Mr. President, we

have a dilemma where we recognize

that one individual, who has repeatedly

defied the will of the international

community, almost certainly has control

over a concentration of weapons of

mass destruction.

We have already seen this individual’s

willingness to use these weapons

against his own people and against Iranian

forces during the Iran-Iraq war.

So the question is, is it inevitable

that sooner or later Saddam Hussein

will again use weapons of mass destruction,

and if so, against whom?

There is concern that if the United

States and her allies use force against

Iraq, Saddam will attempt to use his

weapons of mass destruction in order

to remain in power. It is a legitimate

concern and one that must not be

taken lightly.

But I ask my colleagues, if we are

hesitant now, how hesitant will we be

when Saddam Hussein possesses a nuclear

capability? And what will Saddam

do when he knows we are unwilling

to take action?

We have seen Saddam’s willingness

to invade his neighbors—Iran and Kuwait.

How much farther would Saddam

have gone had he not been stopped by

U.S.-led coalition forces?

In 1981, Israeli aircraft destroyed an

Iraqi military reactor capable of producing

nuclear weapons in a surprise,

preemptive strike. Israel faced tremendous

criticism from the world, but a

decade later, during the gulf war, allied

forces did not face a nuclear weapon

capability from Iraq.

Last month, Secretary Rumsfeld testified

before the Senate Armed Forces

Committee that prior to Operation

Desert Storm, the best intelligence estimates

were that Iraq was at least 5 to

7 years away from having nuclear

weapons. Yet, when coalition forces entered

Iraq, we found that Iraq was 6

months to one year away, not 5 to 7

years.

How close is Saddam today from acquiring

nuclear weapons capability?

We don’t know. We have not been able

to place weapons inspectors in Iraq

since 1998. Recent reports indicate one

to five years, but just like 1991, we

don’t know for sure.

We do know that Saddam Hussein

has developed weapons of mass destruction—

weapons such as anthrax, VX,

sarin and mustard gas. Are these weapons

a country would use to defend

itself? Or are these the weapons of an

aggressor that would go to whatever

means necessary to prevail?

And let’s not forget about the threat

of proliferation—the threat of Saddam

sharing these weapons with like minded

terrorist organizations who would

not hesitate to use them against the

United States and our allies.

Had we known in advance the tragic

events of September 11, 2001, there is

no doubt that the United States would

have taken preemptive action against

the al-Qaida terrorist network.

Every month, every year that Saddam

Hussein remains in defiance of

U.N. Security Council resolutions, we

face an even larger, more deadly threat

to the security of this great nation. As

the President has said, to ignore these

threats is to encourage them.

I am hopeful that the use of military

action will not be necessary. That Saddam

Hussein will fulfill the requirements

of the United Nations Security

Council. That he will allow full and unobstructed

access to U.N. weapons inspectors

to destroy all of Iraq’s weapons

of mass destruction. But past history

does not give much cause for hope.

In the 11 years since the Persian Gulf

War, Saddam Hussein has blatantly ignored

16 U.N. Security Council Resolutions

calling for the total destruction

of Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction.

Eleven years; 16 Resolutions.

This is not a game. We are currently

in a limited war with Iraq. So far in

2002, Iraq has fired on Allied fighter

planes 409 times, 14 times this past

weekend alone. Iraqi forces have fired

anti-aircraft artillery 1,000 times,

launched 600 rockets and fired nearly 60

surface-to-air missiles. Since Iraq set a

letter accepting the return of weapons

inspectors on September 16, they have

fired on Allied forces 70 times.

The time for appeasement is over. We

have seen the policy of appeasement

prove ineffectual in the past. The

League of Nations was unable to stop

Germany from rearming itself and

threatening her neighbors. Its policy of

appeasement only served to advance

Hitler’s ambitions.

The United Nations now finds itself

in a similar situation. It can choose to

either enforce its own resolutions

passed by the Security Council, or find

itself irrelevant in the view of the

world.

The U.N. Security Council is expected

to soon take up its 17th resolution

regarding Iraq. They deserve to

hear, not just from the President of the

United States, but the Congress of the

United States as well.

We can wait. We can react after the

fact. But at what point do we act?

When do we recognize that Saddam is a

threat, that he does train al-Qaida,

that he does fund the terrorists? At a

certain point in time, we have to face

reality.

What if we left this session of the

Congress without authorizing the

President to take the appropriate action

needed to defend the national security

of the United States against the

threat posed by Iraq?

How would we feel if—God forbid—

Saddam was to take action and take

American lives? We would feel we had

been derelict in our obligation.

We have an obligation to provide for

the security of the people of the United

States. Do we follow a policy of appeasement?

Allowing Saddam Hussein to continue

to build his weapons of mass destruction?

To continue to play a cat and mouse

game of allowing weapons inspectors

in, only to place conditions on their actions?

To continue to defy the international

community, without fear of reprisal?

To take the chance that those terrorist

networks that Saddam supports

will not take action against the United

States—with Saddam’s weapons of

mass destruction?

It is oil that built Iraq and it is oil

dollars that keep Saddam in power.

Oil dollars fund the weapons, the research,

and the training camps for terrorists

that give Saddam a global

reach.

Do we continue to import hundreds

of thousands of barrels of oil from Iraq

each day? In September 2002, it is estimated

the U.S. imported 550,000 barrels

a day. In September of 2001, we imported

1.2 million barrels a day—and

broke an 11 year record.

The GAO reports Saddam received

$6.6 billion in illegal revenue through

smuggled oil since 1997, $1.5 billion in

2001 alone.

The number of vessels smuggling oil

has dramatically risen in the past few

months. In June through August, the

Multi-national Interception Force

boarded 297 vessels—nearly 100 per

month—with 225,000 barrels of oil.

Prior to that, the boarded an average

of 12 vessels per month.

This is the Iraqi oil that powers our

economy, fuels our school buses, and

provides jet fuel for our fighters.

No longer should Iraq count on the

United States to fund its regime.

We must pass an energy bill that

helps reduce our dangerous dependence

on Iraq. America must not be held victim

to the whims of Saudi kings and

Middle Eastern dictators.

We have an obligation to the American

people. We have an obligation to

send a strong, unified voice to the

United Nations—Congress and the

President, hand in hand—that it is

time to stop appeasing Saddam.

It is time to enforce the multitude of

resolutions already passed and it is

time to remove the deadly threat posed

by Saddam Hussein.

And if the United Nations is not willing

to enforce its own resolutions, if

the United Nations is not willing to

make itself relevant, then the United

States must not be afraid to stand up,

to ensure that the national security of

the United States is not endangered by

the actions of Saddam Hussein.

I support this resolution. It is time

to send a clear message to Saddam that

we will no longer stand by while he develops

these weapons that threaten the

stability of the region, while he continues

to defy the will of the international

community, and while he

poses a threat to the national security

of the United States.

We cannot afford the risks of inaction.

Not after the lessons we have

learned from September 11.