I

thank the Chair.

Madam President, I can recall 11

years ago—12 years ago actually—I

made my maiden speech on the floor of

the Senate. It was about Saddam Hussein

and going to war with President

Bush in office. Here we are 12 years

later doing the same thing.

I rise today to again support the

President in his duty, I believe, to stop

Iraq from bringing weapons of mass destruction

throughout the world. When I

addressed this topic in January of 1991,

I said then that there was a lot of talk

about George Bush—President Bush

41—leading us into war. What I said

then, and I will say now, is that was

wrong. It is Saddam Hussein who is

leading us into war. The same holds

true today as it did 12 years ago.

Those voices against the Desert

Storm operation, some of whom are repeating

this same antiwar rhetoric

today, are simply wrong. The warmonger

is Saddam Hussein. He is now

moving us toward another major military

engagement with the stakes even

higher than they were 12 years ago.

Unfortunately, Desert Storm did not

finish the job. There has been some

criticism about that. Given the data

and facts President Bush had at the

time and with the U.N. resolution, he

did what he had to do.

If we calculate the costs of air operations,

no-fly zones, and other activities

over these past 12 years, containment

has not worked. In this age of

weapons of mass destruction, relying

on a policy of containment and deterrence

is a risk we cannot and must not

take.

I pulled out a copy of the speech I

made in 1991. I do not know anyone in

this body who wants war. I do not

know anyone in America who wants

war. I certainly do not. The President

does not. Nobody wants war. Yet we

heard today on the floor that President

Bush is leading us into war, and that is

wrong.

Thomas Paine, who is often quoted,

over 200 years ago said: These are the

times that try men’s souls. This is the

time that American service men and

women are keenly aware of the enormous

burden which the world events

have placed upon us. I said that in 1991,

and it is true today.

Unfortunately, Saddam Hussein is

still with us. The stakes are high. We

are in a virtual state of war now with

Saddam Hussein and with Iraq, but it

has not produced the necessary results.

Saddam is again developing the potential

to threaten us with weapons of

mass destruction and with terrorist attacks.

This threat has to be met. It just

simply has to be met head on. And the

only answer is the overthrow of

Saddam’s regime one way or the

other—domestically if possible, militarily

if necessary. The stakes are simply

too high not to do it.

I served in Vietnam. Others have

served in war. We all know the stakes.

If we do not do this, people may die. If

we do this, people will die. Imagine the

tremendous burden that is placed now

upon the President of the United

States.

Democracies do not threaten democracies,

and democracies do not start

wars. We would all be much safer nations

if everybody believed the way we

did, but that is not the way it is.

We have learned much in the wake of

the vicious attack upon our country on

September 11. Frankly, we were pretty

much asleep. We were complacent. The

terrorist attacks in Africa, the U.S.S.

*Cole*, Khobar Towers, our barracks in

Saudi Arabia—these losses were largely

inflicted on our military and on our

State Department personnel, but we

were still largely oblivious to the risks

we faced right here on American soil.

We were not prepared for the devastation

of 9/11 and the lives of nearly 3,000

innocent Americans lost. The total

costs are immeasurable. Some say as

much as a trillion dollars, but how

about in the human loss? All the children

orphaned, young people, men and

women who were embarking on careers—

what they might have contributed

to America over the next several

years we will never know.

What Saddam Hussein is doing has to

be met. He is a threat to the people of

the world. He is indeed a threat to the

world. I know. I have seen enough intelligence

on this over the past several

years to know—not only to believe it

but to know it. Weapons of mass destruction—

nuclear, biological, and

chemical, whatever they may be—can

kill millions in insidious ways throughout

the world. We simply cannot let

this stand.

I know, having been there, the enormous

burden felt by young men and

women in uniform who will be there

when and if this happens. They need

our support. Have the debate, get the

debate behind us, and get behind our

men and women because they are going

to have to do the work, and they deserve

our support, unlike Vietnam

when the troops did not get that support.

We need to find out where the links

to al-Qaida are. They annihilate innocent

people by virtue of their religious

faith or their national identity. That is

what they are doing. They will do it

with terrorist bombs on their backs.

