

WASHINGTON, DC--Today, in response to President Bush's speech before the United Nations calling for military action against Iraq, Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), a member of the House International Relations Committee, issued the following statement:

"Like most people in our community I am deeply troubled by proposals to launch a preemptive attack against Iraq. Saddam Hussein is without question an evil and dangerous person who has inflicted great harm on his own people. However, one can have the lowest opinion of Saddam Hussein and still have great reservations about the calls for an attack. There is as yet no connection between Saddam Hussein and the terrorist attacks on the United States last year. At Johannesburg I heard first hand from our European allies, who were so helpful after September 11th and who were part of the Desert Storm operation, that they are adamantly opposed to the United States taking action against Iraq at this time. The case has not been made either to the American public or to Congress, whose authorization would be required to engage in an act of war.

"It is an extraordinarily dangerous precedent for the United States or any nation to attack another country without direct provocation. We have not done so in the past and we have condemned those who have acted in this fashion.

"We have just begun this national debate in earnest. I look forward to doing my part as a member of the International Relations Committee and will work to make sure that the reservations and concerns I have heard from Oregonians are reflected in this important national debate. Even the United States, as the world's most powerful nation heading a multi-national coalition with almost universal world support, has not been able to stabilize Afghanistan. As some seek to expand our campaign to Iraq and perhaps beyond, we need to be especially careful to handle this unfolding situation with all the care and deliberation we can muster."