

the issues raised by the March report have been working for months to design an appropriate solution.

This amendment is strongly supported by veterans and disability communities. Veterans and their families have waited decades for the confirmation embedded in these findings. They should not have to wait any longer.

This amendment is clearly germane to the underlying bill. It is a veterans issue, and this is a veterans bill. We are not going to be fooling America's veterans by suggesting that somehow this is not germane. Opponents of this amendment should not be able to hide behind some convenient, questionable procedural motion. This is germane. It is relevant. And the time to act is now.

We cannot wait any longer. Let us treat spina bifida as we do all the other diseases that we have already determined have a direct association to agent orange exposure. Let us give veterans and their children the means and support necessary to deal with the problems associated with this crippling disability.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, we have had a lot of debate, a lot of heated rhetoric, and a lot of stirring stories of personal tragedies during this morning's session and tonight, and there is a lot of emotion involved. I think it is reasonable to understand why there is emotion, because every year in the United States there are approximately 150,000 babies born with serious birth defects. There are congenital heart defects, Down's syndrome, neural tube defects, primarily spina bifida. Of those birth defects, about 4,000 babies have spina bifida.

Over the past several years, I have worked with the March of Dimes attempting, with some success, to get the Centers for Disease Control funding for their prevention programs in research to find out what causes these problems, to set up a surveillance and monitoring program so that we can have some sound evidence as to what causes these defects. Some research on spina bifida is already bearing fruit. There is a connection between mothers taking folic acid early in pregnancy, and reduced rates of the incidence of spina bifida have been found. This is good news. This is good science. We are making some progress. But a lot more work needs to be done on the causes, the incidence, and the protections.

Now we come to the recent actions by the National Academy of Sciences. Let me be clear that the agent orange law does not require us to expand an entitlement on this bill. The Agent Orange law does not apply to children or offspring of veterans. The agent orange law sets up some presumptions, but they have to be based on science, which is not present here.

The National Academy of Sciences in their review this past spring found in one study what the authors called a possible association between exposure and spina bifida in the offspring of vet-

erans. The National Academy of Sciences then presented this information to the Veterans' Administration with the caution on how the study should be used. In fact, in that study, the task force emphasizes that its conclusions "made for the limited purposes of PL-10234 do not reflect a judgment that a particular health outcome has shown to be caused by, or in some cases even definitely associated with, herbicide exposure under the standards ordinarily governing such conclusions for purposes of scientific inquiry and medical care."

So much for the contentions that there is compelling scientific evidence. They said there was not.

Later this summer, the author of the study, the Ranch Hand study, told us in testimony before the House that his study was not adequate to make a decision that there was a causal link. He cautioned the House, and said do not count on a causal link from this study. It does not show it.

Then, on July 29, the minority leader introduced legislation which used the study to create this new entitlement program. There has not been a hearing held on it in the authorizing committee.

But there is also some new information that, frankly, I just came across. The Air Force has now sent a letter to Congress, dated August 29, in which they state in their 1996 progress report on the bottom of page 3—this is on the Ranch Hand study, the one study which reported to show any connection:

We found no indication of increased birth defects severity, delays in development, or hyperkinetic syndrome with paternal dioxin. The data provides little or no support for the theory that external exposure to Agent Orange and its dioxin contaminant is associated with adverse reproductive outcomes.

Mr. President, I think that there is a very real question of whether there is any—certainly this has not been demonstrated—scientific evidence of a linkage.

It is time for cooler heads to prevail. We have all expressed our concerns over birth defects. The amendment is not supported by sound scientific evidence. It is not even uniformly supported by veterans groups who recognize that the impact of the amendment will mean reduced benefits to veterans as a result of new entitlements and health care for dependents.

There are many questions which the debate has raised which deserve full consideration in the normal legislative process before the authorizing committee. The opponents of this amendment have every bit as much compassion for people with these disabilities such as spina bifida. All we are saying is let us get the science that establishes the linkage. It is not there. Let us not jump into something that is so lacking in scientific evidence.

That is precisely why we have a separate procedure in this body to consider legislation, particularly legislation setting up an entitlement program

with hearings and actions before an authorizing committee.

