Mr. President, I rise

this evening to address the President’s

request for authority for military action

in Iraq. I have spent weeks thinking

about this issue and listening. I

have sat across the table from Defense

Secretary Rumsfeld, National Security

Advisor Rice, Governor Ridge, CIA Director

Tenet, FBI Director Mueller,

Secretary of State Colin Powell, and

Vice President CHENEY. I have listened

closely to the President’s speeches and

I have listened openly to the many

questions my constituents have raised

over the past few weeks.

Mr. President, I understand the consequences

of war and I don’t shrink

from them. My father was among the

first to land on Okinawa as a GI. Growing

up, we always knew that our country

may need to project force to defend

our freedoms. I know we have high obligations

to the men and women of our

Armed Forces who undertake the hard

work of securing our freedom. In college,

I volunteered at the Seattle Veterans

Hospital. Most of the patients

were young men, my age, who had returned

from Vietnam. I carry that experience

with me as the first woman on

the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee.

When I look at decisions like this

one, I take the time to consider all

sides, with the full knowledge this decision

will have serious consequences

for our country, our world, and our future.

This evening, I want to share with

my colleagues and my constituents my

thoughts and my decision on this difficult

issue. But most of all, I want to

share my reasoning because I want everyone

to know how I arrived at this

conclusion. First, I looked to the

threat posed by Saddam Hussein. Then

I looked at the many questions that

must be considered before our country

begins military action. Then I looked

at the President’s case, the role of the

U.N. and our allies, the impact war

could have on the Middle East, and the

impact it would have on the war on

terrorism. Finally, I looked at the context

in which we are being asked to

make this decision, including our economy

and the political climate.

Mr. President, let me first address

the threat. There is no doubt Saddam

Hussein poses a serious threat to our

interests, to his own people, and to the

world. Under his rule, Iraq has been an

aggressor nation. It has started conflict

with its neighbors and it has

sought to stockpile conventional weapons

and weapons of mass destruction.

Over the years, Iraq has worked to

develop nuclear, chemical, and biological

weapons. During 1991 through 1994,

despite Iraq’s denials, U.N. inspectors

discovered and dismantled a large network

of facilities Iraq was using to develop

nuclear weapons. Various reports

indicate Iraq is still actively pursuing

nuclear weapons capability. There is no

reason to think otherwise.

Beyond nuclear weapons, Iraq has actively

pursued biological and chemical

weapons. U.N. inspectors have said

Iraq’s claims about biological weapons

is neither credible nor verifiable. In

1986, Iraq used chemical weapons

against Iran and later against its own

Kurdish population.

While weapons inspections have been

successful in the past, there have been

no inspections since the end of 1998.

There can be no doubt Iraq has continued

to pursue its goal of obtaining

weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. President, we know from history

and experience that Iraq poses a danger

to the region, to our interests, and perhaps

to ourselves. It will continue its

aggression and its pursuit of weapons

of mass destruction.

This leads us to a second set of questions.

What should we do about this

threat? The President has now asked

Congress to authorize him to make war

on Iraq. The goals of military action

have shifted from regime change one

day to disarmament, to enforcing any

number of U.N. resolutions. The list of

crimes to which the administration

says Iraq must be held accountable

varies widely. They include: attempting

to assassinate a former President;

holding prisoners of war after the gulf

war, including one American; firing on

aircraft enforcing the no-fly zone;

seeking weapons of mass destruction;

and violating U.N. resolutions.

All of these are serious crimes; not

all of them deserve the same response;

not all of them call for war.

Without a clear objective, victory

cannot be measured. Indeed, it appears

the administration established a solution—

going to war—before it defined

the problem or the goal.

Our most important goal is disarmament.

Given Iraq’s history and

Saddam’s madness, there can be no

doubt the world will be safer if we dismantle

Iraq’s ability to produce and

use weapons of mass destruction. On

this goal, the President receives complete

support from the American people,

the Congress, and the world community.

Disarmament of Iraq is unquestionably

the right thing to do. The means

of achieving this goal are what is up

for debate.

