Madam Speaker, I

thank the gentleman from Texas for

the point that he made that is well

taken.

With all due respect to my colleagues

who may have a difference of opinion

about this bill, I think that most

American people know that this administration

has already made a mess

of international relations with respect

to the illegal and unwarranted invasion

of Iraq.

We now know that Iraq did not have

weapons of mass destruction, that Iraq

was not cooperating with al Qaeda with

respect to 9/11, that Iraq had neither

the intention nor the capability of attacking

the United States, and yet we

took steps, starting with the policy of

regime change, that took us into a war

against Iraq that we clearly did not

have to initiate, and we clearly should

not be there.

Now, if you love the steps which took

this country into a war in Iraq, then

you are going to like this bill because

it does the same thing, which is why I

rise in opposition to it. This bill sounds

a lot like the Iraq Liberation Act of

1998, which many Members voted for in

good faith, not knowing later on it

would be evoked as a cause for the

prosecution of war against Iraq.

Overall this bill seriously inhibits

the ability of the United States Government

to use diplomacy, and diplomacy

is the strongest and most rational

tool we have to resolve the situation

regarding Iran’s nuclear program.

Instead I submit that this bill sets

our country on a path to war with Iran.

You can be sure the Government of

Iran will view this bill in this way.

First, the bill makes it official U.S.

policy to impose international sanctions

through the U.N. Security Council

for Iran’s ‘‘repeated breaches’’ of its

nuclear nonproliferation obligations.

Now, this sounds eerily familiar to

actions pursued in the lead-up to the

invasion of Iraq, and which, as we

know, were for appearances only. Similarly,

advocating international sanctions

against Iran through the Security

Council is for appearances only.

This administration has apparently

made up its mind it wants to attack

Iran. There is evidence that the U.S.

military is already inside Iran, and I

ask to include at this point in the debate

an article from the New Yorker by

Seymour Hirsch which asserts just

that.

Including this section in the bill that

I just referred to is simply an attempt

to cover the President’s slap in the face

of the international community with

respect to Iran.

Second, H.R. 282 also promotes regime

change in Iran as opposed to behavior

change, regime change as a solution

to the stand-off regarding Iran’s

nuclear program. By advocating regime

change, we indicate our priority is not,

in fact, to encourage Iran to adhere to

its nonproliferation treaty obligation,

but to remove the leadership in Iran

even if it were to make some concessions.

This communicates to the world

community that, to the U.S., Iran has

passed the point of no return, which

completely undermines any efforts towards

diplomacy and negotiations.

Furthermore, while this bill makes the

point of so-called not authorizing the

use of force against Iran, be assured

this is a stepping stone to the use of

force, the same way that the Iraq Liberation

Act was used as a stepping

stone.

Third, H.R. 282 supports antigovernment

advocates in Iran promoting

regime change. Now this is

highly problematic. While an important

amendment offered by my friend

Congressman BLUMENAUER was adopted

in this bill during markup to prohibit

U.S. assistance to groups that are on

the State Department’s list of terrorist

organizations or have been on the list

for the last 4 years, there are ways

around this.

For example, according to a Newsweek

article from February 14, 2005

that the U.S. has been recruiting individuals

from the MEK, a group currently

labeled as terrorists by the

State Department, who have agreed to

form a new group with the same mission

as the MEK, regime change in

Iraq.

I will insert this article from Newsweek

in the RECORD at this point.

These individuals have been conducting

military activity in Iran with

United States support. I just wanted to

remind everyone that the MEK was the

group responsible for the U.S. Embassy

takeover in Tehran in 1979. This group

also had a camp in Iraq where Osama

bin Laden’s first fighters were reportedly

trained. The MEK also trained and

supported Taliban fighters. Now we are

recruiting help from members of the

MEK which makes a total mockery of

the so-called war on terror.

Fourth, H.R. 282 states that it is U.S.

policy to focus attention to stopping

cooperation, stopping cooperation, between

Iran, Russia, China and Pakistan.

Considering Russia and China

have the strongest leverage with Iran,

yet are also opposed to Iran’s violations

of the Nonproliferation Treaty

obligations, the U.S. should try to

work with Russia and China to try to

find a path to diplomacy, not to isolate

Russia and China.

