Mr. President, as we

approach the anniversary of the September

11 tragedy, our Nation is in the

midst of a national debate about war

with Iraq.

I am sure the presiding Senator recalls,

as I do, graphically, that day just

a year ago, on September 11, when the

Capitol Building was evacuated. During

the course of that evacuation, it finally

hit me, as I stood on the grass outside

the Capitol and was looking at this

building, I was looking at the last

building ever invaded by a foreign

army on the continental United States

soil, when the British attacked the

Capitol during the War of 1812. That

struck me as I stood there and reflected

that once again an enemy had

struck the United States home.

I never would have imagined, when I

came to work that week, that by the

end of the week I would be voting

unanimously with my colleagues in the

Senate, Democrats and Republicans, to

give to the President of the United

States the authority to go to war and

the resources to go to war. It happened

so quickly, but it was the right thing

to do. We understood that the United

States was in peril, was in danger—and

still is—from the forces of terrorism

around the world. We stood as one, in a

bipartisan way, to back the President,

to fight this war on terrorism, to go

after those who were responsible for

the September 11 tragedy which struck

the United States.

Now, here we are a year later. The

war on terrorism continues. Few, if

any, would say that it is resolved or

that we have won it. And we are debating

the possibility of another war

against another enemy. Osama bin

Laden has not been captured or accounted

for. The major leaders in al-

Qaida are still on the loose somewhere.

We believe al-Qaida still has a network

of sleepers in 60 nations around the

world. Afghanistan, the first battleground

in the war against terrorism in

the 21st century, is still not a stable

and safe country. Hamid Karzai, the

President of Afghanistan, barely survived

an assassination attempt last

week. We have thousands of American

troops still on the ground there. I had

the honor to meet with some of them

last January; our hearts and prayers

are with them every single day. But

that war on terrorism still continues.

Yet the administration comes forward

and tells us we still have to think

about the possibility of another war, in

this case a war against Iraq. Indeed, it

is possible that within a few days or

maybe a few weeks the people of the

United States of America, through

their Members of Congress, will be

asked to vote on whether to go to war

against Iraq. It is hard to believe the

events are moving so quickly that we

would be declaring a second war within

little more than a year of the September

11 attack.

Last Sunday on ‘‘Meet the Press,’’

Vice President CHENEY indicated that

the administration would like the Congress

to vote on Iraq prior to adjourning

this October. Do you realize that is

a matter of weeks—weeks, before we

would be called on to make this momentous

decision? Because this is not a

matter of high-altitude bombing when

it comes to Iraq. We wouldn’t have the

luxury of that type of warfare. We are

talking about, in the President’s

words, ‘‘regime change.’’ We are talking

about removing Saddam Hussein

from power, not peacefully but with

force. That would involve, I am afraid,

land forces invading, the type of war

we have not seen in many decades in

the United States.

We recall the Persian Gulf war. It

was a much different situation, a little

over 10 years ago, precipitated by Saddam

Hussein’s invasion and occupation

of Kuwait: The formation of a coalition

led by the United States but also with

the United Nations and allies around

the world, including many Arab States

who joined us.

We fought to remove Saddam Hussein

from Kuwait. We were successful in

doing that. We had logistical support.

We positioned our troops in Saudi Arabia

and nearby. We had a broad coalition.

We were forcing Saddam Hussein

out of a territory he had occupied.

This is a far different challenge if we

invade Iraq—different in that the coalition

today consists of England and the

United States, and no others.

Logistical support is hard to find because

the countries surrounding Iraq

have basically told us they will not

support us in this effort. Frankly, we

would be fighting Saddam Hussein on

his own territory, which gives him a

home field advantage, which most military

experts concede. Would we be successful

ultimately? Yes—at some cost

and at some price over some period of

time. I have no doubt the American

military—the very best in the world.

Hussein would be gone. I can’t tell you

what it would cost.

In the midst of the Kuwait situation,

Saddam Hussein didn’t use chemical

and biological weapons, which we believe

he has, but instead he decided to

fire Scud missiles on Israel—kind of a

third party to this conversation—hoping,

I am sure, that he would destabilize

the Middle East and cause such

an uproar and consternation that the

United States would withdraw. It

didn’t work. Sadly, Israelis died in the

process.

This time, we are not talking about

moving Iraqi troops out of Kuwait but

actually killing and capturing Saddam

Hussein. To what lengths would he go

in response? What victims would he

seek? He doesn’t have missiles to reach

the United States, but he has the capacity

to train what missiles he does

have on nearby neighbors such as

Israel.

Vice President CHENEY said that before

the October adjournment, Congress

would be asked to

By most definitions, that is article I,

section 8, clause 11, of the Constitution

which gives the Congress, and the Congress

alone, the power to declare war.

The people who wrote that Constitution—

the Founding Fathers—had seen

a king in action, a king who had

dragged his country into wars, and said

that the United States would be different.

