Madam President, first, I

say to my friend from Virginia, this is

an opportunity for us to spend a few

minutes talking about the issue of war

with Iraq. We all listened last evening

to the comments of the President during

his press conference. We all have

great respect, obviously, for the Presidency

of the United States. I would not

call the President’s press conference a

Churchillian moment, but certainly

the President expressed his views on

what he believes ought to be done.

On October 11, 2002, I voted for H.J.

Res. 114, a resolution providing the

President with the authority to use

force against Iraq if proved necessary.

The vote on that resolution was 77 to

23. I voted for the entire resolution including

language which requires the

President to first determine that ‘‘reliance

by the United States on further

diplomatic or other peaceful means

alone either will not adequately protect

the national security of the United

States against the continuing threat

posed by Iraq or is not likely to lead to

the enforcement of all relevant United

Nations Security Resolutions.’’ The

particular requirement seems to have

gotten lost in recent discussions about

Iraq and deserves repeating in the context

of our debate this morning.

My concern is that the Bush administration,

at this juncture, has not made

the case that we have reached the

point that we can say that diplomacy

has failed.

I do not know of anyone who disagrees

with the notion that we would

be far better off with Iraq disarmed.

Every person I know supports that conclusion.

The debate, if you will, is not

over whether Iraq should be disarmed

but whether there are means short of

military conflict for doing so. Knowing

all the hazards and dangers that will

arise when we send American service

men and women into combat to achieve

that result, we must not take that decision

precipitously, without first exhausting

other options, particularly

diplomatic options.

As I stated earlier, I voted for H.J.

Res 114 last fall, and I would vote for it

again because I believe force, coupled

with with diplomacy, are needed in this

circumstance. Threats of force alone

without diplomacy can too often lead

us to unnecessary armed conflict and

costly destruction and loss of life.

We fail sometimes to recognize and

understand the value of diplomacy and

how well it has worked for us in times

past. We saw diplomacy at work during

the Kennedy administration when

President Kennedy diffused the Cuban

missile crisis. We saw it at work as

well in the Carter administration when

Sadat and Begin came together at

Camp David to end conflict between

Israel and Egypt. We saw it at work in

1993 when, through the efforts of

former-President Carter in North

Korea, we were able to diffuse a situation

that was getting very serious. Diplomacy

has successfully resolved

many disputes large and small. On each

occasion it requires our President to

put his credibility on the line and work

diligently day in and day out to bring

those warring parties together to avoid

the conflict that would have ensued.

I think too often we fail to appreciate

the value of what can be done

through diplomacy. There are countless

examples throughout our history.

My plea this morning, is not that we

renounce the use of force multilateral

or unilateral—in the case of Iraq or

any other circumstance where US national

security interests are at stake. I

would never support a resolution that

would deprive our Nation of the opportunity

to protect and defend its security

and its sovereignty, including by

the unilateral use of force. My only

concern is that we ought not rush unnecessarily

to that conclusion when

other options still remain. Do we really

want to unnecessarily put at risk the

lives of innocent Iraqi people or more

importantly the lives of our own young

men and women in uniform who have

been deployed to the Middle East and

await the orders of the Commander in

Chief?

My plea today is that the President

seriously consider giving the U.N. effort

the diplomatic track a bit more

time. Obviously, there is a threat in

Iraq. We all know that. But it is a

threat at this moment that is being effectively

contained by the presence of

international inspectors and the threat

of force. Yes, Iraq is a threat, but there

are graver and more immediate threats

confronting the United States. I believe

that North Korea poses a far

greater and far more immediate danger

to the United States and the region.

U.S./Korean experts across the political

spectrum share that view.

I am concerned that our impatience

over Iraq is doing great harm to our relationships

with our long standing

friends and allies. U.N. Security Council

Resolution 1441 did not contain an

end date by which the inspectors were

to conclude their mission. However,

from the very beginning, the administration

showed very little patience for

the inspections process. Almost before

it began, members of the Bush Administration

were ridiculing the process,

suggesting it would never work anyway;

why are we bothering with it?

One might ask the basic question: If

we never thought it was going to work,

why did we support U.N. Security Resolution

1441 in the first place?

The problem of Iraq and Saddam Hussein

is not weeks old, it is years old.

We all know that. Nonetheless, we

drafted, worked, suggested, and supported

the resolution that called for an

inspections process. There is no certainty

that an inspections process will

necessarily succeed, given the size of

the country and the difficulties involved,

but we voted to send inspectors

to Iraq and we supported the terms of

their mission as spelled out in the text

of the resolution.