In the end we are only isolating ourselves

and setting our country on another

unilateral path of war. Our

troops are already extended in Iraq,

and they are in a vulnerable position.

Starting a war in Iran is the last thing

we should be doing.

I urge a vote against this dangerous

bill. Stop this unilateralism. Work

with diplomacy and work towards

peace.

I want to thank the

gentleman from Texas for his very

calm and patient approach to this. I

don’t think the American people want

our Nation set on a path of war with

Iran, and I believe the American people

are very concerned about the steps

which set us on a path to war against

Iraq. There are questions that have to

be answered by this administration before

Congress should rightfully even

vote on this.

You know, it has been reported recently

that U.S. troops are conducting

military operations in Iran. In Iran.

Now, if that is true, then apparently

the administration has made a decision

to commit U.S. military forces to a

unilateral conflict with Iran, even before

direct or indirect negotiations

with the Government of Iran have been

attempted, without U.N. support and

without authorization from this Congress.

First things first here. Where are we

right now? Are we already inside Iran?

According to Seymour Hersh, in the

New Yorker, there is evidence that suggests

that we are. The presence of U.S.

troops in Iran would constitute a hostile

act against that country.

Now, put that in the context of this

particular bill. At a time when diplomacy

is urgently needed, this bill

would escalate an international crisis

that is already percolating by the probability

or at least the possibility that

this administration has already committed

troops to Iran. What we are seeing

here is an undermining of any attempt

to negotiate with the Government

of Iran, and we are seeing the undermining

of any diplomatic efforts at

the U.N.

I said this before and I will say it

again. Any kind of saber rattling

against Iran puts our troops in Iraq at

jeopardy. The achievement of stability

in transition to Iraqi security control

will be compromised, reversing any

progress that has been cited by the administration.

I am sure that many Americans are

saying, you know, it is hard to believe

that the United States could have already

taken such an imprudent decision

as committing troops to Iran, but

we have had a number and variety of

sources confirming this. Over a week

ago Air Force Colonel Sam Gardner related

on CNN that the Iranian Ambassador

to the IAEA, Aliasghar

Soltaniyeh, reported to him that Iranians

have captured dissident forces

who have confessed to working with

U.S. troops in Iran. Earlier that week,

Seymour Hersh reported that a U.S.

source told him that U.S. Marines were

operating in the Baluchi, Azeri and

Kurdish regions of Iran.

Now, any kind of military deployment

in Iran would and should constitute

an urgent matter of national

significance. And I think that the administration

has an obligation to this

Congress, before Congress would vote

on this kind of a bill, to tell us exactly

what is going on with the activities of

American forces with regard to Iran.

Also, there are reports that the U.S.

is fomenting opposition and supporting

military operations in Iran among insurgent

groups and Iranian ethnic minority

groups, some of whom are operating

from Iraq. The Party for a Free

Life in Kurdistan, PEJAK, is one such

group, and the other group is called the

MEK, the Mujahedin e-Khalq. It is an

Iranian antigovernment group which

was listed as a terrorist group by the

State Department since 1997. An article

by Jim Lobe, published in antiwar.com,

on February 11, 2005, claims that the

Pentagon civilians in Vice President

CHENEY’s office are among those in the

U.S. Government who support MEK.

We also know from the Hersh article in

the New Yorker which confirms that

U.S. troops are establishing contact

with antigovernment ethnic minority

groups in Iran.

Now, U.S. support for insurgent activity

in Iran would not be tolerable.

The administration has claimed numerous

times that the object of the socalled

war on terrorism is to target

lawless insurgent groups. It would be a

breach of trust if the administration is

involved in this. Iran does not present

an imminent threat. Any setting the

stage for an attack on Iran is setting

the stage for a unilateral act of war.

I think that this country needs to

move very slowly anytime we are setting

the stage for conflict with another

nation. Don’t we have enough problems

in Iraq to clean up without setting the

stage for another conflict in Iran? We

must use diplomacy. We must use our

relationships with Russia and China

and other nations in order to avert a

conflict with Iran.