Since this is an attempt to set up an entitlement program, and it has not been heard before or acted upon by the authorizing committee, I raise a point of order that this amendment is not germane.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair would suggest that the manager of the bill withhold his request as the minority leader still has 50 seconds of his time.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I yield that time to the distinguished Democratic whip.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, I have listened to my colleague from Missouri talk about the March of Dimes. I started with the March of Dimes. We raised \$800 trying to find a polio vaccine until it was completed. For 25 years I have worked with the March of Dimes and scholarships. The March of Dimes can't be used to stop this amendment. The veterans and their children deserve the vote of this Senate.

If you could listen to the Democratic leader and the statements he has made, if you want to vote against the Vietnam veterans' children with spina bifida, you go ahead and do it. Then we will see who suffers the consequences. We are talking about children here. Let us be compassionate tonight, and not be so hard that we say to these Vietnam veterans there is even the possibility that they should not be taken care of.

I hope the Senate will join the Democratic leader and support his amendment.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri has 49 seconds.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, the argument about political retribution for somebody who demands scientific evidence and wants to provide a fair hearing and a scientific basis for action is one which does not, I think, serve this body well. I think we have a proper procedure for determining whether there is scientific evidence. To date, there has been none shown. That is why when I said this is entitlement legislation being offered on an appropriations bill, it is not germane to the appropriations process. And, for that reason, I raise this point of order that this amendment is not germane.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question should be submitted to the Senate.

Does the Senator request the yeas and nays?

Mr. BOND. I ask for the yeas and nays on the question of germaneness.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second? There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

UNITED STATES RESPONSE TO
IRAQI AGGRESSION

Mr. DASCHLE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader.

Mr. DASCHLE. According to the unanimous consent agreement, the final issue to be disposed of at approximately 9:30 deals with the resolution relating to Iraq. I would like to address that resolution at this time.

I send it to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 288) regarding the United States response to Iraqi aggression.

The Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, on Tuesday, I spoke briefly about my views on President Clinton's decision to retaliate against Iraq for its unprovoked, unjustified, and brutal attack on the civilian population of Irbil, a city in northern Iraq.

At that time, I also indicated I planned to introduce a resolution condemning Saddam Hussein's behavior and expressing the Senate's support for the President's actions.

I must say I never dreamed it would take this long and be this difficult to arrive at a simple resolution in support of the actions taken earlier this week.

For several days now, we have been attempting to resolve issues relating to language and have been thwarted and frustrated in that effort for a lot of reasons, in large measure because many of my colleagues on the other side wish not to laud the President or find any way with which to praise the President's actions. In fact, for the last several hours the issue has been, do we even use the word "President" in the resolution? There was an adamant feeling on the part of many on the other side that we could not use the word "President," and so you will not find that word used as a result of the requirements by many of my colleagues on the Republican side.

In fact, the only reference to the President is a reference to the Commander in Chief, and I must say that that is suitable to many of us, but I do believe that it is a very unfortunate set of circumstances that could have caused some partisanship, in fact a great deal of partisanship, to enter into these deliberations.

Let me at the same time applaud the majority leader for his willingness to continue to work with me to resolve those outstanding questions and to come to some compromise on the language that has now been presented to the Senate. His work and his cooperation as well as that of some of our colleagues on the other side have brought us to this point tonight.

Let me also thank the distinguished Senator from Georgia, the ranking member of the Armed Services Committee, Senator NUNN, and the distinguished Senator from Michigan, Senator CARL LEVIN. Let me also thank Senator PELL and many others—Senator BIDEN, who had a lot to do with the wording of this legislation; in addi-

tion, Senator McCAIN, Senator WARNER, and others who were very helpful in bringing us to this point.

Let me make it very clear that in spite of what I consider to be the pettiness involved with whether you use the word "President" or not, this resolution very clearly and strongly and wholeheartedly supports the measures taken by this President in the last 72 hours.

Last Saturday, in spite of clear warnings from the United States and the international community, Iraqi forces commenced their vicious attack on the defenseless civilian Kurdish population in and around Irbil. Casualties reportedly numbered in the thousands. Reports of door-to-door searches resulting in executions were rampant and, unfortunately, all too credible.

In addition to this obvious toll on human life, Saddam's invasion also threatens the interests of the United States and its allies in this crucial region of the world. The prospect for factional strife has been greatly increased while regional stability has been called into question, thereby enhancing the risk of a larger scale conflict in the region.

Saddam's aggression is in direct contravention of the United Nations Resolution 688 which was enacted in 1991 at the end of the Persian Gulf war. At that time the Security Council empowered the United States, Britain, and France to protect the Kurdish population from human rights abuses by the Iraqi regime through the establishment of a no-fly zone over large portions of northern and southern Iraq.

