Mr. President, I thank

my good friend from Arizona for his introduction

and for his generous comments

about the role that Senator

HAGEL and I have played.

My colleague, Senator HAGEL, and I

share seats on the Foreign Relations

Committee. We have both followed this

issue for a long period of time.

Obviously, with respect to an issue

that might take Americans to war, we

deserve time, and there is no more important

debate to be had on the floor of

the Senate. It is in the greatest traditions

of this institution, and I am

proud to take part in that debate now.

This is a debate that should be conducted

without regard to parties, to

politics, to labels. It is a debate that

has to come from the gut of each and

every Member, and I am confident that

it does. I know for Senator HAGEL, Senator

MCCAIN, and myself, when we pick

up the newspapers and read about the

residuals of the Vietnam war, there is

a particular sensitivity because I do

not think any of us feel a residual with

respect to the choices we are making

now.

I know for myself back in that period

of time, even as I protested the war, I

wrote that if my Nation was again

threatened and Americans made the

decision we needed to defend ourselves,

I would be among the first to put on a

uniform again and go and do that.

We are facing a very different world

today than we have ever faced before.

September 11 changed a lot, but other

things have changed: Globalization,

technology, a smaller planet, the difficulties

of radical fundamentalism,

the crosscurrents of religion and politics.

We are living in an age where the

dangers are different and they require

a different response, different thinking,

and different approaches than we have

applied in the past.

Most importantly, it is a time when

international institutions must rise to

the occasion and seek new authority

and a new measure of respect.

In approaching the question of this

resolution, I wish the timing were different.

I wish for the sake of the country

we were not here now at this moment.

There are legitimate questions

about that timing. But none of the underlying

realities of the threat, none of

the underlying realities of the choices

we face are altered because they are, in

fact, the same as they were in 1991

when we discovered those weapons

when the teams went in, and in 1998

when the teams were kicked out.

With respect to Saddam Hussein and

the threat he presents, we must ask

ourselves a simple question: Why? Why

is Saddam Hussein pursuing weapons

that most nations have agreed to limit

or give up? Why is Saddam Hussein

guilty of breaking his own cease-fire

agreement with the international community?

Why is Saddam Hussein attempting

to develop nuclear weapons

when most nations don’t even try, and

responsible nations that have them attempt

to limit their potential for disaster?

Why did Saddam Hussein threaten

and provoke? Why does he develop

missiles that exceed allowable limits?

Why did Saddam Hussein lie and deceive

the inspection teams previously?

Why did Saddam Hussein not account

for all of the weapons of mass destruction

which UNSCOM identified? Why is

he seeking to develop unmanned airborne

vehicles for delivery of biological

agents?

Does he do all of these things because

he wants to live by international

standards of behavior? Because he respects

international law? Because he is

a nice guy underneath it all and the

world should trust him?

It would be naive to the point of

grave danger not to believe that, left to

his own devices, Saddam Hussein will

provoke, misjudge, or stumble into a

future, more dangerous confrontation

with the civilized world. He has as

much as promised it. He has already

created a stunning track record of miscalculation.

He miscalculated an 8-year

war with Iran. He miscalculated the invasion

of Kuwait. He miscalculated

America’s responses to it. He miscalculated

the result of setting oil rigs on

fire. He miscalculated the impact of

sending Scuds into Israel. He miscalculated

his own military might. He miscalculated

the Arab world’s response to

his plight. He miscalculated in attempting

an assassination of a former

President of the United States. And he

is miscalculating now America’s judgments

about his miscalculations.

All those miscalculations are compounded

by the rest of history. A brutal,

oppressive dictator, guilty of personally

murdering and condoning murder

and torture, grotesque violence

against women, execution of political

opponents, a war criminal who used

chemical weapons against another nation

and, of course, as we know,

against his own people, the Kurds. He

has diverted funds from the Oil-for-

Food program, intended by the international

community to go to his own

people. He has supported and harbored

terrorist groups, particularly radical

Palestinian groups such as Abu Nidal,

and he has given money to families of

suicide murderers in Israel.

I mention these not because they are

a cause to go to war in and of themselves,

as the President previously suggested,

but because they tell a lot

about the threat of the weapons of

mass destruction and the nature of this

man. We should not go to war because

these things are in his past, but we

should be prepared to go to war because

of what they tell us about the future.

