Mr. President, I

first want to commend, in the very

strongest terms, the very able Senator

from Michigan, chairman of the Armed

Services Committee, for the powerful

statement he just made and for the

analysis he has brought to this critically

important issue.

In my judgment, he has drawn the essential

lines of distinction and differentiation.

They are reflected in the

amendment that is now before us,

which I hope will be adopted tomorrow

when it is offered as a substitute to the

pending Lieberman proposal.

At the end of World War II, the

United States stood astride the world

like a colossus. We were preeminently

the most powerful nation—in some respects,

more powerful even than we are

today, although we are once again certainly

the most powerful nation. At

the end of World War II, the United

States had an overwhelming military

capacity and overwhelming economic

strength, but at that time we chose to

act multilaterally, to make our way in

the world on the basis of cooperation,

to help found the United Nations. The

United States played a leading role in

creating the U.N. framework and has

exercised extraordinary influence within

it ever since.

The question of how we are to exercise

our power is a critically important

question. We need to recognize that,

for it is at issue here. We face a real dividing

line: are we going to seek to exercise

our power in cooperation, in coordination

with others, which in the

current context means working

through the United Nations; or are we

going to move down the path of asserting

a unilateral preemptive prerogative,

in effect, asserting our right to do

what we want anywhere, anytime, to

anyone. The comprehensive strategic

doctrine that the administration issued

only a short while ago would take us

down that unilateral path.

It goes without saying, as the able

Senator from Michigan pointed out,

that the United States has an inherent

right of self-defense; this right is recognized

in his amendment. In fact,

international law and the United Nations

Charter both recognize that inherent

right to use military force in

self-defense.

But as the Senator very carefully

pointed out in his most thoughtful

statement, under international law

that inherent right to use military

force in self-defense is justified in response

to an imminent threat. Now we

have an effort to change that standard.

I think such a change is fraught with

danger both for our position in the

world and for our leadership status.

We have to re-affirm the long-standing

principle that the most effective

way to accomplish our goals is to work

in concert with others. No one is proposing

to give away our ultimate authority

to act. The President can always

come back to us to seek such an

authorization. In fact, if the Senator

from Michigan will yield for a question——

As I read the

amendment, the Senator provides that

the President could come back to Congress

to seek authority if he decided it

was necessary to proceed on the unilateral

path; is that correct?

On the other hand,

his amendment provides an authority

to act in support of multilateral action,

as reflected in the adoption of a

U.N. resolution, which would seek to

deal with the threat Saddam Hussein

presents to the region and to the world;

is that correct?

Mr. President, this

is an extremely important point. It is

not enough to be strong; you have to be

smart as well. You have to be both

strong and smart. If we insist on acting

alone, the potential consequences are

obviously very great.

First of all—although it has been asserted

by some to the contrary—many

believe it will impede and adversely affect

the war against terrorism. Why do

they believe that? Because the war

against terrorism, as Brent Scowcroft

has pointed out in a number of articles,

requires the cooperation of other nations,

the broadest possible coalition of

nations. We need the contributions of

their intelligence services. We need

their cooperation in tracing and cutting

off money that is going to fund

terrorist activities. We need other nations

to help us monitor and control

the movement of people across frontiers

and borders. If the United States

says to the rest of the world that we

are just going to go our own way, we

will be hard put to turn around and expect

a high degree of cooperation and

participation when we need it badly.

We have to work with others. There is

no question about that.

Efforts are underway at the U.N. now

to develop a very strong resolution as

the basis for sending the inspectors

back into Iraq. I support that effort. I

don’t understand those who seem to

just dismiss the possibility of what the

inspectors might accomplish. Others

have said that the inspection system

was futile, that Saddam played games

with the inspectors and made it impossible

for them to see the total picture.

I don’t differ with that. But I want to

emphasize that the inspectors did a

very good job. They discovered and destroyed

a lot of weaponry, and they

very substantially reduced Saddam’s

capabilities.

I fail to understand why, if we have

the opportunity to send them back

under terms that will enable them to

do their job, we would not pursue that

option before resorting to military

force. Why would we not do that? Why

would we not explore to the limit the

possibility of resolving the situation

without having to resort to war?

Think of the experience of the past

fifty-plus years. International cooperation

has worked brilliantly for the

United States for over half a century.

