Mr. President, I commend

President Bush for taking his

case against Iraq to the American people

last evening, and I agree with the

President that Saddam is a despicable

tyrant who must be disarmed. As many

of us had hoped, the President has now

clearly given the Iraqi regime an opportunity

to avoid war. The President

himself says he has not yet decided war

will be necessary. In this situation, it

would be wrong for Congress to act now

to authorize the President to go to war

before the steps the President has outlined

are exhausted.

The most solemn responsibility any

Congress has is the responsibility given

the Congress by the Constitution to declare

war. We would violate that responsibility

if we delegate that responsibility

to the President in advance before

the President himself has decided

the time has come for war.

The President acknowledged last

night there are major risks in going to

war. I do not believe these risks have

been adequately described to the American

people.

General Wesley Clark, the former Supreme

Allied Commander in Europe,

told the Armed Services Committee on

September 23 if you are talking to the

mothers and the loved ones of those

who die in that operation in Iraq, you

want to be sure using force and expending

American blood and lives and treasure

is the ultimate last resort, not because

of the sense of impatience with

the arcane ways of international institutions

or frustrations from the domestic

political process of allies.

As the Senate continues to debate

the use of military force against Iraq,

we must do all we can to assess the potential

costs of such a war in blood and

treasure. The American people deserve

to know what a conflict in Iraq might

be like. They deserve to know how

many casualties there might be. They

deserve to know the true preparedness

of our troops to fight in a chemical or

biological environment. If they are in

the National Guard or Reserves, they

deserve to know how a conflict in Iraq

will affect them and whether they are

likely to be called up for duty.

Many Reservists who were initially

recalled for the war in Afghanistan

have been either demobilized or extended

for a second year. They are concerned

about what the impact of war

against Iraq will have on their families

and on their jobs. Many employers,

who are struggling in the current sagging

economy, are also deeply concerned

about the stability of their

workforce. These patriotic Americans

are willing to sacrifice, but they deserve

to know all reasonable alternatives

to war have been exhausted.

None of us can foresee the course of

events that will unfold if we go to war.

Before Congress acts, the administration

has an obligation to explain to the

Congress and the American people the

potential consequences of war. As of

now, it has not.

The President is asking Congress to

delegate its constitutional power to declare

war before he has decided we need

to go to war, but he has not adequately

explained what this war will look like.

How many ground troops will be required?

How many casualties can we

expect to suffer? How well can we respond

to the use of chemical or biological

weapons against our troops? How

will postwar occupation and reconstruction

in Iraq be conducted? How

will our ongoing military operation in

Afghanistan be affected, and what will

the impact be on the overall war

against terrorism?

Today, our service men and women

are helping to combat terrorism in Afghanistan,

the Philippines, the Nation

of Georgia, and elsewhere around the

world.

Our purpose is clear; defend our country

against the clear and compelling

threat to our security posed by al-

Qaida. I strongly support the President

in the war against al-Qaida and the al-

Qaida terrorists. I am proud of the

achievement of our Armed Forces in

the war against terrorism.

Some argue that America’s vastly superior

military force can easily defeat

the Iraqi army, but many of us are concerned

that the very strength and success

of our Armed Forces in the gulf

war and in Afghanistan will lull America

into thinking if war with Iraq becomes

necessary, it will be a bloodless

war with few casualties.

The gulf war was fought in the desert

a decade ago with an overwhelming superiority

of forces in a strong coalition

of the United States and other nations.

They achieved one of the most decisive

victories in the history of warfare. The

experts I have consulted believe that a

new war with Iraq will not be as easy,

especially if we do not have the support

of a coalition of nations.

Some defense analysts contend the

Iraqi regular army is plagued with low

morale and poor equipment and may

well surrender at the first sight of

American might. Other experts believe,

however, that unlike the regular Iraqi

army, up to 100,000 Republican Guard

and special Republican Guard troops of

Iraq will defend Baghdad and remain

fiercely loyal to Saddam Hussein.

Michael O’Hanlon of the Brookings

Institution believes the Iraqi Republican

Guard forces could make a U.S.

military attack very difficult. He estimates

that our military casualties

could be as high as 5,000. By comparison,

in the gulf war, just under 400 U.S.

service members lost their lives.

Many believe our Armed Forces may

need to occupy Baghdad, which has

over 5 million residents. Testifying before

the Armed Services Committee on

September 23, GEN Joseph Hoar,

former commander in chief of the U.S.

Central Command, discussed the potential

horrors of urban warfare. He said

in urban warfare you could run through

battalions a day at a time. All of our

advantages of command and control,

technology and mobility are, in part,

given up and you are working with corporals,

sergeants, and young men fighting

street to street. It looks like the

last 15 minutes of the movie ‘‘Saving

Private Ryan.’’

Despite the risks of urban warfare,

the administration has avoided questions

about how a military operation

in Iraq may unfold. We have not been

told how many ground troops we will

need or, again, how many casualties we

can expect. The Joint Chiefs should

provide Congress with casualty estimates

for a war in Iraq as they have

done in advance of every past conflict.

