Madam Speaker, I

appreciate this opportunity, and I

would like to thank the members of

the House staff that are staying beyond

voting hours for our opportunity to

speak, and I promise that I will reward

your efforts with brevity.

This is the end of another difficult

week for a lot of Americans. For too

many Americans, it’s another week

without a paycheck. For many Americans,

this is the week their unemployment

benefits will expire and they will

have no income next week. For many

Americans, this is the last weekend

they’ll be in their home because the

foreclosure is about to be executed

upon. And sadly, for many Americans,

this might be the last time that he or

she closes the doors on their business.

This time they close it for good.

Our constituents and neighbors are

hurting, hurting desperately, and I

think there has been far too little attention

paid to those problems here in

this institution. I hope that when we

return after what is, parenthetically,

our 12th recess of the year, we will get

to work on the jobs problem for our

country and try to put our people back

to work.

As vital as that jobs crisis is, we can

never put our country in a situation

where we are not paying attention to

threats to our security here at home

and around the world. And I do want to

spend a few moments this afternoon

talking about what I think is a very

significant threat, and that is the

threat of Iran developing a nuclear

weapon.

It is to the credit of the chairwoman

of the international relations committee,

the Foreign Affairs Committee,

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, and the senior Democrat

ranking member, Mr. BERMAN,

that yesterday Republicans and Democrats

on that committee came together

to pass what I consider to be very powerful

legislation that would work

against the propagation of nuclear

weapons by Iran. I hope that legislation

is something that will be brought

to the floor promptly and supported by

Members from both sides. I think it is

important to understand what more we

could do and why it’s so important to

do it.

This is another productive day

throughout our country. People are

going to work in our cities and in our

small towns and our suburbs. They are

going to classes at universities and

schools. They are visiting their loved

ones in hospitals. It is, thank God, a

normal day in America where we can

do the things that we want to do. But,

you know, a day 10 years ago in September

of 2001 started like a normal

day, too. September 11, 2001, was a

beautiful, blue sky, crystalline day,

and it ended as one of the worst days in

the history of our country. The pain of

that day is felt by people around this

country not just in the New York metropolitan

region, not just in Washington,

D.C., not just in Pennsylvania,

but around the country and around the

world.

I fear and dread that a similar day

could come from a scenario almost too

terrible to imagine. Imagine a group of

terrorists who are able to assemble a

substantial amount of money but not

an impossible amount of money—let’s

say about $2 million—and they’re able

to commandeer the services of scientists

who are evil enough or hungry

enough that they would lend their

skills to the destructive task of making

a small nuclear device, what we

call a small improvised explosive device,

a nuclear IED. And they don’t

need a missile to deliver this nuclear

IED; they need a U-Haul truck. So they

assemble the IED and they load it on

the back of a U-Haul truck, and they

drive it to a place where there’s a lot of

innocent Americans: The National Mall

right outside of this building, a sports

arena for an NFL football game, Times

Square, or a church or a synagogue or

a mosque where people are about to

worship. And they detonate the IED.

The consequences are huge numbers of

deaths in the immediate area of the explosion,

a significant number of people

sickened and eventually dying from nuclear

poisoning, the contamination of

the area of the explosion, and a devastating

blow to the psyche of the

United States of America.

How could this happen? Is this possible?

Well, it’s possible only if terrorists

get access to what’s called fissile material

from which you can make a nuclear

bomb. Fissile material can only

come from three places: You can make

it, and it takes a very significant industrial

complex to do so; you can

steal it, and that’s a problem that

we’re working on trying to prevent; or

you can have a government that gives

it to you because that government is

committed to a terrorist agenda.

My colleagues, understand that the

risk of Iranian nuclear proliferation includes

firing a missile at U.S. troops or

U.S. allies in the Middle East. It most

certainly includes that risk, but it’s

not limited to that risk. I think the

greatest risk of Iranian nuclear proliferation

is the risk of fissile material

being handed off by the Iranian Government

to a terrorist organization

that then assembles a small nuclear

IED and brings havoc and death to innocent

people in the United States of

America. How do we stop that? How do

we prevent that from happening? That

was the focus of the effort of the Foreign

Affairs Committee yesterday, and

I think it should be the focus of our

country and civilized countries around

the world.