President Truman, President Eisenhower,

and their successors, faced

grave provocations at critical turning

points but refrained from taking unilateral

military action. There were

some who argued at the end of World

War II that the United States should

attack the Soviet Union, at a time

when the United States had a nuclear

capability and the Soviet Union did

not. That argument was rejected,

rightly, by President Truman.

We had the foresight and the wisdom

at the time to see the importance of

cooperative international relationships

to protecting our security broadly defined.

Our security is not one-dimensional:

it encompasses military matters,

of course, but also economic and

political matters. The United States

must work in a world environment in

which we seek to maximize cooperation.

We run great dangers if we proceed

unilaterally.

This amendment says, in effect, that

at the present time the Congress is not

going to provide an authority for unilateral

action. It also says that if the

President concludes that such action is

necessary, he can come back to the

Congress and request the necessary authority.

This is an effort to support a

multilateral effort.

Does anyone seriously contest the

proposition that if we act in concert

with other nations, if the U.S. action

has the support of the international

community, then the possibility of turbulence

in other countries in the region,

with which we have had important

longstanding relationships, will be

much less, and the support that will

come from elsewhere in the world will

be much greater?

Furthermore, consider for a moment

the precedent we are setting if we

adopt this model of unilateral preemptive

action.

We have worked very hard to try to

develop international law in the United

Nations institutions which can check

the danger that countries will seek to

attack others, but if we assert our

right to undertake preemptive action

on a unilateral basis, act can do a unilateral

preemption, what will keep

other countries from doing the same,

and using our action as their justification?

A very tense situation exists between

India and Pakistan, and in other parts

of the world. What message do we send

by acting unilaterally? This is a very

important question for us, especially as

we are now so powerful.

Interestingly enough, the more powerful

you are, the more urgent this

question becomes. Stanley Hoffmann

has made this point in a very thoughtful

and provocative article, and I ask

unanimous consent the article be

printed in the RECORD at the end of my

remarks——

Stanley Hoffmann

has pointed out it is precisely the most

powerful state that has the greatest interest

in links of reciprocity, international

law, and mutual restraint;

that a superpower must take special

care not to provoke the united resistance

of lesser powers. The challenge,

and it is a challenge, is to work cooperatively,

through the international institutions.

In doing so we join with

others to register a judgment of the entire

international community, and we

can then use our strength to carry out

this judgment of the international

community, again in cooperation with

others. Failure to do that, I think, is

fraught with dangers for our continued

leadership position in the world.

It seems to me the distinction made

in this amendment is a critical one. It

reserves to the United States the power

to act in self-defense. It provides authority

to back a U.N. action and it

leaves open, of course, the possibility

of the President’s coming back to the

Congress to request an authority to act

unilaterally, which would then enable

us to assess the circumstances and the

consequences under those circumstances

of granting such an action.

We have an opportunity here to

achieve our ends—the destruction of

this program of weapons of mass destruction,

assuming that is our end—

without resorting to unilateral military

action, and I think that is the option

we should pursue at this time.

As a matter of fact, the authority

contained in the underlying resolution

cites Iraq’s violation of all previous

U.N. resolutions as a basis for acting.

Some of those previous resolutions did

not deal with the issue of weapons of

mass destruction at all. One dealt with

violations of the oil embargo. Another

dealt with accounting for missing prisoners

of war. Is it intended that we authorize

the use of military force to

achieve the objectives of these and

other resolutions not directed to the

issue of weapons of mass destruction? I

would hope not. But in fact that is precisely

what the underlying resolution,

the Warner-Lieberman resolution, provides,

and what the administration

supports.

I am not going to address the very

broad resolution that the President

originally sent here. I find it difficult

to understand the administration’s reasoning

in sending such a proposal to

the Congress, given the thinking it represented

about the role of the Congress

in making a decision with respect to

the use of military force. On a matter

as grave and momentous as this, it is a

matter of great concern.

That resolution was apparently written

in the White House counsel’s office.

It was not written at the State Department.

It was not written by those who

have had to deal with these difficult

and complex issues. It created such

concern when it was first sent to the

Hill that efforts were subsequently

made to modify it somewhat. But the

basic difficulty remains: like its predecessor,

the revised resolution posits

unilateral and not multilateral action.

I think the United States at this

point needs to focus all its energies on

acting in concert with the international

community to send a very

strong message to Saddam Hussein.

That message will be much stronger for

having the support of the international

community and representing the judgement

of the international community.

