Madam President, before

he departs the floor, I commend my

colleague from Nebraska. I regret—it is

late in the day, and I am sure there is

going to be more speechifying tomorrow

on this subject matter—but I regret

there were not more Members

present to hear his comments.

Senator HAGEL is one of the most

thoughtful Members of this body. When

he talks about the sum of all our parts

and talks about being a father and a

soldier, it is always in our interest to

listen to those who have worn the military

uniform into combat when we debate

the issues of war and peace because

they know more than just intellectually

and theoretically what the

price can be.

I believe I should give my remarks

because I have written these things

out, but I can associate myself with

the comments of my friend from Nebraska.

He pretty much couches a lot

of my thinking on how this has

evolved, where we are, what we have

come to this evening, the pace at which

we are moving, the regrets I feel about

how I wish this debate were being conducted

under circumstances other than

on the eve of an election in this country

where already the campaign spots

are running wildly one way or the

other in terms of where people are. So

I commend the Senator for his comments

this afternoon on this subject

matter.

I come this afternoon to speak about

the subject which is on the minds not

only of all of us but I think millions of

our constituents across the country,

the possibility of going to war against

Iraq.

On Monday night, President Bush, I

think, spoke for all of us. I know of no

one who really disagrees at all. He described

Saddam Hussein as a homicidal

dictator who is addicted to weapons of

mass destruction. It is that addiction

that demands a strong response. We all

agree on that. There is no question

that Iraq possesses biological and

chemical weapons and that he seeks to

acquire additional weapons of mass destruction,

including nuclear weapons.

That is not in debate. I also agree with

President Bush that Saddam Hussein is

a threat to peace and must be disarmed,

to quote President Bush directly.

I suspect virtually every Member

of this Chamber would not vary too

much with those conclusions.

How imminent that threat is, unfortunately,

has been extremely difficult

to assess. This is because of a troubling

new trend by the intelligence agencies

to not just give us information and objective

analysis but, in my opinion, too

often to insert themselves into policymaking.

That is not their job. It is not

the job of the intelligence agencies to

make policy. It is their job to provide

others in the executive branch and the

Congress with neutral information,

with facts on which we will ultimately

base our policy judgments.

This is a very troubling trend, in my

view, which I believe ought to stop. If

we are to go to war, it is even more important

that we trust the information

given by the intelligence agencies.

Nevertheless, this week we are debating

because there are profound disagreements

over how, when, and with

whom we should act to deal with the

threat posed by Iraq.

To have a different answer to these

questions than the President should

not be considered unpatriotic or partisan.

Unfortunately, that is the kind

of rhetoric we are hearing too often

today.

Let’s be honest. We are less than 30

days out from a national congressional

election in this country. That is never

an easy time for the Congress and the

executive branch to come together on

much of anything, let alone the question

of war and peace.

Some in this Chamber have said the

eve of an election is in fact the best

time for Members of Congress to make

decisions such as these. I could not disagree

more. As my good friend and colleague,

Senator BYRD, has passionately

reminded us every day this week, forcing

a vote on this issue so close to an

election will, whether we like it or not,

embroil the issue in politics more than

usual.

The campaign ads running across

this country speak for themselves.

Forcing Congress’s hand on this important

matter does a disservice, I believe,

to the American public and to this

most profound and serious debate. But

now we have no choice but to consider

the matter and to vote on the issues of

this utmost gravity, the issues of war

and peace and of life and death, for

those who will engage in it.

The President has asked Congress to

grant him the authority to use force

against Iraq, if he deems it necessary,

and Congress will provide the President

with the authority to respond effectively

to the threat posed by Iraq. But

we will do so only after careful consideration

of all of the stakes involved.

My colleagues, Senator BYRD, Senator

KENNEDY, Senator LEVIN, and others,

have done an outstanding job of

highlighting their questions and concerns,

reflecting the questions and concerns

raised by millions of Americans

across political and economic lines,

across geographic lines in this country;

questions and concerns regarding the

use of force and the resolution the

President originally sent to Congress, a

number of these concerns which I think

many of us share.

Many of us believe the language of

the President’s original request was

too far reaching, empowering the

President to use all means necessary

that he would determine appropriate,

including force, to restore peace and

stability to the region. That was an

open invitation for an American military

involvement in the broad context

of the Middle East. And the language

was far too unilateral. It did not even

mention a role for the United Nations

or our allies.

