Mr. President, I do

not support the passage of the Syrian

Accountability Act. The situation in

the Middle East is a delicate one. It

calls for subtle, creative diplomacy as

the United States seeks to support its

troops in Iraq, promote the Arab-

Israeli peace process, and combat terrorism.

While I agree with the goals of the

Syrian Accountability Act, I am concerned

that this legislation will undermine

our ability to achieve those goals.

In particular, I am opposed to the act’s

provisions that would mandate the imposition

of new sanctions against

Syria. I believe that these provisions

would tie this or any future administration’s

hands in a way that will

make the conduct of our foreign policy

more difficult. A number of sanctions

already exist against Syria by virtue of

its designation as a state sponsor of

terrorism. In addition, the President

already has the authority to impose

many of the sanctions set forth in this

act. If we are to promote peace in the

region and move Syria in a more positive

direction, the United States must

pursue an approach that is more

nuanced and flexible than what is

called for in this legislation.