I would like to thank

you, Congressman WATERS and Congressman

LEE. Before I got to Congress

I thought both of you just were towering

heroes of peace. Now that I have

been here and had the chance to get to

know both of you, I am certain that I

was right from the very first impression

I had of you. Thank you for standing

up and calling this special order tonight.

The point I would like to make is

simply this. We see in Iran a country

we have not had any open diplomatic

relationships with since 1979, except for

brief moments around IEDs last summer.

The meetings have not been continued,

and, in essence, we have had no

real diplomatic relationships with Iran

in many, many years.

Many Americans don’t remember the

day when we did have relationships

with Iran. Yet, despite all these years

of having no diplomatic ties to Iran, no

open communications, channels of

communications, it really has not

solved any of the problems. Not talking

has not helped.

I want to join with Representative

WATERS and Representative LEE in

calling for an open dialogue, unconditional

bilateral dialogue. Dialogue is

not a gift, dialogue is not a present,

dialogue is not a reward.

Dialogue is a tool that can help us

stabilize the world, bring peace to millions

and millions of people all over the

world. Dialogues should not be used as

some sort of a gift. It doesn’t make

sense for any nation to say capitulate

to our demands, and then we will talk

to you. The very purpose of negotiation

is to say, let’s talk, and the first agenda

item could be serious problems we

have with one another.

But the start is talking, unconditional

talking, talking with a clear

agenda in mind, talking with no illusions

about differences. But talking,

nonetheless, is something that I think

we need, and we need it now.

I want to say that our effort to isolate

Iran by not talking to Iran, reminds

me of our effort of trying to isolate

Cuba by not talking to Cuba. Now

everybody in the world does business

with Cuba except the United States.

American farmers wanting to sell

grain, Cubans want to buy stuff from

the U.S., people wanting to see family,

those things are hampered because we

are the only ones in the world maintaining

this policy of nondialogue. I

fear that we could end up in the same

way with Iran.

Let me just point out an article in

the Times online from March 3, 2008.

The headline is, ‘‘Four kisses, then the

band played: the day former foes became

friends.’’

It starts out describing a meeting between

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and

Nouri al-Maliki. It goes on to talk

about how a young girl dressed in a

white dress clutched a bouquet of flowers

as she waited with a small boy in a

smart suit to greet President

Ahmadinejad of Iran, who began a historic

visit to Iraq.

Earlier today, we heard a speaker

who I won’t name say that, oh, the

United States needs to get with China

and Russia to isolate Iran. China and

Russia, we can’t even get Iraq to isolate

Iran.

We can’t even get Iraq, a country we

have invaded and essentially have

taken over, though it does operate

under the guise of sovereignty, we

can’t even get them to say don’t talk

to Iran. They have open relationships

with Iran and are building them more

and stronger every day. It doesn’t

make any sense.

Now, it’s not just Iraq that has a welcome

mat for Iran. But let me just say

that when Americans, Members of Congress

go to Iraq, all of us know we go

into military aircraft that takes evasive

maneuvers into Baghdad, because

we are concerned about our safety.

This is a fact. So much for isolating

Iran from Iraq. Okay, well, then, what

about another country, Pakistan. We

send a lot of money to Pakistan. Yet

Pakistan announced in a March 5, 2008

article, the Times of India, Iran, on

Wednesday, said it was ‘‘ready to sign

the India-Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline

deal,’’ but technical issues between the

two are hindering the process.

‘‘We are ready to sign the agreement

as soon as possible,’’ Iranian Deputy

Foreign Minister for Economic Affairs

said. ‘‘Everything is okay from our

side. There are some technical issues

between India and Pakistan,’’ he said.

‘‘The India-Pakistan-Iran pipeline,

which is dubbed as the ’Peace Pipeline,’

is stuck over issues such as price and

transition fees.’’

So much for isolating Iran from

Pakistan and India. All right, so Iraq,

they are talking to them, Iran, Pakistan

and India are talking, but, okay,

maybe we can still get Russia and

China, countries that have militaries,

countries that have economies, countries

that have been freestanding and

independent for many, many, many,

many, many years.