Saddam's attack on Irbil blatantly violates international norms and is by itself sufficient justification for the President's decisions to strike four critical Iraqi targets with 44 cruise missiles and to expand the no-fly zone northward to the very suburbs of Baghdad.

Unfortunately, the aggression in Irbil is but the latest in a string of ruthless and provocative actions undertaken by Saddam before, during, and after the Persian Gulf war.

Mr. President, I will not outline the entire catalog of violent and reprehensible acts undertaken by Saddam and his henchmen since he ascended to power in Iraq. Needless to say, the list is as chilling as it is long. President Clinton succinctly noted in his statement on Tuesday, "Saddam Hussein's objectives may change but his methods are always the same—violence and aggression against the Kurds, against ethnic minorities, against Iraq's neighbors."

It is for these reasons that I support and our colleagues support the President's decision to take action. I am very confident the American people feel exactly as we do tonight.

The President's actions served a twofold purpose. First, they showed Saddam that he will pay a price for his latest act of aggression. In mounting the largest attack on Iraqi territory in the

5 years since the end of the Persian Gulf war, president Clinton has appropriately reminded Saddam that violations of international norms will not go unpunished.

Secondly, by destroying air defense assets in central Iraq and extending the no-fly zone northward toward Baghdad, the United States has greatly reduced the threat Saddam poses to his opponents within Iraq and his opponents in adjoining nations.

By restraining Saddam's bloody hand, the President's decisive action has limited the ability of an oppressive regime to disrupt the volatile center of a Middle East region that is vital to American foreign policy interests. The response was measured, appropriate, and absolutely necessary.

I also want to indicate at this time my strong support for the men and women in uniform who are asked repeatedly to go in harm's way to protect our national interests. Early damage reports from the latest attack on Iraq indicate another mission accomplished without a hitch and without a casualty.

It is noteworthy that despite the end of the cold war, the military forces of the United States continue to play a crucial role around the world in advancing and protecting our national interests. This dedicated group of men and women have been called upon repeatedly since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the onset of the post-cold-war era. They have never failed the American people or our friends abroad.

The resolution before us is an extremely crucial matter for all of us because our enemies and friends must see that we speak with one voice when it comes to our policy for containing and defeating Saddam Hussein. As we have learned only too painfully in the past, domestic discord on important national security issues only plays into the hands of those who seek to undermine our resolve. It is critically important to demonstrate national unity when our military forces are in harm's way.

Even in this most intense political season, politics for all Americans still ends at the water's edge.

President Clinton was faced with a broad array of choices when deciding how to respond to Saddam's aggression, everything from doing nothing to inserting United States ground troops and forcefully evicting Iraqi troops from Irbil. Obviously, each end of this spectrum constitutes an unacceptable and inappropriate response. Only something between the two extremes makes any sense, precisely the course chosen by President Clinton.

This resolution puts the Senate forcefully behind the President's measured decision. The President opted both to weaken Iraqi air defenses and simultaneously expand the area in which the Iraqi Air Force will not be permitted to operate. These actions clearly demonstrate the United States

is prepared to impose real costs on Saddam Hussein for his aggression. As noted by Gen. Colin Powell, the President did exactly the right thing.

Of our friends and allies abroad, we ask they stand with the United States as we seek to faithfully implement the U.N. resolutions adopted at the end of the Persian Gulf war. Saddam's actions demonstrate he still represents a direct threat to his people, his neighbors, and the security of the entire vitally important region. If the world were to look the other way now and allow Saddam to go unpunished, we would encourage more blatant and damaging incursions in the future. There must be no doubt in Saddam's mind that the international community is united in its opposition to such unacceptable behavior.

Finally, to Saddam Hussein, let us state for the record the position of this administration and this Congress, as plainly and as simply as we can. Although we may belong to different political parties and have opposing views on some issues, we stand united and indivisible on this. Iraqi aggression must not go unpunished, now or in the future. We will insist on Iraq's compliance with international norms of behavior, regardless of the circumstance.

To this end I have worked with the distinguished majority leader to draft a resolution condemning Saddam's behavior and indicating our strong support for the U.S. response to this latest incident. With the adoption of this resolution by the Senate, there should be no doubt in anyone's mind, least of all Saddam Hussein's, that the American people are united in their opposition to this conduct. Passage of this resolution is one way to demonstrate to our friends and enemies alike, our resolve on this crucial issue.

