Mr. President, the

resolution authorizing the use of force

against Iraq is before us.

We are being asked to decide some

fundamental questions about the world

in which we live. But more significantly,

we are being asked to decide

what kind of world we choose for our

children.

Essentially, the question is this: Is

the world going to be safer today, tomorrow

and in the years ahead if the

United States leads an effort to rid the

world of not only Iraqi weapons of

mass destruction, but of a ruthless terrorist-

supporting despot as well?

Here is what we have learned.

There is agreement that Saddam

Hussein is amassing weapons of mass

destruction—chemical, biological, and

even nuclear—but some continue to naively

believe that diplomatic initiatives

and weapon inspections must be

given a chance to succeed. There is

consensus that Iraq is a state sponsor

of terrorism, but some believe that

America should not act alone against

Iraq and that an attack on Iraq will detract

from our ongoing pursuit of al-

Qaida. There is concurrence that Saddam

Hussein is a mass murderer of

Iraqi, Kurdish, Kuwaiti and Iranian

men, women, and children, but some

believe that Iraq poses no immediate

threat to the American people or those

in Saddam’s backyard, including our

allies.

My views on this issue could not be

more clear: Our Commander in Chief

has requested the authority to use

force against Iraq to ‘‘defend the national

security of the United States

against the continuing threat posed by

Iraq’’ and Congress must authorize it

and must do so now.

Nine days after the al-Qaida attacks

on our soil, President Bush promised

Congress and the world that America

would bring the war on terrorism to

the terrorists wherever they may hide.

He intends to do just that in Iraq. This

Congress and our entire nation stood as

one with President Bush following the

September 11th attacks. A year later,

we must continue to stand behind his

outstanding leadership in combating

terrorism around the globe. This war

on terrorism will not end—it must not

end—until terrorists and their supporters

are destroyed.

Let me say to my colleagues who

suggest that diplomatic initiatives and

weapon inspections can prevent the

coming conflict with Iraq to look at recent

history. Saddam Hussein has violated

each and every one of the 16 U.N.

Security Council Resolutions pertaining

to Iraq. His armed forces continue

to fire on American and coalition

aircraft in the no-fly zone. Al-Qaida

terrorists continue to leave footprints

on Iraqi soil. And Saddam Hussein and

his henchmen continue to make billions

of dollars by exploiting the U.N.’s

oil for food program and through other

illicit activities.

Although the regime recently proved

that it can fool some embarrassingly

naive visiting American lawmakers

into believing its empty assurances of

cooperation and compliance, they are

not duping this Senator—or the President.

More importantly, the American people

will not follow the lead of these

modern-day Neville Chamberlains and

allow the United States to be played

for a fool. For it is only a fool who does

not learn from past mistakes, and the

world has ten years of Iraqi lies from

which to learn. Speaking before the

United Nations General Assembly a

day after the anniversary of the September

11th attacks, President Bush

challenged the United Nations to maintain

its relevancy in a world challenged

by terror:

The fact is that President Bush is

giving the United Nations and the

international community a final

chance to disarm Saddam Hussein

through diplomatic means. But under

no illusions of Saddam Hussein’s violent

and irrational character, the

President has made clear that if reason

fails, force will prevail. I am reminded

of President Franklin Roosevelt insights

into Nazi Germany and Adolph

Hitler: ‘‘No man can tame a tiger into

a kitten by stroking it. There can be

no appeasement with ruthlessness.

There can be no reasoning with an incendiary

bomb.’’

Unfortunately, some of my colleagues

seem to ignore this indisputable

truth—and the fact that America

is at war against global terrorists.

Former Vice President Al Gore’s recent

attack on the President for his conduct

of the war was ill-timed and ill-advised.

A self proclaimed hawk, Mr.

Gore alleged in a recent speech that in

a single year, President Bush ‘‘squandered

the international outpouring of

sympathy, goodwill, and solidarity

that followed the attacks of September

11th and converted it into anger and

apprehension aimed much more at the

United States than at the terrorist network.

. . . ’’ This is utter nonsense, and

the American people are right to expect

more from a former national leader.

Mr. Gore seems to have forgotten

that in a single year the Bush administration

liberated the people of Afghanistan

from oppressive Taliban rule, destroyed

and disrupted al-Qaida operations

in South Asia and throughout

the world, and bolstered homeland defense

for the American people. If Mr.

Gore belittles the victory in Afghanistan—

against what he describes as a

‘‘fifth rate military power’’—why was

it that his own administration failed to

take decisive action to topple the

Taliban and al-Qaida? One might surmise

that they were too busy ‘‘feeling

pain’’ to inflict any.

Mr. Gore’s characterization of the

pre-emptive use of force to prevent terrorist

attacks as ‘‘a troubling new element’’

of U.S. foreign policy is similarly

misguided. In the post-September

11th world, the Bush doctrine of preemption

makes plain old common

sense. Who among us disagrees that

terrorists should be destroyed before

they have a chance to again bring

death and destruction on our family,

friends, or neighbors? What do we say

to the victims of a terrorist attack

that we could have prevented—sorry,

but Moscow, Paris, or Beijing objected

to pre-emptive action?

The fact is that that America has the

right and the responsibility to protect

and defend its citizens against terrorism—

be it from al Qaida terrorists

or weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

Let me also dispel the myth that

military action against Iraq will detract

from ongoing operations against

al-Qaida. Secretary of Defense Donald

Rumsfeld testified before Congress last

month that ‘‘. . . Iraq is part of the

global war on terror. Stopping terrorist

regimes from acquiring weapons of

mass destruction is a key objective of

that war. And we can fight all elements

of the global war on terrorism simultaneously.’’

We have no choice but to fight these

threats simultaneously. Our nation is

at war. Given Saddam Hussein’s use of

chemical and biological weapons

against his own people and his neighbors,

it is reckless to dismiss the immediacy

of the threats posed by his regime

to the United States. We already

know that he is a mass murderer and

that he is armed and dangerous—to

treat him otherwise is folly.

Saddam Hussein is also a danger to

the region. Those nations reluctant to

confront him would be wise to take

note of the British Government’s assessment

that Iraq is capable of deploying

chemical and biological weapons

within 45 minutes.

With Fort Campbell and the 101st

Airborne Division in Kentucky, I understand

firsthand what risks are posed

to our military personnel by an attack

on Iraq. Having fired the opening shots

of Operation Desert Storm more than a

decade ago, the Screaming Eagles are

no strangers to that country. They—

and the Special Forces soldiers of the

5th Group and the Night Stalkers of

Task Force 160—are professionals, the

best of best. America is fortunate to

have such dedicated patriots serving on

our front lines. We can be secure in the

knowledge that if these troops return

to the region, they will answer the call

with the same determination and dedication

as they did in 1991.

Let me conclude by saying that we

did not ask for this war on terrorism.

But we will fight it and win it—on our

terms and conditions.