Mr. President, this

morning’s Washington Post has an especially

long editorial. Indeed, it takes

up the entire length of the editorial

page. It is entitled ‘‘Drumbeat on Iraq,

a Response to Readers.’’

I have a dear friend in Utah who

wrote me. She was distraught—is distraught,

I am sure—about the prospect

of going to war and expressed a great

many concerns. I have been in the

process of constructing what I hope is

a responsible and thoughtful response

to her concerns. As I read the editorial

in this morning’s Washington Post, I

found that it does a better job than I

could do of summarizing many, if not

most, of the issues about which she is

concerned. I want to read from sections

of the editorial and then ask unanimous

consent that it be printed in the

RECORD at the end of my remarks.

In the editorial they

say:

As I say, I could not have put it better,

which is why I have quoted it. I

have raised the question on the floor

before: What are the consequences if we

do not follow through in Iraq? Some

have said let’s just leave the troops in

place. And that means Iraq remains

contained.

Leaving the troops in place is not an

option. We must understand that the

troops are where they are, poised to

move into Iraq, because of the agreement

of the governments in Qatar,

Turkey, and Saudi Arabia, among others.

Those governments will not allow

our troops to remain on their soil indefinitely.

They will not allow those

troops to remain there while we contain

Saddam Hussein for 6 months or 12

months or 12 years, which has been the

period of ‘‘containment’’ that we have

seen up until now. We must either

withdraw those troops and say we are

not going to move ahead militarily or,

if Saddam Hussein does not disarm in

accordance with the U.N. resolutions,

those troops will move forward into his

territory. We have no other choice:

Move forward or withdraw.

For those who say the inspectors

should be allowed to do their job, we

must understand that the only reason

the inspectors are there is because the

troops are there. So we are coming

down to the decision point, that is very

clear.

Again, back to the editorial:

I should say that the editorial quotes

President Clinton as outlining the case

against Saddam Hussein in 1998.

There is one other issue that was

raised by my friend in Utah to which

the editorial does not speak. This is

the issue of first strike. My friend says

we cannot cross the line of having the

United States be involved in a first

strike against a nation that has not attacked

us.

One of the arguments I have heard on

this score is that if we do it, we will set

a precedent that will allow other nations

to do it. Other nations that we do

not want to do it will say we can do it

because the United States did.

If I may, without being disrespectful

to that argument, I would point out

that Adolph Hitler did not need a

precedent from the United States to attack

Poland. He made up his own excuse.

He pretended that Poland had attacked

him. He dressed prisoners in

Polish military uniforms, murdered

them, and then had them found by German

soldiers on German soil who said

they were shot as they tried to invade

Germany.

The setting of a precedent by the

United States or the not setting of a

precedent by the United States will

have absolutely no effect on the actions

of a brutal dictator who decides

to attack his neighbors in a first strike

fashion. Saddam Hussein didn’t quote

precedent when he attacked Kuwait in

the early 1990s. He went ahead and did

it, and would have done it again whether

he had precedent or not.

Having said that, however, I want to

review a little bit of American history.

It may not be history of which we are

proud, for those who say we have never

committed a first strike, but it is history

nonetheless of which we must be

aware. I have not taken the time to research

all examples of this because my

memory provides me with enough to

make the point.

I remember when Lyndon Johnson

sent the Marines into the Dominican

Republic, for what purpose I cannot recall.

But this was not a country that

had attacked us and we sent military

forces in there on the grounds that

there was some American interest that

had to be protected.

Ronald Reagan sent the Marines into

Grenada. His reason was that the legitimate

Government of Grenada requested

it.

In his book, ‘‘The Rise and Fall of

the Soviet Empire,’’ Brian Crozier referred

to the American military action

in Grenada as one of the key turning

points in the cold war. He said if the

United States had not moved into Grenada

and removed the Communist government

there, the cold war would

have lasted considerably longer and

been more devastating.

There was no international clamor

against President Reagan when he did

this. He believed it was in America’s

best interests, and at least one historian

has said it was not only in America’s

best interests, it was in the

world’s best interests for Ronald

Reagan to have done what he did in

Grenada.

In the waning days of his Presidency,

the first President Bush sent American

troops into Somalia. Somalia had not

attacked us and did not represent any

threat. The troops were there presumably

on a humanitarian mission, but

they were sent in to deal with a military

situation in that country that

President Bush thought had to be dealt

with. Those troops were withdrawn by

the Clinton administration. But, once

again, this was not a circumstance

where America had been attacked but

one where an American President sent

American troops and there was no

international outcry, no international

complaint.

