Thank you, Madam

President.

Madam President, I rise this evening

to speak to my colleagues, more importantly

to speak to the people of the

United States and, especially, my fellow

Floridians.

In my service in the Senate I have

not shied away from authorizing the

use of force when I believed it was in

our Nation’s interests.

I voted to use force in the Persian

Gulf in 1991. I voted to use force in Bosnia

in 1992. I voted to use force in

Kosovo in 1999.

I have given the President of the

United States a presumption of correctness

in his assessment of our national

security interest.

But, Madam President, tonight I am

going to vote no on this resolution.

The reason is this resolution is too

timid. It is too limiting. It is too weak.

This resolution fails to recognize the

new reality of the era of terrorism. And

that reality is that war abroad will,

without assertive security actions, increase

the prospects of terrorist attacks

here at home.

In fact, war on Iraq alone leaves

Americans more vulnerable to the No.

1 threat facing us today, those international

terrorist organizations that

have the capability to inflict upon us a

repeat of the tragedy of September 11.

The resolution I had hoped we would

pass would contain what the President

has asked for relative to the use of

force against Saddam Hussein’s regime

in Iraq, and more.

It also should provide the President

all necessary authorities to use force

against the international terrorist

groups that will probably strike the

United States as the regime of Saddam

Hussein crumbles.

I offered an amendment on this floor

yesterday that would have given the

President the authorities he needs to

deal with the threat posed by the five

deadliest terrorist organizations in addition

to al-Qaida—that would gladly

join Saddam Hussein in his retaliatory

strike.

Those five organizations have already

killed hundreds of Americans.

Those five organizations have ties to

countries that could provide them with

weapons of mass destruction. Those

five organizations have the capability

to strike within our homeland. They

have recruited, trained, and placed

operatives in our hometowns.

I argued that the President should

have the option to set priorities and

choose our targets, and to be able to

preempt terrorists before they can

order strikes against us in our homeland.

Unfortunately, that amendment

was rejected.

Some said I was incorrect in my contention

that the President, as Commander

in Chief, lacks the power to expand

the war on terrorism beyond al-

Qaida. I disagree. But I will not repeat

the legal arguments that I made yesterday.

But even accepting the fact that others

may disagree, how is it in the interest

of our Nation’s security to leave

the question in doubt as to whether the

President has the authority to attack

these international terrorist organizations

that represent such a lethal

threat to the people of the United

States?

There have been some past administrations

which have allowed leaders of

rogue states to be uncertain as to how

America would respond if they used

weapons of mass destruction. This administration

should not repeat that

fundamental error.

If we want to deter the world’s terrorists

and madmen, shouldn’t we tell

them, in the most explicit terms, what

they will face by U.S. retaliation to

their action?

I also want to restate my conviction

that this resolution forces the President

to focus our military and intelligence

resources on the wrong target.

A historical example, which has been

used repeatedly in this debate, is the

example of the 1930s: that England,

France, and other nations, which would

eventually join in the world’s greatest

alliance, slept while Hitler’s power

grew.

They say the equivalent of passing

this resolution is to have declared war

on Hitler. I disagree with that assessment

of what this lesson of history

means. In my judgment, passing this

resolution tonight will be the equivalent

of declaring war on Italy. That is

not what we should be doing. We

should not be declaring war just on

Mussolini’s Italy. We should also be declaring

war on Hitler’s Germany.

There are good reasons to consider

attacking today’s Italy, by which I

mean Iraq. Saddam Hussein’s regime

has chemical and biological weapons

and is trying to get nuclear capacity.

But the briefings I have received suggest

our efforts, for instance, to block

him from obtaining necessary nuclear

materials have been largely successful,

as evidenced by the recent intercept of

centrifuge tubes, and that he is years

away from having nuclear capability.

So why does it make sense to attack

this era’s Italy and not Germany, especially

when by attacking Italy, we are

making Germany a more probable adversary?

The CIA has warned us that international

terrorist organizations will

probably use United States action

against Iraq as a justification for striking

us here in the homeland. You

might ask: What does the word ‘‘probably’’

mean in intelligence speak.

‘‘Probably’’ means there is a 75 percent

or greater chance of the event occurring.

And the event is that international

terrorist organizations will

use United States action against Iraq

as a justification for striking us here in

the homeland.

Let me read a declassified portion of

a CIA report recently presented to the

Senate Select Committee on Intelligence:

In other words, the odds of another

strike against the people of the United

States by al-Qaida or one of the international

terrorist groups goes up when

we attack Baghdad.

The President should be in the most

advantageous position to protect

Americans, to launch preemptive

strikes and hack off the heads of these

snakes. With the resolution before us,

we are denying the President that opportunity,

and we are sending confusing

signals to our people and our allies

as to the sincerity of our commitment

to the war on terrorism.

