after that letter arrived at the

U.N., Iraq was shooting at U.S. aircraft

implementing those same relevant U.N.

Security Council resolutions. Since

1992, the Iraqis have used anti-aircraft

artillery, or Triple-A, against our aircraft

in the northern and southern nofly

zones. In fact, over the last three

years Iraqi Triple-A has fired at coalition

aircraft over 1,000 times. This year

to date they have fired on us over 400

times—and since that September 16 letter

where Saddam pledged his support

for U.N. resolutions they have fired on

coalition aircraft more than 70 times.

It appears that Iraq has actually

stepped up its firing on U.S. and British

planes since he agreed to cooperate

with the U.N. Actions speak louder

than words. And for 11 years Saddam

Hussein’s actions have shown that he is

bent upon pursuing weapons of mass

destruction at all costs.

After all, three days after Saddam

Hussein’s September 16th letter pledging

the unconditional return of weapons

inspectors, Iraq’s foreign minister

stated U.N. resolutions were ‘‘unjust

and at odds with the U.N. charter and

international law.’’ He further declared,

‘‘Iraq demands that its inalienable

rights are met, including respect

for its sovereignty, security and the

lifting of the blockade imposed on it.’’

Then Baghdad stated that the 1998

Memorandum of Understanding which

exempted certain presidential palaces

must stand. I am sure we will hear

from time to time that Baghdad is once

again stating that unconditional inspections

could take place. The words

change, but the actions stay the same.

They keep right on firing at our pilots.

Madam President, on September 11,

3,000 innocent citizens were killed. If

their deaths are to have any meaning,

our nation must not forget the lesson

they gave their lives for us to learn.

The era of our invulnerability is over.

Evil exists—it is real, it is out there,

and it seeks our destruction. If we ignore

it, it will not go away. It will continue

to stalk us, and kill more of our

people.

It must be confronted and it must be

defeated.

‘‘There is a time for all things,’’ the

Rev. Peter Muhlenberg told his congregation

on the eve of the Revolutionary

War, ‘‘a time to preach and a

time to pray. But those times have

passed away. There is a time to fight,

and that time has now come.’’

We have listened and we have prayed.

Now we must fight.

For the best honor we can bestow on

those who have died for our nation, and

those who will die for our nation, is

victory. Victory over terrorism. And if

the President believes it is necessary

to secure our freedom, victory over the

regime of Saddam Hussein.

Madam President, I yield back the

remainder of my time.