Mr. Speaker,

my comments today are heavily

contributed to by the author of ‘‘The

Nature of War,’’ Ron Tira; and I want

to acknowledge him. He’s a noted military

expert and noted national security

expert, and I appreciate so very much

his seminal contribution to these comments.

Mr. Speaker, a nuclear Iran poses a

severe and unfamiliar risk to the

United States and its allies. We have to

be very careful not to mistakenly assume

that a relatively stable balance

of deterrence, similar to the nuclear

equilibrium between the United States

and the Soviet Union during the Cold

War, can be achieved with Iran. A nuclear

Iran represents a very different

type of threat that simply cannot be

managed.

A nuclear Iran would serve to

incentivize the development of nuclear

weapons by many other regional powers

in the Middle East, such as Saudi

Arabia, Egypt and Turkey.

Mr. Speaker, a multi-polar nuclear

crisis is much harder to manage than

anything we’ve experienced or did experience

during the Cold War. If we

could all just imagine for a moment

the so-called ‘‘chicken game.’’ But instead

of two drivers, imagine five drivers,

Mr. Speaker, each speeding from

different directions to converge on the

same intersection.

All of this, in addition to the other

characteristics of the Middle East,

such as unstable regimes and the danger

of nuclear weapons falling into the

hands of al Qaeda or other terrorist

groups.

Consider Qadhafi’s Libya, Mr. Speaker,

with several nuclear warheads. Who

knows where they might be now? And

where would the world be today if Syria’s

Assad had managed to complete his

nuclear bombmaking efforts?

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the only viable

U.S. policy is one of preventing

Iran from going nuclear, not this delusional

notion of containing a nuclear

Iran. Indeed, prevention is the stated

policy objective of this President and

his top advisers.

However, the problem is not with the

stated policy, but with the strategy

that is supposed to achieve it. And, Mr.

Speaker, the facts on the ground reveal

that our policy objectives are not turning

into reality.

Nearly all previous red lines demarcated

by America and its allies over

Iran’s nuclear ambition have now been

crossed, with very few repercussions to

show for Iran’s defiance. Iran is now

enriching uranium in quantities, enrichment

levels and facilities that

would have terrified the entire free

world only a few years ago.

Indeed, at this very moment, a defiant

Iran is forging ahead with the development

of ballistic missiles, detonators

and other components essential

to nuclear weaponization.

Mr. Speaker, why do we find it so

challenging to realize our policy objectives?

Why is the world’s sole superpower

unable to impose its will on a country

whose GDP is comparable with that of

Argentina and many of those whose

significant military assets date back as

far as arms deals with the Johnson and

Nixon administrations?

Mr. Speaker, one of the key enabling

factors for Iran’s nuclear weapons development

is the perception of a lack

of symmetry between Iranian and

American seriousness and determination

regarding the nuclear program.

But for Iran, it is of the utmost importance,

and the regime is willing to take

risks and to pay high prices to achieve

its objectives, or at least this is certainly

how it postures.

Mr. Speaker, Iran is successfully deterring

its adversaries and positioning

itself as ready to face a confrontation,

even if its deep-rooted weaknesses

make it unlikely that it could ever

withstand such a direct conflict.

Mr. Speaker, it’s time for us to be

candid in questioning the strategic effectiveness

of covert and clandestine

operations, as important as they are.

While the courage and resourcefulness

of our intelligence community is unquestionable,

and while covert and

clandestine operations may inflict

some damage on Iran’s nuclear program,

they cannot and have not been

effective in convincing Iran to abandon

its nuclearization policy.

More significantly, covert and clandestine

activities create an illusion of

‘‘something being done,’’ thus appearing

to justify the fact that we continue

to let more and more time pass.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have to realize

that covert operations simply cannot

be the primary means by which we expect

to deter Iran. If prevention is our

real commitment, and not merely lip

service, then we must deal with that

Iranian nuclear challenge immediately,

and not later.

Every day that passes, Iran grows

more dangerously close to realizing its

nuclear ambition—and to becoming

virtually untouchable militarily. In

the face of that reality, the more

breathtaking reality is that it seems

both the Iranian and American administrations

favor wasting more time:

Iran, because it allows them to forge

ahead toward completion, and the

Obama administration, because it allows

them to postpone difficult decisions

which would necessitate actual

leadership from the White House.

Mr. Speaker, the President’s disingenuously

stated ends are utterly at

odds with our actual response, and this

raises a host of questions as to the

credibility of either the administration’s

true intent or its chosen strategies.

It’s almost unimaginable how

much further American strategic credibility

would deteriorate if Iran actually

acquires the bomb in spite of the

half-hearted ‘‘warnings’’ of Mr. Obama.

Credibility questions also abound

with regard to the administration’s

reasoning against military action.

Time and again administration officials

argue that the futility of military

action is real since, allegedly, some of

the nuclear assets are difficult to

reach, and a military action may only

postpone the nuclear program by a couple

of years. But, Mr. Speaker, this is a

peculiar argument, at the very least.

Any nuclear production asset that is

destroyed can be eventually rebuilt.

Moreover, chasing each and every centrifuge,

wherever it is stashed away, is

ultimately an ineffective strategy. So

why does the administration advocate

such a strategy?

Our strategic challenge, Mr. Speaker,

is Iran’s policy of pursuing a military

nuclear capability. It is not necessarily,

not even mostly, that Iran is

currently in possession of certain nuclear

production assets. It is Iran’s policy

that must be altered. Production

assets will then inherently follow. To

realize its objectives, the U.S. must

compel Iran to alter its policy of acquiring

a military nuclear capability

and then enforce the policy change

over time.

If we fail to deprive Iran of nuclear

weapons, we will ultimately have to

face infinitely more dangerous challenges

than those associated with preventing

it from going nuclear. Consider

the dangers for a moment of conducting

a second operation to free Kuwait,

only this time, once it’s been

taken over by a nuclear-armed Iran.

And none of this even touches upon the

grave reality that would emerge once

Iran possesses intercontinental ballistic

missile capability along with a

strategic reach to our own shores.

Mr. Speaker, it’s a sad day when the

vacuum of leadership in the White

House has allowed Iran to posture more

credibly than America, in spite of

wielding a much smaller stick. In this

instance, it has literally allowed Iran

to be more strategically effective than

we are.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the administration

has been trying for a very long

time to diplomatically talk its way out

of this challenge or to bluff its way out

of the challenge by moving military assets

up and down the Gulf, and therefore

has made it doubtful that any further

such statements or deployments

can ever suffice to get the job done. Indeed,

they may well have the opposite

effect, as the demarcation of the administration’s

risk tolerance, which to

any observer of its actions caps the

ends it can reasonably expect to realize.

So, Mr. Speaker, this brings us to the

critical question that everyone should

be asking themselves: If this administration

is so deterred by a pre-nuclear

Iran, how would it ever face up to a nuclear-

armed Iran? This is why, to date,

in the only game that matters—that of

conflicting policies—Mr. Speaker, the

United States has not been able to

alter Iran’s policy of acquiring nuclear

weapons. And, Mr. Speaker, we are running

out of time to do things differently.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield back

the balance of my time.