I ask for its support tonight. I hope we could indicate our support unanimously.

I yield the floor.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, just briefly, this Senate Resolution 288 recognizes that the United States and its allies have vital interests in ensuring regional stability in the Persian Gulf. It recognizes that:

On August 31, 1996, Saddam Hussein, despite warnings from the United States, began an unprovoked, unjustified, and brutal attack on civilian population in and around Irbil in northern Iraq.

It recognizes:

the United States responded to Hussein's aggression on September 3, 1996 by destroying some of the Iraqi air defense installations and announcing the expansion of the southern no-fly zone.

Those are the whereas clauses in the resolution. And the resolved says:

The Senate commends the military actions taken by and the performance of the United States Armed Force under the direction of the Commander-in-Chief, for carrying out this military mission in a highly professional, efficient and effective manner.

There are those who would have liked for it to have said a lot more. There are

those who were not comfortable saying anything at this time, who have some questions about the policy and what the future holds. But I do think it is appropriate that we have a bipartisan resolution on this subject matter, that we commend our men and women for the job they have done. They have done a wonderful job in the air and on the sea in this instance, as in all other instances. And whenever American forces are introduced, we do come together and partisanship stops at the shoreline, and that is the case here.

We have been working since Tuesday to craft a resolution that condemns what happened there in Iraq, under Saddam Hussein's actions, again, and to commend these troops.

There is no doubt in any Senator's mind that we have 100 percent support by the American people and by us in support of our men and women who have participated in this military action.

The United States has led the multinational coalition which defeated Hussein's aggression in 1991. When President Clinton came into office, he inherited a policy toward Iraq that included a weakened Saddam Hussein, a united international coalition, a solid international sanctions regime and a united Iraqi opposition.

There is concern now about the move toward lessening sanctions, although I had an opportunity to personally ask the President about the sanctions, and he assured me that the sanctions were not being lifted and that the Iraqi oil sales were not going to go forward under these conditions.

We are also concerned about our international coalition, what is going to be their role in the new no-fly zone in the southern part of Iraq.

So there is work to be done in this area, but I am sure both the Congress will be paying attention to that, as will the administration.

There is unanimous condemnation by the American people and by the Senate of the brutal attacks on the Kurdish areas in northern Iraq. That is as it should be. While it is a complicated situation, with interests by Turkey and interests by Iran and by different factions within the Kurds, it still is a situation that we cannot ignore. Any leader of a country, however that person obtained that position, that will exercise that kind of brutality in his own country or threaten military action against its neighbors or, in fact, invade a neighbor must be consistently watched and very serious and strong actions taken against them.

I want to also say I am concerned—and I discussed this with the Democratic leader—about the lack of prior consultation with the Congress about this action. The War Powers Act is very clear about the need for notification, consultation and also a report on what happened. It did not happen in this instance, and I don't believe it happened on either side of the aisle. That is unacceptable. Perhaps there

were reasons for it, but I have expressed my concern to the administration, to the NSC, and I believe that we will have more consultation and notification in the future. We must not have the commitment of military power without even a word of consultation with the Congress. We have to continue to insist on that.

Our resolution is a modest step tonight. Many of our Members would like it to have been much more. I think it is fair. It has been worked out in a bipartisan way. I think it is time we stepped up to this issue, we have this resolution and we move on. So I appreciate the cooperation we did have.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise to support the resolution on Iraq. This resolution states the Senate stands with our troops, and our President, as they respond to Saddam Hussein's brutality.

The President was right to act to contain Saddam Hussein's aggression. Saddam Hussein's actions threaten American interests and peace in the Middle East—as well as the safety of his own people. He must be taught that his reckless acts have consequences. He must pay the price for his brutal and immoral actions.

The U.S. response is swift, specific and limited. The President responded swiftly and strategically after Iraq seized the city of Irbil in the Kurdish safe haven. Our objectives are clear and limited: to force Saddam Hussein to pay a price for his brutality and to make it safer for our pilots to patrol the no-fly zones in Iraq by destroying Iraqi air defense systems. To achieve these objectives, only specific military sites are targeted.

We have already paid a great price to contain Saddam Hussein in Operation Desert Storm. If we ignore Saddam Hussein's latest aggression, he will only be emboldened to take further reckless actions that threaten our national interests—and the lives of his own people.

