Mr. Speaker, I

would like to yield myself such time as

I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this

measure, but with great reservations

that this weak legislation will send a

message to our enemies of a weakened

U.S. position on the issue of Iran.

The Iranian threat to the United

States, to our allies and to our interests

could not be more apparent. Only

last week the head of the International

Atomic Energy Agency warned that

Iran is probably carrying out secret nuclear

activities. Then last Saturday the

lead inspector for the Middle East

shared with member nations of the

IAEA extensive documentation of an

Iranian effort to reconfigure the

Shahab-3 long-range missile to carry a

nuclear warhead. The range of these

missiles reach Israel and most of the

Middle East.

And this is a regime whose current

leader, Ahmadinejad, has consistently

called for the destruction of the Jewish

State of Israel.

On October 26, 2005, at the World

Without Zionism Conference in Tehran,

the Iranian leader called for Israel to

be ‘‘wiped off the map,’’ described

Israel as ‘‘a disgraceful blot on the face

of the Islamic world’’ and declared that

‘‘anybody who recognizes Israel will

burn in the fire of the Islamic nation’s

fury.’’ Then on December 12, 2006, he

addressed a conference in Tehran questioning

the historical veracity of the

Holocaust and said that Israel, again,

would ‘‘soon be wiped out.’’

On Israel’s 60th birthday,

Ahmadinejad gave a speech in which,

according to the official Iranian news

agency, he stated that Israel was ‘‘on

its way to total destruction.’’

In a public address which aired on

the Iranian news channel on June 2 of

this year, Ahmadinejad again called

this ‘‘worm of corruption’’ in reference

to Israel, to be wiped off. He further

stated that while ‘‘some say the ideal

of Greater Israel has expired, I say the

idea of lesser Israel has expired too.’’

And earlier this week at the United Nations,

he continued to invoke anti-

Israel and anti-Semitic canards when

he stated ‘‘the dignity, integrity and

rights of the European and American

people are being played with by a small

but deceitful number of people call Zionists.

These nations are spending

their dignity and resources on the

crimes and the occupations and the

threats of the Zionist network against

their will.’’

But the threat is not just to our

friend Israel. Iran is currently working

on even longer-range missiles directly

threatening critical U.S. interests. The

importance and the urgency of

strengthened sanctions was underlined

just a few days ago, Mr. Speaker, when

the European Union warned that Iran

was approaching a nuclear weapons capability.

The significance stems from

the fact that the European Union has

long insisted that the West and other

countries focus their efforts on diplomacy

to persuade Iran to suspend its

nuclear program.

This is an acknowledgment that a

strategy based on holding out an olive

branch and engaging directly with the

Iranian regime, while promising trade

agreements and other benefits, has not

worked and that more concrete economic

pressure is needed to compel a

change in regimes’ behavior. Thus the

evidence before us makes it clear that

we must act quickly to impose the

greatest pressure possible on the regime

and its enablers.

Unfortunately, this bill does not do

quite that, Mr. Speaker. My colleagues,

you all know where I stand on Iran.

Last Congress I authored the Iran

Freedom Support Act which contained

very tough and quite focused sanctions

on the regime in Tehran. Our beloved

late former chairman of the Foreign

Affairs Committee, Tom Lantos, was

the lead Democrat cosponsor, and the

bill enjoyed the support of our current

chairman, HOWARD BERMAN, my good

friend, and 360 Members of the House.

The Iran Freedom Support Act was

enacted into law 2 years ago almost to

the day on September 30. Then when

Chairman Lantos approached me last

year and asked that I serve as the lead

Republican cosponsor of H.R. 1400, the

Iran Counter-Proliferation Act of 2007,

I immediately agreed because H.R. 1400

truly does strengthen U.S. law and does

tighten the economic noose around the

regime’s elites in Iran.

H.R. 1400 passed the House a year ago

yesterday, September 25, 2007, by a

vote of 397 in favor and only 16 against.

Yet it has been stalled in the Senate

all this time. Then we have Senate bill

970 which currently has the support of

73 Senators. However, action on these

stronger bills was not to be. Instead,

we have a bill which refers to certain

sanctions already in place, and they

call them ‘‘new’’ sanctions, and then

refers to a handful of other important

ones while providing a meager ‘‘national

interest waiver.’’

What does this mean in practice, Mr.

Speaker? The next President doesn’t

have to worry about actually implementing

or applying these sanctions,

as a ‘‘national interest waiver’’ has

been easily justified by consecutive administrations

to avoid implementing

U.S. laws concerning state sponsors of

terrorism, like Iran.

So rather than strengthening the

sanctions structure, rather than limiting

the President’s flexibility, as we

did 2 years ago in the Iran Freedom

Support Act on proliferation-related

sanctions by removing the waiver and

on the Iran Sanctions Act by raising

the threshold to ‘‘vital to the national

security interests of the United

States,’’ the bill before us provides the

weakest possible threshold.

I do not fault my good friend, Chairman

BERMAN. I commend the chairman

for his efforts. He is in a difficult situation,

and this is as strong a bill as

some of his colleagues will allow the

House or the Senate to act on.

This bill is like one of the weak Iran

resolutions that the United Nations Security

Council keeps passing that allows

Russia and China and others to go

along with because they do nothing. In

fact, just today, the U.N. Security

Council moved a measure that contained

no new sanctions but said that

other Security Council resolutions on

Iran are legally binding and must be

carried out. That is almost exactly

what the bill before us is going to do on

the issue of sanctions.

