Madam President, I

hold the Senate seat of the late Wayne

Morse. Senator Morse lost his job in

1968, and many have attributed his loss

to his outspoken opposition to the

Vietnam war. Wayne Morse’s election

loss makes his words from that era no

less true today.

In a 1966 debate on the role of the

Senate with respect to the great issues

of war and peace, Senator Wayne Morse

said:

It is the long-term interest of our

country, Madam President, that Wayne

Morse so presciently focused on in 1966

that leads me to outline the following

conclusion that I have made with respect

to the Iraq resolution.

Saddam Hussein is the bad actor here

and the United States of America is

the good actor. I believe the authorization

of a unilateral preemptive military

attack based on the information

now available will cause much of the

world, unfortunately, to lose sight of

this reality. This perception in a region

racked by poverty and already marked

by a deep mistrust in American foreign

policy could foster decades, possibly

even centuries of undeserved hatred of

our great Nation that will threaten our

children and our grandchildren.

Protecting our children and grandchildren

after a unilateral preemptive

attack on Iraq will require a staggering

financial commitment from our National

Government. Given the pressing

financial needs here at home for public

safety, for education, for health, where

are the funds going to come from after

our Nation wins such an engagement

with Iraq?

Protecting our children and grandchildren

after a unilateral preemptive

attack on Iraq will require an American

policy of energy independence—especially

independence from Middle

East oil. We are a long way from there,

and on some issues, such as saving energy

and the crucial transportation

sector, it seems that now we have been

going backward.

Protecting our children and grandchildren

after a unilateral preemptive

attack on Iraq will require a plan for

rebuilding confidence among many of

the countries that stood with us during

the gulf war conflict, but do not stand

with us today. Many of those countries

do not believe diplomatic and other

steps have been fully exhausted. If our

Government cannot convince them of

that, it is certainly going to be tough

to restore faith after a unilateral, preemptive

attack.

For many weeks now, I have waited

and listened patiently, I feel, for the

administration to make its case for the

resolution. I serve on the Senate Intelligence

Committee. I followed this

issue very closely, and I believe neither

partisan politics nor the pressures of

an anxious public should be factored

into a decision of this magnitude.

Instead, I see my duty as an elected

representative of the great State of Oregon

to listen, to inquire dispassionately,

and make the decision I believe

to be in the best interest of Oregon and

this great country, and leave the judgment

to history and the voters as to

whether I made that judgment in the

right way.

In approaching the decision about

whether to vote to authorize the military

option this measure calls for, I

laid out some criteria on which to base

my decision.

My criteria were: If our security

agencies were to provide me with compelling

evidence of a significant threat

to our domestic security if Hussein’s

Iraq is not defeated militarily, I would

be willing to grant authority for the

use of force. But I am unwilling to give

my approval for a first-strike, unilateral

attack until and unless there is assurance

under the resolution that before

such an attack, the administration

exhausted all other reasonable means

to accomplish our goals.

Second, I am convinced it is essential

to have a workable plan to contain the

situation if Iraq attacks Israel and

Israel enters the conflict.

And third, I am concerned there has

to be a showing such an attack will not

make our Nation less safe by setting us

back in the war on terrorism.

The President has made a compelling

case—I believe a sincere one—regarding

the danger posed by Iraq under the

rule of Saddam Hussein, but his argument—

and I say respectfully—does not

meet the criteria I have laid out.

First, I am not convinced, regarding

a clear and present threat, Saddam

Hussein currently imposes a clear and

present threat to the domestic security

of the Nation. While my service on the

Senate Intelligence Committee has left

me convinced of Iraq’s support of terrorism,

suspicious of its ties to al-

Qaida, I have seen no evidence, acts, or

involvement in the planning or execution

of the vicious attacks of 9/11.

While Iraq has aided terrorism for

many years, there are any number of

regimes who have aided terrorism, including

some with far more direct links

to Osama bin Laden’s network of terror.

In this regard, I note the first conclusion

in the Central Intelligence

Agency’s declassified letter to Chairman

Bob Graham of Florida dated October

7 of this year which states that

at present, Iraq does not appear to be

planning or sponsoring terrorism

aimed at the United States.

Yet, had the administration met this

threshold test, in my view, it has still

not met the rest of what I consider to

be prudent criteria. While the President

has stated his desire to seek alternative

means to accomplish his goals

before beginning a military strike, to

grant the President the authority to

conduct a first-strike war before first

witnessing the exhaustion of those efforts

is to abdicate the obligations of

this body in its most sacred role. The

Founding Fathers surely envisaged a

more challenging inquiry when granting

the Congress the responsibility of

authorizing armed conflict.