Mr. President, my thoughts and gratitude are with our brave troops. They are once again called upon to stand sentry for those who would otherwise stand alone. The men and women of our Armed Forces have performed their mission with great skill and courage. I pray for their safe and swift return.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, last weekend Saddam Hussein sought to test the international community's tolerance and resolve yet again. Some 30,000 Iraqi soldiers, led by the elite Republican Guards, attacked and captured the Kurdish-controlled city of Irbil in northern Iraq. Saddam undertook this action despite warnings from the United States and other members of the international community and in defiance of our collective commitment, born out of the Persian Gulf war, to protect the Kurds.

None of us knows why Saddam decided to test us now. But if the history of the last six years has taught us anything, it is that Saddam Hussein does

not understand diplomacy, he only understands power, and when he brandishes power in a manner that threatens our interests or violates internationally accepted standards of behavior, we must be prepared to respond—and with force, if necessary.

President Clinton's response to Saddam's latest challenge was the right one—decisive, measured, and carefully calculated to take the strategic advantage away from Saddam. By expanding the southern no-fly zone to the 33d parallel, we have denied him the ability to use two key military air bases and to control Iraqi airspace from the Kuwaiti border to the southern outskirts of Baghdad. This significantly reduces his capacity to launch offensive operations against Iraq's neighbors and the Persian Gulf oil fields. By attacking his air defense and command and control systems we have increased our capacity to patrol the no-fly zone and reduced the potential threat to our pilots and those of our British and French allies.

Saddam Hussein has tried to explain away this latest aggressive move by contending that his forces entered Irbil at the request of the Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP], one of the two warring factions in northern Iraq. It is hard to understand why any Kurdish faction would willingly ally with Saddam, given the many years in which his forces have repressed, tortured and abused the human rights of the Kurdish people. However, if the KDP did request Iraqi intervention, that request does not justify the use of force against Kurdish civilians in Irbil. The international community has made it clear since April 1991, when the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 688, that it would not tolerate the repression of the Kurds and other Iraqi civilians. That is why the United Nations established the no-fly zone in northern Iraq. The Iraqi attack on Irbil, and the continued threat posed by Iraqi forces positioned to attack again in support of the KDP, contravenes the letter and the spirit of this resolution.

For months the United States has led a diplomatic effort to try to mediate the conflict between two warring Kurdish factions, the Kurdistan Democratic Party led by Massoud Barzani and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] led by Jalal Talabani. There is no doubt that the PUK's flirtation with Iran earlier this year and the raw power politics played by these groups opened the door for Saddam Hussein. Hundreds of innocent Kurdish civilians have died, and others could die as long as Saddam has de facto control over Irbil and Iraqi forces remain poised to attack other PUK-controlled areas.

The United States has a moral interest in preventing the abuse of the Kurdish people, but our strategic interests go beyond this. We have strategic interests in denying Saddam the capability to take action against Kuwait and other states in the region or to

threaten the world's oil supply. We also have a strategic interest in supporting the Iraqi opposition as a way to counter Iran's growing influence and limiting its ability to control a post-Saddam Iraq. That is why we did not—and should not—side with either of the Kurdish factions.

The U.S. military response was deliberately designed to accomplish two objectives: first, to make Saddam Hussein pay a steep price for his aggressive moves against Kurdish civilians in Irbil, and second, to weaken his capacity to undertake offensive action in the region. Time and again in the last six years, Saddam has tried to test the international community's commitment to peace and stability in the region. Each and every time he has met a forceful response.

Iraq's August 1990 attack on Kuwait resulted in defeat for Iraqi forces at the hands of a U.S.-led coalition. Suppression of the Kurdish revolt in northern Iraq at the end of the Persian Gulf war led to the establishment of the northern no-fly zone by the international community. Iraqi threats against United States and allied planes enforcing the no-fly zone in January 1993 led to missile strikes against Iraq's southern air defense systems. Six months later President Clinton ordered United States forces to strike at an Iraqi intelligence facility when he learned of an Iraqi plot to assassinate former President Bush. In October 1994, the United States and its allies sent forces to the region as Iraqi troops began to move south toward Kuwait. We did the same thing the following fall when Iraqi troops appeared to be moving south again.

The United States, under President Bush and then President Clinton, led these earlier efforts to contain Saddam. Whereas some of our allies in the region are constrained from acting on this occasion, we are not. Our interests, and the long-term interests of peace and stability in the region, dictate that we respond to this latest test of wills with Saddam.

