Mr. President, I

rise to speak for a short time today

about the Iraq resolution, and tomorrow

I will have a chance to speak at

greater length. I thank Senator KENNEDY

for allowing me to precede him. I

also tell my colleague from Georgia

that his speech on the concurrent receipt

was powerful and, having spent

the whole day with veterans yesterday,

is absolutely right. It is critically important

that this defense appropriations

bill go through with that provision.

Mr. President, I did not have a

chance to hear the President speak last

night, but I read the transcript. I think

it is important that the President

focus on obtaining international support.

The military option should only

be considered as the last option. I believe

that people were glad to hear that

last night in Minnesota and in the

country.

The problem is that the actual resolution

before us goes in a different direction.

What this resolution does is

give the President the authority for a

possible go-it-alone, unilateral military

strike and ground war. I think

this would be a mistake. We should not

go it alone.

There is a critical distinction between

going it alone and taking action

in conjunction with our allies. Our

focus should be going to the United Nations

Security Council and asking for a

resolution that makes it clear to Saddam

Hussein that he must disarm. Saddam

must give arms inspectors unfettered

access. And, if he does not comply

with this new UN resolution there

will be consequences, including the use

of appropriate military force. But we

must do this together with our allies.

We must bring the international community

on board. This resolution allows

for a preemptive, unilateral

strike, which I believe would be a huge

mistake.

When Secretaries Kissinger and

Albright testified before the Foreign

Relations Committee, I asked both of

them about the consequences of going

alone versus working with the international

community. First I asked:

Shouldn’t the goal be disarmament,

and shouldn’t we make every effort to

try to make disarmament happen before

taking military action?

They both were in agreement. Secretary

Kissinger said: Yes, we need to

play this out.

No one trusts Saddam Hussein. Everybody

knows he is a brutal dictator.

That is not the point. The point is how

to proceed; how to do this the right

way. The focus should be on disarmament

and getting the support of our

allies in the international community.

I do not think we should be approving

a preemptive, unilateral strike by

the United States, going it alone, or

only with Great Britain.

I asked the former secretaries what

the differences would be. They spelled

out hugely different consequences between

our going it alone, if, in fact,

military action was necessary, versus

taking action with our allies.

The former secretaries made the following

points. If we take unilateral

military action Saddam Hussein will

have a better chance of uniting the

world community against us, rather

than vice versa. Moreover, there could

be grave consequences in the Near East

and South Asia that could include energizing

other radical elements and increasing

support for al-Qaida. Would

this not play into the hands of the

radicals? This is a big question if we go

it alone.

What about our men and women, our

sons and daughters who would be put in

harm’s way? What would the consequences

be on the ground for them if

we go it alone versus with our allies?

What about this war against terror?

As a father and grandfather of six children

I take al-Qaida very seriously. Unfortunately

international terror is a

part of the world in which we now live.

Will we have the same international

cooperation to fight international terror

if we go it alone? In many parts of

the world we need the cooperation, assets,

and on-the-ground intelligence of

our allies for the continued war on terror.

I think going it alone, a preemptive

military strike, perhaps a ground

war, could very well undercut that effort.

Mr. President, I have one more point.

I am not going to talk at length about

my interaction with people in Minnesota

over the last several days since

I announced my opposition to the first

resolution, but I will tell my colleagues

this: Many people have come up to me,

and I had great discussions with people

in Minnesota. I cannot thank them

enough.

I do not really know what the breakdown

is in terms of X percentage this

way or that way, but I will say that the

people in Minnesota and our country

are worried about this issue. They are

worried about us going it alone. They

are worried about what might happen

to our sons and daughters in Iraq. They

far prefer we work together with our

allies. They far prefer we have international

support and that the focus be

on disarmament.

I believe that is the direction in

which we should go. That is not what

this resolution before us asks us to do.

Therefore, I will vote no on this resolution.

I yield the floor.