Yet as the inspection mission was

getting underway, the administration

seemed to already have lost patience

with it. Perhaps that is why other

members of the Security Council began

to question whether the United States

was ever genuinely committed to an inspections

regime.

U.N. weapons inspector Hans Blix

spoke before the United Nations this

morning. Let me share with my colleagues

some of his conclusions—very

significant conclusions in my view. Mr.

Blix said that the inspectors were in a

better position to carry out their work

than they had been in the 1990s because

of the existence of international pressure.

The President should claim victory

that his policy is succeeding—the

combination of diplomacy and the

threat of force is bearing fruit.

We ought to be celebrating the fact

that the inspectors have made progress

in disarming Iraq. I do not think that

a call for inspections without a threat

of force would have produced positive

results. The combination of the threat

of force and the inspections process is,

according to those we have asked to

perform these duties, producing far

better results than we ever could have

imagined.

Mr. Blix went on to say that there is

no air surveillance over the entire

country, and that inspectors can move

freely anywhere in Iraq. Even with enhanced

Iraqi cooperation, Mr. Blix

stated that the mission would need

some additional months not years to

complete its work.

I am not interested in seeing the inspections

process prolonged indefinitely.

I do not think that is in anyone’s

interest. We have men and

women in uniform deployed abroad,

waiting for orders. We cannot keep

them there indefinitely without having

the necessary rotations. That poses

some problems. I hope we never reach

the conclusion that simply because we

have deployed our forces to the Middle

East, we see that action as putting our

credibility on the line if we don’t then

take military action, even though diplomacy

may be working.

American service men and women

certainly understand that when they

are called to duty, there may be times

they are asked to put their lives on the

line. They also know there may be

times when they are going to be asked

to wait. Certainly, we need to understand

the conduct of this particular

delicate situation. Asking our men and

women in uniform to be patient as we

try to see if we cannot resolve this

problem without putting them in

harm’s way is not an irresponsible way

to proceed at all, given the fact we may

get exactly what we are seeking as a

result of the combined efforts of diplomacy

and threat of force.

I believe this process is working and

the President ought to claim victory,

in a sense, because as a result of his efforts,

we are getting the job done better

than we might have imagined we

could.

In a sense, I almost get the feeling we

are trying to snatch defeat from the

jaws of victory by moving away from a

process that appears to be working despite

all the difficulty surrounding it.

Obviously, if we want the multilateral

support of our allies then we need

to allow the U.N. effort some time. I

can make a strong case that we probably

do not need multilateral forces to

win the military contest here. I am

quite confident the United States military

can more than adequately perform

the challenges posed in Iraq militarily.

But the problem becomes greater when

you think of the aftermath, of how we

manage that, how this event will affect

other relationships we have where

international cooperation is important.

I say this with a great deal of lament.

Diplomacy has been suffering

terribly here over the last few years.

This is not just my conclusion. This is

the conclusion of the responsible people

who have watched, tragically over

the last 24 months, where diplomacy

has not been working as well as it

could. I don’t want to digress very

much. I will keep focused on the discussion

in front of us, but from the

outset there was a notion that international

cooperation was somehow a

sign of weakness; that, in fact, the

comments of our friend from Alabama

suggesting a moment ago that international

organizations and the United

Nations could not perform duties when

asked to act and asked to get a job

done, I disagree with.

I have my difficulties with the performance

of the U.N. from time to

time, but I ask anyone to suggest what

the world might look like if we did not

have a U.N. system to respond all over

the globe to every imaginable crisis

that emerges. The idea of deriding and

ridiculing and diminishing the role of

the U.N. system is not in our interest,

and I don’t think it is in our interest to

ridicule our allies in Europe and elsewhere.

These are good friends. They

have been and will continue to be. But

we need to work at those relationships

to keep them strong. Unfortunately,

we have not been doing that. And, we

are paying a price for that. That is why

the American public and so many

around the world are worried about unnecessarily

taking unilateral action.

Particularly a preemptive unilateral

action.

Having said that, I applaud the President’s

decision last night to go to the

U.N. and to put a resolution on the

table. I feared he might abandon the

U.N. effort without doing so because

some of his advisors have recommended

this course of action. I commend

the President for still being willing

to try and get that international

support. I hope a resolution can be

crafted which our allies and others will

feel comfortable supporting, one that

gives the inspections more time to see

if they can succeed. If I didn’t feel time

might work for us here, or that there

was an imminent threat to our nations,

then I would stand with those who

would say we have to go forward now

and unilaterally respond to the threat.