Thanks to the efforts of our congressional

leaders—and I commend specifically

Senator DASCHLE and others—we

now have a compromise resolution, a

modified resolution, correcting many

of the evident flaws in the initial resolution

that was sent to us.

The resolution now before us is limited

to Iraq, and it contemplates the

possibility of resolving this threat

peacefully through the use of diplomacy.

It also acknowledges the importance

of maintaining our focus on our

continuing war on terrorism as we consider

what action to take in Iraq.

Despite these changes, of course,

questions do remain. First and foremost,

will the President use the authority

granted by Congress to go it

alone? Or will he take the time to build

the international coalition that the

overwhelming majority of Americans

believe is the better course of action to

follow?

If he chooses to go it alone, I believe

that will be a terrible mistake, and I

think millions of others in this country

do as well. Given the geography and

the politics of the region in the Middle

East, I do not see how the United

States could engage Iraq militarily,

without the help of others, without seriously

undermining our chances of

success. And it would be terribly destabilizing

to the entire region.

There are many reasons for acting

with international support.

I have already commended the President

for his decision to look first to the

United Nations to answer these questions.

On September 12, speaking before

the United Nations General Assembly,

President Bush enumerated

Iraq’s repeated failures to meet its

international obligations.

The U.N. has been a valued body for

the last one-half of the 20th century. It

has not always done what we wanted.

It has not always acted deliberately. It

has not always acted with the kind of

force and direction that many of us

wish it would have. But think what the

world would have looked like over the

last 50 years had there not been a

United Nations to have a forum where

the world gathers to try to resolve the

many conflicts that confront us.

It has not served our interests well to

have national leadership ridicule this

institution. We are the founders, in

many ways, of the U.N. system. It was

the great leaders in the post-World War

II period who insisted we try to frame

an international body where we might

resolve disputes other than going

through what we did throughout World

War II. My hope would be that as dark

as these clouds may seem as we debate

and consider the issue of Iraq, that this

may be an opportunity for the institution

of the United Nations to mature

into the 21st century role it must if we

are going to succeed in the efforts

against terrorism, the efforts against

Iraq or other problems that will

emerge, without any question, in the

coming years.

My hope will be that this U.N. will

look at what we are doing, listen to

what we are saying as one nation, and

consider how important its role must

be in the coming weeks and months. If

there ever were a set of circumstances

that justified U.N. action, I believe it is

now on Iraq, without any question.

If the framework of international

law, developed at the U.N. over the last

50 years to protect peace and security,

is to stand, then the U.N. must act

with leadership. It is my sincere hope

that the President has the patience and

staying power to make the U.N. work

in support of our interests.

There is also no question that the

President’s speech, in which he called

for a more engaged U.N., got Saddam

Hussein’s attention. Iraq quickly announced

its willingness to permit

weapons inspections beginning as early

as the middle of October.

At the end of the day, I suspect Iraq

will accept whatever terms are ultimately

contained in a final version of

the U.N. resolution now under consideration.

To be credible, however, that

resolution must have teeth. It must be

enforceable, by military means, if necessary,

should Iraq fail to comply with

any new disarmament regime.

I also have questions about the ultimate

goal of U.S. strategy, what it is

and what it ought to be. Is it the destruction

of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction

or the Iraqi regime itself?

Secretary of State Colin Powell was definitive

before the Senate Foreign Relations

Committee in saying—and I

quote him—regime change for its own

sake was not the administration’s goal.

Specifically, he stated:

Many Members are still very concerned

that President Bush has regime

change on his mind. If anything, Monday

night’s speech clarified this position

when he said that ‘‘regime change

in Iraq is the only certain means of removing

a great danger to our Nation.’’

I hope the President will heed the advice

of his Secretary of State and keep

our eye on the ball. Iraq’s weapons of

mass destruction should be our immediate

threat or seen as our immediate

threat, not some two-bit dictator that

Saddam Hussein is. It is the weapons of

mass destruction; but for those we

would not be here debating or discussing

the matter we are this evening.

