I ask unanimous consent

that the Senate now return to legislative

session.

Mr. President, I thank

the majority leader, Senator FRIST, for

accommodating my being able to speak

at this moment.

I rise today, after coming from a

hearing of my Foreign Relations Committee,

where Secretary Powell has

just testified. I note at the outset that

I, for one—and I think my view is

shared by many—think Secretary Powell

made a compelling and irrefutable

case yesterday about Saddam Hussein’s

possession of and continued effort to

hide his weapons of mass destruction

and his desire to gain more. But I am

fearful—that is the wrong word—I am

concerned that our understandable

focus on Iraq at this moment is taking

focus off of what I believe to be an

equal, if not more immediate, threat to

U.S. interests and those of our allies. I

speak of Korea.

Last week we learned that North

Korea has moved plutonium fuel rods

out of storage and possibly towards a

production—for everybody listening,

this is complicated stuff and I will explain

what I mean. They announced

today they are beginning their 5 megawatt

nuclear powerplant. What happens

with that type of nuclear powerplant—

which we, until now, had them

shut down with the IAEA, when there

were cameras and inspectors making

sure it was shut down. What happens is

they have fuel rods—as my friend

knows well, fuel is a nuclear power,

produces nuclear power. That spent

rod—in other words, the byproduct of

that process of generating electricity

through nuclear power—that so-called

spent rod is then taken out of that reactor

and, because of the type of reactor

this is, it is the byproduct of that

reactor. It is a spent rod that has plutonium

in it. Plutonium—and I am giving

an unscientific analysis. Not that

the American public could not understand

it, but this is an unscientific

analysis of how it works.

That spent rod is then stored somewhere

because it has a radioactive half

life that is longer than any of us, or

our grandchildren, or great-grandchildren

are going to have. What we

have always worried about is they

would take that spent rod and move it

to a plant not far from the reactor that

generates electricity, such as the lights

that are on in this Chamber, and they

are put in a reprocessing plant.

The reprocessing plant is another

process by which that spent rod that no

longer generates electricity, that has

the fissile material in it, essentially

takes that rod—it is a long rod and it

looks like a big pole, sort of. When it is

put in that reprocessing plant, within 1

month there would be enough plutonium—

figuratively—that comes out of

that rod that is in a different form—

enough plutonium to construct one additional

nuclear bomb. That material

does not lend itself to easy detection.

Geiger counters don’t click when it

passes through a detection area. It is

very hard to pick up, like we pick up

knives in suitcases going through at

the airport. That plutonium is exportable

and hardly detectable. It is the

stuff of which a nuclear bomb is made.

Correct, and prophetic! How then, do

we explain the administration’s muted

response to the world’s worst

proliferator taking concrete steps that

could permit it to build a nuclear arsenal?

We can’t afford to put this problem

on the back burner just because we are

preoccupied with Iraq and the war on

terrorism. The administration needs to

demonstrate the ability to walk, chew

tobacco, and spit at the same time.

If we follow the hard-headed engagement

prescription, will it work? Will

the North change course?

I don’t know. It’s impossible to know

for sure unless we try. I say the odds,

frankly, are stacked against us, and

would have been stacked against us

even if we hadn’t wasted the last 2

years.

Pyongyang says it wants to resolve

all of the United States’ security concerns,

including the ‘‘nuclear issue,’’

and will do so if the United States formally

assures the DPRK of nonaggression.

Is this price too high? Can the

North be counted on to fulfill its side

of the bargain?

Prior to his departure for Pyongyang

in 1994, President Carter was briefed by

the State Department on the current

situation in North Korea—its economy,

military capabilities, diplomatic initiatives.

He kept coming back to one

question, ‘‘What does North Korea

want?’’

He answered the question himself

with one word: RESPECT. The underlying

cause of the 1994 crisis and the

current one are the same.

North Korea is weak, isolated, and

incapable of rescuing itself. Largely

cut off from Chinese and Russian support,

the DPRK is profoundly insecure.

South Korea’s economy has made possible

a revolution in military affairs,

and U.S. military prowess has been

proved repeatedly in the Gulf, the Balkans,

and most recently in Afghanistan.

By contrast the North’s conventional

military forces are obsolete, its

training budget minuscule.

