Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues in both Chambers to press forward in getting to the truth in airing the facts behind

the administration’s deal with Moscow.

I ask my colleagues that sit on the relevant committees to investigate the

administration and, of course, the Vice President’s role in co-chairing the 1995

meeting with the Russian Prime Minister on the U.S.-Russian Binational

Commission. My colleagues, it is only through

newspaper articles recently that we have hints of the administration’s

turning a blind eye concerning Moscow’s arms sales to Iran. The White

House has refused to provide a copy of

the classified 1995 ‘‘aide-memoire’’

signed by Vice President GORE and Russian Prime Minister Chernomyrdin

that stated the United States would

not impose penalties on Moscow as required by U.S. law. The aide-memoire

reveals an implicit agreement to ignore U.S. laws governing the U.S. response to arms sales to terrorist nations, including Iran.

Mr. Speaker, the law I am referring

to is the Iran-Iraq Arms Nonproliferation Act that was passed in 1992, which

requires sanctions against countries

that sell advanced weaponry to countries the State Department classifies

as state sponsors of terrorism. It is interesting that then-Senator GORE,

along with Senator MCCAIN, authored

this law, also known as the Gore-McCain Act. The law is rooted in concerns about Russian sales to Iraq of

some of the most sophisticated weapons that the Gore-Chernomyrdin agreement explicitly allowed.

In 1995, an agreement signed by Vice President GORE and Russia’s Prime

Minister Chernomyrdin endorsed Russia’s completion of sophisticated and

advanced arms deliveries to Iran. The

Vice President and the Russian Prime Minister mentioned an arms agreement

in general terms at a news conference the day the agreement was signed, but

the details have never been disclosed to Congress or the public.

The weapons Russia has committed

to supply to Iran include one kilo-classed diesel-powered submarine, 160

T–72 tanks, 600 armored personnel car-

riers, numerous anti-ship mines, cluster bombs, and a variety of long-range

guided torpedoes and other munitions

for the submarine and tanks. Russia

agreed to complete the sales by the end of 1999, and not to sell weapons to Iran other than the ones specified. Russia

has already provided Iran with fighter aircraft and surface-to-air missiles.

The kilo-class submarine sold to Iran

should be of particular concern to Congress and the American public because

it can be hard to detect and could pose

a threat to oil tankers or American

war ships in the Gulf. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, Russia continues to be a significant supplier of conventional arms

to Iran despite the Gore-Chernomyrdin

deal, the Central Intelligence Agency reported in August.

Those working for the Vice President

argue that the arms pact aided the U.S. because the submarine and tanks were

not advanced weapons, as defined by

the Pentagon; and, thus, the U.S. could not have applied sanctions anyway.

However, statements by the White

House and the Vice President’s office defending the policy of not sanctioning

Russia was contradicted by a letter sent to Russia in January by Secretary

of State Madeleine Albright. The letter

to Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov states that the United States

would have imposed sanctions on Russia for its arms sales if there had been

no 1995 agreement. ‘‘Without the aide-memoire, Russia’s conventional arms

sales to Iran would have been subject

to sanctions based on various provisions of our laws.’’

Furthermore, Senator MCCAIN, one of the principal authors of the act said, ‘‘Clearly, the 1995 Gore-Chernomyrdin

agreement was intended to evade sanctions imposed by the legislation writ-

ten in 1992 by the Vice President and me.’’ Furthermore, he went on to say,

‘‘If the administration acquiesced in the sale, then they have violated both the intent and the letter of the law.’’

Without the explicit act of Congress, the Vice President did not have the

power or authority to commit the United States to ignore U.S. law. The

Vice President’s deal with Moscow gives the Russians not only the green

light to violate our Nation’s laws but

encourages them to do so. The administration has already admitted that Russia has failed to meet its promise to

end deliveries by December 1999 to Iran.

So, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues in both Chambers to properly

investigate, find the truth, and I should say get to the bottom of our relationships with Russia.