Finally, I still have concerns about

how the President intends to manage

the war on terrorism if we confront

Iraq militarily. September 11 revealed

Saddam Hussein is not the only or perhaps

even the greatest threat to our

national security. Those who hold no

allegiance to any state, who have no

name or return address, are a far greater

threat to America and the American

way of life. As recent arrests in Buffalo,

NY, and Portland, OR, remind us,

these threats are not always in some

distant land. The United States acting

without global support could divert our

military intelligence assets away from

our global effort to combat terrorism

and to uproot terrorist organizations.

It could also weaken the multilateral

coalition forged over the last 12

months to combat this international

scourge.

I state for the record I do not hold

some ironclad view that the United

States should never use force or act

alone. And I believe that the President

of the United States already has the

authority as Commander in Chief to

deploy military force to protect America

against all imminent threats. The

pending resolution recognizes this reality.

The fact is, unless force is a real

option, our resolution will not have the

credibility needed to, once and for all,

get Saddam Hussein’s full attention on

this matter.

As I said earlier, I accept the proposition

that we must deal with the Iraqi

threat. I stand prepared, as almost all

of our colleagues do, to support the

unilateral use of force against Iraq but

only if U.N. or other multinational efforts

prove ineffective, or if Saddam

Hussein is using them as a guise to rebuild

his offensive weapons capabilities.

We still have time to do this right.

After I complete my remarks.

We still have time to do this right.

We should have an opportunity to debate

and vote on all meaningful alternatives

to the pending resolution, regardless

of parliamentary technicalities.

For that reason, I join with my

colleague, Senator BYRD, in opposing

cloture when we vote on this issue tomorrow.

I am not persuaded that the

situation is so dire that a few more

days or an additional week of deliberations

at the U.N. will be harmful to our

interests.

I have been in this body 22 years. The

unique role of the Senate is the role of

debate, unlimited debate. It is what

makes us fundamentally different from

the Chamber down the hall. If there are

Members of this body who wish to be

heard and wish to offer meaningful

ideas to something as critical as this,

then asking this body to take a few

more days to weigh and discuss those

matters ought not to be denied. We are

invoking cloture too often. I know people

are interested in efficiency, but if

efficiency was the only goal of the

Founding Fathers, they never would

have created this body to begin with.

They understood the importance of debate

and discussion when a matter of

this magnitude and this significance is

before the American public.

I don’t know how many others intend

to support my colleague from West Virginia,

but I do, not because I necessarily

agree with him in his final

conclusion, but I stand to defend his

right to be heard and to see to it that

he has the opportunity to exhaust his

ideas, to share them not only with Senators

but with the American people. I

hope cloture will not necessarily be invoked

prematurely.

Our own CIA Director states the likelihood

of Iraq using weapons of mass

destruction against the United States

or passing them off to terrorists to do

so is currently long. The real risk

emerges should Saddam Hussein believe

an attack by the United States is

imminent. That is according to press

accounts today.

I hope the President does not see the

passage of a resolution in the Congress

as a termination state for his efforts at

the United Nations but rather as a sign

of unity and support of continued effort

by the United States to elicit further

action by the United Nations.

Senators BIDEN, LUGAR, Senator

HAGEL and others crafted an approach

to this issue that I found extremely

constructive. I regret the administration

did not endorse their ideas. This

week’s debate would be far less contentious

had they done so. Their idea was,

of course, to focus on the weapons of

mass destruction, a multilateral force,

unilateral action if the U.N. efforts or

multilateral efforts failed and serious

thoughts about what you do to win the

peace after the conflict is over. That

idea will not be offered as an alternative.

I regret that is the case. It is an

idea that I found potentially rather attractive.

Some very important elements of the

Biden-Lugar draft resolution have been

incorporated in the White House compromise

language. I commend the

White House, those that have been involved

in crafting this resolution for

including this language.

First in this resolution there is an

acknowledgment of U.S. efforts within

the United Nations Security Council to

forge international agreement on a

prompt and decisive strategy to compel

Iraqi compliance and the explicit congressional

endorsement of such evidence.

Second, the requirement that the

President make several important determinations

before exercising any

military option; namely, ‘‘that further

diplomatic or other peaceful means

alone will not adequately protect the

national security of the United

States.’’ And that our efforts to fight

international terrorism will not be undermined

by military action against

Iraq. Those determinations are going

to be extremely important.

