Mr. President, tonight at

8:00 p.m., President Bush will make a

televised address to speak to the Nation

about the threat of Iraq. According

to press reports from this weekend,

the President is expected to lay out, in

detail, his case against Saddam Hussein,

including the repressive dictator’s

long history of violence and aggression.

There is no disagreement about the

character of Saddam Hussein, neither

on Capitol Hill nor in the minds of

every American. But while the President

continues to make his case

against Saddam Hussein, the issue on

the minds of Senators and our constituents

is, what exactly is the United

States planning to do?

Rather than hearing more about Saddam

Hussein—we know enough about

him—what we need to hear from the

President are answers to our questions

about what he plans to do in Iraq. We

need to know why the President is demanding

that we act now. We need to

have some idea of what we are getting

ourselves into, what the costs and consequences

may be, and what the President

is planning to do after the fighting

has stopped. After Iraq. After Saddam

Hussein. It is not unpatriotic to

ask these questions, especially when

they are already on the minds of all

Americans.

Why now? Those two little words:

Why now?

Why now? What has changed in the

last year, 6 months, or 2 weeks that

would compel us to attack now?

Is Iraq on the verge of attacking the

United States? If so, should our homeland

security alert be elevated?

Shouldn’t the President be spending

more time with his military advisors in

Washington, instead of making campaign

speeches all over the country?

The media reports suggest that the

administration does not plan to act

until February. Why is the President

telling Congress it has to act before the

elections? Why are our own leaders

telling us we have to act before the

elections.

What are we signing up for?

We are about to give the President a

blank check to deal with Iraq however

he sees fit. What exactly is he planning

to do with this power?

Does the President have clear objectives

for this war? Does he want to disarm

Saddam Hussein, or remove him

from power?

When might the fighting end? What

conditions must be met before the

President would determine that the

war is over?

The President has said several times

that he wants to use force in order to

bring Iraq into compliance with its

international obligations. Why is he

then demanding that Congress go even

further and give him a blank check

that would give him the power to commit

our country to years or even decades

of bloody war without the support

of our allies?

We have already given the President

a blank check to deal with al-Qaida,

which he used to invade and occupy Afghanistan.

Does the President plan to

fight these two wars separately, or will

the President combine them into a

broader regional campaign?

What will be the costs of this war?

How many troops will be involved?

Will we exercise the heavy ground option

or will we exercise the heavy air

option? Or might we exercise both options?

How many reservists will have

to leave their jobs to serve in uniform?

Will they be fighting door-to-door

combat in downtown Bagdad?

Do our troops have adequate protection

against the chemical and biological

weapons that Saddam Hussein

might employ?

How many American casualties is the

Department of Defense anticipating in

case the heavy ground option is utilized?

How many American casualties

is the Department of Defense anticipating.

?

In addition to the cost in blood, war

is also a drain on the national treasury.

How much will it cost to fight this

war and to maintain an occupation

force? Larry Lindsey said it would cost

$100 billion to $200 billion, talking

about this war and what it would cost.

One hundred to two hundred billion

dollars, and he said: That’s nothing.

During the Gulf War, our allies contributed

$54 billion of the $61 billion

cost of the war. Leaving the United

States holding the bag for roughly $7

billion, a little over $7 billion out of

the $61.1 billion total. Will our allies

give us financial assistance in this

war? Has anyone been asking them to

divvy it up, to help pay the financial

cost, or do we plan to shoulder it all?

Do we have the resources to care for

our injured and sick veterans when

they return from Iraq? Are our hospitals

in this country prepared for that

event?

Will there be other consequences to a

war with Iraq?

How will the war against Iraq affect

the fight against terrorism? How many

of us will feel safer here in this country

at night, when the shades of evening

fall? How many of us will feel safer,

once an attack against Iraq is

launched? Will National Guard troops

be removed from important homeland

security missions in the United States?

If we act without the approval of the

international community, what happens

to the international cooperation

in the war on terror we worked so hard

to foster after 9/11?

How will a war between the United

States and Iraq affect regional stability

in the Middle East?

What will we do if Iraq attacks

Israel? Can we persuade Israel to stay

out of the war, or will we just stand by

and watch them join in the fighting?

Are we putting more moderate regimes

in the Middle East at risk, like

Jordan, or Pakistan, which already has

nuclear weapons. If a more radical government

takes over in Pakistan, are we

prepared to act there as well?

What happens after the war?

Who will govern a defeated Iraq?

How long will our troops be expected

to occupy Iraq?

Do we expect Iraqis to rise up against

Saddam Hussein, or take arms against

us?