In the past few weeks, the Bush administration

unveiled its new preemption

doctrine. This marks a shift from

our longstanding national policy, and

so far we have not been told how it applies

to the world beyond Iraq. Obviously,

if troops or tanks are amassing

at the border, we have the right to defend

ourselves, but to strike on the

basis of suspicion alone is another matter.

It is something this Congress and

the American people need to fully explore

and debate before we endorse the

preemption doctrine.

The United States is not alone in facing

the threat of Saddam Hussein, but

unfortunately our Government is acting

that way. I am very concerned that

a unilateral race to make war on Iraq

will weaken the support we need worldwide

to win the war on terrorism.

In the aftermath of September 11, the

international community helped us

heal and supported our efforts to respond.

Their support has provided critical

intelligence keys to disrupting

international terrorist networks. But

today our allies are as confused about

America’s objectives in Iraq as the

American people are. Like the American

public, our allies woke up one day

to find that the administration was

making plans for war. Like the Congress,

they were not consulted. Like

the American people, they had nothing

explained to them. They saw, as did the

rest of us, that a course of action had

apparently been determined before the

reasons were clear.

Recently, the administration has

done a better job working with our allies.

Secretary of State Powell is to be

commended for his work, but we still

have a long way to go. It would greatly

benefit the Congress and the American

people to know where our allies stand

and what they are willing to do before

we take action.

While we welcome the support of our

allies and the United Nations, we do

not hand them or anyone else the ultimate

power to decide America’s security

demands. Only the United States

can determine our interests and what

steps are required to defend them.

That said, before we jump into a

fight, we should know who is with us

and what we are getting into, and

today we do not.

Another key part of the international

response to the Iraqi threat is

the United Nations. Efforts at the U.N.

have been met with both success and

failure. To date, our greatest failure

has been the ending of weapons inspections

in 1998 and the U.N.’s failure to

hold Iraq responsible for its obligations.

Today, the United States is working

with our ally Britain to pass through

the U.N. Security Council a new, tough

resolution regarding Iraqi weapons inspections.

I believe we need a new,

strong U.N. resolution that provides for

complete transparency of Iraq’s weapons

of mass destruction programs. This

new resolution must allow inspectors

to search all sites without roadblocks.

Iraq should know that the U.N. and the

international community are serious

about enforcing this resolution even

with force, if necessary.

One of the reasons U.N. support is

critical is that it shapes how other nations

will look upon our action in Iraq.

There is a difference between going it

alone and having the support of a broad

coalition. We have a stated goal of

working to achieve peace in the Israeli-

Palestinian conflict. We have strong

ties to other states in the region—Jordan,

Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and other

gulf states. What action we take and

how we take it will have a direct impact

on our other stated foreign policy

goals of achieving peace in the Middle

East, maintaining friendly relations

with our allies in the region, and contributing

to the stability of the region.

In addition to the impact of war on

the Middle East, we must understand

how action in Iraq will affect the war

on terrorism.

On September 11 last year, we were

reminded again of the dangerous world

in which we live. After bombing our

embassies in Kenya and Tanzania and

attacking the U.S.S. *Cole* in Yemen, al-

Qaida has pulled off the most horrific

crime our Nation has ever known.

In the aftermath of these tragic

events, the President declared war on

terrorism. We dispatched our troops to

Afghanistan and its neighbors. We

worked closely with our allies. We even

got help from some unexpected quarters.

Most of the world joined our effort,

but there are places where we do

not have relations where terrorists

hide, and to reach those dark corners

we rely on intermediaries. Today,

those intermediaries are providing us

with intelligence information to help

our efforts.

We have to ask: Will unilateral action

in Iraq undermine the support we

need from other countries in the war

on terrorism? The answer to that question

should help inform us on our decision

on military action in Iraq.

If we do take action in Iraq, there is

no doubt that our Armed Forces will

prevail. We will win a war with Iraq decisively,

and, God willing, will win it

quickly. But what happens after the

war? That will have just as big an impact

on our future peace and our security.

Will we be obligated to rebuild

Iraq, and, if so, how? Our economy at

home is reeling, our budget is in deficit,

and we have no estimate of the

cost of rebuilding. And with whom?

As New York Times columnist Tom

Friedman points out, there is a retail

store mentality that suggests to some:

If you break it, you buy it.