To those who say, Suppose they don’t

act? I would respond that we will consider

the matter in the light of that

circumstance. But the chances are better,

I think, that the international

community will act through the United

Nations if the U.S. makes its case and

calls upon other nations to join in the

effort.

To those who say that by seeking

multilateral, U.N. action we are giving

the U.N. a veto over the right of the

U.S. to use its military power to defend

itself, I say that is absolutely not the

case. Under international law the inherent

right to self-defense is precisely

defined and recognized. We seek a U.N.

resolution to reflect the judgement of

the international community, and

through that resolution we seek to accomplish

our objectives.

Congressman HOUGHTON of New York

had an interesting statement on the

floor of the House last night. He said:

The right decision at the wrong time is

the wrong decision. I think we should

keep that in mind as we think about

how the United States ought to proceed.

Mr. President, I strongly urge my

colleagues to think through very carefully

the implications of a go-it-alone

strategy. We need to work with others.

We ought to join in a common effort.

Other nations can be supportive in numerous

ways. Anyone who talks about

the situation knows that if force is

eventually used against Iraq, there will

have to be major reconstruction afterwards.

Everyone acknowledges this.

Who will do it? Will the U.S. do it

alone? We can hardly draw much comfort

from what we are doing in Afghanistan.

We had an amazing, very successful

military action, and yet we now

run the risk of having success turn into

failure. Afghanistan is in the very earliest

stages of reconstruction: its entire

infrastructure needs to be rebuilt;

the central government has no effective

control of the country and barely

of the capital. Its elected President

Hamid Karzai is a man of great courage.

He has asked for continuing international

support. He said over the

weekend:

International forces are in Afghanistan,

and the world has registered a

judgment there. I frankly think the

United States could and should be

doing more than it currently is to assure

the progress of the Afghan reconstruction.

We have an important stake

there, much too important to relegate

to a back seat. On the contrary, we

must remain focused, to make sure

that it is carried through to success.

My perception of

the underlying resolution is that it

says to the world the following: we are

here, we want to get this resolution, we

want to work together, but if you will

not do it our way, then we are going to

do it unilaterally, and in any event we

assert the right to act unilaterally. It

is part and parcel of the new strategic

doctrine that has just been announced.

For the life of me I do not understand

why the administration chose this particular

moment to proclaim this doctrine,

which obviously raises ll sorts of

additional red flags about what their

intentions with respect to the U.S. role

around the world.

There is no question that the United

States is the most powerful country in

the world. I do not recall the precise

figure, but the American military

budget is more than the sum of I do not

know how many countries that follow

along behind us. Yes, we have incredible

military resources and power. We

can go around the world and whack

anybody we choose. We can brush almost

anyone aside.

But is that what we want for our nation?

Is that the way we choose to conduct

ourselves? Why would we make

such a choice when we have an opportunity,

if we are smart and skillful and

have the underlying military strength,

to work in a way that brings the rest of

the international community into concert

with us?

We have an opportunity to help formulate

the judgement of the international

community against someone

who has clearly violated international

norms and standards, and to have that

judgement carried out. Why would we

not seek to do so?

That is the path the Levin proposal

lays out. It avoids the downside of having

the United States asserting a unilateral

right as the basis for its action.

We should not throw away the opportunity

to work through the United Nations

and in concert with others to accomplish

our objectives with respect to

disarming Iraq, and also to set very important

precedents and standards for

the international community in dealing

with problems of this kind. It is

frustrating to think that we might not

avail ourselves of this opportunity.

What will we say when some other

country decides to engage in preemptive

action on a unilateral basis? If

we condemn the action, arguing that it

aggravates tensions and creates chaos

in the international world, the response

will be that we have no basis for

criticism—if we did it, why should

other countries be kept from doing it?

What message will our actions send to

countries in other parts of the world

where tensions run very high?

I close with a plea to my colleagues

to recognize the fundamental distinction

between unilateral and multilateral

action. I ask my colleagues to consider

how important it is for our future,

in so many ways—not just in

military and security terms, but also

for our economic and political and indeed

the whole range of our interests—

that we seek to work with others and

not set out on a path of unilateral action.

That the U.S. has such great military

resources at its command makes

the decision that much more urgent. It

may seem paradoxical, as Stanley Hoffman

has observed, so powerful a nation

should choose to work in concert with

other nations rather than through willful

imposition of its power on others.

But that principle has served our national

interests well, and that is where

our long-term interests lie.