Mr. President, I

thank the Senators from Virginia, Arizona,

and Connecticut for all of the efforts

being made to bring a full debate

on this issue to the Senate.

Congress has no greater responsibility

under the Constitution than to

provide for our Nation’s common defense.

There is no decision we make

that requires more careful consideration

than a decision to authorize the

use of armed forces and, in so doing,

send America’s sons and daughters into

harm’s way.

Shortly after I was elected to the

Senate, our Nation suffered through

the brutal battle in Mogadishu, Somalia.

It left 18 of our soldiers dead. Our

mission was vague. There was no clear

American national security threat in

Somalia. The President did not come

to the American people and explain the

rationale for continued military involvement.

The impact of this uncertainty became

very clear to me soon after the

tragedy when I met a constituent on a

flight from Washington, DC, to Dallas.

He came up to me and said: Senator,

my name is Larry Joyce. I am your

constituent.

I said: Hi, Larry, how are you doing?

What were you doing in Washington?

He said: I was burying my son in Arlington

National Cemetery.

His son Casey had been killed in the

street ambush that was depicted in the

book ‘‘Black Hawk Down,’’ also a

movie.

Colonel Joyce said to me, with tears

rolling down his face: Senator, I am a

military man. I served two tours in

Vietnam. And now my son Casey, on

his first mission as an Army Ranger, is

not coming home. Senator, I can’t tell

you why.

I vowed that day that I would never

vote to send an American into battle

unless I could answer that question. I

want to be able to face any parent and

say: This is the national security interest

of our country, and that is why

your child signed up and was willing to

fight and was sent to do so.

Since Somalia, I have come to the

Senate floor to express grave reservations

about deployments to Haiti, Bosnia,

and Kosovo. In each case, I called

on the President to come to Congress,

make the case to the American people,

and outline the U.S. security interest.

After the tragic events of 9/11, President

Bush sought and received the authorization

to use force to find and destroy

the terrorists who had launched

that heinous crime. There was no question

in my mind and in the minds of

most Members of Congress that our national

security demanded our support

of the President.

Today, President Bush seeks congressional

authorization to use military

force to deal with the threat Saddam

Hussein poses with weapons of mass destruction.

We must answer the major

question for America: What is the U.S.

security interest? Why Saddam? Why

now?

It is a question I thought about as I

sat among the hushed crowds at the

Pentagon’s memorial service on September

11, 2002. It was a poignant moment.

I was surrounded by those who

had suffered so much and many who

will ultimately bear the consequences

of the decision we are about to make.

I doubt there is anyone in America

who doesn’t feel as I do. If we could

have prevented 9/11, we certainly would

have. We didn’t have warning, and we

paid a heavy price.

It is this experience that has led

President Bush to think in a different

way about protecting our homeland. I

believe he doesn’t want to wait until

an enemy is finished building his deadly

arsenal and ready to attack from a

position of strength. It is one thing to

turn three commercial airliners into

weapons of mass destruction. It is another

to have a nuclear missile ready

to deploy or to arm an unmanned aerial

vehicle with anthrax ready to ship

anywhere in the world.

Each generation of Americans has

been called to defend our freedom.

Each time, our forefathers and mothers

have answered the call. Our generation’s

time of national trial has come.

We are being called to stop a new kind

of enemy, different from any we have

ever fought before. This enemy is not

just contained in one country or two, it

is spread throughout the world and

even within our own borders. This

enemy purposely kills itself in order to

harm others.

This enemy is patient, building resources

and striking when and where

we are least prepared. This enemy uses

a different method each time. This

enemy requires a new kind of defense.

That is what the President is attempting

to build.

The cold war ended when the Iron

Curtain and Berlin Wall came tumbling

down. The post-cold-war era ended

when the World Trade Center towers

came crashing down. September 11

made it abundantly clear that the

strategy of deterrence alone is not

enough.

The President recently released a

new national security strategy. It articulates

a policy of preemption and

dominance. Some fear that our new national

security strategy is too bold. A

bold defense does not cause calamities

to occur, but a lack of action will. It is

not our defense strategy that will provoke

attacks on the United States.

Rather, it is when we fail to act or fail

to lead that our enemies strike. It is

when they think we have become soft

and complacent that they will kill innocent

Americans again.

We have learned hard and valuable

lessons these past few years. The first

terrorist attack on the World Trade

Center occurred in 1993, a bombing that

killed 6 Americans and injured more

than 1,000. What did we do? In 1996,

Hezbollah extremists bombed the

United States military barracks at

Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, killing

19 American service members and injuring

500 others. What did we do? In 1998,

al-Qaida terrorists bombed the United

States Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania,

killing and injuring hundreds.

What did we do? In 2000, al-Qaida terrorists

again attacked Americans, this

time bombing the U.S.S. *Cole* in

Yemen, killing 17 American

Service members and injuring scores

more. What did we do?

Then came the devastating attacks

of 9/11. Our Nation finally was awakened.

We put the pattern together to

see the threat to the very freedom that

we cherish. We did do something. We

took action against our enemy swiftly

and boldly after 9/11. Now we must follow

through.

The President has asked for authority

to meet this threat. Congress gave

him wide latitude to root out terrorism.

We and our allies are doing

that job in Afghanistan, the home base

of al-Qaida.

We have liberated millions and millions

of innocent Afghanis from the

cruel Taliban regime.

Now the President is asking for authority

to go into Iraq. Why Iraq? Why

now? Because we have learned the lessons

of complacency. We have learned

the lessons of not being prepared.

The President has solid information

that with a small amount of highly enriched

uranium, Iraq could have a nuclear

weapon in less than a year. We

know Iraq already has the means to deliver

it. He has hard intelligence that

Iraq has chemical and biological weapons

and small, unmanned aerial vehicles

to disseminate them, potentially

killing thousands of people anywhere

in the world. The President is saying:

‘‘Do we wait for the attack, or do we

take steps to prevent it?’’ Our post-9/11

defense strategy demands that we prevent

it.

Saddam Hussein has fired on coalition

aircraft patrolling the no-fly zones

over Iraq 2,500 times since the Gulf

War. Saddam Hussein has rewarded the

families of Palestinian suicide bombers.

He has attempted to assassinate

the former U.S. President who led the

international coalition that defeated

him in the Gulf War. His No. 1 enemy

is the United States of America.

So if all diplomatic efforts fail, and if

the U.N. weapons inspectors are not allowed

unfettered access to suspected

sites, our President wants to be able to

take away Saddam Hussein’s means to

destroy us and our allies.

It is our responsibility to give the

President the authorization he needs.

The question of whether the security of

the United States is threatened has

been answered. The answer is yes.

It is with a heavy heart and a realization

of the consequences that I will

vote yes. But it would be a burden I

could not carry to vote no and then, a

year or 2 from now, see a preventable

attack kill thousands more innocent

Americans or our allies.

Mr. President, we are going to meet

this test of our generation. We are

going to protect the freedom and the

way of life that has become the beacon

to the world of the way life should be.

We can do no less.

I yield the floor.