It is the total of all of these acts

that provided the foundation for the

world’s determination in 1991 at the

end of the gulf war that Saddam Hussein

must:

Saddam Hussein signed that agreement.

Saddam Hussein is in office

today because of that agreement. It is

the only reason he survived in 1991. In

1991, the world collectively made a

judgment that this man should not

have weapons of mass destruction. And

we are here today in the year 2002 with

an uninspected 4-year interval during

which time we know through intelligence

he not only has kept them, but

he continues to grow them.

I believe the record of Saddam Hussein’s

ruthless, reckless breach of

international values and standards of

behavior which is at the core of the

cease-fire agreement, with no reach, no

stretch, is cause enough for the world

community to hold him accountable by

use of force, if necessary. The threat of

Saddam Hussein with weapons of mass

destruction is real, but as I said, it is

not new. It has been with us since the

end of that war, and particularly in the

last 4 years we know after Operation

Desert Fox failed to force him to reaccept

them, that he has continued to

build those weapons.

He has had a free hand for 4 years to

reconstitute these weapons, allowing

the world, during the interval, to lose

the focus we had on weapons of mass

destruction and the issue of proliferation.

The Senate worked to urge action in

early 1998. I joined with Senator

MCCAIN, Senator HAGEL, and other

Senators, in a resolution urging the

President to ‘‘take all necessary and

appropriate actions to respond to the

threat posed by Iraq’s refusal to end

his weapons of mass destruction program.’’

That was 1998 that we thought

we needed a more serious response.

Later in the year, Congress enacted

legislation declaring Iraq in material,

unacceptable breach of its disarmament

obligations and urging the

President to take appropriate action to

bring Iraq into compliance. In fact, had

we done so, President Bush could well

have taken his office, backed by our

sense of urgency about holding Saddam

Hussein accountable and, with an

international United Nations, backed a

multilateral stamp of approval record

on a clear demand for the disarmament

of Saddam Hussein’s Iraq. We could

have had that and we would not be here

debating this today. But the administration

missed an opportunity 2 years

ago and particularly a year ago after

September 11. They regrettably, and

even clumsily, complicated their own

case. The events of September 11 created

new understanding of the terrorist

threat and the degree to which every

nation is vulnerable.

That understanding enabled the administration

to form a broad and impressive

coalition against terrorism.

Had the administration tried then to

capitalize on this unity of spirit to

build a coalition to disarm Iraq, we

would not be here in the pressing days

before an election, late in this year, debating

this now. The administration’s

decision to engage on this issue now,

rather than a year ago or earlier, and

the manner in which it has engaged,

has politicized and complicated the national

debate and raised questions

about the credibility of their case.

By beginning its public discourse

with talk of invasion and regime

change, the administration raised

doubts about their bona fides on the

most legitimate justification for war—

that in the post-September 11 world

the unrestrained threat of weapons of

mass destruction in the hands of Saddam

Hussein is unacceptable, and his

refusal to allow U.N. inspectors to return

was in blatant violation of the

1991 cease-fire agreement that left him

in power. By casting about in an

unfocused, undisciplined, overly public,

internal debate for a rationale for war,

the administration complicated their

case, confused the American public,

and compromised America’s credibility

in the eyes of the world community. By

engaging in hasty war talk rather than

focusing on the central issue of Iraq’s

weapons of mass destruction, the administration

placed doubts in the

minds of potential allies, particularly

in the Middle East, where managing

the Arab street is difficult at best.

Against this disarray, it is not surprising

that tough questions began to

be asked and critics began to emerge.

Indeed over the course of the last 6

weeks some of the strongest and most

thoughtful questioning of our Nation’s

Iraq policy has come from what some

observers would say are unlikely

sources: Senators like CHUCK HAGEL

and DICK LUGAR, former Bush Administration

national security experts including

Brent Scowcroft and James

Baker, and distinguished military

voices including General Shalikashvili.

They are asking the tough questions

which must be answered before—and

not after—you commit a nation to a

course that may well lead to war. They

know from their years of experience,

whether on the battlefield as soldiers,

in the Senate, or at the highest levels

of public diplomacy, that you build the

consent of the American people to sustain

military confrontation by asking

questions, not avoiding them. Criticism

and questions do not reflect a

lack of patriotism—they demonstrate

the strength and core values of our

American democracy.

It is love of country, and it is defined

by defense of those policies that protect

and defend our country.