The Iraqi attack on Irbil has had serious ramifications for the people of Iraq. It has resulted in the deaths of innocent civilians. It has set back the possibility of resolving differences and reaching a viable political settlement between the Kurdish factions. It has forced the United Nations Secretary General to suspend implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 986, which provides for the sale of some Iraqi oil to generate funds to buy food and medicine for the Iraqi people. Irbil is one of the key distribution centers for this humanitarian assistance. Needless to say that plan cannot go forward in the shadow of Iraqi forces.

President Clinton made it clear that we intend to judge Saddam Hussein by his actions, not his words. Saddam has said that Iraq will not respect the expanded no fly zone and yesterday, Iraqi radar locked on a United States plane enforcing the zone. What this means is

unclear. Clearly the rational response on Saddam's part would be to refrain from any action that will escalate this crisis. I know that all of us hope that rationality will prevail.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I join the majority leader today in expressing the Senate's support for the accomplishments by the men and women of the Armed Forces who planned and executed the recent air strikes against Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi military. At times of international crisis, it is essential that our troops in the field—those who are assuming high personal risks—know that they have the support of Congress and the American people. Having myself served in, and later with our military, as Secretary of Navy, I know the vital need for this support for our troops and their families.

Since Saddam Hussein's forces invaded Kuwait in August 1990, I have been a consistent supporter of U.S. military, using force if justified, to stop Iraqi aggression throughout that region. It is clearly in the national security interests, and the economic interests, of the United States—and indeed the international community—to ensure that the Government and military of Iraq do not threaten the stability of a region which contains an estimated 70 percent of the world's known oil reserves. That is why the United States, under the leadership of President Bush, was able to put together the most significant military coalition since World War II to force Iraqi invaders out of Kuwait, restore Kuwait sovereignty, impose severe restrictions and prohibitions on Saddam Hussein's military capability and aggressive behavior, and restore a measure of stability to this ever troubled region.

I was privileged to work with Senator Dole in drafting the legislation and managing the floor debate resulting in Senate approval of the resolution which authorized President Bush to employ U.S. Armed Forces—using force—in the Gulf War. It is hard to image today—when a consensus generally exists in this country for taking military action against Iraqi aggression—that in 1991, with 500,000 U.S. troops in the Gulf ready to use force that the Senate supported the authority for the President to use force by a mere 5 votes. Thankfully, after Desert Storm was launched, the Congress, the nation quickly rallied behind our troops. The missions, as set out in U.N. resolutions, were successfully accomplished.

Today, the crisis in Iraq is not simply about a tragic civil war between factions of the Kurds. It is about maintaining the regional security balance that our troops fought—and died—for in 1991. Almost 6 years after the gulf war, the international community is still fighting to secure Saddam's compliance with the agreements demanded from him and his government at the end of the war. Yet today, Saddam continues to defy U.N. weapons inspectors;

refuses to account for Kuwaitis missing since the war; refuses to return Kuwaiti property seized during the Iraqi occupation; and continues to repress Iraqi citizens. Such actions must not be tolerated.

The United States has already made a substantial investment, in the sacrifices, casualties of our troops and their families, to contain Saddam's aggression. During Desert Storm, almost 150 U.S. military personnel were killed, and over 460 were wounded. In addition, the American taxpayer invested heavily in the U.S. major military effort, and has continued to pay—an average of at least a half billion dollars a year since 1991—to contain Saddam Hussein.

That investment must be preserved, so a U.S. response to Saddam's latest transgression had to be made. The timeliness, the magnitude, and the process by which the Presidential decisions were made must be fully reviewed. But for now, a "well done" to the U.S. military.

I commend the majority leader, Senators THURMOND and MCCAIN for their leadership on this resolution.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, Saddam Hussein's movement into northern Iraq was yet another direct threat to U.S. national interest: to maintain security and stability in the Middle East. American cruise missiles have struck various Iraqi military installations with the purpose of deterring Iraq from further violence against the Kurds and to take out air-defense systems that posed a danger to our air patrols.

I support the President as our Commander in Chief and his decision to attack Saddam Hussein's military installations to provide greater protection for our personnel enforcing the current and expanded no-fly zone. I stand 100 percent behind the brave men and women in our Armed Forces. Therefore, I support the resolution we are voting on this evening which condemns Saddam Hussein's actions and expresses support for our troops and the President's efforts to curb further actions by Iraq. It is my understanding that after intelligence reports disclosed the Iraqi military buildup, clear warnings were sent that he should not use any military force—warnings that were not heeded.

