Mr. President, I

rise today in support of the Lieberman-

Warner resolution authorizing the use

of force against Iraq. This resolution

gives President Bush the flexibility he

needs to address the threat posed by

Saddam Hussein, including the authority

to use military force as he deems

appropriate, without ceding too much

authority to the executive to wage war

outside Iraq. I applaud Senators

LIEBERMAN, WARNER, MCCAIN, and so

many others who have worked with

President Bush to reach an agreement

on this critical issue.

I support the President’s policy of regime

change in Iraq to eliminate the

threat Saddam poses to the U.S. and

the world, and agree that time is of the

essence. I was concerned that the administration’s

initial draft resolution

was too broad, and called for tighter

parameters on the Presidential mandate.

The resolution now before us addresses

my concerns by confining the

scope of possible military action to

Iraq, rather than the entire Middle

East region.

Only last month we commemorated

the one-year anniversary of the deadliest

terrorist attack in our history.

Today, we face a threat from a regime

that would not hesitate to use weapons

of mass destruction against our friends

and allies, or against the United States

itself, or transfer these weapons to terrorist

groups that target Americans.

Saddam Hussein’s track record is

well-known to all. He ordered the use

of chemical weapons—including sarin,

VX, tabun, and mustard agents—

against his own people, killing tens of

thousands of innocent civilians. His regime

invaded two neighbors and

threatened others. In 1991, his troops

were prepared to invade other countries,

had they not been thwarted by

the U.S.-led international coalition.

His regime launched ballistic missiles

at four of its neighbors—Israel, Saudi

Arabia, Iran, and Bahrain. He ordered

the assassination of opponents in Iraq

and abroad, including a former president

of the United States. His regime

beat and tortured American POWs and

used them as human shields during the

1991 Persian gulf war. His military continues

to fire at U.S. and coalition aircraft

patrolling the no-fly zones in

northern and southern Iraq.

Based on the information presented

to me in classified briefings, I share

President Bush’s assessment that Iraqi

disarmament must be the objective.

Weapon inspections alone will not

achieve this goal, and a lengthy inspections

regime could inadvertently give

Saddam more time to stockpile and

conceal weapons of mass destruction.

After eleven years of lies and deception,

we cannot expect that Saddam

will reverse course and willingly disarm.

Clearly, regime change in Iraq is

the only way to end the threat Saddam

Hussein poses to the United States and

the world.

What has brought us to this point?

On March 3, 1991, Iraq, having been

forced to abandon the territory it

overran in Kuwait, agreed to the terms

of a cease-fire offered by the allied

forces. Since the cease-fire, Iraq has repeatedly

violated a series of Security

Council resolutions designed to ensure

that Iraq submits to U.N. inspections,

abides by the cease-fire agreement, dismantles

its extensive weapons of mass

destruction programs, and returns Kuwaiti

and other nations’ POWs, missing

persons, and property seized during the

gulf war. The United Nations has found

Iraq in ‘‘material breach of cease-fire

terms’’ on seven occasions, and Iraq remains

in violation of the cease-fire to

this very day.

For seven and one-half years, Saddam

Hussein played a cat-and-mouse

game with U.N. inspectors. The Iraqi

regime misled, lied, intimidated, and

physically obstructed the inspectors;

and Iraqi scientists who provided in

formation to the inspectors disappeared,

most likely into Saddam’s

dungeons and execution chambers. The

inspectors uncovered an enormous

amount of biological and chemical

weapons materials and production facilities,

but by their own account they

could not find everything. And any success

they may have had was in large

measure because Saddam feared a renewed

military offensive by the United

States. Finally, on November 11, 1998,

following Iraq’s announcement that it

was prohibiting all U.N. inspections,

weapons inspections in Iraq ceased.

Under increasing international pressure,

Iraq again agreed to allow inspectors

full access, but then resumed obstructing

their operations, and the

United Nations withdrew the inspectors

on December 15, 1998. Over the

next 4 years, Iraq refused to admit

weapons inspectors under the terms set

forth by the Security Council.

Iraq has had 4 years to refine its

techniques of deception. It defies common

sense to suggest that a hundred or

even a thousand U.N. inspectors could,

with any assurance, succeed in finding

small WMD stockpiles and facilities in

a country the size of the state of California.

Many former U.N. inspectors

who experienced first-hand Iraq’s lies

and deceptions have come to the same

conclusion.