The North is one of the obvious targets

of a new so-called ‘‘preemptive’’

military doctrine, and it is witnessing

a military buildup in the Persian Gulf

designed to oust Saddam Hussein from

power in the very near future.

The message to Pyongyang could not

be more clear: ‘‘Be afraid. Be very

afraid.’’

Fine, Deterrence works, up to a

point, and I am not against reminding

North Korea of our military prowess.

But only comprehensive negotiations

have a change to move Pyongyang

back from the precipice it is approaching.

The administration should overcome

its distaste for dealing with Kim

Chong-il and engage the North in serious,

high level, bilateral discussions to

end the North’s nuclear program once

and for all.

Demanding that Pyongyang unconditionally

surrender before the United

States will engage in talks is a nice

fantasy policy, but it has absolutely no

hope in the real world.

We should instead adopt a posture of

‘‘more for more.’’ The President is

right when he resists ‘‘paying’’ North

Korea to abide by the agreements it

has already signed. But that is not

what I’m talking about. The agreed

framework left too much undone. Our

objective should not be to restore the

status quo ante.

Rather, we need to seek the removal

of all of the spent fuel rods from the

Yongbyon nuclear reactor. We need

verifiably to dismantle the North’s

highly enriched uranium program. We

need to account for the 8–9 kilograms

of plutonium ‘‘missing’’ since 1994, and

do so sooner. rather than later. We

need to get North Korea back inside

the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty

and return the inspectors to monitor

the North’s conduct.

Long term, we need to address the

North’s development and export of ballistic

missiles and its abominable

human rights records.

To get there, we must bring something

to the table other than threats

and insults.

The North isn’t looking for money

from us. That can come from South

Korea, Japan, our allies, in the form of

trade, aid, investment, and war reparations.

The North is looking for respect and

security. These are precious commodities.

The North must earn them. But

in the end, it seems a small price to

pay if the outcome is a denuclearized

Peninsula with North and South living

in peace.

If you have a piece of plutonium that

has a base bigger in circumference than

the bottom of the jar I am holding up

and about as half as thick and you

have the right instrument, the right rifling

effect—you know how a bullet

that has gunpowder in it and a piece of

metal at the end of it, the stuff that

goes through your body, the bullet has

to be directed some way; it has to be,

in effect, ignited some way.

What happens is you have a rifle with

a firing pin. It has a long tube. You hit

the back of it, and it explodes the gunpowder,

fires this projectile through

the rifle, through the long muzzle, and

it goes certain distances based on its

configuration.

That is what happens when you have

these two pieces of plutonium, if you

can get your hands on them, and you

put it in a nuclear device they call a

rifle device. If you can smash those two

pieces of plutonium together at the appropriate

speed in the appropriate

sphere, you can have, with just those

two small pieces, a 1-kiloton bomb. A

nuclear chain reaction starts when

those pieces collide in the right circumstances.

If one of those weapons is homemade—

it does not have to be put in a

missile. Because it is classified, I am

not able to tell you, but I know my

friend knows because he has full access,

as I do. If we put that so-called

rifle device which is, like that old saying,

bigger than a bread box but smaller

than a Mack truck—it is somewhere

in between—if you put that in place in

a stationary position and detonate it,

you would have been able to take down

the World Trade Towers in, I believe it

was 3 seconds—do not hold me to that,

but very few seconds—and kill about

100,000 people according to our experts.

Because this material is highly

undetectable and moveable, it is of

considerable concern.

What does this have to do with anything?

Why am I standing here when

we may be able to go to war in Iraq if

Saddam does not make the right

choice? Why am I talking about this?

What happened is, the North Koreans,

who are trying to blackmail us

and the world, who are the bad guys,

who are doing the wrong thing and are

doing it on their own—I am not suggesting

anything we did produced that

or made them do that—they are saying:

We are going forward, and we just

turned the light switch on in our 5-

megawatt nuclear reactor that will

only produce more spent rods—follow

me?—the stuff from which you get plutonium,

but we have 8,000 of these

spent rods sitting in another location.

But all we have to do is take these

spent rods or the new ones we get and

take them over to that reprocessing

plant. We have not clicked the light

switch on in that plant yet, but we

promised you we would not switch the

light on in our nuclear powerplant, and

we are saying: No, we are out; we are

out of the arms control regime; we are

going ahead and switching the light on,

and if you do not talk to us—basically,

blackmail—we are going ahead and

switching the light on in the reprocessing

facility.

