Madam Speaker, when Iran will

have a nuclear weapon is not the right question.

Rather, we need to focus on when Iran

will have the indigenous capability to produce

nuclear fissile materials. This is the point of no

return and should be our benchmark regarding

the urgency of addressing Iran’s behavior.

It is an undisputed fact Iran is pursuing nuclear

capabilities. It is a fact Iran is the world’s

must egregious exporter of terrorism. And we

all heard for ourselves when Iran’s president

threatened to ‘‘wipe Israel off the map’’ and

when Ayatollah Khamenei, just yesterday, told

another one of the world’s worst human rights

abusers, Sudan, that Iran would gladly transfer

nuclear technology. When one considers

these points together, it becomes clear how

important it is we act today.

Some residents of Connecticut’s Fourth

Congressional district have already expressed

concern to me about the United States’ consideration

of the use of force against Iran to

eliminate its nuclear weapons program and

end its state support of terrorism. Such action,

while not off the table, must be an absolute

last resort. That is why it is so critical our government

utilize the tools at our disposal including

economic and diplomatic sanctions and

the appropriate distribution of foreign aid as

suggested in this bill, to deter the threat Iran

poses to global security. It is also appropriate

for us impose pressure on the other nations of

the world who prop up the Iranian government

and the extremists at its helm by investing

heavily in that nation.

While I understand the concern the Administration

has expressed that by passing this bill

we are tying its hands to conduct foreign policy,

I would be more sympathetic if it were

doing more to enforce the laws Congress has

already passed.

The International Relations Committee

states in the report accompanying this legislation

that, ‘‘the laws which have been enacted,

as enforced, and other steps taken by current

and past Administrations, have proven inadequate

. . . Specifically with respect to ILSA,

the Committee is deeply dismayed that the

current Administration, like the prior Administration,

has not acted to sanction a single enterprise

for investing in Iran, but has delayed

its decisions on ‘alleged’ investments well past

the point of failing the ‘laugh test.’ ’’

Given the extreme rhetoric of Iranian President

Ahmadinejad, I do not expect this legislation

will bring an immediate change to Iran’s

aggressive and ill-advised march to acquire

nuclear capabilities. It does send an important

message, however, that the United States will

not stand by as Iran pursues its nuclear ambitions

and threatens international security.

The bottom line is, in defiance of its assurances

to the contrary, Iran remains committed

to a nuclear weapons program. The United

States must be unequivocal in its rejection of

these ambitions.

I urge support of this legislation and appreciate

the leadership of Chairman HYDE and

Ranking Member LANTOS to bring it to the

floor today.