Writing in the New York Times in

early September, I argued that the

American people would never accept

the legitimacy of this war or give their

consent to it unless the administration

first presented detailed evidence of the

threat of Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction

and proved that it had exhausted

all other options to protect

our national security. I laid out a series

of steps that the administration

must take for the legitimacy of our

cause and our ultimate success in

Iraq—seek the advice and approval of

Congress after laying out the evidence

and making the case, and work with

our allies to seek full enforcement of

the existing cease-fire agreement while

simultaneously offering Iraq a clear ultimatum:

accept rigorous inspections

without negotiation or compromise

and without condition.

Those of us who have offered questions

and criticisms—and there are

many in this body and beyond—can

take heart in the fact that those questions

and those criticisms have had an

impact on the debate. They have

changed how we may or may not deal

with Iraq. The Bush administration

began talking about Iraq by suggesting

that congressional consultation and

authorization for the use of force were

not needed. Now they are consulting

with Congress and seeking our authorization.

The administration began this

process walking down a path of

unilateralism. Today they acknowledge

that while we reserve the right to

act alone, it is better to act with allies.

The administration which once seemed

entirely disengaged from the United

Nations ultimately went to the United

Nations and began building international

consensus to hold Saddam

Hussein accountable. The administration

began this process suggesting that

the United States might well go to war

over Saddam Hussein’s failure to return

Kuwaiti property. Last week the

Secretary of State and on Monday

night the President made clear we

would go to war only to disarm Iraq.

The administration began discussion

of Iraq by almost belittling the importance

of arms inspections. Today the

administration has refocused their aim

and made clear we are not in an arbitrary

conflict with one of the world’s

many dictators, but a conflict with a

dictator whom the international community

left in power only because he

agreed not to pursue weapons of mass

destruction. That is why arms inspections—

and I believe ultimately

Saddam’s unwillingness to submit to

fail-safe inspections—is absolutely

critical in building international support

for our case to the world.

That is the way in which you make it

clear to the world that we are contemplating

war not for war’s sake, and not

to accomplish goals that don’t meet

international standards or muster with

respect to national security, but because

weapons inspections may be the

ultimate enforcement mechanism, and

that may be the way in which we ultimately

protect ourselves.

I am pleased that the Bush administration

has recognized the wisdom of

shifting its approach on Iraq. That

shift has made it possible, in my judgment,

for the Senate to move forward

with greater unity, having asked and

begun to answer the questions that

best defend our troops and protect our

national security. The Senate can now

make a determination about this resolution

and, in this historic vote, help

put our country and the world on a

course to begin to answer one fundamental

question—not whether to hold

Saddam Hussein accountable, but how.

I have said publicly for years that

weapons of mass destruction in the

hands of Saddam Hussein pose a real

and grave threat to our security and

that of our allies in the Persian Gulf

region. Saddam Hussein’s record bears

this out.

I have talked about that record. Iraq

never fully accounted for the major

gaps and inconsistencies in declarations

provided to the inspectors of the

pre-Gulf war weapons of mass destruction

program, nor did the Iraq regime

provide credible proof that it had completely

destroyed its weapons and production

infrastructure.

He has continually failed to meet the

obligations imposed by the international

community on Iraq at the end

of the Persian Gulf the Iraqi regime

provide credible proof war to declare

and destroy its weapons of mass destruction

and delivery systems and to

forego the development of nuclear

weapons. during the 7 years of weapons

inspections, the Iraqi regime repeatedly

frustrated the work of the

UNSCOM—Special Commission—inspectors,

culminating in 1998 in their

ouster. Even during the period of inspections,

Iraq never fully accounted

for major gaps and inconsistencies in

declarations provided to the inspectors

of its pre-gulf war WMD programs, nor

did the Iraqi regime provide credible

proof that it had completely destroyed

its weapons stockpiles and production

infrastructure.

It is clear that in the 4 years since

the UNSCOM inspectors were forced

out, Saddam Hussein has continued his

quest for weapons of mass destruction.