These estimates should consider

Saddam’s possible use of chemical or

biological weapons against our troops.

Unlike the gulf war, many experts

believe Saddam would resort to chemical

and biological weapons against our

troops in a desperate attempt to save

his regime if he believes he and his regime

are ultimately threatened.

In the September 19 hearing before

the Senate Armed Services Committee,

General Myers, the Chairman of the

Joint Chiefs of Staff, cited a long list

of improvements that have dramatically

increased the combat effectiveness

of our forces since the gulf war. He

said our troops now have improved

ability to protect themselves against

chemical or biological attacks.

However, the General Accounting Office

published a report on October 1

which clearly suggests that our forces

are not adequately prepared for a

chemical or biological attack. The report

concluded that although the Defense

Department has taken significant

actions to provide such protection, serious

problems persist. This is what the

GAO report found: Chemical and biological

defense training continues to be

a problem; medical readiness of some

units to conduct operations in a contaminated

environment remains questionable;

some units are critically

short of required protective gear.

One Air Force wing has only 25 percent

of the protective masks required

and only 48 percent of required patient

decontamination kits.

If Prime Minister Blair is correct in

saying that Iraq has the capability to

launch chemical or biological warheads

in 45 minutes, what sense does it make

to put our soldiers in the path of that

danger without exhausting every reasonable

means to disarm Iraq short of

war?

We do not know whether the military

will be able to adequately protect our

service men and women from a chemical

or biological attack, and this issue

should be explained to the American

people.

The Wall Street Journal reported

last week that in addition to chemical

and biological chemical deficiencies,

there are other notable gaps in the

Pentagon’s planning. Civilians working

at port facilities in the Persian Gulf region,

where our forces will be unloading

warfighting equipment, have not

all received the proper protective gear

or training for a chemical and biological

attack.

The Secretary of Defense and the

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs have not

adequately answered such questions

about the military operation in Iraq.

They both say there will be risks to a

conflict, but they have not adequately

and fully discussed those risks with

Congress and the American people.

The Bush administration has also repeatedly

claimed that we can fight a

war in Iraq without undermining the

war against terrorism, but last year, on

June 21, 2001, testifying before the Senate

Armed Services Committee, Secretary

Rumsfeld cited significant problems

in military readiness. He said we

have underfunded and overused our

forces, and we are steadily falling

below acceptable readiness standards.

Yet last month, on September 19, when

asked about military readiness in the

Armed Services Committee hearing,

Secretary Rumsfeld said recent defense

budget increases, coupled with the recall

of reservists and shifts in the assignment

of existing personnel, have

reduced the stress on our forces.

He did not explain how the budget increases,

which only recently took effect,

could have reversed the starkest

estimate of readiness he provided to

the Armed Services Committee last

year. In fact, experts say that most of

the growth in operations and maintenance

spending over the past decade

have been for infrastructure-related

programs, not military readiness.

General Myers, in his September 19

testimony, agreed that the U.S. military

was stretched in some key areas.

He said if our operations on the war on

terror are expanded, we will be required

to prioritize the deployment of

unique units in high demand such as

special operation forces and combat

rescue forces. He also said our coalition

partners may facilitate our combined

operations by having similar units of

forces. That, of course, assumes we will

have a coalition in terms of a potential

conflict.

Before the Senate Armed Services

Committee 2 weeks ago, the Chairman

of the Joint Chiefs admitted that because

of the high demand placed on

some of our forces that coalition partners

are necessary to mitigate the risk

of war in Iraq.

Two weeks ago, the Chairman of the

Joint Chiefs admitted that because of

the high demand on some of our forces

that coalition partners are necessary.

The way we are going to get the coalition

forces is by going to the United

Nations and gaining their support for

the disarming of Saddam, and if action

is necessary in the future.

War against Iraq may well undermine

the ongoing war against al-Qaida and

our continuing operation in Afghanistan

by draining resources from our

Armed Forces that are already

stretched thin. In Afghanistan, U.S.

forces continue to search villages,

caves, and potential hideouts. The

searches are now being conducted by

the 82nd Airborne, not the elite special

operation forces which are being recalled

in preparation for a potential invasion

of Iraq.

Many of us in the Senate are aware

of these concerns with the Reserves

and National Guard. We have heard

them firsthand. Already, the Nation

has mobilized and demobilized thousands

of reservists and National

Guardsmen to support the current war

on terrorism. Massachusetts reservists

and reservists from across the country

are providing training, intelligence,

and security support around the world.

Almost 1,500 National Guardsmen

from Massachusetts alone are deployed

to support the war on terror. Citizen

soldiers are now serving in critical security

positions throughout the United

States and in Afghanistan. They have

distinguished themselves for their patriotism

and superior service. They

have proven ready to meet the challenge

of fighting the war on terrorism,

despite outdated equipment and funding

shortfalls.