Now, it’s important to understand

the history of this problem, the context

of this problem, the risk of this

problem, and what I believe is the solution

to this problem. The history is

this:

Of all the Nations in the world, only

one has conducted a nuclear weapons

research program and systematically

lied about the fact that it has done so,

and that one nation is the Republic of

Iran. The source, it’s a document from

the IAEA, the international agency

that monitors nuclear development,

from September 24, 2005, when that organization

said that they were uncertain

of Iran’s motives in failing to

make important declarations over an

extended period of time and in pursuing

a policy of concealment until October

of 2003. This is not a political

view of an American legislator or an

ideological position of a journal. This

is the official statement from the

international agency that watches nuclear

weapons. That’s the history. A

long history of deceit and concealment.

What’s the context? How is Iran behaving

in the present state of world affairs?

First of all, they are killing

United States troops in Iraq. Here’s

what the State Department’s 2010

country terrorism report had to say

about Iran:

Despite its pledge to support the stabilization

of Iraq, Iranian authorities

continue to provide lethal support, including

weapons, training, funding, and

guidance to Iraqi Shia militant groups

that target U.S. and Iraqi forces.

This is a country that is actively engaged

in an attempt to kill American

soldiers in Iraq as we speak today.

Secondly, their brutality extends to

their own people systematically. Let

me highlight just one chilling and horrifying

example reported by Amnesty

International on October 11, 2011. An

actress named Marzieh Vafamehr has

become the latest individual to face a

sentence of flogging—flogging. She was

sentenced on or about October 8, 2011,

to a year in prison and 90 lashes.

This is not the Middle Ages. I’m not

reading from a historic treatise from

the year 800. I’m reading from a sentence

passed down by an Iranian court

less than a month ago. What was her

offense? Her offense was she appeared

in a film called ‘‘My Tehran for Sale’’

in which she appeared in one scene

without the mandatory head covering

which women in Iran are required to

wear and appears to drink alcohol in

another. Her husband denied that she

had consumed any alcohol, but the

exact charge was levied, and this

woman is in prison as we speak and

once a month is beaten because she appeared

in a movie in a way that was

culturally offensive to the regime. This

is the regime that is seeking a nuclear

weapon.

What else in the context, what else

are they up to? Well, let’s listen to the

statements of the President of Iran.

Now he’s not the person that really

runs the country; the so-called Revolutionary

Council does. But he’s involved

in its government, President

Ahmadinejad, and here is what he said:

‘‘Thanks to people’s wishes and God’s

will, the trend for the existence of the

Zionist regime is downwards, and this

is what God has promised and what all

nations want. Just as the Soviet Union

was wiped out and today does not exist,

so will the Zionist regime soon be

wiped out.’’ This is the regime that is

attempting to acquire a nuclear weapon.

And, finally, we were all, I think,

stunned by the reports last week that

individuals who allegedly had ties to

the Iranian Government were indicted

in the American court system for allegedly

plotting the assassination of the

Saudi Arabian ambassador to the

United States on U.S. soil. Now,

Madam Speaker, I would hasten to

point out, as you well know, in our system

these are allegations, not facts,

and so we cannot say that these things

are true. But I can scarcely think of a

time in the history of our country

where we have indicted foreign nationals

or U.S. citizens for an alleged conspiracy

to murder a foreign diplomat

on our soil. Perhaps these individuals

will be found not guilty. Perhaps they

will be found guilty. But the fact that

there was probable cause to make such

an assertion is deeply shocking and disconcerting.

This is the regime that is

attempting to achieve a nuclear weapon.