According to intelligence, Iraq has

chemical and biological weapons as

well as missiles with ranges in excess

of the 150 kilometer restriction imposed

by the United Nations in the

ceasefire resolution. Although Iraq’s

chemical weapons capability was reduced

during the UNSCOM inspections,

Iraq has maintained its chemical weapons

effort over the last 4 years. Evidence

suggests that it has begun renewed

production of chemical warfare

agents, probably including mustard

gas, sarin, cyclosarin, and VX. Intelligence

reports show that Iraq has invested

more heavily in its biological

weapons programs over the 4 years,

with the result that all key aspects of

this program—R&D, production and

weaponization—are active. Most elements

of the program are larger and

more advanced than they were before

the gulf war. Iraq has some lethal and

incapacitating agents and is capable of

quickly producing and weaponizing a

variety of such agents, including anthrax,

for delivery on a range of vehicles

such as bombs, missiles, aerial

sprayers, and covert operatives which

could bring them to the United States

homeland. Since inspectors left, the

Iraqi regime has energized its missile

program, probably now consisting of a

few dozen Scud-type missiles with

ranges of 650 to 900 kilometers that

could hit Israel, Saudi Arabia and

other U.S. allies in the region. In addition,

Iraq is developing unmanned aerial

vehicles UAVs, capable of delivering

chemical and biological warfare

agents, which could threaten Iraq’s

neighbors as well as American forces in

the Persian Gulf.

Prior to the gulf war, Iraq had an advance

nuclear weapons development

program. Although UNSCOM and IAEA

International Atomic Energy Agency

inspectors learned much about Iraq’s

efforts in this area, Iraq has failed to

provide complete information on all aspects

of its program. Iraq has maintained

its nuclear scientists and technicians

as well as sufficient dual-use

manufacturing capability to support a

reconstituted nuclear weapons program.

Iraqi defectors who once worked

for Iraq’s nuclear weapons establishment

have reportedly told American

officials that acquiring nuclear weapons

is a top priority for Saddam Hussein’s

regime.

According to the CIA’s report, all

U.S. intelligence experts agree that

Iraq is seeking nuclear weapons. There

is little question that Saddam Hussein

wants to develop nuclear weapons. The

more difficult question to answer is

when Iraq could actually achieve this

goal. That depends on is its ability to

acquire weapons-grade fissile material.

If Iraq could acquire this material from

abroad, the CIA estimates that it could

have a nuclear weapon within 1 year.

Absent a foreign supplier, it might be

longer. There is no question that Saddam

Hussein represents a threat. I

have heard even my colleagues who oppose

the President’s resolution say we

have to hold Saddam Hussein accountable.

They also say we have to force

the inspections. And to force the inspections,

you have to be prepared to

use force.

So the issue is not over the question

of whether or not the threat is real, or

whether or not people agree there is a

threat. It is over what means we will

take, and when, in order to try to

eliminate it.

The reason for going to war, if we

must fight, is not because Saddam Hussein

has failed to deliver gulf war prisoners

or Kuwaiti property. As much as

we decry the way he has treated his

people, regime change alone is not a

sufficient reason for going to war, as

desirable as it is to change the regime.

Regime change has been an American

policy under the Clinton administration,

and it is the current policy. I support

the policy. But regime change in

and of itself is not sufficient justification

for going to war—particularly unilaterally—

unless regime change is the

only way to disarm Iraq of the weapons

of mass destruction pursuant to the

United Nations resolution.

As bad as he is, Saddam Hussein, the

dictator, is not the cause of war. Saddam

Hussein sitting in Baghdad with

an arsenal of weapons of mass destruction

is a different matter.

In the wake of September 11, who

among us can say, with any certainty,

to anybody, that those weapons might

not be used against our troops or

against allies in the region? Who can

say that this master of miscalculation

will not develop a weapon of mass destruction

even greater—a nuclear

weapon—then reinvade Kuwait, push

the Kurds out, attack Israel, any number

of scenarios to try to further his

ambitions to be the pan-Arab leader or

simply to confront in the region, and

once again miscalculate the response,

to believe he is stronger because he has

those weapons?

And while the administration has

failed to provide any direct link between

Iraq and the events of September

11, can we afford to ignore the possibility

that Saddam Hussein might accidentally,

as well as purposely, allow

those weapons to slide off to one group

or other in a region where weapons are

the currency of trade? How do we leave

that to chance?

That is why the enforcement mechanism

through the United Nations and

the reality of the potential of the use

of force is so critical to achieve the

protection of long-term interests, not

just of the United States but of the

world, to understand that the dynamic

has changed, that we are living in a different

status today, that we cannot sit

by and be as complacent or even negligent

about weapons of mass destruction

and proliferation as we have been

in the past.

The Iraqi regime’s record over the

decade leaves little doubt that Saddam

Hussein wants to retain his arsenal of

weapons of mass destruction and, obviously,

as we have said, grow it. These

weapons represent an unacceptable

threat.