Okay, what about Afghanistan? Isn’t

that country essentially a failed state

which we invaded and kicked out the

Taliban and now are trying to reconstruct

today?

‘‘In the electricity substation just

outside of Herat, western Afghanistan,

there’s the loud hum of power—Iranian

power,’’ that’s right. ‘‘More electricity

reaches Herat than the city can use,

but the industrial park just across the

road from the NATO military base is

putting it to good use.

‘‘Small plastic bottles of fizzy orange

juice shuffle along the conveyor belt to

be labeled and packed—the building is

noticeably Iranian in design and the

markings on the machinery show exactly

which country helped these Afghan

businessmen.

‘‘The camels grazing outside cautiously

cross the fast, straight, asphalt

road—one of the best roads in Afghanistan

stretching 120km to the border.

‘‘Soon a railway will link Afghanistan

to Europe, or so boasts the Iranian

government.’’

I would just mention, with a quick

Google search, Iraq, India, Pakistan

and, now, Afghanistan are all coalescing

economically with Iran. We are

not talking to Iran. We don’t talk to

Iran. We don’t want to try to get into

that market of 70 million people. We

don’t want to try to open up diplomatic

ties and work on issues.

We are not trying to solve this nuclear

conflict with dialogue, discussion

and open conversation. We are just trying

to isolate them, but nothing suggested

we are being successful at doing

that.

The fact is maybe isolation of Iran is

not the right tactic. Maybe the right

tactic is to try to talk to them, to try

to build a better relationship, to try to

have cultural exchange, try to have exchange

of views, different though they

may be, with an eye toward a more

peaceful world, with an eye toward a

world in which people can have security

and in which an eye toward which

the world can rest and feel their children

are safe at night.

The fact is this saber rattling, I remember

that it was about maybe 16

months ago that I sat in my first meeting

that I ever had with the President,

with, I believe, Representative LEE and

Representative WATERS. I think it was

Representative LEE who said, are you,

Mr. President, planning on hitting

Iran? He gave us a sure statement that

he was not.

Yet ever since that time, all we have

been hearing, time and time again is

that Iran is the problem.

I don’t know how Iran could be the

problem in Iraq without the complicity

of the Iraqi government. I mean, I need

somebody to correct me on this point

because I just don’t get it. How can

Iran be an issue in Iraq unless Iraq

wants them in the country. It just

doesn’t make any other kind of sense

to me, and I need somebody to explain

that, because maybe I have just not

been in Congress long enough to get it.

Let me just say, I want to move aside

now, and I want to thank the two Members

who have been leading the charge,

along with Congresswoman WOOLSEY,

who is recovering from back surgery. I

know if she was feeling better she

would be right better with you, the

triad, the triad for peace. I admire you

so much.

Madam Speaker, I just

want to again thank Representatives

WATERS and LEE and SHEILA JACKSON

LEE.

I just want to make a few quick

points. We’re under no illusions. I

think that by this special order, I don’t

think anyone intends to excuse bellicose,

inflammatory remarks that have

been made by the President of Iran.

There’s no excusing that. But you don’t

deal with bellicose remarks with a war.

You deal with bellicose remarks by

issuing a statement condemning those

statements, but not with a war. And I

don’t think any bellicose statements or

inflammatory remarks by the President

of Iran could ever justify an attack

which will result in the massive

loss of life.

I also want to say that a strike

against Iran, no one can predict what

the consequences of that will be. Will it

excite the Shiia community in Pakistan,

of which 30 percent of the people

are Shiia there? What will it do to Afghanistan?

Again, Iran is providing electricity in

Afghanistan in an effective way, much,

much more than other countries have

done. Again, Kabul and Kandajar are

not electrified 100 percent of the time.

What will happen in Lebanon? Will

that inflame another war such as the

one in the summer of 2006? That could

inflame the region, and no one knows

whether bombs will start falling from

other parts of the region.

This war against Iran, a strike

against Iran has no clear outcome. It is

a very bad idea. And I think that what

we must do is pursue diplomatic negotiations,

and remember that negotiation

is not a reward, it’s not a gift, it’s

not a present; it’s a tool for the security

of the world.