Now how close are they? Here’s a report

from May 24 of 2011. The world’s

global nuclear inspection agency, the

IAEA, frustrated by Iran’s refusal to

answer questions, revealed for the first

time on Tuesday that it, meaning the

U.N. agency that watches nuclear

weapons, it possesses evidence that

Tehran has conducted work on a highly

sophisticated nuclear triggering technology

that experts said could be used

for only one purpose: setting off a nuclear

weapon. This is the regime that

says it is trying to acquire centrifuges

and nuclear power plants to create nuclear

power for its people. But the

quote that I just read is from the international

agency, not from U.S. intelligence,

not from our allies, not from

those who oppose the Iranian regime,

but from the neutral international

agency, which, frankly, has criticized

the United States on occasion, from

the neutral international agency talking

about what the Iranians are up to.

Now it’s classified information as to

how close they are to receiving this,

and we are all under an oath not to

talk about that classified information,

but the public record is replete with information

that the Iranians are aggressively

pursuing such a weapon.

And here’s an academic analysis that

talks about how such a weapon could

be used by a terrorist group that would

be the beneficiary of an Iranian handoff

of fissile material. Based upon this professor’s

analysis, and this is written by

the executive director for the Project

on Managing the Atom, Jeffrey Lewis

from the John F. Kennedy School of

Government at Harvard University, the

article is called the ‘‘Economics of Nuclear

Terrorism.’’ Here is what Professor

Lewis has to say: A terrorist organization

like al Qaeda could plausibly

build and deliver a nuclear weapon

for less than $2 million. Two million

dollars. Now, of course, that’s $2 million

after you’ve received the fissile

material or bought it. Well, such an organization

would now have a willing

partner in Tehran that would own and

be able to produce such fissile material.

We have an urgent economic crisis in

our country. We need to fix it. We have

a lot of other problems we need to fix.

But this is happening. And we cannot

let our attention to our economic crisis

take our attention away from our duty

to prevent this kind of catastrophe

from happening to innocent people in

the world.

So what do we do about it? What’s

the solution? How do we go forward in

a way that stops the Iranians from getting

this fissile material? To the credit

of this Congress, both parties, and

President Obama, the United States

imposed bilateral sanctions on the Iranians

about a year and a half ago. And

to the credit of the United Nations Security

Council, the United Nations Security

Council imposed modest sanctions

on the Iranians about a year ago,

and there is some evidence that these

sanctions are beginning to work.

The United States sanctions, which

were led by then-ranking member ROSLEHTINEN

and now chairwoman, and by

then-Chairman BERMAN, now ranking

member, and frankly that relied upon

the work of Senator KIRK in the Senate,

focused on a gasoline embargo. It’s

an odd fact, but Iran, which is a country

which exports crude oil, imports

about 40 percent of its gasoline because

its economy is so dysfunctional that it

cannot refine its own products. Before

the U.S. sanctions were imposed, the

price of a gallon of gasoline heavily

subsidized in Iran was 38 cents a gallon.

Today it’s $1.58 a gallon.

Now what does this mean? It means

that an Iranian citizen who used to

have to work 1 hour to fill their gas

tank once a week now has to work 5

hours to fill their gas tank once a

week. This is not a huge sacrifice, but

it’s making a dent in the economy of

Iran.

It is our intention, obviously, not to

in any way punish or jeopardize the

well-being of the Iranian people. They

are our friends, and we want them to

be our friends and allies for years to

come. But the simple, and I think compelling,

logic of these sanctions is we

are compelling the Iranian leadership

to choose between pursuing their nuclear

weapons ambitions but suffering

economic consequences or abandoning

those nuclear weapons ambitions and

having the opportunity to restore their

economy to some basic degree of

health.

By the way, at a time when crude oil

prices were rising, the Iranian economy

stagnated. They had a negative growth

of 1 percent last year, and they had

stagnant growth the year before that.

So at a time when they should have

been enjoying robust economic growth

because of rising crude oil prices, they

were stagnant because of the effectiveness

of these sanctions.

Perhaps the best evidence of effectiveness

was from President

Ahmadinejad himself, who this week

stood before their parliament defending

a cabinet member of his who is accused

of some wrongdoing and said

that one of the reasons why they had

to engage in the wrongdoing was their

economy was in bad shape because ‘‘we

can’t do international banking transactions

anymore.’’ Well, there’s some

good news.

