Mr. President, the issue of American presence in the

Middle East is of great importance. We are currently engaged in a war

in Iraq from which, according to poll after poll, a majority of the

American people believe we should withdraw.

In the face of the momentous elections of this past November, in

which the American electorate indicated their dissatisfaction with the

President's policies in Iraq, President Bush has responded with a call

for more troops, not less. At this moment, he is escalating the war,

not redeploying our brave men and women out of harm's way. He is

sending these troops into the middle of a civil war.

Now there are reports that the President may be considering expanding

this tragic war into Iran. The President has no constitutional

authority to make war on Iran without congressional approval, nor has

he historical precedent. I offer today a resolution ``expressing the

sense of Congress that the President should not initiate military

action against Iran without first obtaining authorization from

Congress.'' The resolution sets forth the constitutional grant of

authority to Congress for declaring war and funding any war, it cites

Federalist Paper No. 69 on the intention of the drafters of the

Constitution, and it cites Presidents Washington and Jefferson on the

power reserved to Congress to authorize war.

The resolution strongly and unequivocally affirms that the President

does not have the power to initiate military action against Iran

without first obtaining authorization from Congress, that neither of

the existing authorizations to use military force in Iraq gives him

such authority, and that the President must seek congressional

authority prior to taking any military action against Iran.