We know that Saddam has chemical

and biological weapons, and is developing

nuclear weapons. These weapons

would immediately threaten U.S.

troops and our friends and allies in the

region. A Saddam Hussein with nuclear

weapons would radically alter the balance

of power in the Middle East, requiring

a profound shift in the deployment

of American forces and undermine

our ability to respond to other

potential threats around the globe.

Saddam has worked with terrorist

networks for many years. He harbored

Abu Nidal, and is reportedly providing

safe have to Abdul Rahman Yasin, a

key participant in the 1993 World Trade

Center bombing. Saddam has himself

ordered acts of terror. He shares many

objectives with groups like al-Qaida,

and may decide to use terrorists to

conceal his responsibility for an attack

on the United States.

For 11 years, Saddam Hussein has

thumbed his nose at the international

community. Would it be prudent to

continue what has failed for 11 long

years? Would it be wise to give Saddam

more time, which we know he will devote

to realizing his greatest dream—

to obtain the nuclear weapons that

would allow him to dominate the Middle

East with all of its oil and threaten

to drive the United States out of a region

that is vital to our security?

Never in our history have we been in

a position where we could be

blackmailed, under the threat of nuclear

war, into withdrawing support for

our closest allies or sacrificing our national

security to prevent the death of

millions. And yet this is the danger we

face in as little as one year if we do not

act to remove this looming threat.

Time is not on our side; it is on the

side of Saddam Hussein. We cannot

wait for a smoking gun, because a gun

smokes only after it is fired, and the

smoke of a nuclear blast would mean

that we are too late.

I applaud the President’s decision to

seek international support for regime

change in Iraq, but U.S. action should

not hinge on the endorsement of the

United Nations. The United States is

leading a coalition of international allies

in the war on terror, not the other

way around.

In the case of Iraq, U.S. national security

interests should not be sacrificed

if the U.N. cannot be persuaded

of the urgency of this threat. It would

be preferable to have U.N. support, but

we have to be prepared to go it alone if

necessary. We cannot give the United

Nations veto power over our decisions

to protect our national interests.

I remain concerned about our planning

for the future of Iraq if we succeed

in removing Saddam Hussein from

power. Administration officials have

presented a vision of a post-Saddam

Iraq that is peaceful, democratic, and

unified. Defeating the Iraqi military on

the battlefield will not be easy, but ensuring

a stable and friendly post-Saddam

Iraq will pose even greater challenges,

requiring careful planning by

the administration in concert with our

allies in the region. Iraq could rapidly

slide into long-term political instability

or even bloody war upon the collapse

of the Baathist regime.

Iraq’s population is made up of three

main components: the Kurdish speaking

people in the north, the Arab

Sunnis in the center, and the Arab Shiites

in the south who make up a majority—

some 60 percent—of the entire

population of the country. Many Shiites

desire a theocratic government

similar to that in neighboring Iran.

The Kurdish leadership in the north

may recognize that independence is an

impossible dream, but their experience

of ten years of self-government will

make their reintegration into a unified

Iraq problematic at best. Arab Sunnis,

fearing retaliation from the long-oppressed

Shiite majority, may use the

Sunni-dominated Iraqi military to

keep the Shiites from gaining power.

And while the overthrow of Saddam

Hussein would involve the likely end to

the Iraqi Republican Guard, the regular

Iraqi army may remain to play a

critical role in a post-Saddam Iraq. Yet

the Iraqi army may become a den of

coup-plotters; after all, Iraq endured a

succession of bloody coups from 1953

until Saddam Hussein’s ascent to

power in the late 1970s.

Our military planning should be

guided by an awareness that how

Saddam’s regime falls will shape the

Iraq that follows. At some point the

American people will need to know the

nature and extent of America’s commitment

to a post-Saddam Iraq. How

long will our troops be on the ground

in Iraq? What material and financial

resources will we be asked to provide

to Iraq? What responsibility will the

United States have to maintain peace

in the region? What help will we get

from our allies in rebuilding Iraq?

President Bush has exercised great

leadership at a critical time in our history.

I am proud to be a part of the debate

we are having today in this chamber,

which is a powerful demonstration

of our democratic institutions. Ours is

a nation that is slow to anger. Americans

abhor war. I vote in support of

this resolution, but hope and pray that

the President, united with Congress,

will succeed in averting war.

There is no question in my mind that

we must disarm Saddam, and that time

is running out. Clearly, there are risks

involved. But I believe the risks of

doing nothing are far greater.

I yield that floor.