Madam President, I

have signed on as an original cosponsor

of the Iraq resolution that our President

has proposed, and I would like to

tell you a story that I believe explains

why I think that is the right path to

take.

A few weeks ago, we were doing some

work on my back porch back home,

tearing out a section of old stacked

rocks, when all of a sudden I uncovered

a nest of copperhead snakes. I am not

one to get alarmed at snakes. I know

they perform some valuable functions,

like eating rats.

When I was a young lad, I kept

snakes as pets. I had an indigo snake. I

had a bull snake. I had a beautiful colored

corn snake, and many others. I

must have had a dozen king snakes at

one time or another. They make great

pets, and you only have to give them a

little mouse every 30 days.

I read all the books by Raymond C.

Ditmars, who was before most herpetologists

of the day—that is a person

who is an expert on snakes—and for a

while I wanted to be a herpetologist,

but the pull of being a big league shortstop

out ran that childhood dream.

I reminisce this way to explain that

snakes do not scare me like they do

most people, and I guess the reason is

that I know the difference between

those snakes that are harmless and

those that can kill you. In fact, I bet I

may be the only Senator in this body

who can look at the last 3 inches of a

snake’s tail and tell you whether it is

poisonous. I can also tell the sex of a

snake, but that is another story.

A copperhead snake will kill you. It

could kill one of my dogs. It could kill

one of my grandchildren. It could kill

any one of my four great-grandchildren.

They play all the time where

I found those killers.

You know, when I discovered those

copperheads, I did not call my wife

Shirley for advice, as I usually do on

most things. I did not go before the

city council. I did not yell for help

from my neighbors. I just took a hoe

and knocked them in the head and

killed them, dead as a doorknob.

I guess you could call it unilateral

action, a preemptive strike. Perhaps if

you had been watching me, you could

have even said it was bellicose and reactive.

I took their poisonous heads off

because they were a threat to me, they

were a threat to my home, they were a

threat to my family, and all I hold

dear. And isn’t that what this is all

about?

I yield the floor and suggest the absence

of a quorum, Madam President.