We will never have a President

to take us into a war. The American

people will make that choice through

Members of Congress—Members of the

House elected every 2 years, and the

Senate every 6 years. They will make

the call, and do it very explicitly.

Vice President CHENEY is saying to

Congress: It is your turn to make this

decision.

The decision to go to war is the most

significant decision any government

can make, and Congress plays an essential

role. We and the executive branch

need to have all the relevant facts analyzed

as thoroughly and objectively as

possible before making the decision to

put America’s military men and

women in harm’s way.

Senior administration officials publicly

identified Iraq’s development of

weapons of mass destruction and the

potential of Iraq’s transfer of these

weapons to terrorist groups as the primary

threat to our Nation. Ultimately,

our Government must rely on the intelligence

community to make the

most thorough and unbiased analytic

assessment of the current and projected

status of Iraq’s weapons of mass

destruction infrastructure, regardless

of whether the analytic judgments conform

or conflict with stated U.S. policy.

In other words, we are saying that

the intelligence community should

give us the unvarnished truth, tell us

what Iraq has and its likely capability.

It is interesting, if you look at the

countries that the Bush administration

designated as part of the axis of evil—

North Korea, Iran, and Iraq—of the

three, the military capabilities of

North Korea and Iran far surpass the

capability of Iraq. We know that in the

case with North Korea, and probably

Iran as well, they have nuclear weapons

today. We also know they are

working on developing long-range missiles.

We believe North Korea is the

closest to developing missiles which

could make it to the shores of the

United States. But we think Iran is

trying to do the same thing.

All that I am telling you is a matter

of public information. We know this.

We know what their capability is.

When you look at the status of the

three countries which the President

said are the axis of evil, Iraq clearly

ranks third. If all three are threats and

enemies to the United States, why is it

that the administration has focused in

on Iraq, which to our knowledge does

not have nuclear weapons today nor

the ability to deliver any type of longrange

weaponry against the United

States?

As a member of the Senate Select

Committee on Intelligence, I am deeply

concerned that the intelligence community

has not completed the most

basic document which is asked of them

before the United States makes such a

critical life-or-death decision.

It is within the power of the Director

of the CIA, George Tenet, to order a

national intelligence estimate, known

as an NIE. National intelligence estimates

bring together all the agencies

of the Federal Government involved in

intelligence, sits them down, and collects

and coordinate all of their information

to reach the best possible conclusion

he can come up with.

I was stunned to learn last week that

we have not produced a national intelligence

estimate showing the current

state of weapons of mass destruction in

Iraq. What is incredible, with all of the

statements made by members of this

administration about those weapons, is

the fact that the intelligence community

has not been brought together.

If we learned anything from September

11 of last year, we learned,

when it came to the intelligence out

there at the FBI and the CIA and other

agencies, that no one ever brought it

together. Had we been able to bring it

together by September 10, could we

have avoided September 11? I am not

sure. I wouldn’t say that. But we certainly

would have appreciated the

threat a lot better, and perhaps we

would have been prepared a lot better.

Maybe—just maybe—we might have

avoided some or all of the tragedy. But

we didn’t do it.

Time and again since then as we

looked back on last year, we have said

we have to be better prepared, with

better communications and better coordination

of information from outside

the country and inside, and bring it all

together so we can make the best decision.

When we are talking about a possible

invasion of Iraq and a war against Iraq,

why haven’t we really created the most

basic document that we have the power

to create in this Government—the national

intelligence estimate—so we

know exactly what we may be up

against in Iraq? It has not been done.

This morning, I handed a letter to

the deputy to Director Tenet asking

that he give it to the Director personally,

asking that they move as quickly

as possible to establish and create this

national intelligence estimate. Once it

is established, I think we should meet

on Capitol Hill—the Senate and the

House Intelligence Committees. We

should have classified hearing on

things that can’t be discussed publicly

about this NIE, and then a public hearing

as well to share with the American

people, without compromising in any

way the safety and security of the

United States, as much information as

we possibly can about the current state

of affairs in Iraq.

National intelligence estimates are

the Director of Central Intelligence’s

most authoritative written judgments

concerning national security issues.

They contain the coordinated judgments

of the entire intelligence community

regarding the likely course of

future events. They provide not just a

snapshot of a particular national security

problem today but a coordinated

assessment of how that problem might

evolve over the next several years. This

is the vital policy planning tool for our

Nation’s policymakers.