Mr. President, Saddam Hussein's actions and our response didn't come out of the blue. They are an extension of ongoing efforts to enforce the restraints placed on Iraq at the end of the Gulf war. Therefore, while the use of force should always be a last resort tool of foreign policy, the reckless and aggressive pattern of actions Hussein has carried out, required the only warning he would respond to: force.

While we can understand these recent events, the future of this situation remains a concern for us all. U.S. interests in the region have not changed. In addition, the various conflicts among neighboring nations and the division within the Kurdish people, further complicates our ability to stabilize the

situation. It is critical and in our national interest that the administration work with our allies, especially those in the region, to bring this incident to a peaceful conclusion.

Finally, while the cold war has come to an end, it is clear that we continue to live in an unstable world where our national security interests will be tested. We must continue to fully fund our Armed Forces so they remain strong. When we ask American men and women to put their lives on the line for our country, they better have the best equipment and training possible.

Mr. President, there is no doubt that we have strong national security interests in this very volatile and unstable region of the world. Any further hostility by Saddam Hussein's forces against our personnel, or in violation of Operation Provide Comfort or the other restraints established by the international community must be met with a swift and decisive response from the United States.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, 2 days ago the President ordered a forceful response to Iraq's aggression against its own Kurdish minority.

The question before us is whether the Senate supports the action taken by our President.

Some have expressed concerns that go beyond the scope of that question. They have raised points that could be the matter of legitimate debate—but that debate should be reserved for another day.

We are not debating the history of American diplomacy with respect to Iraq. We are not debating the future of American security policy in the Persian Gulf. We are simply being asked to state whether or not we support the actions initiated by the Commander in Chief; Whether we support the troops fulfilling his orders; and, whether we condemn Saddam Hussein's aggressive actions.

These are weighty matters in and of themselves. We should not cloud the debate by injecting extraneous issues.

I intend to support the resolution before us because I believe that the forceful response ordered by the President was both necessary and appropriate. Saddam Hussein has demonstrated repeatedly that he only understands the language of force.

He was warned explicitly by the United States when evidence mounted of a threatening Iraqi military mobilization. He chose to ignore those warnings and enter an area that has been the site of past Iraqi transgressions. His actions violated universal human rights norms as well as U.N. Security Council Resolution 688, which demanded that he cease his oppression of the Kurds.

Had this aggression gone unanswered, it would have strengthened his position internally and emboldened him to strike elsewhere. Thankfully, it did not go unanswered.

President Clinton's decisive action sent a strong signal that the United

States will not condone Iraqi military adventurism. It sent the message that there is a price to pay for aggression. It served to protect vital interests in the Persian Gulf by reassuring key allies of America's commitment to regional stability. And by extending the Southern no-fly-zone, the President has constrained Saddam Hussein's ability to make greater mischief.

Upholding these interests transcends the concerns that I and many of my colleagues have over becoming enmeshed in the internecine warfare between Kurdish factions. The saga of the Kurds is a long tale of struggle, betrayal, and oppression. It is one that is further complicated by a regional dynamic involving Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. The Kurdish question does not lend itself to an easy solution.

However, we should not allow the complexities of Kurdistan to cause us to lose sight of our broader objectives. The President's action is not about involving the United States in Kurdish intrigue. It is about containing a dangerous tyrant who is a continuing threat to international peace and security. It is about preserving stability in a region vital to American national security. In short, it is about protecting American interests.

I urge my colleagues to join me in standing with the President as he confronts a ruthless dictator.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1997

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I gather now we are able to wrap up the other matters which do not require a vote. We will attempt to do those very quickly. These are matters that have been cleared on both sides.

AMENDMENT NO. 5198

(Purpose: To revise the name of the Japan-United States Friendship Commission)

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk by Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. ROCKEFELLER, to revise the name of the United States-Japan Friendship Commission, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Missouri [Mr. BOND], for Mr. BINGAMAN, for himself, Mr. MURKOWSKI and Mr. ROCKEFELLER proposes an amendment numbered 5198.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

On page 104, below line 24, add the following:

SEC. 421 (a) REVISION OF NAME OF JAPAN-UNITED STATES FRIENDSHIP COMMISSION.—