I thank the Chair. I

thank the distinguished Senator from

Oklahoma for the opportunity to go

forward.

I rise tonight to express my views on

what has become the overriding issue

before the Senate and our Nation as we

close out the 107th Congress: the authorization

of the use of military force

against Iraq and in what context and

under what circumstances such an operation

might take place.

This issue has been one on which I

have given much thought and careful

analysis. This decision quite literally

has life-and-death implications, not

just for our courageous men and

women in uniform but for all Americans

across our homeland, for your

family and mine.

No decision we take can weigh more

heavily on our hearts and minds, particularly

in light of the exposed

vulnerabilities and tragic events of

September 11, 2001. This is as important

an issue as any of us will ever

face. It requires a sober and calculating

weight of the costs and benefits to our

Nation.

Ultimately, our decision will shape

the nature of the U.S. leadership as the

first among equals in the post-cold-war

world, and our decision sets a precedent

for ourselves and for those who

take our lead in the 21st century for

good or evil.

No one argues that Saddam Hussein’s

brutal and criminal regime should be

tolerated. He and his regime are evil.

We all accept that Hussein uses torture

and terrorism to advance his political

goals. He constructs palaces while his

people starve. He stockpiles biological

and chemical weapons. At times, these

weapons of mass destruction have been

unleashed against the Iraqi people and

his enemies.

All of us are concerned that the Iraqi

regime is seeking to develop nuclear

weapons contrary to international law

and U.N. resolutions. With deference to

these circumstances and probable

facts, the United Nations and the world

community must act swiftly and decisively

in response to the Iraqi threat.

As my colleague Senator KERRY said

earlier today: The question is not

whether Saddam Hussein should be

held accountable to disarm; the question

is how. Should disarmament be

imposed by the United States alone or

with the weight of global public opinion

behind it? To answer the question

how, one needs to consider the context

of the broader role America plays as a

single remaining superpower.

As I see it, America should make

every effort to build a global coalition

to achieve our objective of disarming

Iraq. This effort should be considered

our first priority in these grave circumstances.

Building an international

coalition will give moral authority to

our challenge, share the sacrifices that

will be incurred, and set a positive

precedent for the future in foreign relations

among nations.

The benefits of working cooperatively

with other countries have been a

cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy since

the end of World War II. That is why

the United States worked to create the

United Nations in the very first instance.

Strangely, this administration has

sometimes appeared to consider multilateral

support for a military campaign

to be an unnecessary inconvenience.

Even in light of our unprecedented

international support and cooperation

following the tragedy of 9/11—some 90

nations if I am not mistaken—it was

only after the President delivered his

September 12 speech at the United Nations

that he began visible and serious

outreach to the global community.

This week, the President in his

speech in Cincinnati went further to

embrace a multilateral approach. I

support what he expressed in that

speech. In my view, we must reinforce

his recent instincts. We all know at the

end of the day the United States always

retains the inherent right to act

unilaterally in self-defense. With that

understanding, I believe strongly we

must not stop pursuing, however, the

support of the world community before

acting alone.

The United States may be the strongest

country in the world militarily. We

still need allies. We need help with logistics.

We need intelligence cooperation

and overflight rights to help us

succeed. That is in the short run. And

after the military campaign is over, we

will need help in the long run reconstructing

Iraq and rebuilding a civil society.

But if the world community is

not with us when we take off, it will be

hard to ask for their help when we

land.

Our Nation has been well served if we

share the human and financial sacrifices

required to prosecute the war

and keep the peace, and we will be well

served in the future if we follow that

pattern. Unless we have the support of

our allies, it will be difficult to ask

them for humanitarian assistance in

helping to feed, clothe, and heal the

Iraqi people or reestablishing the rule

of law.

It will be difficult to ask for assistance

for peacekeeping and

nationbuilding activities. In the past,

the current administration has been

somewhat reticent to support these

kinds of operations. As a case in point,

we relied on the armed forces of other

countries, for example, to restore law

and order in Afghanistan. Yet if other

countries had not been committed from

the beginning, they would have been

much less likely to participate once

the fighting was over.

Unilateralism also brings with us

great costs—most importantly, costs in

the precious lives of our men and

women in uniform, people who serve us

bravely.

It also brings us costs as we saw in

the gulf war. The United States had

relatively low out-of-pocket expenses.

The reason was, we had a coalition of

nations. Although the Congressional

Research Service notes that war cost

about $80 billion, much of that was covered

by allied contributions.

Without allies, the United States, it

is projected, will have to shoulder by

itself the $100 billion to $200 billion

pricetag suggested by the administration

for the current war. I have seen

higher estimates. It really depends on

how long our participation in the

peacekeeping and nationbuilding efforts

will go on afterwards.

It should not be lost on the American

people that we are still in Korea, 50

some years after our intervention. In

other words, unilateralism is expensive

and its cost—crowd out other priorities

on the Nation’s agenda from our first

responders to our first graders.

Unfortunately, by authorizing force

before a multilateral approach has

been devised, the President’s resolution

provides no assurance that the world

community will be actively involved in

either the military campaign or, more

importantly, the reconstruction efforts.