Let me tell you the many components

of the U.S. intelligence community

are worthy agencies. Each and

every one of them does a good job of intelligence

collection—the Central Intelligence

Agency, the Defense Intelligence

Agency, the Department of

State Intelligence and Research Bureau,

and the Department of Energy’s

Intelligence Office which is critical to

doing an assessment of nuclear capability,

and the National Security Agency,

just to name a few. They provide

analytic assessments on an hour-tohour,

day-to-day basis. They can tell us

better than any other group the current

situation in Iraq. We need to know

what their consensus opinion is before

we decide in advance whether or not

this war should be undertaken. I firmly

believe that policymakers in both the

executive branch and the Congress—

the President, the White House, the

Department of Defense, the Department

of State, and the Congress—

would benefit from the production of a

coordinated consensus document produced

by all relevant components of

the intelligence community on the current

and projected status of Iraq’s

weapons of mass destruction.

The letter I sent to Director Tenet

asked him to initiate this process as

quickly as possible and to produce the

NIE within several weeks. I requested

that an unclassified summary of it be

produced, as has been done in the past,

so the American public can better understand

this vitally important national

security issue.

Let me tell you that during the time

I served in the Congress—the House

and the Senate—there is no moment I

recall with more pain in my heart than

the debate a little over 10 years ago

about the Persian Gulf war. After we

persuaded President Bush’s father to

follow the Constitution, to come to

Congress and to seek the authority of

the American people and the permission

and approval of Congress before

initiating that war, we then engaged in

a debate—a long debate. I think virtually

every Member of the House of

Representatives took the floor over a 2-

or 3-day period of time. The House met

continuously. In that period of time,

each of us stood in the well of the

House of Representatives—as we did in

the Senate Chamber here—and spoke

our hearts about the challenge we

faced and the vote we faced. We knew

that if a vote were cast to go to war,

innocent people would die and that

American soldiers and American sailors

and marines and airmen would have

their lives on the line.

It meant a lot to me personally because

of a friend of mine, who was a

Marine at the time—I knew his parents

well. They were from Springfield, IL. I

had known his mother and father for

many years. They came to me early on

when the debate got started and said:

We are worried to death about our son.

Really, our hope for the future of our

family is in the Marines. He is there in

the Persian Gulf, and we sure don’t

want to see anything happen to him.

I assured them that I would think

about him constantly as I made my decision

on the Persian Gulf war. Of

course, we all recall what happened. Finally,

after the approval was given, the

war was initiated. The land war did not

take but 2 or 3 days and it was over.

And I thought, at the time, what a

great relief it was to be able to call his

parents and tell them that it had ended

so quickly and so well.

Little did I know that Christian Porter

of the U.S. Marine Corps from

Springfield, IL, was one of the several

hundred American casualties in that

war. This young man, whom we all

worried about so much, was the victim

of friendly fire.

I went to his funeral service in

Springfield and to the veterans cemetery

afterwards. My heart was broken

for that family. But it was a good reminder

for this Member of Congress—

now a Member of the Senate—to remember

what war is all about. It is

about the potential loss of life of many

innocent people. It is about being in

harm’s way for many Americans in

uniform.

We have to take this responsibility

very seriously. And if we are going to

take it seriously, we must insist, in

Congress, that the administration

produce the clear and convincing evidence

that an invasion of Iraq is the

only option available to us to bring

this potential threat under control.

If this administration cannot produce

a National Intelligence Estimate which

comes to that same conclusion, then,

frankly, those of us who have listened

to the heavy rhetoric over the last several

weeks will understand that, when

it comes to the evidence, there is something

lacking.

It is time for the administration to

rise to the occasion, to produce this

evidence, as has been asked for and

been produced so many times in the

past when America’s national security

was at risk. We cannot accept anything

less than that before any Member of

the House or the Senate is asked to

vote on this critical question of going

to war.

We have to say to the administration:

Bring forward your best evidence

and your best arguments so that, ultimately,

when we make this momentous

and historic decision, we can go back

to the States and people who we represent

and say that we have dispatched

our responsibility in a credible, goodfaith

manner, that we have done everything

possible to understand the nature

of the threat, and the best response of

the United States.

War is the last option. We have to

know every element before we make

that decision. We have to exhaust

every other opportunity before we

reach it.

On Thursday, the President will be at

the United Nations in New York. I am

certain he is going to remind them

that Saddam Hussein is a thug, that he

has been a threat to his own people, to

the region, and to people around the

world with his weapons of mass destruction.

He will, undoubtedly, remind

them of his cruel invasion of Kuwait,

which mobilized the United Nations to

defeat him and to displace his troops

from Kuwait. He will, undoubtedly, remind

them of what has happened since:

when the United Nations resolution,

which condemns and prohibits Iraq

from ever having weapons of mass destruction,

has been ignored by Saddam

Hussein; how the inspectors, some 4

years ago, were pushed out of his country;

and how this man has literally, as

a thug, ruled this nation in a manner

and form that most civilized countries

in the world find reprehensible.

All of those things, I will concede,

are true. But the next question facing

the United Nations and facing the

United States and its people, through

its elected representatives in Congress,

is: Is it the right thing for us to do?

We cannot make the right decision

without the best information. And the

production of the National Intelligence

Estimate will give us that information.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence

of a quorum.