I don’t believe that moment has arrived.

Last night the President said that

the world has changed since September

11th. I agree with him. The administration’s

eyes obviously were opened to

the fact we needed help and support

from the nations in coping with the

amorphous nature of the stateless and

faceless terrorist organizations. We

heard the great news in the last few

days of the capture of some al-Qaida

operatives. I would respectfully say

that this would not have happened

without international cooperation. So

in this particular set of circumstances,

we have seen the value of international

cooperation.

While Bush administration officials

have seen the wisdom of cooperating

with our allies in combating terrorist

organizations, key administration policymakers

still hold—too many of

them—the fundamental belief that as

the world’s only remaining superpower,

the United States does not need to consult

or build the support from other nations

in the conduct of foreign policy.

They believe that we can singlehandedly

decide who are good guys and bad

guys, the members of the axis of evil,

in the Bush administration’s lexicon. It

is this tension that brings us where we

are in Iraq and North Korea.

Now we have, of course, the paradox

that the administration is in no particular

hurry, it would appear, to resolve

the North Korean problem which

was precipitated in part, I argue, by

our handling and engagement with

Iraq. It has no patience in the case of

Iraq to allow the inspections process to

play out. I appreciate that the administration

is trying to maintain the readiness

of more than 200,000 American

troops that are or will soon be in the

region and that this cannot go on indefinitely

without troop rotation. However,

I strongly believe the American

forces are carrying out an incredibly

important mission, even if the order is

never given to attack. Just being there

has a tremendous value in terms of

what we are trying to achieve in the

Middle East.

Their presence signals a seriousness

and resolve on the part of the United

States that Iraq must disarm. Iraq is,

in fact, beginning, as we see here, to respond—

not as quickly as I would like,

not in the ways some might prefer—but

Hans Blix has reported progress. We

should not yet draw the conclusion

that in U.N. effort has failed.

I want to see Iraq disarm. Every

American does. I believe as a way of

doing this, at least a way worth trying

to get this accomplished without resorting

to force. The bellicose and public

efforts by the administration to end

the inspections process is going to have

severe diplomatic costs in the months

and years ahead. My hope is that we

will be able to repair these relationships.

The quick way we might do that

is to allow this process to work a bit

longer. If we do that, I think we can

build the kind of support that is necessary

to achieve not only the desired

results in Iraq, but also to allow us to

continue to build the relationships

that are going to be critically important

to deal with other pressing foreign

policy concerns.

We live in a world that absolutely requires

international cooperation, and

the United States must be a leader in

this effort. The great leaders in the

post-World-War-II period understood

this. The great people we revere and

talk about often, people like Omar

Bradley and George Marshall, the Dulles

brothers and others, who understood

the value and the importance of

international organizations. They were

the architects of these institutions.

They were the ones who argued so vociferously

to create a U.N. system,

international courts of justice, to build

a NATO system. They understood the

importance of international cooperation.

They understood that even a

great power such as ours could not

solve all the world’s problems singlehandedly.

Too often, as we engage in this debate,

many Americans and many people

across the globe have the impression

that the United States no longer

believes that international cooperation

is important in the conduct of our foreign

policy. I disagree with that profoundly.

That worries this Senator very deeply.

I will not take a backseat to anybody

in my concern about Saddam Hussein.

I would support the resolution

which I voted for in October again

today if it were the pending business of

this body. I don’t believe that the resolution

calls upon the President to

abandon diplomacy.

For those reasons I would urge and

encourage the President to continue

his efforts with the framework of the

U.N. Again, I want to compliment him

for indicating he is going to go back to

the U.N. in the coming days to see if

we can get a resolution that will build

the kind of international cooperation

that is necessary. But I have this nagging

fear that there are some in the

President’s inner circle who believe

this is all a waste of time and effort,

that it is not in our interests to do it,

and the sooner we move away from

seeking international cooperation the

better off we are going to be.

That mentality seems to be gaining

currency in the minds of far too many.

That is a dangerous road to follow. It is

one I hope and pray that the President

does not take.

Mr. President, let me associate myself

with what others have said in the

course of this debate. If or when the

President orders U.S. Service Members

into combat, I and every other member

of this body will support these brave

men and women one hundred percent

and we will pray that they return home

to their families unharmed.

With those thoughts in mind, I thank

my colleagues for the opportunity to

express some views on this critical

issue. I am certainly anxious to hear

the thoughts of my colleagues as they

express those during the remaining

time of this debate.