What I’m suggesting here is that the

House should move rapidly to embrace

and support the legislation that the

Foreign Relations Committee marked

up yesterday. And I think that legislation

will enjoy broad Republican and

Democratic support, as it did yesterday.

I believe it was approved unanimously

by the committee. I would then

urge our administration to work with

the Congress and sign such legislation

and implement it.

Now, listen, Madam Speaker, I fully

understand that sanctions alone may

not be sufficient. And I’m not here

today to argue for that proposition.

What I am here today to argue for is

the proposition that the sanctions we

have imposed thus far have shown

some signs of success. I think this is

the time to intensify those sanctions,

not to weaken them. I think this is a

time for us to intensify our unified national

resolve on this question. And despite

our very profound differences on

matters of economics and social policy,

which is what a democracy ought to

have, there should be no difference between

us on the question of standing in

a unified fashion in favor of more intense

sanctions against Iran. The need

is urgent and compelling.

You know, Madam Speaker, if someone

had stood in this Chamber in the

mid-1990s and said, If we don’t focus

our intelligence efforts on an obscure

group of former mujahedin rebels in Afghanistan

called al Qaeda, if we don’t

do that, the day may come when we

will have a domestic Pearl Harbor,

when the World Trade Centers will collapse,

when thousands of people will

perish, when the Pentagon, our own air

space, will be attacked by civilians in

our country, I think one would have

thought that the Member was auditioning

for a Tom Clancy film. It would

sound very fantastic, very unlikely,

and almost like science fiction or a spy

thriller.

I wish September 11, 2001, had been

fiction—I wish. That we had not had to

go to those funerals and comfort those

families who suffer today, I wish that

were the fact. And there will be some

who will say that the scenario we

talked about earlier, about a nuclear

IED exploding in Times Square or the

National Mall or an NFL football

game, is too provocative or too sensational

or too scary. I hope they’re absolutely

right; I hope it’s total fiction.

But I think we ought to know better.

I think we ought to know better that

there is a regime which has demonstrated

its deceit, which has manifested

its evil toward its own people

and to our troops in the Middle East,

that has used language that is more

than just purple language, that is language

that goes beyond the pale about

the annihilation of Israel and of all

those who would stand with Israel, and

that now stands accused—or persons

alleged to have been tied to that regime

now stand accused in our courts

of participating in a conspiracy to assassinate

a foreign diplomat on our

soil. These are people we should be concerned

about.

And as we look at the question of

whether such an attack could happen, I

think the question is unequivocally:

Yes, it can. Our responsibility is to,

with equal equivocation, say, no, it

won’t, no, it won’t; that we will use the

resources at our disposal—our international

alliances, our economic leverage,

our diplomatic skill—to try to

move the Iranians to the point where

they would accept a reasonable deal

which says if you want to have nuclear

power plants in your country, that’s

your sovereign right; but you must buy

your fuel from outside the country and

you must abandon your ability to manufacture

and synthesize fuel. That’s a

reasonable and fair settlement. We

should use every tool at our disposal to

encourage the Iranian Government to

accept such a settlement.

And as any wise President should do,

as President Obama has done, as President

Bush did before him, as President

Clinton did before him, as President

Bush did before him, as Presidents

Reagan and Carter did before them,

any prudent American President must

reserve the right to defend our sovereign

interests with whatever tools

are necessary should the need arise. I

pray that the need will never arise.

And I think if we act intelligently,

forcefully, but urgently, I think that

we can avoid that day and avoid a situation

like I described earlier.

So, Madam Speaker, thank you for

this time this afternoon. I’d like to

again thank the staff for its indulgence.

I commend the chairwoman of

our committee and the ranking member.

And I look forward to supporting

their legislation, broadening our unified,

bipartisan national effort to stand

strong against the tyranny and evil of

this regime and for the welfare of innocent

people throughout the world and

throughout our country.

I yield back the balance of my time.