Mr. President, I am

pleased the Senate is about to act on

H.R. 4655, the Iraq Liberation Act of

1998. I introduced companion legislation,

S. 2525, last week with 7 co-sponsors.

Last Friday, the House International

Relations Committee marked

up the legislation and made only

minor, technical changes. On October

5, the House passed H.R. 4655 by an

overwhelmingly bipartisan vote of 360

to 38. That vote, and our vote in several

moments, is a strong demonstration

of Congressional support for a new

policy toward Iraq—a policy that

overtly seeks the replacement of Saddam

Hussein’s regime through military

and political support for the Iraq opposition.

The United States has many means

at its disposal to support the liberation

of Iraq. At the height of the Cold War,

we support freedom fighters in Asia,

Africa and Latin America willing to

fight and die for a democratic future.

We can and should do the same now in

Iraq.

The Clinton Administration regularly

calls for bipartisanship in foreign

policy. I support them when I can.

Today, we see a clear example of a policy

that has the broadest possible bipartisan

support. I know the Administration

understands the depth of our

feeling on this issue. I think they are

beginning to understand the strategic

argument in favor of moving beyond

containment to a policy of ‘‘rollback.’’

Containment is not sustainable. Pressure

to lift sanctions on Iraq is increasing—

despite Iraq’s seven years of refusal

to comply with the terms of the

Gulf War cease-fire. Our interests in

the Middle East cannot be protected

with Saddam Hussien in power. Our

legislation provides a roadmap to

achieve our objective.

This year, Congress has already provided

$5 million to support the Iraqi

political opposition. We provided $5

million to establish Radio Free Iraq.

We will provide additional resources

for political support in the FY 1999

Foreign Operations Appropriations

Act, including $3 million for the Iraqi

National Congress.

Enactment of this bill will go farther.

It requires the President to designate

at least one Iraqi opposition

group to receive U.S. military assistance.

It defines eligibility criteria such

a group or groups must meet. Many of

us have ideas on how the designation

process should work. I have repeatedly

stated that the Iraqi National Congress

has been effective in the past and can

be effective in the future. They represent

the broadest possible base of the

opposition. There are other groups that

are currently active inside Iraq: the

Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, the

Kurdish Democratic Party and the Supreme

Council for the Islamic Revolution

in Iraq. The State Department

seems to believe there are more than 70

opposition groups, many of which do

not meet the criteria in H.R. 4655.

Many barely even exist or have no political

base. They should not be considered

for support. We should also be

very careful about considering designation

of groups which do not share our

values or which are simply creations of

external forces or exile politics, such

as the Iraqi Communist Party or the

Iraqi National Accord.

I appreciate the work we have been

able to do with the Administration on

this legislation. But we should be very

clear about the designation process. We

intend to exercise our oversight responsibility

and authority as provided

in section 4(d) and section 5(d). I do not

think the Members of Congress, notified

pursuant to law, will agree to any

designation that we believe does not

meet the criteria in section 5 of the

Iraq Liberation Act of 1998.

This is an important step. Observers

should not misunderstand the Senate’s

action. Even though this legislation

will pass without controversy on an

unanimous voice vote, it is a major

step forward in the final conclusion of

the Persian Gulf war. In 1991, we and

our allies shed blood to liberate Kuwait.

Today, we are empowering Iraqis

to liberate their own country.