I want to underscore that this administration

began this debate with a resolution

that granted exceedingly broad

authority to the President to use force.

I regret that some in the Congress

rushed so quickly to support it. I would

have opposed it. It gave the President

the authority to use force not only to

enforce all of the U.N. resolutions as a

cause of war, but also to produce regime

change in Iraq, and to restore

international peace and security in the

Persian Gulf region. It made no mention

of the President’s efforts at the

United Nations or the need to build

multilateral support for whatever

course of action we ultimately would

take.

I am pleased that our pressure, and

the questions we have asked, and the

criticisms that have been raised publicly,

the debate in our democracy has

pushed this administration to adopt

important changes, both in language as

well as in the promises that they

make.

The revised White House text, which

we will vote on, limits the grant of authority

to the President to the use of

force only with respect to Iraq. It does

not empower him to use force throughout

the Persian Gulf region. It authorizes

the President to use Armed Forces

to defend the ‘‘national security’’ of

the United States—a power most of us

believe he already has under the Constitution

as Commander in Chief. And

it empowers him to enforce all ‘‘relevant’’

Security Council resolutions related

to Iraq. None of those resolutions

or, for that matter, any of the other

Security Council resolutions demanding

Iraqi compliance with its international

obligations, calls for a regime

change.

In recent days, the administration

has gone further. They are defining

what ‘‘relevant’’ U.N. Security Council

resolutions mean. When Secretary

Powell testified before our committee,

the Foreign Relations Committee, on

September 26, he was asked what specific

U.N. Security Council resolutions

the United States would go to war to

enforce. His response was clear: the

resolutions dealing with weapons of

mass destruction and the disarmament

of Iraq. In fact, when asked about compliance

with other U.N. resolutions

which do not deal with weapons of

mass destruction, the Secretary said:

When asked why the resolution sent

by the President to Congress requested

authority to enforce all the resolutions

with which Iraq had not complied, the

Secretary told the committee:

In his speech on Monday night, President

Bush confirmed what Secretary

Powell told the committee. In the

clearest presentation to date, the

President laid out a strong, comprehensive,

and compelling argument

why Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction

programs are a threat to the United

States and the international community.

The President said:

Saddam Hussein must disarm himself, or,

for the sake of peace, we will lead a coalition

to disarm him.

This statement left no doubt that the

casus belli for the United States will be

Iraq’s failure to rid itself of weapons of

mass destruction.

I would have preferred that the President

agree to the approach drafted by

Senators BIDEN and LUGAR because

that resolution would authorize the use

of force for the explicit purpose of disarming

Iraq and countering the threat

posed by Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction.

The Biden-Lugar resolution also acknowledges

the importance of the

President’s efforts at the United Nations.

It would require the President,

before exercising the authority granted

in the resolution, to send a determination

to Congress that the United States

tried to seek a new Security Council

resolution or that the threat posed by

Iraq’s WMD is so great he must act absent

a new resolution—a power, incidentally,

that the President of the

United States always has.

I believe this approach would have

provided greater clarity to the American

people about the reason for going

to war and the specific grant of authority.

I think it would have been a better

way to do this. But it does not change

the bottom line of what we are voting

for.

The administration, unwisely, in my

view, rejected the Biden-Lugar approach.

But, perhaps as a nod to the

sponsors, it did agree to a determination

requirement on the status of its

efforts at the United Nations. That is

now embodied in the White House text.

The President has challenged the

United Nations, as he should, and as all

of us in the Senate should, to enforce

its own resolutions vis-a-vis Iraq. And

his administration is now working aggressively

with the Perm 5 members on

the Security Council to reach a consensus.

As he told the American people

Monday night:

Because of my concerns, and because

of the need to understand, with clarity,

what this resolution meant, I traveled

to New York a week ago. I met with

members of the Security Council and

came away with a conviction that they

will indeed move to enforce, that they

understand the need to enforce, if Saddam

Hussein does not fulfill his obligation

to disarm.

And I believe they made it clear that

if the United States operates through

the U.N., and through the Security

Council, they—all of them—will also

bear responsibility for the aftermath of

rebuilding Iraq and for the joint efforts

to do what we need to do as a consequence

of that enforcement.

I talked to Secretary General Kofi

Annan at the end of last week and

again felt a reiteration of the seriousness

with which the United Nations

takes this and that they will respond.