That puts the President in a very difficult

position, and I am not suggesting

this is an easy call. At the end of December,

the administration indicated

that it intended to take a careful and

deliberative approach to the emerging

crisis on the peninsula.

The emerging crisis occurred when

they blocked the cameras of the IAEA,

kicked the inspectors out, and they

went dark; we did not know what they

were doing. Fortunately, we have

COMINT and HUMINT, my friend

knows, a fancy way of saying human

intelligence on the ground and satellites

above, that give us a pretty

good idea what they are doing because

we know where the reprocessing plant

and nuclear plant are.

I think the administration took a

fairly reasoned approach. They declared:

We have months to watch this unfold and

see what happens.

Other administration officials, including

the President, conveyed the

importance of patience in assessing and

responding to North Korean threats.

Were North Korea 3 to 5 years away

from acquiring additional nuclear

weapons, this patience in diplomacy

would be very appropriate. However,

there are 8,000 spent-fuel rods in North

Korea, which may now be moving out

of storage, that can yield enough fissile

material for five or six additional nuclear

weapons.

The time line for reprocessing this

spent fuel is a mere 5 to 6 months, but

it gets worse. The North Koreans are

likely to reprocess plutonium from

spent-fuel rods in small batches. They

do not have to take the 8,000 spent-fuel

rods and start to reprocess them,

meaning that the plutonium emerges a

few grams at a time. Enough plutonium

to produce one nuclear weapon

can be ready in less than 5 weeks, according

to our intelligence people and

our scientists at the laboratories, after

the initial spent fuel—those 8,000

rods—enter the reprocessing plant, not

8,000 of them but some of them.

The clock is already ticking, and I

think it is important that the administration’s

assessment of the recent reports

that North Korea has begun removing

some or all of those 8,000 spentfuel

rods from those storage facilities—

tell us how this development will impact

on the overall policy of the administration

in terms of patience.

Just restarting this reactor could

produce another 6 kilograms of plutonium,

in addition to those that are sitting

in these rods right now. If

Pyongyang completes construction of

two unfinished, but much larger nuclear

reactors, it could produce as

much as 275 kilograms of weaponsgrade

plutonium each year.

When the administration says North

Korea’s reprocessing, if they started, is

not a crisis, it seems to me it makes a

very unhealthy suggestion, and that is

that the only use of this reprocessed

plutonium, the stuff that can go right

into a bomb, a nuclear weapon, that

the only use they will use it for is to

make another six or eight nuclear

weapons.

They have, we think, one or two nuclear

bombs now, from the time we

shut down the process. We worked out

an agreement that they shut down the

process, and everybody agrees it was

shut down in 1994.

I would have to agree with the administration

because I think deterrence

works. They seem to have a dual

standard here. They say the reason we

have to build a national missile defense

is if deterrence does not work, and now

they tell us basically: Do not worry, it

does not materially change the situation

on the peninsula if they get another

three, four, five, or eight nuclear

weapons. I think it does. Apparently

they agree deterrence does work somehow

or they would be much more worried

about it.

I then ask the question, What happens

if they do not take this spent

fuel? What happens if they do not take

it and put it in a weapon? What happens

if they take this plutonium from

the spent fuel and put it in a little canister?

I am told by my staff who is expert

on Korea that their total trade

surplus is about $400 million a year.

If they have this spent fuel, I cannot

imagine they would not be able to find

buyers where they could pick up maybe

$200 million for this. What would Iran

pay for this spent fuel? They are trying

to now generate the ability to reprocess

their own fissile material.

What about al-Qaida, who I might

note is alive and well, unfortunately?

Damaged but well, damaged but in

business. Remember when we saw those

pictures as we took Kandahar, when we

invaded Afghanistan with the multilateral

force? Remember a reporter—I forget

which news organization it was, but

I think it was one of the weekly magazines.

I will not say which one. I remember

clearly, and everyone else will

remember when I say it, they went into

a safe house, I believe it was in

Kandahar, and came out with a diagram—

a safe house meaning a house

occupied by al-Qaida—of an attempt at

what looked like how to produce a nuclear

weapon. Then we got further information

saying there was clear evidence

that al-Qaida had been talking to

two Pakistani nuclear scientists who

know how to and have made nuclear

weapons. So obviously these boys are

trying to figure out how to make a

homemade nuclear device.

