MCCAIN an actual A–4 ejection seat. I don't know what he does with that, but a couple of old infantry men like Senator CLELAND and I were out of our league dealing with the ejection seats and we didn't go near that seat.

Suffice it to say that this Nation owes Senator MCCAIN and all the POWs a great debt. We recognize their service, their commitment, their loyalty, but mostly we recognize their leadership and what they have meant to us when times are tough and when we dig down deep in our society and we look for standards and leadership and commitment and role models. Mr. President, that role model is JOHN MCCAIN.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CLELAND. I associate myself, first of all, Mr. President, with the marvelous remarks from the Senator from Nebraska. He is a distinguished Vietnam veteran himself. It was a wonderful experience to be with Senator MCCAIN, Senator HAGEL and Senator KERREY this morning—all of us Vietnam veterans.

It was a marvelous experience to be there with Senator JOHN MCCAIN as he celebrated his 25th homecoming ''back to the world'' as we used to call this country, when we were in Southeast Asia. Senator HAGEL has spoken eloquently, and I associate my remarks with his. I hope that Senator MCCAIN won't be ejected from the Senate for many, many years to come.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 15 minutes of the time allocated to Senator DASCHLE.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right to be recognized for 15 minutes.

THE IRAQI CRISIS: WALKING SOFTLY AND CARRYING A BIG STICK

Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, just a short time ago, the Senate was prepared to consider, and likely to adopt, a resolution granting the President largely unlimited authority ''to take all necessary and appropriate actions'' to respond to the threat posed by Iraq's refusal to end its weapons of mass destruction programs. After some of us raised concerns about the echoes of Tonkin Gulf in that original wording, we were then prepared to endorse a measure which constrained that authority by requiring that it be ''in consultation with Congress and consistent with the U.S. Constitution and laws.''

Some of us were prepared to stand behind this language, and its endorsement of the President's policy determinations which we generally believed would culminate in air strikes by American forces against Iraq, though no one, including the President, believed that such strikes would necessarily accomplish our principle objective of removing Saddam Hussein's arsenal of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons.

We then were presented with a diplomatic solution of the crisis negotiated by U.N. Secretary-General Annan that offered the prospect of achieving our principle goal in a way which strikes from the air could not possibly have done. It empowered UN inspectors on the ground in Iraq to more fully investigate and destroy Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. The President has, in my view, taken the correct approach. He welcomes the agreement as representing a solution to the current problem, while immediately seeking to test and verify Iraqi compliance. He reserves our ability to take such other action as may be necessary if the agreement proves inadequate. Let me say clearly that this outcome is a good deal for the United States, the people of Iraq, the entire region and for international security. It is especially a good deal for the thousands of American families who have loved ones on guard right now for us in the Persian Gulf.

There is no more awesome responsibility facing us as members of the United States Senate than the decision to authorize the use of American military power. Such action puts America's finest, its servicemen and women, in harm's way. This basic fact was driven home to me as I reviewed the following press reports from my home state of Georgia over the past few weeks:

From the February 12 Valdosta Daily Times:

> Troops from south Georgia's Moody Air Force Base departed for the Persian Gulf today. Up to 3,000 soldiers from Ft. Stewart are expected to follow soon. About 80 Air Force rescue personnel from the base near Valdosta departed just after 7 AM along with two HC–130s, which refuel rescue helicopters, drop para-rescue jumpers to assist in operations and deploy equipment for rescue operations. . .

From the February 12 Augusta Chronicle:

> As tensions mount in Iraq, some Fort Gordon troops are preparing for possible deployment in the Middle East, and the 513th Military Intelligence Brigade is poised to provide intelligence support for military operations there. . .

From the February 13 Macon Telegraph:

> Base workers loaded a C–5 cargo plane with communications equipment Thursday afternoon as 30 members of the 5th Combat Communications Group prepared to fly to the Persian Gulf area about 6 a.m. today. The communications group, commonly known as the 5th MOB, primarily is responsible for establishing communications and air-traffic-control systems for military operations. . .

From the February 18 Savannah Morning News:

> 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized) soldiers like Spc. Shane Rollins of the 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, had little time to relax as they prepared for a deployment to the Middle East. In less than a week, Rollins and nearly 3,000 other Fort Stewart soldiers will be in Kuwait.

And from the February 22 Columbus Ledger-Enquirer:

> As about 200 Fort Benning troops left Saturday for a possible confrontation with Iraq, Acting Army Secretary Robert Walker said the decision to send more troops from the post hinges on what Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein does next.

Such scenes have been repeated all over America in recent weeks, and underscore the human consequences of our policy deliberations in this chamber. Before discussing those important questions with which this body must grapple in fulfilling its Constitutional role, we must always be mindful of the young men and women who will risk more than their reputations in carrying out the policies we approve.

A LITTLE HISTORY

Karl Von Clausewitz, the great German theoretician on war, once wrote,

> War is not merely a political act but a real political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carrying out of the same by other means.

In August of 1990, Saddam Hussein tried to accomplish by war what he could not achieve by other means. Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait. This came just two years after the conclusion of the eight-year Iran-Iraq War, a terrible conflict in which Saddam Hussein used chemical weapons. The war left 600,000 Iranians and 400,000 Iraqis dead.

After months of fruitless negotiations and after a huge U.S. and allied military build-up in the region, in January of 1991 President Bush was granted authority by Congress to use force to compel Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. The resulting Persian Gulf War lasted 44 days, and the U.S.-lead forces achieved the primary mission of evicting Iraqi forces from Kuwait. In the process, the United States crippled Iraqi defense forces, and in the words of Lt. General Tom Kelly, ''Iraq went from the fourth-largest army in the world to the second-largest army in Iraq.''

All along, the U.S. goal was to compel Iraqi compliance with U.N. Security Council resolutions calling for Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. Destruction of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, and in particular its nuclear weapons program, was only a secondary goal. It was only discoveries made during and after the Gulf War of greater than anticipated Iraqi capability for deploying chemical and biological weapons, in addition to nuclear weapons, which elevated the destruction of these capabilities to a key aim of American policy.

After the cease fire which ended the 1991 war, the U.N. Security Council established the U.N. Special Commission, or UNSCOM, to investigate, monitor and destroy Iraq's weapons of mass destruction capability, including its delivery systems.

Over the past 6 years, UNSCOM has been doing yeoman's work in fulfilling this task by destroying more Iraqi chemical weaponry than was accomplished in the Gulf War itself. Late last year, Saddam Hussein began denying UNSCOM the ability to inspect key Iraqi facilities where production and processing of weapons of mass destruction materials was suspected to be taking place.

Since then, the United States, our allies and the U.N., have been working