Madam Speaker, I rise today

in reluctant opposition to H.R. 282, the Iran

sanction bill. If this bill was only about imposing

targeted sanctions against the Iranian regime,

or companies and countries who invest

in Iran, I could support it. In fact, I voted in

favor of the original Iran sanctions bill when it

was approved in 1996, and I voted to extend

the bill when it came up for renewal in 2001.

Unfortunately, the bill on the floor today

does not just extend or expand sanctions

against Iran and those doing business with

that country; it also establishes a U.S. policy

in favor of regime change in Iran. Therefore,

I am extremely concerned that H.R. 282 is the

first step in taking our country down the same

misguided path that was taken with Iraq. The

Iranian exile groups that would likely benefit

from the provisions in this bill to support

groups seeking regime change in Iran eerily

echo Ahmad Chalabi’s Iraqi National Congress.

You may recall that Chalabi’s INC

worked with the Bush administration to mislead

Congress and the American people about

Iraq’s supposed weapons of mass destruction

in order to gain support for toppling Saddam

Hussein using U.S. forces.

It is my hope that as this bill continues

through the legislative process, it will be

amended to focus on sanctions and diplomacy

rather than U.S. sponsored regime change. I

believe that sanctions should be targeted at

foreign investment in Iran, which would force

Iranian leaders to choose between a growing

economy and their desire for nuclear weapons.

Sanctions could also be targeted at Iran’s

leaders by freezing their assets and imposing

travel bans. Targeted sanctions can ratchet up

the pressure on Iran’s leaders without harming

or alienating the Iranian people.