Mr. President,

the Syria Accountability and

Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act

takes important and valuable steps,

and I would have voted for it had I been

present, but I am concerned that it

may not go far enough.

Syria has long been recognized as a

state sponsor of terrorism. In fact, the

Syrians themselves openly speak of

their support for terrorist organizations

such as Hezbollah, Hamas, and

the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Intelligence

reports and terrorism experts

tell us that the next generation of terrorists

is being trained in a network of

training facilities that exist in Syria

and the Syrian-controlled parts of Lebanon.

These international terrorist organizations

that run these camps already

have the capacity to kill Americans,

and they have state sponsors with

access to weapons of mass destruction.

Prior to 9/11, Hezbollah was responsible

for the deaths of more Americans than

any other terrorist group.

On September 18, 2001, the Senate

passed S.J. Res 23, which authorized

the President to use ‘‘all necessary and

appropriate force’’ against those responsible

for the attacks of 9/11. This

authorization for the use of force is

therefore limited to al-Qaeda. We ignore

other terrorist networks at our

peril—and at one point, President Bush

recognized that. Nine days after the

terrorist attack of September 11, the

President declared:

‘‘Our war on terror begins with al-

Qaeda but it does not end there. It will

not end until every terrorist group of

global reach has been found, stopped

and defeated.’’

In his State of the Union speech on

January 29, 2002, President bush restated

our priorities:

I supported those statements and

hoped to help the President carry out

his pledge. Last October, Congress authorized

the use of force against Iraq. I

voted against this authorization because

I believed it was a distraction

from the war on terrorism. At that

time, I attempted to amend the resolution

to provide the president the authorization

to use force against other

terrorist organizations that met the

following criteria: they have a state

sponsor with access to weapons of mass

destruction; they have a history of

killing Americans; and they have the

ability to strike inside the United

States.

I remain concerned that the President

does not have the necessary authorization

to use force against these

additional terrorist organizations.

Without such authorization, he cannot

fulfill the commitment he made in his

January 2002 State of the Union

speech.

I hope the administration will take

this occasion to review its existing authorities

and report back to Congress

on where there may be deficiencies in

its authorities to carry out the war on

terrorism. Only then will we be able to

hold Syria and similar states that

sponsor or harbor terrorists truly accountable.