I appreciated

what my colleague just said

about the banks, and one of the things

that I think we ought to focus on in addition

to that is that we are not energy

independent and we’re not allowed the

drill off the Continental Shelf or in the

ANWR in Alaska or do other exploration

for a number of reasons, not the

least of which is, quote-unquote, environmental.

But at the same time we won’t allow

offshore drilling here, we just gave

Brazil $2 billion so they can drill off

their shores. It just doesn’t make any

sense to me. We ought to be spending

that money here at home exploring for

oil so we can move towards energy

independence. We have a 400- or 500-

year supply of natural gas and we have

plenty of oil if we just could go get it,

and we can do it in an environmentally

safe way.

Now the reason I bring that up is because

one of the big problems we face is

we get 35 to 40 percent of our oil from

the Middle East, and one of the big

problems facing the United States and

the world right now is Iran. Iran has

been developing a nuclear program, a

nuclear weapons program for some

time, and our position in the United

States now, under the new administration,

is to try to work with them, to

talk with them to stop them with their

nuclear development program. And if

they don’t, we’re going to try to get a

sanctions bill passed.

Now, we have a bill sponsored by the

chairman of the International Relations

Committee, Mr. BERMAN, that has

over 300 cosponsors—I happen to be one

of them—and we believe we ought to

bring that bill to the floor as quickly

as possible to try to put pressure on

Iran to stop the development of the nuclear

weapons program.

But the administration, I think, has

suggested we should wait. They were

trying to bring China and Russia on

board, and China and Russia are not

going to be on board. So we should do

it by ourselves and we should do it expeditiously.

Let me tell you why I think it’s so

important. If Iran continues down this

path, Israel—whom Iran has said they

want to destroy—will have no choice

but to defend itself. They cannot let

Iran develop a nuclear bomb and a delivery

system. If they do that, they

will be able to destroy Israel and millions

of Jews in Israel in a very short

period of time. It will be another Holocaust.

So what will happen? If they get too

far down the path, if we don’t put pressure

on them to stop—and they don’t

stop—I believe Israel will have no

choice but to attack Iran. And if they

attack Iran, that could end up in being

a major conflagration in the entire

Persian Gulf area.

Now, why is that important to us?

We get 35 to 40 percent of our energy

from the Persian Gulf area. If that goes

up in smoke, we will lose 35 to 40 percent

of the energy that we have in this

country because we’re not energy independent.

The lights that we have, the gasoline

in our cars, the fuel we use to heat our

houses, everything that needs energy

will suffer, and we will have severe economic

problems if this problem isn’t

dealt with before a tragedy occurs over

there.

This really bothers me. We tried to

work with North Korea some time ago

during the Clinton administration. We

even had an agreement with them that

they would stop their nuclear development

program if we gave them some

things, and we did. And what did they

do? They lied and they went ahead

with their program, and they are a nuclear

power. They’re using missiles

that would be intercontinental in

scope, testing them over the sea of

Japan right now. And they’ve done

that a number of times.

So we have to worry about them. We

have to worry about North Korea and

what they’re going to do next. Can you

imagine what it will be like once Iran

develops a nuclear weapons program?

They are committed to destroying

Israel. They are committed to forcing

their view of religion and religious beliefs

on much of the rest of the world,

and it could be a real problem for us.

They don’t like America very much either.

And so we have a myriad of problems

facing us if we don’t get on with

putting as much pressure as possible on

Iran and doing it right now.

As we speak, they’re developing their

nuclear weapons program. They said

they’re going to let U.N. nuclear experts

come in and police the area and

see what they’re doing. I don’t believe

that. I believe they will let us see one

or two spots, but they’re going to go on

with their nuclear development program.

We must put pressure on them now.

We must put pressure on them immediately,

because if we don’t, we’re toying

with a major problem, a major economic

problem for America as well as a

possible holocaust in that part of the

world in the very near future.