If the President arbitrarily walks

away from this course of action—without

good cause or reason—the legitimacy

of any subsequent action by the

United States against Iraq will be challenged

by the American people and the

international community. And I would

vigorously oppose the President doing

so.

When I vote to give the President of

the United States the authority to use

force, if necessary, to disarm Saddam

Hussein, it is because I believe that a

deadly arsenal of weapons of mass destruction

in his hands is a threat, and

a grave threat, to our security and that

of our allies in the Persian Gulf region.

I will vote yes because I believe it is

the best way to hold Saddam Hussein

accountable. And the administration, I

believe, is now committed to a recognition

that war must be the last option

to address this threat, not the first,

and that we must act in concert with

allies around the globe to make the

world’s case against Saddam Hussein.

As the President made clear earlier

this week, ‘‘Approving this resolution

does not mean that military action is

imminent or unavoidable.’’ It means

‘‘America speaks with one voice.’’

Let me be clear, the vote I will give

to the President is for one reason and

one reason only: To disarm Iraq of

weapons of mass destruction, if we cannot

accomplish that objective through

new, tough weapons inspections in

joint concert with our allies.

In giving the President this authority,

I expect him to fulfill the commitments

he has made to the American

people in recent days—to work with

the United Nations Security Council to

adopt a new resolution setting out

tough and immediate inspection requirements,

and to act with our allies

at our side if we have to disarm Saddam

Hussein by force. If he fails to do

so, I will be among the first to speak

out.

If we do wind up going to war with

Iraq, it is imperative that we do so

with others in the international community,

unless there is a showing of a

grave, imminent—and I emphasize

‘‘imminent’’—threat to this country

which requires the President to respond

in a way that protects our immediate

national security needs.

Prime Minister Tony Blair has recognized

a similar need to distinguish how

we approach this. He has said that he

believes we should move in concert

with allies, and he has promised his

own party that he will not do so otherwise.

The administration may not be in

the habit of building coalitions, but

that is what they need to do. And it is

what can be done. If we go it alone

without reason, we risk inflaming an

entire region, breeding a new generation

of terrorists, a new cadre of anti-

American zealots, and we will be less

secure, not more secure, at the end of

the day, even with Saddam Hussein disarmed.

Let there be no doubt or confusion

about where we stand on this. I will

support a multilateral effort to disarm

him by force, if we ever exhaust those

other options, as the President has

promised, but I will not support a unilateral

U.S. war against Iraq unless

that threat is imminent and the multilateral

effort has not proven possible

under any circumstances.

In voting to grant the President the

authority, I am not giving him carte

blanche to run roughshod over every

country that poses or may pose some

kind of potential threat to the United

States. Every nation has the right to

act preemptively, if it faces an imminent

and grave threat, for its self-defense

under the standards of law. The

threat we face today with Iraq does not

meet that test yet. I emphasize ‘‘yet.’’

Yes, it is grave because of the deadliness

of Saddam Hussein’s arsenal and

the very high probability that he

might use these weapons one day if not

disarmed. But it is not imminent, and

no one in the CIA, no intelligence briefing

we have had suggests it is imminent.

None of our intelligence reports

suggest that he is about to launch an

attack.

The argument for going to war

against Iraq is rooted in enforcement

of the international community’s demand

that he disarm. It is not rooted

in the doctrine of preemption. Nor is

the grant of authority in this resolution

an acknowledgment that Congress

accepts or agrees with the President’s

new strategic doctrine of preemption.

Just the opposite. This resolution

clearly limits the authority given to

the President to use force in Iraq, and

Iraq only, and for the specific purpose

of defending the United States against

the threat posed by Iraq and enforcing

relevant Security Council resolutions.

The definition of purpose circumscribes

the authority given to the

President to the use of force to disarm

Iraq because only Iraq’s weapons of

mass destruction meet the two criteria

laid out in this resolution.

Congressional action on this resolution

is not the end of our national debate

on how best to disarm Iraq. Nor

does it mean we have exhausted all of

our peaceful options to achieve this

goal. There is much more to be done.

The administration must continue its

efforts to build support at the United

Nations for a new, unfettered, unconditional

weapons inspection regime. If we

can eliminate the threat posed by

Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction

through inspections, whenever, wherever,

and however we want them, including

in palaces—and I am highly

skeptical, given the full record, given

their past practices, that we can necessarily

achieve that—then we have an

obligation to try that as the first

course of action before we expend

American lives in any further effort.

