Mr. President, the

American people need and deserve a

thorough, reasoned discussion on the

question of going to war against Iraq. I

appreciate the opportunity to share

with my colleagues my thoughts during

this momentous debate.

A great deal of the justification for a

United States military intervention in

Iraq centers on the threat posed by

Saddam Hussein. I recognize that there

are international criminals capable of

unspeakable horrors and Saddam Hussein

is one of those. President Bush has

urged us to believe the threat from

Saddam Hussein is urgent and immediate,

and thus this impending vote. I

have listened carefully to every shred

of evidence presented by the administration.

And I have also listened carefully to

other world leaders. Of particular concern

to me is the position of those nations

that share a border with Iraq—

Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia,

Kuwait, and Iran.

The Turkish Prime Minister said,

‘‘We’re trying to dissuade the American

Administration from a military

operation.’’

King Abdullah of Jordan said, ‘‘In all

the years I have been in the international

community, everybody is saying

this is a bad idea. Our concern is .

. . that a miscalculation in Iraq would

throw the whole area into turmoil.’’

The Kuwaiti Defense Minister said,

‘‘Kuwait will participate in the military

campaign to remove the Iraqi regime

only if the military action came

in compliance with a United Nations’

resolution.’’ This in Kuwait, a country

that suffered greatly under the hands

of the Iraqi dictator. These nations

share a border with Iraq. Their leaders

know their neighborhood and they

have expressed their opposition to our

intervention at this time.

I would also like to quote President

Mubarak of Egypt who said, ‘‘If you

strike Iraq . . . not one Arab leader will

be able to control the angry outburst

of the masses.’’ And President

Mussharaf of Pakistan said, ‘‘this will

have very negative repercussions

around the Islamic world.’’ I believe it

is wise to heed the concerns of our

friends. And our friends are telling us

that we are ratcheting up the hatred.

In two nations’ recent elections the

defining issues seemingly revolved

around American arrogance. The fact

that the two countries are our friends,

Germany and Brazil, is alarming.

What Congress does this week and

next will have very serious implications

throughout the world.

Demagogues in the Middle East and

elsewhere are surely ready and willing

to exploit a U.S. invasion of Iraq. And

today the CIA is warning Americans of

the connection between a rise in terrorism

and military activity in Iraq.

Certainly it is preferable to address the

threat posed by any international

criminal in concert with our allies and

within the confines of the United Nations.

This is the preference outlined in

the amendment offered by Senator

LEVIN—an amendment I support.

We need to provide people susceptible

to anti-Americanism with a positive

message that respects international cooperation

and friendship. The LEVIN

substitute upholds the values I have

heard in discussions with the people of

Rhode Island; it recognizes the benefit

of an international coalition in taking

on the tremendous challenge of disarming

the Iraqi regime. It authorizes

military force against Iraq only as part

of a new UN-approved resolution, and

failing that, allows Congress to return

to session to consider an alternative

approach.

As a nation, we are united in opposing

the tyranny and repression of Saddam

Hussein. But there are real disagreements

both here at home and

abroad as to how best to ensure that

this man cannot threaten world peace.

Adoption of the LEVIN amendment

would not give Saddam Hussein a

chance to further obstruct and delay—

it is the prudent idea most consistent

with the values that have made the

United States a great nation. I urge all

of my colleagues to support the LEVIN

amendment.