Mr. President, the most

fundamental and painful of decisions—

whether to authorize the President to

send U.S. military personnel to war—is

being confronted by the Senate today,

previous days, and maybe more days. I

believe the decision is in good hands.

I have had the privilege of serving in

this body for nearly 30 years. The men

and women in this chamber are the respected

servants of the American people.

I have faith in my fellow Senators.

For 3 days in August and 2 days in

September, the Foreign Relations

Committee heard testimony on the

possibility of American military action

against Iraq. We heard 23 witnesses, including

current and former Secretaries

of State, former National Security Advisors,

a number of experts on Iraq

from academia and from prominent research

institutes, an important defector

from Iraq’s nuclear weapons program,

retired senior level military officers,

and former members of U.N. inspections

teams in Iraq.

The chairman of the committee, Senator

BIDEN, deserves our thanks for

conducting these hearings in a fair and

comprehensive manner.

The hearings established some fundamental

points that deserve repeating

here on the floor.

First, the threat posed by the Iraqi

regime to American national security

is serious and growing. Former Secretary

of State Madeleine Albright testified

that after U.N. inspectors were

banished by Iraq in 1998, ‘‘. . . the risk

that Saddam Hussein will succeed in

reconstituting deliverable weapons of

mass destruction has increased. It is in

the interest not only of the United

States but also of the entire international

community to act.’’

Former U.S. Ambassador to the

United Nationals Richard Holbrooke

similarly stated: ‘‘in my view, Saddam

is even more dangerous than [former

Serbian leader Slobodan] Milosevic,

given his continuing quest for weapons

of mass destruction. Left alone, he will

only seek to become stronger.’’

Now, neither of these two eminent

individuals share all of President

Bush’s foreign policy priorities. But

both concede that the threat is real,

and growing.

Second, three former high-ranking

members of the U.N. Special Commission

agreed that inspections will fail to

stop Iraq’s development of weapons of

mass destruction. Charles Deulfer stated

that, in his opinion, inspections

‘‘are only a short term palliative and

do not address the fundamental problem.

Saddam knows this.’’

Ambassador Robert Gallucci noted

that ‘‘We can assume that any regime

that appeared as though it would be effective

in blocking Iraqi WMD acquisition

would also be resisted by Iraq.

Therefore, the only way to impose such

a regime short of war would be to pose

to Iraq the credible alternative of a

prompt invasion and regime change if

the inspection regime change if the inspection

regime resisted.’’

Lastly, Ambassador Richard Butler,

the former head of the inspections

team, warned that inspections were

doomed to fail if Saddam succeeds once

again in what Butler calls the ‘‘shell

game—phony inspections, more deceit,

more concealment.’’ ‘‘That would,’’ he

concluded, ‘‘be deeply dangerous, providing

an illusion of security.’’

Third, a variety of witnesses, including

Secretary Powell, agreed that containment

of the Iraq threat, our policy

since the end of Operation Desert

Storm, is no longer suitable.

Secretary Powell told the committee

that the box that contains Saddam

Hussein’s murderous ambitions cannot

last much longer. Secretary Powell,

said, ‘‘[Saddam] continues to bounce

against the walls of that box. And one

of these days he’ll have a box cutter

and he’ll be out. And we don’t want to

wait and see that day.’’

Ambassador Butler also suggested

that containment no longer works. He

told the committee, ‘‘we also need a

specific solution to the specific problems

posed by this particular and, I

suggest, unique outlaw.’’ Former Secretary

of Defense Caspar Weinberger,

National Security Advisor Robert

McFarlane, and Dr. Khidir Hamza,

former Iraqi nuclear weapons designer,

all noted Saddam’s absolute commitment

to the development of weapons of

mass destruction, especially nuclear

weapons.

Secretary Weinberger also noted that

Saddam’s ability to smuggle goods in

and out of Iraq, despite U.N. sanctions,

earns him billions of dollars per year—

money that goes to develop weapons of

mass destruction.

In hearings before other committees,

our able Secretary of Defense, Donald

Rumsfeld, has pointed out that the

problem is not inspections but disarmament.

Saddam has succeeded in circumventing

sanctions and containment

to the point where we no longer have

the luxury of waiting idly by while he

continues to develop the means to

threaten us and our allies.

The President’s policy is the only

way to deal with Iraq today, and we are

obliged to give him maximum flexibility

to carry it out. Even as the

President develops a coalition, we cannot

yield to a few countries like China

or Russia that would allow Saddam to

evade full disarmament.

We can no longer countenance

Saddam’s delays and obfuscations. The

President, in his speech to the Nation

Monday night, articulated a series of

options to deal with the Iraqi regime of

Saddam Hussein. He displayed the essence

of leadership, moving forward in

the face of evil. Diplomacy absent demonstrated

resolve—which was our policy

too often in the past—will continue

to prove absolutely ineffectual.

I do hope Senators will stand with

the President today. He has shown the

leadership necessary to rid the world of

Saddam Hussein. We should demonstrate

that same leadership and authorize

the President to do what is now

so clearly necessary.

I yield the floor.