Madam

Speaker, I yield myself such time as I

may consume.

I rise in very strong support of H.R.

282, the Iran Freedom Support Act. And

I want to thank our colleague from

Florida, Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN, for

sponsoring this important legislation. I

am proud to be an original cosponsor.

The United States and the world

community, Madam Speaker, are at a

crucial point in our efforts to prevent

Iran from producing nuclear weapons.

Let us be clear: Iran’s acquisition of

nuclear weapons will be a devastating

blow to peace and security not only in

the Middle East but in the entire

world.

Iran has been designated, as we

know, as a ‘‘State Sponsor of Terrorism’’

for over two decades. The Department

of State has declared in its

most recent Country Reports on Terrorism

that Iran ‘‘remained the most

active state sponsor of terrorism in the

world.’’ Iran maintains ‘‘a high profile

role,’’ they go on to say, ‘‘in encouraging

antiIsraeli terrorist activity,

both rhetorically and operationally,’’

according to the State Department.

Supreme religious leader Khamenei

does not just praise Palestinian terrorist

operations; Iran also provides

Lebanese and Palestinian terrorist

groups, most notably Hamas, with

funding, safe haven, training, and

weapons. Iran has now pledged to contribute

$50 million to Hamas so that

the Hamas regime in Palestine can

continue to resist international pressure

to recognize Israel’s right to exist.

In October Iran’s President

Ahmadinejad called for Israel to be

‘‘wiped off the map.’’ In December he

declared the Holocaust ‘‘a myth.’’ Last

Monday he attacked Israel as a ‘‘fake

regime’’ that ‘‘cannot logically continue

to live.’’ Can we doubt that such

people are capable of carrying out their

threats if they ever acquire the means

to do so? Have we learned nothing in 60

years?

This prudent measure will strengthen

our sanctions regime against Iran’s nuclear

weapons proliferation. To keep up

economic pressure, the bill tightens

the existing sanctions against Iran by

requiring a yes-or-no decision on

whether to impose sanctions on firms

reported to be making investments in

the Iranian petroleum sector. The bill

also amends the Iran-Libya Sanctions

Act, or ILSA, Public Law 104–172, to

eliminate the 5-year sunset clause included

in the original ILSA. We should

certainly not give the Iranians the impression

that they can wait us out on

the sanctions issue.

The bill requires that all bilateral

U.S. sanctions, controls, and regulations

on Iran related to weapons of

mass destruction remain in effect until

Iran has verifiably dismantled its WMD

programs. The bill also provides the

means and moral pressure to encourage

American investors and American pension

plans to divest from companies

that invest in Iran’s energy sector.

Such investment can be a powerful tool

in our efforts to stop Iran’s march towards

nuclear weapons.

In February, Madam Speaker, H.

Con. Res. 341 passed overwhelmingly by

this House, 404–4. We called on all

members of the U.N. Security Council,

in particular the Russian Federation

and the People’s Republic of China, to

take expeditious action in response to

Iran’s noncompliance with the mandate

of the Security Council, and it

calls on ‘‘all responsible members of

the international community’’ to impose

economic sanctions designed to

deny Iran the ability to develop nuclear

weapons.

We were severely criticized by many

members of the world community,

Madam Speaker, for not relying on the

Security Council and on sanctions in

our confrontation with Saddam Hussein.

Now is the time for the world

community, for China and Russia especially,

to show that they are indeed responsible

members of the international

community and take effective action

to stop this terrorist regime in Iran.

Time is running out. The world needs

to act now. The Bush administration

deserves high praise for working with

our friends to get Iran to the Security

Council where once again next week it

will be on the agenda.

This bill renews our call for diplomatic

and multilateral action and will

strengthen the President’s hand with

our international partners.

Finally, we must work to change

Iran itself by working to promote democracy

and human rights within Iran.

This bill authorizes the President to

provide democracy assistance to individuals

who are working through exclusively

peaceful means to support democracy

and promote democracy in

Iran. It does not in any way authorize

the use of force.

The bill was introduced, as I noted,

by our friend and colleague Ms. ROSLEHTINEN

of Florida, who has devoted

tremendous efforts to secure its passage.

She now has 360 cosponsors.

Chairman HYDE had asked her to manage

the bill, but she has a family emergency

in Florida that required her to

leave for Florida and to be with her

family. Our thoughts and prayers are

with her during this time.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance

of my time.