So I would like to think, and I agree

the probability is North Korea is not

likely to sell this—I should not say not

likely—may not sell this plutonium.

They may use it all for their own purposes.

What if we are wrong and the ability

to account for this material is virtually

nonexistent, because it is so difficult

to discern and determine where

it is? The reason why our intelligence

service, even after the agreed framework,

is saying we think they have

enough fuel, enough fissile material,

plutonium from the past to have made

one or two nuclear bombs by 1994, we

do not know that. So what happens if

we do not resolve this crisis, draw some

red lines, make it clear what our intention

is and talk with these guys? What

happens if 6 months down the road they

have started up the reprocessing plant

and we know they have enough plutonium

for 6 new nuclear weapons, and

then we get an agreement? They are

going to say we did not really produce

X amount, we produced Y amount, or X

minus whatever. Are we ever going to

know where this material is? This is

dangerous stuff.

As I understand it, the Bush administration

says—which is the preferred

course—we do not want to be

blackmailed. We have to put this into a

multilateral context. Again, I find it

interesting they never wanted to do

anything multilateral but now with regard

to Korea they want to be multilateral,

which is a good idea. They say

China, Russia, South Korea, and Japan

have as much at stake as we do, even

more.

So what we are going to do—and it is

correct if we can get it done—we are

going to say we will negotiate or talk

with North Korea only under the umbrella

of a multilateral meeting called

by the community I just named, where

we are one of the parties.

What are the North Koreans saying?

They are saying it does not matter

what the rest of these guys think. We

want to know what you think. We

know if we do not get a nonaggression

agreement in some form from you, our

legitimacy continues to be at stake.

Do we want to legitimize this illegitimate

regime? No. But here is the

horns of the dilemma. If we do not talk

to them about what it is we insist on in

order to suggest we get a nonaggression

pact or some version of it, if we do

not let it be known, we will never know

whether there could have been an

agreement, and we almost certainly

know that in the near term there will

be plutonium that is unaccounted for

coming out of that country.

My colleagues might say, oh, that is

not true, Joe. All we have to do is we

can take out those reprocessing

plants—and we can, by the way. We can

take them out in a heartbeat. We have

the capacity. We know where they are.

We can blow them up with our missiles,

our jets, our standoff bombers.

Guess what. There are roughly 8,000

pieces of artillery they have sitting

within range of Seoul. One of our

South Korean friends told us, we do not

support you using force against the

North.

How can we go to war with the North

when the South will not support us?

Kind of fascinating, isn’t it?

China says they are prepared to talk

with North Korea but you should not

waste any more time. Talk to them.

South Korea is saying you should talk

to them. In a sense, the President is

put on the horns of another dilemma.

One says we should talk multilateral

because that is the best way to deal

with this, and all our multilateral

partners whom we say should be part of

the discussion say, no, you talk, which

is unfair because China will not step up

to its obligations and its own interest,

in my humble opinion. So much is at

stake for South Korea in terms of the

potential carnage that would occur to

South Koreans, in addition to the 37,000

American forces on the peninsula.

They are saying, whoa, we are not for

you taking out those reactors. We are

not ready to have you call the bluff of

the North.

So what does the President do? Imagine

being President of the United

States and having to make the decision

between shutting down a reactor you

believe to be inimicable to your security

interests, and knowing if you do,

you may very well be in a position of

starting a war—justified in literal

terms, in my view—that would cause

such overwhelming damage to the—and

we would win the war, by the way, but

it would cause such overwhelming

damage to the very people we went to

Korea in the first place to protect, the

South Koreans.

What do we do? I suggest the members

of this administration have the

answer if they listen to the people who

are now in their administration. The

Bush administration claims the ball is

in North Korea’s court. North Korea

says the ball is in our court. From

where I sit, the ball is stuck somewhere

in the net, or not even in the

net. You know how once in awhile

when you were a kid you would fake a

jumpshot from the corner and it would

get wedged between the back corner

and the rim? That is where the ball is

right now. Somebody has to jump up

and put the ball back in play.

How does the ball get put back in

play? There was a report written not

long ago called The Armitage Report.