What plans do we have to prevent

Iraq from breaking up and descending

into civil war?

How can we contain the instability

that will likely result in the north of

Iraq that may threaten Turkey, our

friend and NATO ally? Are we giving

any thought to this? Is anybody in the

administration giving thoughts to this

question?

In his weekend radio address, the

president told us that:

should force be required to bring Saddam to

account, the United States will work with

other nations to help the Iraqi people rebuild

and form a just government.

What does he mean by that? Is the

President advocating a new Marshall

Plan for the Middle East? Are the

American people ready to make that

kind of long-term regional commitment?

How much will the American taxpayer

pay to rebuild Iraq? How much

will our allies pay? If the United States

should act alone in attacking Iraq, can

we really expect the rest of the world

to help rebuild Iraq after the war? Have

any other countries committed to assisting

in these peacekeeping duties? If

so, how many? Can we afford to rebuild

Iraq and Afghanistan at the same

time? We may have to rebuild Israel as

well.

I have a lot of questions. The American

people have a lot of questions. But

apparently the American people are

not going to be asked. They are not

going to be given the opportunity to

ask their questions.

We are going to be stampeded and

rushed pellmell into a showdown right

here in the Senate and in the House,

and in the next few days. Why all the

hurry? Why are we in such a hurry?

Election day is 4 weeks away from tomorrow.

Wouldn’t it be better to go

home and listen to the people, hear

what they have to say, and answer

their questions before voting on this

far-reaching, grave, and troubling question?

Every one of the questions the American

people have is important. Without

better answers from the President, we

will only be getting part of the story,

which is a dangerous position for Congress

to be in as we prepare to vote on

a war resolution this week or next

week.

It is a sad thing that the elected representatives

of the American people

are being asked to vote on this troubling

question before the election.

But the administration is not giving

us meaningful answers to these questions.

All we are getting are vague

threats and political pressure from the

White House. The President has not

backed up his case against Iraq with a

consistent justification based on clear

reason and evidence. When the President

and his advisers are pressed for

clarity, they have responded with evasive

and confusing references to the

dangers of terrorism which they now

seem to think has more to do with Saddam

Hussein than Osama bin Laden.

Defense Secretary Rumsfeld revealed

that recently when he told the Senate

Armed Services Committee:

I suggest that any who insist on perfect

evidence are back in the 20th century and

still thinking in pre-9–11 terms.

In other words, it is just too hard for

them to answer all of these questions,

so Congress should just hand everything

over to the President, and he will

determine by himself what is ‘‘necessary

and appropriate’’ when the time

comes. Until then, the administration

will provide Congress and the American

people with very little information.

We need to know this information,

and we need to know it now, before we

are pressured into making a hasty decision

about whether to send the sons

and daughters of Americans to war in a

foreign land; namely, Iraq.

The President’s military doctrine

will give him a free hand to justify almost

any military action with unsubstantiated

allegations and arbitrary

risk assessments, and Congress is

about to rubberstamp that doctrine

and simply step out of the way.

I cannot understand why much of the

leadership of this Congress has bought

into the administration’s political

pressure. Congress will be out of the

business of making any decisions about

war, and the voice of the people will

quickly be drowned out by the White

House beating the drums of war.

There is no need for Congress to underwrite

the President’s new military

doctrine. If the United States uses

force against Iraq, then Congress can

provide the President with enough authority

to act decisively in Iraq. Any

further actions the President wants to

take should be decided on a case-bycase

basis. We should not get carried

away by all of the war rhetoric and

turn this Iraq resolution into a blank

check for the President to enforce

some vague new doctrine in every corner

of the Middle East or the world beyond.

Granting him such broad power

would not only set a dangerous international

precedent but would severely

undermine our own constitutional system

of checks and balances.

Some say that the process laid out in

the Constitution will be satisfied once

Congress votes on whether to authorize

war. But Congress must not grant the

use of force authorization without a

full understanding of the consequences.

We will be voting to decide whether we

will allow the President to declare war

at his convenience for an unlimited period

of time. That does not satisfy the

Constitution. After all, the President

has repeatedly said he has not decided

whether we must go to war.

Do we want to just give the President

and all future Presidents an authorization

for war that they can put in their

hip pockets, to be pulled out whenever

it is convenient? That is not the course

of action worthy of the greatness the

Founding Fathers expected when they

created the legislative branch.

We should not have this vote on the

issue for war or for peace before the

Congress has answers to these questions.

The President, when he speaks

to the Nation tonight, must provide

real answers to these questions that

the American people are asking.

Madam President, I yield the floor.