Mr. Speaker, I rise in

strong support of H.R. 6198, legislation to hold

the current regime in Iran accountable for its

threatening behavior and to support a transition

to democracy in Iran. As an original cosponsor

of the legislation I am pleased that

the House is considering it today.

The threat from Iran is plain. The Iranian

mullahs have lied to the international community

about their nuclear program for years.

They have, again and again and again, defied

the clear will of the international community

that has demanded that they freeze their efforts

to enrich uranium. Iran has been, and remains

today, the most active state sponsor of

terrorism in the world. Iran provides hundreds

of millions of dollars, shiploads of weapons,

advanced military training and substantial political

cover to Hizballah, Hamas and other

radical, violent Islamist groups in the Middle

East. Their most senior officials continue to

make pronouncements that call into question

their attachment to reality. Supreme Leader

Khamenei has confirmed that Iran would share

its nuclear technology with other states. President

Ahmadinejad has made a hobby out of

Holocaust denial and at every opportunity violates

the most fundamental tenet of international

law by calling for the annihilation of

Israel, a sovereign member of the international

community.

In Iran, we have exactly what we thought

we had in Iraq: a state with enormous wealth

in natural resources; significant WMD capabilities

and the means to deliver them; and the

use of terrorist organizations as an instrument

of state policy. But what will amaze the historians

who look back on this period will be the

stunning lack of urgency with which the Bush

Administration and this Congress has approached

this problem.

I will be the first to admit that our policy options

toward Iran are unappetizing at best. We

have little diplomatic leverage, since we don’t

talk with Iran directly, except in very limited

circumstances. Any military operation beyond

pinpoint air strikes is quite simply beyond our

capacity at the moment, given our situation in

Iraq. And we should honestly acknowledge

that even a robust campaign of air strikes targeted

at Iran’s nuclear facilities might have

only a marginal effect on Iran’s nuclear program.

We don’t know where all of it is hidden

and many of the sites that we do know of

can’t be effectively attacked from the air. Further,

since our intelligence is so incomplete,

we would have a very limited ability to assess

how much damage our strikes had actually

done to the Iranian program. In addition to

questions about the direct affects, a decision

to strike Iran, would have enormous diplomatic

consequences for the United States, and

would likely lead to Iranian retaliation against

our already overextended troops in Iraq, and

probably against our ally, Israel.

So without a viable military option, we are

left with maklng multi-lateral diplomacy effective.

This is the right course, but it is one that

the Bush administration has been extremely

loathe to pursue, and one at which they have

shown little proficiency.

If a nuclear-armed Iran is ‘‘very de-stabilizing,’’

as the President has said it is—and I

do believe it is—then we need to make that

view, and the implications of that view, clear to

Russia and China and even to our partners in

Europe. Fortunately, this legislation provides

the administration with new and useful tools

that can be applied to help make that case.

Our message must be that this urgent problem

can be addressed if the will is there to do so.

In short, Iran needs to become urgent for

the administration before it will become urgent

for anyone else. Only concerted, sustained

multilateral pressure has any chance of convincing

Iran to change course. And if Iran

chooses not to change course, then the international

community must be prepared to pursue

effective multilateral sanctions against the

regime. Unfortunately, while the EU–3 shares

our view that an Iran with nuclear weapons is

not an acceptable outcome, it seems that Russia

and China do not. If the administration

can’t convince those nations that it is in their

interest for Iran not to have nuclear weapons,

then we need to start considering what options

remain to us unilaterally, what the cost of the

options would be and how we could go about

containing a nuclear-armed Iran.

One last point Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed

that the bill we are considering

today does not contain the language regarding

pension plans and mutual funds that would require

the managers of such funds to notify investors

if any of the assets of a particular fund

are invested in an entity which has invested in

Iran and may be subject to sanctions under

ILSA. I think such notifications are consistent

with the fiduciary responsibilities of fund managers

and would have prevented Americans

from unwittingly fueling Iran’s drive to acquire

nuclear weapons, simply by contributing to

their 401(k)’s. Nevertheless, I strongly urge my

colleagues to support the bill.