On my second point, while I am not

privy to the administration’s war

plans, I am of the belief the administration

is satisfactorily preparing for a

potential enlargement of the conflict

with Israel or other allies. I am concerned

this issue has not been adequately

addressed.

I do believe the administration needs

to outline in further detail how they

would address issues with respect to

the enlargement of the conflict, and I

want to make clear I do not believe

that point has been addressed clearly

and fully to date. The possibility this

conflict would be enlarged with an attack

on Iraq to one that involves Israel

is one I think needs to be laid out and

laid out clearly.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly

for my purposes, I reached the

conclusion that pursuit of a first-strike

war, absent any credible sign Saddam

Hussein is preparing to wage war

against our Nation or other nations,

will leave this Nation less secure than

before. I believe we have to look at

greater length at these key questions,

and I do not believe that has been done

to date.

It is the sacred duty of the Senate to

focus and act upon the long-term interests

of our beloved Nation. Saddam

Hussein is an extremely dangerous and

extremely despicable man. Time and

again, he has demonstrated that to his

enemies, as well as his own people. He

lives in a part of the world where there

is no shortage of dangerous and despicable

men who pose a threat to the

security of the United States. In my

service on the Senate Intelligence

Committee, I have not seen satisfactory

evidence he is any more despicable

than the threat presented by

Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran.

In summary, those are the central

questions. Making sure we have exhausted

all of the diplomatic opportunities

before one considers a first

strike, making sure we are ready to

deal with the region after a first strike

and one that, in my judgment, we are

clearly going to win, the unanswered

questions of what happens when there

is an attack on Iraq and the possibility

of enlarging the conflict to Israel—

these questions have not been addressed,

and they have not been addressed

fully.

There is no question in my mind Saddam

Hussein represents a very real

threat to this country and to the

world, but I do not want to, in the days

ahead, compound the problems we already

face with Hussein in the region

by authorizing a unilateral, preemptive

military strike at this time, and that

is why I will oppose the resolution.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

I thank my distinguished

colleague for the chance to further

discuss this. My colleague makes

a good point that clearly last night in

the President’s speech, and further

today, he made it clear he was interested

in trying to mobilize world opinion,

and I think all of that is extremely

constructive.

At the same time, the letter to Senator

GRAHAM that now has been declassified—

I sit on the Senate Intelligence

Committee—makes it clear the CIA

does not believe, as of October 7 of this

year, the threat is imminent. That is

why I think we have now reached the

point where we are debating whether

there is a continuing threat, which

clearly Saddam Hussein is, or whether

there is an imminent threat. It was the

imminent threat I really set out as one

of the thresholds I thought was relevant

for supporting this resolution.

As the Senator could hear from my

speech, A, I do not doubt the President’s

sincerity; B, I thought what he

said last night was clearly a step in the

right direction, and he elaborated on

that further today.

On this matter with respect to the

nature of the threat, for me what has

been dispositive has been the now-declassified

letter from the CIA where

the CIA did not believe, as of October 7,

the threat was imminent. I thank my

distinguished colleague because he

makes a number of good points, and always

does.

The Senator again

makes a legitimate point, but what we

are talking about now, it seems to

me—and this is what the CIA is talking

about in their letter of October 7—is an

imminent threat to the American people.

It is very clear that conflict is a

hostile one. It is one that must be

countered. It is being countered today.

I do not take a backseat to any Member

of the Senate in terms of supporting

our troops, our military, in

terms of countering that conflict. But

the question for the Senate then becomes

whether a conflict like that

should translate into support in this

body for a resolution that would authorize

a unilateral preemptive strike.

In spite of all of the attacks which

the distinguished Senator from Virginia

has mentioned—and they are

very serious ones—as of October 7 of

this year, the CIA did not believe there

was an imminent threat to our country.

I assume in making that judgment

before the Intelligence Committee, if

they had felt the attacks the Senator

was talking about are dispositive, they

would not have written that letter.

Again, I want our people

who are in harm’s way, as the Senator

has outlined, to be able to counter

that very hostile attack. They are

doing so today under existing law and

it is an effort I support. In spite of

those attacks, the Central Intelligence

Agency stated at present Iraq does not

appear to be planning or sponsoring

terrorism aimed at the United States

which, after 9/11, was the stated concern

that was vital to our national security.