Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose

the march to war with Iran. I am as concerned

as the authors and supporters of this bill about

Iran’s nuclear weapons program. But I do not

believe that levying additional sanctions and

encouraging regime change is the correct

course. Instead, we should work with our allies

to negotiate a diplomatic solution.

The ‘‘Iran Freedom Support Act’’, H.R.

6198, will antagonize Iran’s government. Provisions

calling for democracy promotion and

‘‘the exercise of self-determination’’ will be interpreted

as a direct assault on Iran’s sovereignty

and may prompt Iran to discontinue

ongoing negotiations. Unilateral sanctions may

also discourage France, Germany, Italy, and

Spain from working to broker an international

agreement. Our allies do not appreciate it

when we ‘‘go it alone.’’

Dissidents will also be hurt by our offer of financial

and political assistance. As in Iraq, individuals

and groups that ally with America will

see their integrity questioned and their reputations

for independence undermined.

Iranian families will be hurt by sanctions that

prohibit foreign investment in the country’s petroleum

industries. Sanctions already in place

have not impacted Iran’s behavior. Why would

new prohibitions on investment succeed where

old sanctions have failed?

Finally, the American people will be less secure.

Antagonizing Iran will not stop or even

slow nuclear weapons development. Instead,

sanctions will prompt Iran to redouble its efforts

as a means of saving domestic and international

face.

The Bush administration and Republicans in

Congress have already made a mess of Iraq

and allowed warlords to gain control of much

of Afghanistan’s countryside. This legislation

takes us a step closer to similar results in Iran.

I urge my colleagues to vote ‘‘no’’.