How will the Iraqis get back on their

feet? Iraq’s leadership has led its people

through two decades of misery. The

people of Iraq have paid a terrible price

for Saddam Hussein’s military campaigns.

What promises is the international

community prepared to make

to help restore the health of the Iraqi

people? What promise is implicit in a

unilateral attack?

If we must disarm Iraq by force, we

will, but we cannot achieve peace

through occupation alone. It costs

money and energy and time, and like

building anything else, it is better as a

shared responsibility than a solo effort.

Again, the answers to these questions

should not be the only factors in play

as we make decisions on how to protect

our security interests, but they are not

insignificant and they have not been

answered.

We do not have a clear policy. We do

not have a clear path to implementing

that policy. We do not yet know what

level of assistance we are going to get

from our allies and the broader international

community. We have not

factored in all of the implications this

may have on our other foreign policy

objectives. We have not factored in all

the implications this may have on our

own economy.

Not having a well-defined policy or

proper preparations for contingencies

that may result from whatever action

we take is a dangerous situation on the

eve of the war this administration says

we must have.

With all of these unanswered questions,

how do we get here today? The

administration has said it wants a vote

on this resolution ‘‘before the election.’’

In this debate, many in Congress

and many of our citizens are asking:

What is special about November 5 in

deciding this question?

The question of war should not be

placed in the context of trying to influence

the outcome of an election, and

surely that cannot be the case today.

The question is too grave for that to be

the motivation, even for that to be a

motivation. The question of war should

be placed squarely in the context of

what is the right policy to achieve our

Nation’s security goals.

With all of these questions in mind, I

look to the resolution that is before us.

Does this resolution address the question

this Nation must answer in order

to succeed? Does it clearly articulate a

policy objective? What course of action

does it sanction in our Nation’s pursuit

of that goal?

While this resolution is a marked improvement

over the President’s original

proposal, S.J. Res. 46 does not provide

the information—and the objectives—

needed at this time.

It is overly broad in defining the objectives

of military action.

After considering the threat, the

cost, and the unanswered questions, I

have reached a decision. I will vote

against the underlying resolution; I

will vote against going to war at this

time.

I am committed to fighting and winning

the war on terrorism, including

eliminating Saddam Hussein’s weapons

of mass destruction.

I support wholeheartedly our men

and women in uniform. I admire their

heroism. And I will continue to do all

I can to provide them with the resources

they need for whatever mission

they are asked to carry out on our behalf.

Today we are being told we have no

choice; that we have to grant the

President war-making authority immediately,

without knowing the ultimate

goal or the ultimate cost, and without

knowing whether we are going it alone.

It may well be that someday our

country needs to take military action

in Iraq, but the decision right now to

give the President this broad authority,

without focusing it narrowly on

weapons of mass destruction, without

the support of our allies, without defining

the costs to our country today and

tomorrow, is not something I can support

given what we know today.

The constituents I hear from want to

know:

Why are we racing to take this action

right now, alone, with so many

questions unanswered?

The administration could answer

those questions with clear, compelling

facts and goals, but so far we have not

heard them.

We are being asked to endorse a policy

that has not been thought out, and

one that could have dramatic consequences

for our citizens and our future.

While we may need to take action in

Iraq down the road, today I cannot support

sending our men and women into

harm’s way on an ill-defined, solo mission

with so many critical questions

unanswered.

If, in the coming weeks or months,

we learn that Saddam’s capabilities are

more advanced than we now realize, or

if Saddam defies U.N. resolutions, we

will certainly have the right to take

appropriate action.

Looking back over the past year, it is

clear that we can respond to September

11 several ways.

We can act out of fear, casting aside

our principles, and taking action without

sufficient planning. Or we can stick

to our principles and draw strength

from them in tough times. That is the

course I advocate today.

In closing, let me be clear. Despite

my reservations today, I will always

stand with and support those who serve

our country, wherever and whenever

their Commander in Chief sends them.

If American troops are called to fight

in Iraq, I will stand with the President

and I will support our troops not only

during the conflict, but afterward.

The international community, and

those who would do us harm, need to

know without exception that while we

may have our disagreements before

military action, once our troops are on

the ground, we are all on the same side.

I yield the floor.