Madam Speaker,

I appreciate the gentleman’s courtesy

in permitting me to speak on this resolution.

One of the reasons, Madam Speaker,

that I argued against our invasion of

Iraq long before the war began was because

I felt we needed to face far more

serious threats like the danger posed

by Iran. In the 3 years since that attack,

the threat from Iran has grown,

and our capacity to meet that threat

has diminished. Now Iran has a President

who exploits Iranian national

grievances to consolidate power and

has threatened to wipe Israel off the

map. Our troops are bogged down in

Iraq, placing them at risk should Iran

launch a new wave of terrorism.

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We have done nothing to break our

dependency on oil, the control of which

gives Iran its greatest ability now to

blackmail us and other countries.

I appreciate the leadership of my

good friend Mr. LANTOS and others

bringing the resolution forward to

spotlight the problems with Iran. I appreciate

their working with us to improve

the bill.

For instance, now the bill will not

allow us to deal with terrorist groups

on our own watch list. I think that is

very, very important. Unfortunately,

this legislation does not provide solutions.

Instead it limits the administration’s

flexibility to pursue diplomacy

without providing any new tools not

already at their disposal.

We need allies and partners to address

the Iranian threat. We need the

cooperation of the European Union, of

China and, yes, Russia, since we have

no more unilateral sanctions to place

on Iran.

Our global standing is at a low point.

Yet this bill sanctions not Iran, but the

very countries we need for a strong diplomatic

effort. This bill tragically

gives equal weight to overthrowing the

Iranian Government as it does to the

immediate threat of nuclear proliferation.

Now, I am strongly opposed to this

regime, but preventing them from developing

nuclear weapons capacity

must be our first priority, not

prioritizing behavior change over regime

change. We pull the rug out from

underneath anybody in the current Iranian

leadership who values survival

over the nuclear program, and it clearly

works to eliminate incentives for

diplomatic solutions.

I have a sense of deja vu when I think

back to the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998

which did not explicitly authorize the

use of force, but certainly got the ball

rolling that led to the tragedy of this

Iraq war. Knowing what they know

today, how many Members of this

House would have voted differently 8

years ago?

I am very worried about where all

this ends. We have heard reports from

the Pentagon of plans to attack Iran,

indeed plans for a nuclear strike on

Iran, the repercussions of which should

make us all recoil with horror. Now,

the administration dismisses these

news reports, but the American people

and this Congress got better information

about what happened in Iraq from

reporters like Seymour Hirsch than it

got from, sadly, the President, Secretary

Rumsfeld and Secretary Rice.

I do not pretend to imagine the horrific

things that Iran would do with nuclear

weapons. We are all opposed to

that. That is why we need a strong,

smart, constructive diplomatic strategy.

This bill does not provide it.

For over half a century, Madam

Speaker, we have made a series of mistakes

regarding Iran, starting in 1953

when the United States led the charge

to overthrow the democratically elected

Government of Iran and replace

them with a dictatorship in the person

of the Shah. Our support for that dictatorship

and its repressive policies

fueled the reaction that led to the Iranian

revolution. It was part of what

happened with the hostage crisis in

Iran.

More recently there are very credible

reports that diplomatic feelers extended

by the Iranian Government

were dismissed by this administration

2 and 3 years ago. I sincerely hope that

we do not overwhelmingly and

unthinkingly pass a resolution today

that makes us feel good because we all

hate this regime, but instead sets in

motion a process that actually is destabilizing

and makes the peaceful future

that we all seek harder.

Madam Speaker,

I do think this is an important conversation

for us to have on this floor. I

am pleased that the debate time was

extended, and I hope our colleagues

will take the time to scroll through the

information that is available and think

of the consequences.

For instance, I would enter into the

record, a letter from Under Secretary

of State Nick Burns to Chairman HYDE.

I will just quote a little and then insert

the rest in the RECORD.

Nobody here, nobody here, apologizes

for this regime. And my good friend

from Indiana is correct, there is a lot

of shared interest and deep concern.

The notion that this despotic regime

would have control of nuclear weapons

is terrifying, absolutely terrifying.

We long for the day that the Iranian

people are free, in no small measure because

the United States’ history with

the Iranian people over more than half

a century is one where we have not always

been on the side of democracy for

the Iranian people, overthrowing their

democratically elected regime in 1953.

That was not a proud moment in our

history when we helped install a dictator,

but we called him the Shah.

We are united in our commitment to

deal meaningfully with this problem.

This legislation, as the administration

has made clear, falls short of the mark.

It is not tightening our sanctions

against Iran.

We have done that.

There have been administrations,

both Republican and Democrat, who

have maybe not been as zealous in implementing

those sanctions; but that is

on the books. We have done it.

What this talks about doing is extending

sanctions against the very people

whose cooperation we need to solve

this problem. We are confusing our

goals. Is it more important to threaten

a regime change and thereby consolidate

it? This Government of Iran by all

indications is not monolithic. There

are people who disagree with the sad

and repulsive face of the current leader.

There are a vast number of young

people in Iran who are not at this point

violently anti-American. They are pro-

Western. There is interest in the

United States. If we misplay this, we

can end up turning another generation

against us in Iran.

We have had empty threats against

North Korea that did not stop them

from going full speed ahead developing

nuclear weapons, in fact, we are probably

less safe today because we have

not been focused and effective.

I do strongly identify with the words

of my friend, the gentleman from Iowa

(Mr. LEACH). I have been one who has

been somewhat critical of this administration

in its actions in the past. I

would find it absolutely inappropriate

to not reinforce when I think they are

trying to reposition themselves vis-avis

Iran. There are many people on our

side of the aisle who were against the

rush to war in Iraq and many more who

have found that it was a mistake to do

so. We have supported more diplomatic

initiatives, and this is the opportunity

we have now.

This legislation is not each-handed.

It is not focused. The administration

does not want it. It sanctions our allies.

I strongly urge that we do things

that are coming down the pike now

that we in Congress can do that will

make a difference in Iran. Think about

how we deal with India and nuclear

weapons. This is a decision that is

looming ahead of us that will make a

difference for China and other countries

that have nuclear technology

about how we treat them in that situation.

And for heaven’s sake, when people

have suddenly discovered $3-a-gallon

gasoline and that we are addicted to

foreign oil, which is part of Iran’s

strength right now, maybe we in Congress

can forget the goofy energy bill

we passed and get serious about conservation,

alternative energy, increasing

fuel standards and giving full value

to the American public for our oil and

gas resources. These are things that we

can do now that will make a difference.

Let the administration do its job diplomatically;

provide oversight, but do

not go over the edge with this legislation.