The phenomenal performance of our

forces in the war on terrorism attest to

their resolve. But how long can we sustain

this high level of operation? Approximately

11,000 of our reservists

from across the Nation have been recalled

for a second year to support the

war on terror. This is the first time in

decades that we have needed to take

this measure to enhance our military

strength. Not even in the gulf war did

we recall reservists for over a year. If

we open a second front in Iraq, we may

be forced to recall even more.

Additionally, due to critical shortages

of special operations personnel,

pilots, intelligence specialists, and security

personnel, another 22,000 service

members, a number about as high as

the entire gulf war, have been involuntarily

retained on active duty as part

of the current war on terrorism. If we

embark upon a premature or unilateral

military campaign against Iraq or a

campaign with only Great Britain as

our ally, our forces will have to serve

in even greater numbers for longer periods

of time with graver risks.

There is no doubt that Saddam Hussein

is a despicable tyrant. The international

community must work together

to disarm him. But the war

against terrorism and our wider interests

in the region and the world demand

a course that relies on war only

as a last resort after all reasonable alternatives

have been fairly tried.

I have no doubt our forces will prevail

in any conflict with Iraq. But Congress

and the American people deserve

to know the true risk of war with Iraq.

The administration has the responsibility

to state what the real costs of

such a war may be. We need that information

now, before—not after—Congress

exercises its constitutional responsibility

to declare war.

I yield the floor.

The Senator has

asked a number of questions in his

comments. I will do my best to respond.

As the Senator has rightfully pointed

out, the President has not decided on

the course of war. If the President has

not decided that we have an imminent

threat from Saddam Hussein, we have a

serious threat. It is a very important

threat. For all the reasons that have

been outlined on the floor during the

course of this debate about Saddam

Hussein, we understand that. But the

President of the United States has not

made a judgment that it is an imminent

threat to the United States.

He has not made a judgment that he

is prepared to go to war today. If that

is so, which is what he stated last

night, why in the world are we saying,

in the Senate of the United States, we

will give him this power when he has

not made up his mind he wants to use

it, without any limitation on time—no

sunset of this? That is No. 1. So I am

opposed.

Second, on the question of the Senator

from Virginia, in referring to the

Levin amendment, that conforms with

the constitutional authorities I have

discussed, that we have done in other

periods. That does not happen to be my

position. I believe in a two-step approach.

I believe the Security Council

should have a tough resolution with

unfettered inspections and we ought to

galvanize the international community.

I personally believe the way we

galvanize the international community

is by demonstrating we believe the

international community has the responsibility

and obligation to take action.

I believe if we go ahead and take action

as being proposed by the Senator

from Virginia, that will be unilateral,

where the President says: I have not

made up my mind whether there is a

necessity for war. I am not even prepared

to say we are in an imminent

threat. If we had an imminent threat

from Saddam Hussein, he obviously

would have a responsibility to take action

in order to protect the American

people.

What we are saying to the Security

Council is: We are just going to have

something over here on the side in case

you people up there are not going to be

serious.

I would like to challenge the Security

Council the way the President of

the United States did. I commend

President Bush for finally going to the

Security Council, challenging the Security

Council. That is the way to go.

The Security Council takes every step,

uses every opportunity, and finally

comes back and says: There is no alternative,

there is an imminent threat.

We should be at our desks at that

time in making the judgment we will

have to make about committing American

forces—a two-step approach for

those reasons.

I have difficulty in accepting the

concept that we are going to effectively

give to the President of the

United States the authority when he

has stated, as the good Senator stated,

he has not made up his own mind.

Lastly, part of the trouble we have

been in over the period—and I have

great respect for my colleague, and he

knows he is my friend and colleague—

the debate has been about the resolutions,

but not about the war. We are

debating the resolutions. My good

friend from Florida is talking about

changing the resolutions. We ought to

be talking about what the implication

is going to be in terms of the conflict

and the war. The American people

ought to understand that more clearly.

That is an issue where the administration

has failed the American people.

What are the best estimates?

What should we expect are going to

be needed in terms of the forces?

What is the best judgment in terms

of how Saddam Hussein will react?

What will be the enormous impact it

will have in our battle against terror

around the world?

What will it do in terms of inflaming

the Muslim world if the United States

has a go-alone policy, which this resolution

will permit?

Will it be effectively a breeding area

for al-Qaida terrorists?

We ought to be debating those issues.

We do not do that. We have been debating

the technicalities of these

resolutions.

I know the Senator has—as I have—

listened to many debates, not only on

the technicalities but the broad issues

of war and peace as well. But it is my

regret that we are going to be faced

with a cloture motion here to try to insist

on a vote on this in another 2 days

when we have just barely talked about

the issues of war and peace and haven’t

had that kind of informed debate and

haven’t had that kind of information

that is available to us. That is part of

my deep concern about where we are on

the floor of the Senate now.

Would the Senator be

willing to change the words? I don’t

have it here. Would he be willing to

change the words to include ‘‘an imminent

threat’’ from the language that is

included in the resolution which talks

about a grave threat or continuing

threat?