Shortly after I came to the Senate,

President Clinton invaded Haiti. Our

former colleague, Sam Nunn, was in

Haiti just prior to the time when the

American military entered that country,

and he debriefed a number of us

after he came back. He pointed out

that the only reason there was not

bloodshed when the American troops

entered Haiti was because the former

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,

Colin Powell, went with Senator Nunn

and former President Jimmy Carter to

Haiti and General Powell was able to

convince the Haitian general in charge

of their military that it was not dishonorable

for the Haitian general to

save the lives of his troops and allow

the Americans to come in without

military opposition.

As I recall it from Senator Nunn, the

Haitian general was determined that it

was his duty as a military man to resist

any invasion of his country, no

matter how hopeless that resistance

might be. And he gathered his family

around him, his wife and his children,

hugged them together and said: This is

our last night on Earth because tomorrow

the Americans are invading and I

will be killed.

As I say, General Powell sat down

with the Haitian general, convinced

him that his first duty as a military officer

was to protect the lives of his

troops, and that he was not doing a dishonorable

thing if he did not mount a

hopeless resistance against the Americans.

Once again, there was no international

outcry against the American

decision to send troops into Haiti.

Looking back on it, it was not necessarily

a wise thing to have done. We

replaced a brutal dictator much beloved

by American conservatives with

a brutal dictator much beloved by

American liberals. But the average

Haitian has not seen any improvement

in his or her lifestyle. Indeed, those

who have been to Haiti recently tell me

things are worse now than they were

before the Americans invaded.

Then we have the former Yugoslavia,

a country that represented no threat to

the United States and had not attacked

the United States, but the United

States led a national coalition in war

upon that nation.

Why did we do it? We did it because,

under Milosevic, that nation had produced

enough casualties within its borders

to begin to approach 20 percent of

the size of the Holocaust. They killed

that many of their own people, and the

Americans felt that was a serious

enough challenge to require us to go

ahead.

Now we have just heard a speech by

the Senator from Michigan with respect

to North Korea. We are being

asked, Why are we not doing more with

respect to North Korea? I will not respond

to the Senator from Michigan or

the Democratic leader in that vein. But

I will point out that the attitude

around the world and, indeed, here in

the Senate is why the United States

isn’t taking care of this. If I might add

one word to that question, Why isn’t

the United States taking care of this

unilaterally? In other words, the

United States should handle this all by

themselves, according to speeches that

are made here and in the world community.

I run through this history simply to

make this point: It is not accurate to

say the proposed action in Iraq is either

unprecedented in American history

or illegal under American or

international law. The action that is

proposed with respect to Iraq is in the

tradition of these humanitarian missions

that I have described.

Some of them have gone wrong.

Some of them have turned out not to

produce a humanitarian result. But in

every case there was no prior complaint

raised against the proposal that

we do this on the ground that this was

an unacceptable first strike against a

defenseless neighbor. In every circumstance,

it went forward with full

approval. I voted against the move into

Haiti. But the President appropriately

came to the Congress and got approval

before he did it.

President Bush has come to the Congress,

and by a 77–23 vote in this body

and an equally lopsided vote in the

other body, has approval before he goes

into Iraq. This is not a stealth attack

like Pearl Harbor under the cover of

night. This is something that has been

debated and laid before the United Nations.

The United Nations, by a 15–0

vote in the Security Council, announced

to Iraq if she did not disarm,

she would face serious consequences,

and serious consequences in United Nations

speak means war. This is not

something that is done hidden or in a

corner or in the dark.

So we come back now to the fundamental

question: Is it safer to go ahead

with an operation in Iraq than it is to

pull down the American troops and

bring them home? I agree with the editorial

writers of the Washington Post.

This is an agonizing decision. This is

not one to be made lightly, and I am

sure from conversations with him that

the President is not going to make it

lightly. He is going to weigh all of the

consequences. But I believe in the end

he will come to the same conclusion

that the Washington Post editorial

writers have come to and that I have

come to. Whatever the unknowns on either

side, the present evidence suggests

that the most dangerous thing we

could do with respect to the situation

in Iraq is to back down if Iraq does not

comply with the United Nations resolution.

To pull our troops out of Iraq

does not comply with the demands that

the world has made upon it. The safest

thing to do if Iraq does not comply is

to carry through with the resolution

that was adopted on this floor by an

overwhelming margin, adopted in the

Security Council of the United Nations

unanimously, and not hold back.

I yield the floor.