Third, and most importantly, the

narrowing of the President’s authority

to use force to specifically defend the

national security of the United States

against a threat posed by Iraq’s possession

of weapons of mass destruction. As

I noted earlier, Secretary Colin Powell

made it clear in testimony before the

Senate and in remarks elsewhere, that

it is Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction

that is the threat to our national security.

If Iraq disarms or is disarmed,

then the immediate threat to our security

would evaporate and force would

not be necessary. The benefits of that

outcome should be obvious to all.

Finally, the new language recognizes

the need to have in place an effective

exit strategy should military force

prove unavoidable. These changes in

the original text of the resolution are

extremely important. Without them, I

would not be able to consider support

of this legislation.

Let me sum up where this Senator

stands on this. I support Senator

BYRD’s motion because more time is

needed. It is not a burden on this body

to consider questions and to listen to

Members. We should not be cut off in

debate in being heard on a matter of

this importance and significance. I regret

Senators BIDEN and LUGAR and

others have not moved forward with

their proposal. It was the most comprehensive

approach, in my view, to

dealing with the questions of weapons

of mass destruction, U.N. involvement

in the aftermath of the conflict.

Third, I think every effort ought to

be made to resolve this threat as peacefully

as possible.

Fourth, that if military force becomes

necessary, every effort must be

made to do it multilaterally either

through the U.N. or multilateral coalitions.

Fifth, I believe the more immediate

threat is international terrorism, and

that such a threat can only be contained

through collective action.

Sixth, if we must act unilaterally,

then the threat must be clear, grave,

and imminent.

Last, in cases of preemptive action,

we must be even more sure the threat

is immediate and grave for the obvious

reasons of setting precedent that other

nations may model in conflicts that

threat everyone around the globe.

The context within which I deliberated

over the difficult decision on

how I would vote on this imperfect resolution

has been hard, always being

mindful of the dangers that could result

from granting authority contained

in this resolution. Ultimately, my

main reason for supporting the resolution

is that I believe the chances of

avoiding war with Iraq are enhanced

substantially if this country is united

as a nation.

I know members of the United Nations

Security Council are listening to

this debate very intently and are going

to watch this vote very carefully.

American unity will strengthen, I believe,

the President’s hand in convincing

members of the Security Council

that the civilized world must act

and must unite in its action.

Today, in joining with many of my

colleagues in support of this resolution,

I do so in the fervent hope that

this show of unity in authorizing the

President to use force will reduce the

likelihood that force will ultimately be

necessary.

I yield the floor.

I made the point. Certainly

my point is that we should try

to resolve this matter without conflict,

if possible.

There was some confusion about

that, when I listened to the Secretary

of State and the President, as to

whether it is regime change or weapons

of mass destruction. There is a lot of

confusion in the American public about

that as well.

Let us assume they are going to

come together and try to resolve that

without any conflict. It ought to be

done. I think the President’s father did

it well and right back in 1991 with a coalition.

It worked better than imagined.

It certainly set a precedent for

how we are going to deal or should deal

with matters in the future.

I have said the reason I am supporting

the resolution is that I believe

it will strengthen our hand at the

United Nations to get them to act with

some assertiveness. But I also have

said, at the end of the day, if the security

interests of the United States are

in jeopardy and there is nothing else to

be done in the United Nations, or if

other coalitions would not support us,

we will never leave the security of this

country, this Nation, vulnerable and

solely dependent upon the willingness

of the international organizations to

support us.

Let me respond very

quickly on that.

I understand the management of bills

here. I spent 9 days on election reform

with 46 amendments; 100 were offered. I

think election reform is a pretty important

issue. But I don’t think it is

more important than the issue we are

discussing today.

My point simply was to say, on matters

such as this, that the role of the

Senate is so critically important and

the Founders intended it to be such

that if Members of this body, elected to

this body, feel strongly and passionately

about being heard on this matter

and have ideas they wish to contribute

to the debate, we ought to be most reluctant

to deprive a Member of this

body of the opportunity to be heard.

I understand the significance of moving

quickly. But it is dangerous indeed

on a matter of this gravity to curtail

debate to merely try to get a resolution

adopted quickly. I want to hear

what my colleagues have to say. I

know we are going to come to a conclusion

on this fairly quickly. But to cut

off debate prematurely I think would

be a mistake.