They can do it with nuclear missiles or

biological or chemical missiles as well.

If there are some in doubt, I urge

them to go down to the Holocaust Museum

and take a look and see what the

cost of doing nothing is: 6 million innocent

lives annihilated because we stood

by as a world and let it go too long, and

then we finally stopped it. We cannot

let this go too long. Six million lives

lost the way Hitler took them is horrible,

and as despicable as it was, it is

nothing compared to the number of

lives that can be taken in more evil

and despicable ways now.

Some say we should not take preemptive

action. Preemptive action? There

is already action taken against the

United States of America. Remember

the 3,000 people dead. This is not preemptive.

We are reacting.

Our survival as a nation is at risk.

Earlier this year in the wake of the unprecedented

and vicious attack in the

United States and world by al-Qaida,

President Bush came before the American

people in his State of the Union

Address and unveiled his advocacy for

regime change in Iraq.

That is a sound policy. And this is a

terrible dilemma. How would you like

to be the President of the United

States today, sitting in the White

House contemplating what has to be

done? Criticized if you take action,

criticized if you don’t; risking death if

you do, risking death if you don’t.

There is no time in American history

where a decision has been more important.

There is no more important debate,

ever, in my view, in American

history where the stakes are higher

than they are right now.

I am standing right now at the desk

of Daniel Webster. He probably from

this desk made some of the greatest

speeches in the history of this body,

but none of them, whether they were

about slavery or all the great issues of

the day of the 1830s and 1840s, even

come close to the impact of what could

happen by allowing this man, this despot,

to move forward in the world unchecked.

We cannot rely on the United Nations,

weapons inspectors, or Saddam’s

word that he is going to comply with

inspections and disarm. I wish we

could. Neville Chamberlain thought

that about Hitler, didn’t he?

Saddam Hussein’s brutal dictatorship

has reigned for 30 years. During these

three decades, we have seen him attack

Iran in a war that took a million lives;

we have seen him repress, through

murder and terror, ethnic and political

elements in Iraq; We have seen him use

weapons of mass destruction on 250 occasions

against the civilian population.

He had come close to producing a nuclear

device before the gulf war and is

successfully continuing these efforts

despite several years of failed weapons

inspections. He has breached international

law. He has invaded Kuwait.

He set oil wells on fire. He has threatened

the stability of the world. He

prompted the use of military force to

contain him, and Saddam Hussein has

tried to assassinate a former President

of the United States of America.

He is a sponsor of Islamic terrorism

throughout the world, and his regime

has harbored the likes and established

relations with Osama bin Laden’s al-

Qaida. What more evidence do we need

to act?

This resolution also touches my

heart in another way. This resolution

makes very brief mention that Iraq has

failed to account for an American serviceman.

It might be a small matter

compared to the big issue of war with

Iraq, but Captain Speicher, who was

shot down over Iraq, was the first pilot

lost in the war. He was pronounced

dead by the Pentagon, but there is no

evidence that he is dead. The information

was incorrect. His status changed

in January 2001. I worked for 7 years to

change that status and President Clinton,

to his credit, prior to leaving office,

changed that status. I give him

great credit for that because he very

well may be a prisoner held by Saddam

Hussein today. In short, whether he is

a prisoner or not, Saddam Hussein

knows what happened to him. We do

not. This is simply unacceptable.

By not seeking a regime change in

Iraq, by not backing our policies with

military force, by not dismantling

Saddam’s regime and weapons of mass

destruction, I am concerned America

will repeat its folly and give Saddam

the breathing room to produce a nuclear

device, proliferate it, threaten to

use it, or use it. He will continue to

support terrorism which devastated

our Nation.

I supported the resolution on Iraq

during the administration of President

Bush 41, and I will support the resolution

of this President Bush to give him

the power to authorize the use of military

force against Iraq.

I will close with a comment I made in

my closing remarks in 1991:

Unfortunately, it is a little bit later

than we expected. We need not fear. We

are the greatest Nation in the world,

with the greatest people, and I believe

it is the right thing to confront this

monster and do it now. That is why I

will be supporting President Bush.

I yield the floor.