

Fifth, is it sensible to tie our own hands for self-defense by such a Presidential Executive order when Saddam Hussein amasses weapons of mass destruction which threaten the United States and the whole world with horrible consequences?

Sixth, if we are justified in preemptive air and missile strikes, which will inevitably kill Iraqi civilians, why are we not justified in preemptive actions against Saddam Hussein who is a mass murderer and a certified international war criminal?

Mr. President, it is a rapidly changing world scene. It is time to consider those questions.

I have no doubt about two propositions. First, a trial of Saddam Hussein as an international war criminal would be preeminently just. Second, solving the international threat posed by Iraq's weapons of mass destruction mandates removing Saddam Hussein as Iraq's leader. Perhaps Saddam Hussein could be replaced by the people of Iraq with additional U.N. sanctions, a stronger Voice of America, and non-lethal covert action. If not, then we may have to change our answers to those six questions, just as Saddam Hussein has changed the world with his weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that my letter to the President, dated February 16, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
Washington, DC, February 16, 1998.

The PRESIDENT,
*The White House,
Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: I strongly urge you not to take military action against Iraq until Congress has an opportunity to consider a resolution to authorize the use of force.

Bomber and missile strikes constitute acts of war. Only Congress has the Constitutional prerogative to authorize war. The Congress spoke loudly last week by not speaking at all. It is not too long to wait until next week for Congress to consider and vote on this issue.

Our national experience in Vietnam is a relatively recent reminder that public and Congressional support are indispensable to successful military involvement. I am glad to note you plan to address the nation tomorrow night. I held five town meetings last Monday and Friday, and can tell you that my constituents are very uneasy about air and missile strikes. There are concerns about inflicting casualties on innocent Iraqis, about potential terrorist reprisals, and the possibilities of expanding the conflict.

There is general agreement that Saddam Hussein is an intolerable menace and cannot be allowed to threaten the world with weapons of mass destruction. But are there near-term alternatives such as a blockade to tighten the noose on his oil exports? Or can our allies be persuaded to tighten economic sanctions if they will not join us on the use of force?

I compliment Secretary Cohen and Secretary Albright, but their visits have not

produced the coalition which was formed for the successful prosecution of the 1991 Gulf War. Have you considered personal meetings with the leaders of France, Russia, China, Germany, Egypt, etc?

There has been unanimity in our Congressional discussions to support the men and women of our military forces. But that unanimity does not extend to giving the President a blank check when the Constitution calls for independent Congressional action to decide whether to involve the United States in war.

There is yet time to pursue alternatives. Diplomacy and other sanctions short of war should be given every chance to work.

Sincerely,

ARLEN SPECTER.

Mr. SPECTER. I thank the Chair.

NOTICES OF HEARINGS

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I would like to announce for information of the Senate and the public that a hearing of the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources will be held on Tuesday, February 24, 1998, 10:00 a.m., in SD-430 of the Senate Dirksen Building. The subject of the hearing is Tobacco Settlement V. For further information, please call the committee, 202/224-5375.

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I would like to announce for information of the Senate and the public that a hearing of the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources will be held on Wednesday, February 25, 1998, 9:30 a.m., in SD-430 of the Senate Dirksen Building. The subject of the hearing is The Non-School Hours: Mobilizing School and Community Resources. For further information, please call the committee, 202/224-5375.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs would like to request unanimous consent to hold a hearing on the nomination of Togo D. West, Jr., to be Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs.

The hearing will take place on Tuesday, February 24, 1998, at 9:30 a.m., in room 216 of the Hart Senate Office Building.

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I would like to announce for information of the Senate and the public that a hearing of the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources will be held on Thursday, February 26, 1998, 9:30 a.m., in SD-430 of the Senate Dirksen Building. The subject of the hearing is Health Care Information Confidentiality. For further information, please call the committee, 202/224-5375.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Labor and Human Resources be

authorized to hold a meeting during the session of the Senate on Monday, February 23, 1998. The committee will be having a hearing, 1:00 to 5:00 p.m., on "Caring for America's Children."

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SECURITIES

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Securities of the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Monday, February 23, 1998, to conduct a hearing on S. 1260, The Securities Litigation Uniform Standards Act of 1997.

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

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

NATO EXPANSION

● Mr. D'AMATO. Mr. President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to leave the door to NATO open. Others, whose wisdom I respect, have come before the Senate to urge that we legislatively adopt a policy that would close the door to NATO membership to candidate countries, regardless of their qualifications. While the reasons advanced in support of that view carry weight, I do not believe that they outweigh the reasons for leaving the door open.

Last year, as Chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, I chaired a series of hearings at which ambassadors of candidate countries appeared and testified concerning their respective countries' reasons and qualifications for joining NATO. At the end of that series of hearings, we issued a report urging that Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Slovenia be included in the first round of NATO expansion. Since that time, ten months ago, I believe that subsequent developments have supported strongly the conclusion that we drew in favor of NATO expansion.

Now, the Senate is close to voting on the admission of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. I intend to vote for expansion. These countries have each proven that they share our democratic and free enterprise values, that they want to be members of NATO, and that they are willing to join us in bearing the burdens that Alliance membership imposes.

Mr. President, I want to take particular note that each of these countries, contrary to the positions taken by some of our allies of longer standing, have not hesitated to publicly state their support for our effort to persuade, and if necessary, compel Saddam Hussein to comply with the United Nations Security Council resolutions adopted after Iraq's unprovoked military aggression against Kuwait. One of the tests of alliance is the political will to take risks for the common