In the long run, the Bush doctrine of

unilateral preemption embedded in the

underlying resolution would set an

awful example for the world community—

a precedent based on the concept

of survival of the fittest.

For generations, the United States

has decried the aggression of foreign

governments across the globe. We

fought the patriotic and just fights

against the Nazis and Communists who

sought world domination. How in the

future can we criticize Russia for attacking

Georgia or stop India from

taking action against Pakistan or believe

Taiwan will be safe from China?

Many countries may feel threats, continuing

or imminent. They, too, could

argue preemptive rights. The underlying

resolution would codify the Bush

preemption doctrine in precedent and

could undermine our moral authority

and leadership credibility in limiting

future conflicts around the globe.

Furthermore, by advancing a policy

of unilateral preemption, we could be

encouraging state sponsors of terrorism

such as Iran and Syria to form

unholy alliances with just the kinds of

agents of terror that caused the horrific

events of September 11. Iran,

Iraq’s mortal enemy, actually opposes

a U.S. invasion of Iraq. Why is that?

Perhaps because Iran fears that if the

U.S. attacks Iraq today, we might attack

Iran tomorrow. Clearly, the thawing

of relations between these two U.S.

adversaries should give us pause. One

can only wonder what Iran’s instructions

to their agents of terror will be in

a world where they feel threatened

under a preemption doctrine.

Earlier this week, Senator GRAHAM

introduced an amendment which authorized

the President to use force

against several identified dangerous

terrorist groups, including Iranianlinked

Hezbollah and Hamas. I supported

that amendment because I believe

that those foreign terrorist organizations

represent an even higher

order risk to American security than

Iraq.

Like al-Qaida, these organizations

have the clear means of delivery. These

terrorist groups may already be operating

in our homeland. I am concerned

that, at some level, Iraq may be a dangerous

distraction from America’s war

on terrorism. While the United States

military has certainly disrupted the

activities of the al-Qaida network, no

one should doubt that al-Qaida and its

sympathizers continue to operate. The

administration tells the American people

this almost every week.

These groups continue to plot ways

to undermine the American way of life

and our security. As the United States

considers its future course of action

with respect to Iraq, a potential threat,

we must assure the American people

that we will not be distracted from the

effort to destroy a proven threat, al-

Qaida and these other terrorist organizations.

That should be our No. 1 priority.

It certainly has been in repeated

statements by the President. I am also

concerned that the resolution we have

before us is structured with an overly

broad scope. It refers to UN Security

Council resolutions that are unrelated

to the primary goal of disarming Iraq

and eliminating its delivery capacity

of weapons of mass destruction.

We must remember that the threat

we feel is not from the Iraqi people but

from the criminal regime’s control of

weapons of mass destruction. And second,

because the underlying resolution

refers to UN Security Council Resolution

678, a resolution that discusses the

importance of returning security to the

‘‘area,’’ we may inadvertently be permitting

military action beyond Iraq.

Potentially, some of these structural

concerns were addressed by other resolutions

that were circulated including

one drafted by Senators BIDEN AND

LUGAR.

There were attempts to define away

some of the broader aspects of the concerns

I relate to in the underlying

Lieberman-Warner resolution, but I am

fearful, as I have suggested, that by

their reference to other U.N. resolutions

that may not be the case.

I certainly believe we could have

done better through the Biden-Lugar

approach.

Finally, I am troubled my the fact

that Congress is being asked to make a

decision on a matter of this gravity

without being fully informed with all

relevant intelligence. It is an unfortunate

fact but many of us, and I can

speak for myself, have often learned

more by reading the New York Times

and the Washington Post than by attending

the secret briefings provided to

Senators.

Even today, we hear about a conflict

between what it is the CIA says is the

likely response of the Saddam Hussein

regime when they no longer have other

options and would be the case as presented

by the administration.

In the future, I hope that the administration

will be more open earlier with

secure briefings in the process so that

Members of Congress can make fully

informed decisions. I think they should

be built upon true intelligence.

It is in this overarching context, that

I will cosponsor and strongly support

the Levin amendment which authorizes

the use of force pursuant to a new UN

security council resolution demanding

swift council resolution demanding

swift, certain, and unconditional inspections

and Iraqi disarmament. The

Levin amendment in no way comprises

the US’ inherent right to self-defense

or Congress’ ability to authorize unilateral

actions if the UN fails to act.

But it embraces the multilateral approach

as a first priority.

This course of action, will bring with

it all the benefits I have sought to outline,

a multilateral approach, without

giving up the right of unilateral approach

as a last resort. In my judgment,

the Levin amendment embraces

the need for the U.S. to lead a dangerous

world to disarm Saddam Hussein

today with a multilateral approach,

while setting a pattern and

precedent that provides for greater security

to the people of the United

States and around the world.

That security will be in today’s circumstances

but it will equally be true

as a guide to the future by its precedent.

As a matter of conscience, barring

substantive changes, I intend to

oppose the underlying Lieberman-Warner

resolution. I yield the floor.