The American people and our allies

gave President Bush their wholehearted

support in the war on terrorism

after September 11. They

cheered our efforts to remove Osama

bin Laden and the Taliban government

from Afghanistan. A year after we

commenced that war, action in Afghanistan

has ground to a virtual halt.

Osama bin Laden remains at large, and

we have not moved aggressively beyond

Afghanistan to take on the cells of al-

Qaida operatives in other parts of the

world.

We also know of sanctuaries, training

camps where the next generation of

terrorists are being trained and that

those sanctuaries are going

unattacked.

With sadness, I predict we will live to

regret on this day, October 10, 2002, we

stood by, and we allowed those terrorist

organizations to continue growing

in the shadows. It may be days,

weeks, months, or years before they

strike Americans again, but they will,

and we will have allowed them to grow

that capability.

If we are going to pass this resolution—

and I expect we will—there are

several things we should say about the

need to protect the American people.

Within the region of the Middle East

and central Asia, we have a constellation

of challenges, threats, and commitments

of the United States. We

need to use this period of time to begin

to reduce the threat environment in

that area by active, sustained U.S. diplomacy

on two half-century-old disputes:

The dispute between Israel and

Palestine, and the dispute over Kashmir,

the festering sore between two nuclear

powers, India and Pakistan.

Second, the President a year ago

should have ordered all of the law enforcement

agencies under his control

to design a comprehensive means of determining

the number, location, and

capability of terrorists who are living

among us. But tonight, no one in our

government can fully tell us which,

when, where, and how terrorist organizations

might hurt us. This I consider

to be a stunning admission and an unnecessary

vulnerability.

At this late hour, such action should

be of the most urgent priority. This

should be done, of course, within the

confines of the protections afforded to

all American persons by the Constitution

of the United States.

Third, we should be moving to detain

all those who can be legally detained

who represent a threat to the United

States.

Fourth, the President should direct

the military forces of our country to

prepare to execute a full-fledged war on

terrorism. We must complete our mission

in Afghanistan and then move to

the next targets of al-Qaida cells.

Finally, I would advise the President

to request of the Congress the authorities

he needs to execute the war on terror

and to protect Americans. Specifically,

this should include the authority

to use force against those international

terrorist organizations with the greatest

capability to kill Americans here

at home, with the greatest history of

having used their evil intent against

Americans, and with the largest number

of terrorist operatives located

within the United States.

Our people need to know their government

is doing all it can to keep

them safe. Tonight many Americans

are anxious and frightened, and they

have cause to be. One year ago letters

carrying anthrax killed five Americans,

including one in my home State,

and created great concern. That case

has not yet been solved.

One year later, here in the Capital region,

a sniper is randomly taking lives

of innocent people going about their

daily activities. Just hours ago, police

confirmed the man who was shot last

night while pumping gas into his car at

a service station is the eighth victim,

six of whom are dead. And in today’s

Washington Post, a front page article

has the headline ‘‘Probe Less Cohesive

Than Advertised.’’

It states:

Are these acts that we are trying to

unravel those of a madman, a mad scientist,

a terrorist? The honest answer

is that we do not know. In these frightening

times, it is irresponsible to add

to the anxiety of the American people

by going to war with Iraq—without

taking the additional steps required to

curtail the possibility of more horrors

being inflicted upon us here in our

homeland. This resolution fails to take

those steps.

Different people have different opinions

of what our national security priorities

should be. Clearly, some—including

the President—believe the first

priority should be regime change in

Baghdad. Others believe our first priority

should be to disarm Iraq by removing

its weapons of mass destruction.

As important as they may be, I

have a different view.

The United States has many challenges,

threats, and commitments to

respond to, particularly in the region

of the Middle East and central Asia.

These include the Israel-Palestine conflict,

the India-Pakistan standoff, and

the threats posed by weapons of mass

destruction. Even if we say the No. 1

issue in the region should be containing

weapons of mass destruction—

especially nuclear weapons—I frankly

do not believe Iraq should be our first

concern. We do not know the full capabilities

of the State of Israel, although

we believe it has the full capacity to

defend itself against attacks, or the

threat of an attack. We are aware of

the significant capacity possessed by

India, Pakistan, and Iran. I can say

without fear of contradiction that all

of these possess substantially greater

capabilities and means of delivering

nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction

than Iraq.

Of all the issues we care about, and

those issues over which we have some

capability to determine the outcome,

in my judgment, the No. 1 priority

should be the war on terrorism and its

threat to the people of the United

States in our homeland. Our top targets

should be those groups that have

the greatest potential to repeat what

happened on September 11, killing

thousands of Americans. Passing this

timid resolution, I fear, will only increase

the chances of Americans again

being killed. That is not a burden of

probability I am prepared to accept.

Therefore, I will vote no.

I close with the words spoken in one

of the darkest periods of the history of

the Western World. In 1941, Winston

Churchill said: