Mr. President, the debate

here in this chamber is being held

in community halls, meeting places

and living rooms across America and

across Iowa. Many Iowans have told me

in recent weeks that going to war

should be the last resort for our Nation

and I agree with them.

Saddam Hussein is a brutal dictator,

who has brought nothing but pain and

suffering to the Iraqi people and threat

and instability to his neighbors

throughout the Persian Gulf and the

Middle East. He invaded Iran before he

invaded Kuwait. He has aided and abetted

the suicide bombers. He is guilty of

countless crimes against humanity. He

has even used chemical weapons

against men, women and children in

his own country. I understand the

grave danger posed to America and the

whole international community by

weapons of mass destruction in the

hands of a reckless dictator like Saddam

Hussein. Since the terrorist hijackings

and anthrax attacks in America

last year, which wantonly took the

lives of more than 3,000 people, all

Americans are rightly concerned about

the safety of our homeland and united

in supporting the brave men and

women who defend us and the cause of

freedom around the world.

While there is not definite evidence

of prior close collaboration between

the al-Qaeda criminals who attacked

our nation last year and Saddam Hussein,

there is no doubt they might find

common cause in attacking us and our

allies at any time. Simply put: it is

clear to me that the current situation

in Iraq is an on-going tragedy for the

Iraqi people and an unacceptable menace

for us, his neighbors, and the

world. President Bush is to be commended

for calling on the United Nations

to confront this menace and

Iraq’s flagrant disregard of past Security

Council Resolutions. It remains to

be seen whether and how the UN Security

Council will meet head-on the direct

challenge posed by the continued

failure of Saddam Hussein and the Government

of Iraq to fully comply with 16

resolutions approved by the Council

since 1991, including an ironclad requirement

that Iraq destroy all of its

biological and chemical weapons, dismantle

its nuclear program, and submit

to rigorous international inspections

to verify its compliance.

But there is a right way and a wrong

way to confront Saddam Hussein and

to force him to relinquish all of the

weapons of mass destruction at his disposal.

Our policy, and certainly any

fateful decision to actually go to war,

must be made after careful deliberation

and in full accordance with the

U.S. Constitution and our Nation’s

laws. No President of either political

party should be allowed to take our nation

into war like the one that is now

possible solely on his or her own authority.

That is why last July Senator

SPECTER and I were the first members

of the Senate to introduce bipartisan

legislation to require the Congress to

debate and vote on a resolution to require

the Congress to debate and vote

on a resolution authorizing the use of

force by American armed forces

against Iraq before the President

issued such an order. I think the President

was right to provide additional information

to the Congress and the

American people and to put this issue

before the Congress with the draft resolution

of three weeks ago.

In my view, that first draft amounted

to a blank check for the President to

go to war with Iraq and other countries

in the region, whenever he saw fit, and

regardless of whether we had the backing

of our allies inside and outside the

region or in the international community.

I have said that I could not have

supported that resolution. It was too

broad, too unqualified, and too farreaching.

I am glad that since then Republican

and Democratic Senators

across the political spectrum have recognized

the need to narrow and improve

upon the President’s initial request.

Senators BIDEN and LEVIN,

Chairmen of the Senate Foreign Relations

Committee and Armed Services

Committee respectively, held essential

hearings and formulated thoughtful

legislative proposals. Their work reaffirms

that the focus of U.S. policy

should be to secure the disarmament of

Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction and

the establishment of a new, effective

international inspections regime to enforce

that policy. Their careful approach

also underscores the urgency

and importance of maximizing our diplomatic

efforts to secure the strongest

possible U.N. Security Council resolution

to force Saddam Hussein to relinquish

his pursuit of weapons of mass

destruction once and for all.

I also took to heart the President’s

statement in his address to the nation

Monday night in which he said that the

pending congressional resolution giving

him the right to use force if necessary,

‘‘does not mean that military

action is imminent or unavoidable.’’

That statement is consistent with the

approach I believe in, which can maximize

the strength of our coalition and

the success of our policy. Accordingly,

at this point in time, I believe the

President and the Congress should be

united and focused like a laser on getting

the strongest possible, enforceable

resolution through the U.N. Security

Council. That is why I will vote for the

Levin resolution and why I ultimately

will vote for the Lieberman resolution,

too, if that is the final choice. But I

want to be very clear that in voting for

these resolutions, this Senator is not

voting for immediate war with Iraq. I

am voting for them in order to give the

President and Secretary of State Powell

the maximum leverage to persuade

the UN Security Council to promptly

approve a new, tough, resolution that

requires Iraq to immediately allow unconditional,

unfettered inspections designed

to secure the complete disarmament

of Saddam Hussein’s weapons

of mass destruction. There should be

clear consequences that follow from his

failure to comply. And the UN inspectors

should be given enough time to

complete their work and to determine

whether Iraq can be disarmed short of

going to war.

I am concerned that if we immediately

move to unilateral U.S. military

action or in concert with only our

British allies we will weaken our coalition

efforts to wage and win the international

fight against terrorism. This

would also undermine international respect

for the rule of law and the multilateral

problem-solving institutions

that America helped to create and

which have served as the foundation

for principled U.S. leadership in the

world for 50 years and more. Indeed, I

am concerned that precipitous U.S.

military action against Iraq could result

in our nation and world becoming

less rather than more stable and secure.

Under the terms of these resolutions,

the President will be required to

report to the Congress every 60 days on

on-going diplomatic efforts at the UN

Security Council and elsewhere to establish

a tough new inspections regime

and to force Saddam Hussein to destroy

his weapons of mass destruction.

At that time, we will have the opportunity

to examine the issues again. Nobody

knows for certain at this time, including

the President of the United

States, how best to compel Iraq to get

rid of all of its weapons of mass destruction.

But we do know, we all

agree, that war must be a last resort,

not a first response. We must work

with the international community as

much as possible to find new and enforceable

means to deal with the Iraqi

danger in ways that make this a safe

world.