American success in the Persian Gulf

war was enhanced by the creation of an

international coalition. Our coalition

partners picked up the overwhelming

burden of the cost of that war. It is imperative

that the administration continue

to work to multilateralize the

current effort against Iraq. If the administration’s

initiatives at the United

Nations are real and sincere, other nations

are more likely to invest, to

stand behind our efforts to force Iraq

to disarm, be it through a new, rigorous,

no-nonsense program of inspection,

or if necessary, through the use of

force. That is the best way to proceed.

The United States, without question,

has the military power to enter this

conflict unilaterally. But we do need

friends. We need logistical support such

as bases, command and control centers,

overflight rights from allies in the region.

And most importantly, we need

to be able to successfully wage the war

on terror simultaneously. That war on

terror depends more than anything else

on the sharing of intelligence. That

sharing of intelligence depends more

than anything else on the cooperation

of countries in the region. If we disrupt

that, we could disrupt the possibilities

of the capacity of that war to be most

effectively waged.

I believe the support from the region

will come only if they are convinced of

the credibility of our arguments and

the legitimacy of our mission. The

United Nations never has veto power

over any measure the United States

needs to take to protect our national

security. But it is in our interest to try

to act with our allies, if at all possible.

And that should be because the burden

of eliminating the threat posed by

weapons of mass destruction should

not be ours alone. It should not be the

American people’s alone.

If in the end these efforts fail, and if

in the end we are at war, we will have

an obligation, ultimately, to the Iraqi

people with whom we are not at war.

This is a war against a regime, mostly

one man. So other nations in the region

and all of us will need to help create

an Iraq that is a place and a force

for stability and openness in the region.

That effort is going to be long

term, costly, and not without difficulty,

given Iraq’s ethnic and religious

divisions and history of domestic

turbulence. In Afghanistan, the administration

has given more lip service

than resources to the rebuilding effort.

We cannot allow that to happen in

Iraq, and we must be prepared to stay

the course over however many years it

takes to do it right.

The challenge is great: An administration

which made nation building a

dirty word needs to develop a comprehensive,

Marshall-type plan, if it

will meet the challenge. The President

needs to give the American people a

fairer and fuller, clearer understanding

of the magnitude and long-term financial

cost of that effort.

The international community’s support

will be critical because we will not

be able to rebuild Iraq singlehandedly.

We will lack the credibility and the expertise

and the capacity.

It is clear the Senate is about to give

the President the authority he has requested

sometime in the next days.

Whether the President will have to use

that authority depends ultimately on

Saddam Hussein. Saddam Hussein has

a choice: He can continue to defy the

international community, or he can

fulfill his longstanding obligations to

disarm. He is the person who has

brought the world to this brink of confrontation.

He is the dictator who can

end the stalemate simply by following

the terms of the agreement which left

him in power.

By standing with the President, Congress

would demonstrate our Nation is

united in its determination to take

away that arsenal, and we are affirming

the President’s right and responsibility

to keep the American people

safe. One of the lessons I learned from

fighting in a very different war, at a

different time, is we need the consent

of the American people for our mission

to be legitimate and sustainable. I do

know what it means, as does Senator

HAGEL, to fight in a war where that

consent is lost, where allies are in

short supply, where conditions are hostile,

and the mission is ill-defined.

That is why I believe so strongly before

one American soldier steps foot on

Iraqi soil, the American people must

understand completely its urgency.

They need to know we put our country

in the position of ultimate strength

and that we have no options, short of

war, to eliminate a threat we could not

tolerate.

I believe the work we have begun in

this Senate, by offering questions, and

not blind acquiescence, has helped put

our Nation on a responsible course. It

has succeeded, certainly, in putting

Saddam Hussein on notice that he will

be held accountable; but it also has put

the administration on notice we will

hold them accountable for the means

by which we do this.

It is through constant questioning we

will stay the course, and that is a

course that will ultimately defend our

troops and protect our national security.

President Kennedy faced a similar

difficult challenge in the days of the

Cuban missile crisis. He decided not to

proceed, I might add, preemptively. He

decided to show the evidence and proceeded

through the international institutions.

He said at the time:

So I believe the Senate will make it

clear, and the country will make it

clear, that we will not be blackmailed

or extorted by these weapons, and we

will not permit the United Nations—an

institution we have worked hard to

nurture and create—to simply be ignored

by this dictator.

I yield the floor.