Again, I do not understand why, at a

time when the Iranian regime is crystal

clear in accelerating its efforts to

acquire a nuclear weapon, that we are

not considering the Lantos Iran

Counter-Proliferation Act or Senate

bill 970.

Notably, this body has not even considered

the Ackerman-Pence resolution,

which has 275 cosponsors and is a

strong, unequivocal message to the regime.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, despite the many

deficiencies of this bill, I want to

thank my friend, Chairman BERMAN,

for adding a Rule of Construction to

his version of the Dodd bill which

states, ‘‘nothing in this Act shall be

construed as affecting in any way any

provision of the Iran Freedom Support

Act of 2006, Public Law 109–293.’’

Since the legislation retains a ‘‘notwithstanding’’

clause for section 103, I

hope that the Rule of Construction will

be sufficient to prevent the unraveling

of sanctions codified 2 years ago. Additionally,

Mr. Speaker, portions of section

104 are essentially a repetition of

current law as section 2(f) of the Executive

Order 13059 codified.

In this respect, Chairman BERMAN, I

would appreciate or his substitute, Mr.

ACKERMAN, clarification that the waiver

in section 104 would not apply to

sanctions already in place, even if

these have been restated in the legislation.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate

that the reporting requirements have

been strengthened with respect to investments

in Iran’s energy sector since

January 1 of this year. However, I ask

to add language to the bill before us

that would amend current law and

force a determination on whether foreign

investments in Iran’s energy sector

violate the Iran Sanctions Act and

whether sanctions should be implemented.

My proposal was not limited

to the last 9 months of activity or to

simply reporting requirements. But

this modification was not incorporated

in the text that we are considering

today.

Looking to other sections of this

House version of the Dodd bill, there

are provisions seeking to prevent the

export or trans-shipment of U.S.-origin

goods to Iran. Except for the language

calling for the designation of a country

as a Destination of Possible Diversion

Concern, this bill duplicates most existing

laws and regulations on these

issues, as well as current U.S. Government

programs. It does provide for the

application of licensing controls to the

countries designated, but immediately

affords yet another mere ‘‘national interest

waiver.’’

There are also stronger bills pending

on the issue of trans-shipment, such as

H.R. 6178, the Security Through Termination

of Proliferation Act, or the

STOP Act. And I hope that we can

work together to move that legislation

in the next Congress.

My good friend, HOWARD BERMAN,

shares with me concerns about transshipment

and diversion of sensitive

materials and technology to Iran. We

articulated them in our letter of February

5, 2008, a letter to Admiral

McConnell, the Director of National Intelligence,

raising these and many

other vital issues.

Mr. Speaker, also on this issue I recently

wrote to my chairman, HOWARD

BERMAN, asking for greater scrutiny of

foreign military financing, foreign

military sales and direct commercial

sales to countries that are a trans-shipment

concern for U.S.-origin goods to

Iran.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, despite my

grave, serious and repeated reservations

about this weak bill, I will vote

for it, and I hope that the Iranian regime

and its enablers do not see this as

a sign of weakness on our part.

Mr. Speaker, I

would like to yield myself such time as

I may consume.

I would like to point out that the reports

that we are getting about the

threat of a nuclear-powered Iran are

coming from all corners of the world,

and I would like to read just segments

of the online edition of The Jerusalem

Post posted by Herb Keinon. It says,

‘‘Military Intelligence: Iran Halfway to

First Nuclear Bomb.’’ It reads, ‘‘Iran is

halfway to a nuclear bomb, and

Hezbollah, Hamas and Syria are using

this period of relative calm to significantly

rearm.’’

This is according to the Head of Research

from the Israeli Military Intelligence,

and that is the information

that he gave and he shared with members

of the Israeli Cabinet and the

Israeli Parliament on September 21st,

in the Knesset. He said there was a

growing gap between Iran’s progress on

the nuclear front and the determination

of the West to stop it. A growing

gap. Iran gets closer, our determination

is stopped. Iran is concentrating

on uranium enrichment and is making

progress.

He noted that they have improved

the function of their 4,000 centrifuges.

According to this military intelligence

head of research, Iranian centrifuges

have so far produced between one-third

to one-half of the enriched material

that is needed to build a nuclear bomb.

The time that they will have crossed

the nuclear point of no return is fast

approaching.

Although he stopped short of giving a

firm deadline, last week in the

Knesset’s Foreign Affairs and Defense

Committee, he put the date at 2011.

Tick tock, the clock is ticking. He said

that their confidence is growing with

the thought that the international

community is not strong enough to

stop them. He said that the Iranians

were playing for time and that time

was working in their favor because the

longer the process dragged on, the

wider the riffs appearing among the

countries in the west, then Iran is in

control of the technology and continues

to move forward with determination

toward a nuclear bomb.

In addition to their nuclear efforts,

Iranians were also deepening their influence

throughout the region, because

they are cooperating with Syria. They

are cooperating with the Palestinian

terrorist organization, as well as being

the main arms supplier to another terrorist

group, Hezbollah.

While I appreciate the intentions of

my good friend, Chairman BERMAN,

this bill does fall far short of the type

of comprehensive sanctions that would

truly cripple the Iranian economy,

which is dependent on investments in

its energy sector. Setting aside the

weakness of the bill regarding the U.S.

direct sanctions on the regime, it does

nothing tangible to force the executive

branch’s hand to fully implement the

Iran Sanctions Act.

It could have, but language to include

an automatic trigger for a determination

of sanctions was not in place

in this bill, and it was not to be. This

bill had great promise. It does deliver

on some of those promises. I wish that

it could have gone further, but I hope

that my colleagues will adopt this important

bill tonight.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance

of our time.