He happens to be the No. 2 guy at the

State Department now. In that report,

Mr. Armitage and others—including

the following people: Paul Wolfowitz,

the No. 2 guy at Defense; the former

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense,

Peter Brookes; current Assistant Secretary

of Intelligence and Research,

Carl Ford, among others. They are all

part of this Armitage Report filed before

President Bush became President—

called for a policy of hardheaded

engagement, developing close coordination

with our allies and backed by a

credible threat of military force. Their

prescription was remarkably close to

that offered by former Secretary of Defense

Perry, but has the tremendous

political advantage of having been embraced

by so many leading figures on

the Bush foreign policy team, the people

running the show now.

What did Armitage advocate? Here

are the key recommendations.

First, regain the diplomatic initiative.

U.S. policy toward North Korea

has ‘‘become largely reactive and predictable

with U.S. diplomacy characterized

by a cycle of North Korea provocation

or demand and an American response.’’

Good idea. Now the Bush administration

claims the ball is in their court, as

I said.

The second recommendation was ‘‘a

new approach must treat the agreed

framework as the beginning of a policy

toward North Korea, not as an end to

the problem. It should clearly formulate

answers to two key questions.

First, what precisely do we want from

North Korea and what price are we prepared

to pay for it.’’

I am quoting from the Armitage report

that Wolfowitz signed off on and

Carl Ford signed off on, major players

in this administration.

They said, ‘‘Are we prepared to take

a different course if, after exhausting

all reasonable diplomatic efforts, we

conclude that no worthwhile court is

possible?’’

What diplomatic efforts have we exhausted?

These are great questions, but

the administration has yet to answer

them. Indeed, the administration cannot

seem to decide what it is about the

north that bothers it the most. Is it

human rights abuses or past support of

terrorism, export of missiles, its military

threat, or its nuclear program?

To me, the priority must be a

verifiable ending of North Korea’s

weapons program, particularly nuclear

weapons. Everything else must be put

off for another day.

The third recommendation of the

Armitage report: A U.S. point person

should be designated by the President

in consultation with congressional

leaders and should report directly to

the President.

We have a fine man named Kelly out

of the State Department, but he has no

direct access to the President. This has

not been raised up to that level because

we are being told—I don’t know why—

that this is not a crisis.

I think the American people and this

Congress are fully capable of handling

more than one crisis at a time. Iraq is

a crisis. So we are told. Well, it is. But

not in my view in terms of the immediate

threat to the United States. Or

the crisis could be in North Korea. Why

can’t we do both?

President Bush has downgraded the

special envoy position, thereby assuring

that we cannot gain access to Kim

Chong-il, the only man in North Korea

with whom we can get a deal, or at

least figure out what he is about.

Fourth recommendation: Offer

Pyongyang clear choices in regard to

the future. On the one hand, economic

benefits, security assurances, political

legitimization. On the other hand, the

certainty of enhanced military deterrence.

For the United States and its allies,

the package, as a whole, means we are

prepared, if Pyongyang meets our concerns,

to accept North Korea as a legitimate

actor up to and including full

normalization of relations.

This is not JOE BIDEN writing this

recommendation; it is Paul Wolfowitz.

It is the Assistant Secretary of State,

Mr. Armitage. What happened in a year

and a half? What happened to change

their mind?

The good idea of the administration

almost seems ready to be embraced.

The President has spoken about bold

initiatives toward the north but talk of

carrots still has been undermined by

the Bush administration’s insistence

that incentives are the equivalent to

appeasement.

Before my committee today, the Secretary

of State says we have no intention

to go to war with the north, et

cetera, et cetera. The right words,

right phraseology. The Secretary of

Defense walked out of a hearing yesterday

with the House Armed Services

Committee and said this is an evil empire,

something much more provocative.

Accurate but provocative.

The fifth recommendation by this

committee that the notion of buying

time works in our favor is increasingly

dubious. Let me reiterate the fifth

point of the report signed by Carl Ford,

No. 2, over at CIA, Wolfowitz, No. 2 at

Defense, Armitage, No. 2 at State: The

notion that buying time works in our

favor is increasingly dubious.

President Bush, please, even if you

don’t want to enunciate it, in your

mind, treat this as a crisis because, if

it is not contained now, our options are

only diminished as time goes by, not

increased.