Mr. Speaker, I

yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, just 2 weeks ago, the

Senate amended and overwhelmingly

passed H.R. 1828, the Syria Accountability

and the Lebanese Sovereignty

Restoration Act.

The overwhelming support that the

House-passed Syria bill received in the

Senate and in the House clearly demonstrates

a unity of purpose and an approach

to the terrorist regime in Damascus.

Even antisanctions advocates

in the Senate recognize the serious

threat that Syria poses to U.S. national

security and to our interests and

allies in the region.

This bill seeks to hold Syria accountable

for its weapons program, its continued

illegal occupation of Lebanon,

and its terrorist activities, including

its facilitation of attacks against

Americans in Iraq.

The Syrian Foreign Minister has

been quoted as saying that the requirements

of this bill and of the U.S. in

general for Syria to cease and desist on

these three fronts are ‘‘unreasonable

and unrealistic’’ demands. In fact, the

Syrian Foreign Minister believes that

‘‘America has too many demands.’’

Meanwhile, just a few days ago, on

Tuesday of this week, a French news

source published an interview with a

former member of Saddam Hussein’s

nefarious Secret Service. This former

Saddam agent and current leader of the

militias inside Iraq said that Syria is

‘‘definitely’’ working alongside Iraqi

intelligence and other Saddam loyalists.

He said that there is cooperation

between Syria and his forces inside

Iraq, and that ‘‘It began before the war,

through trade, which was only a

cover.’’

‘‘Armed Syrians,’’ he added, ‘‘even

joined our Iraqi militia groups. And

well before the war, we had forged passports

that enabled us to go to that

country,’’ meaning Syria. He added

that this coordination continues to

this day.

Thus, regardless of how some will

spin it, the Syrian regime has the

blood of Americans on its hands, and

they must be held responsible for their

deaths, as well as those of scores of innocent

human beings murdered by Syrian-

sponsored terrorists.

Fully implemented, H.R. 1828 would

help deny Syria the resources to continue

its deplorable activities and will

help prevent U.S. complicity in them.

It seeks to do so by prohibiting U.S. exports

of military, dual-use, and other

items, as well as by prohibiting investments

in key sectors that provide an

economic windfall for the Syrian economy.

We have every faith and confidence

in President Bush’s commitment

to use the range of U.S. policy

options, including the sanctions provided

for in H.R. 1828, to hold Syria accountable

for its unacceptable behavior.

As the President and the Secretary of

State have clearly stated, Syria is on

the wrong side of history. And now, it

is time for it to suffer the consequences.

I ask my colleagues to concur with

the Senate amendments to the House passed

bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of

my time.

Mr. Speaker, I

yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like

to take a moment to express my appreciation

to those without whom this day

would not have been possible. Of

course, first and foremost, the gentleman

from New York (Mr. ENGEL),

with whom it has been a pleasure to

work for passage of this bill, the second

time we pass it in just a few short

weeks. Our impressive leadership here

in the House, very particularly our majority

leader whose unwavering commitment

to U.S. national security and,

thus, to this bill, were instrumental in

moving this legislation. So thank you

to the gentleman from Texas (Mr.

DELAY), my distinguished chairman,

the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE)

for his support and his assistance

throughout this process, the ranking

member of the Committee on International

Relations, the gentleman

from California (Mr. LANTOS) who is always

an inspiration to us all, to Tony

Haddad and the Lebanese American

community whose passion on these

issues have served as a source of energy

for us all.

And I would also like to pay special

thanks to Yleem Poblete, committee

staff director of our Subcommittee on

the Middle East and Central Asia. This

will be the last piece of legislation that

she will be handling for our subcommittee

because she is awaiting

White House approval in a State Department

job working with Secretary

John Bolton. And I thank Yleem for

being a valuable member of my family,

my legislative family for many, many

years. I remember when Yleem and I

first met and she was Miss Teen Florida.

That was not so long ago. But she

has been a wonderful friend and a part

of my family for a long time. And we

wish her God speed and much success.

And I would also like to ask my colleagues

to reflect on the suffering of

the Syrian and Lebanese people today

and on the lives and the sacrifice of

American, Israeli, and so many other

victims of terrorist attacks supported

by or facilitated by the Syrian regime.

This bill is also for them. We look forward

to working closely with President

Bush toward expeditious enactment

and implementation of this bill.

Time has clearly run out for the Syrian

regime. It had a choice to make,

and it chose terrorism. That was the

wrong choice. We have a choice to

make. We have demonstrated it by our

overwhelming vote in support of this

bill, what our will is with respect to

Syria’s regime. Let us again send a

strong, unequivocal message to this pariah

state and concur in the Senate

amendment to the Syria Accountability

and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration

Act.

Mr. Speaker,

we look forward to working on the

Saudi Arabia Accountability Act and

the Iran Accountability Act. We have

only just begun.