Mr. President, I rise

today to speak out on the issue of Iraq.

This conceivably is one of the most important

issues that we as a governing

body will address in what remains of

the 107th Congress.

Let me start by saying that Saddam

Hussein is a dangerous man. As many

of my colleagues have already pointed

out, he has actively engaged in attacking

Americans in the region. He has actively

engaged in deploying chemical

and biological weapons against his own

people. He has participated in genocide

against his own people. He has continually

deceived U.N. weapons inspectors.

He has failed to comply with U.N.

resolutions to disarm his weapons of

mass destruction. He was involved in

an assassination attempt against

former President George Bush senior.

He has committed serious acts of aggression

against his neighbors.

These are all acts of a man that cannot

be trusted.

Back in 1998, the Senate passed the

Iraqi Liberation Act that declared it

should be the policy of the United

States to seek to remove Saddam Hussein

from power in Iraq and replace

him with a democratic government. I

supported this bill and believe that

Saddam continues to be a detriment to

his people. The Iraqi people deserve a

chance to be free from a vicious dictator.

Our actions today go far beyond declaring

Saddam a danger to his people

and to the rest of the world. Our actions

today will authorize the use of

force in the case Saddam refuses once

again to defy U.N. resolutions and disarm.

Our actions today could send our

sons and daughters to battle. And, our

actions today, if not handled cautiously,

could erupt into a conflict we

as a nation are not prepared to address.

This is not something we can take

lightly.

Last week, a bipartisan group of Congressmen

and Senators brokered an

agreement with the President and produced

a resolution that strikes a good

balance between diplomacy and force.

The resolution supports exhausting

diplomatic means to disarm Saddam

prior to engaging in the use of force. It

also provides the President with adequate

flexibility to do what needs to be

done in the case that Saddam refuses

to disarm. I have cosponsored this bipartisan

agreement and believe that

the focus of the resolution is appropriate.

I believe that a strong resolution is

necessary to protect the American people

from threats posed by Saddam Hussein.

And while I believe we should

strive to garner the support of the U.N.

and our allies around the world, we

must ensure that we don’t limit our

ability to act to protect American

lives.