Mr. Speaker,

Iran’s nuclear program is progressing

at a rapid pace, and absent swift action,

Iran could soon build a nuclear

bomb, putting the United States,

Israel, and the entire Middle East at

risk. The need for Congress to pass

strong and comprehensive sanctions

against Iran is urgent.

Iran currently possesses enough lowenriched

uranium to produce two nuclear

weapons upon further enrichment.

Last month, Iran began enriching

the stockpile of low-enriched uranium

to a level of 20 percent under the

guise of needing more highly enriched

uranium for medical purposes; yet the

truth is that Iran lacks the technical

know-how to turn 20 percent enriched

uranium into fuel rods needed to

produce medical isotopes.

Rather than meeting its medical

needs, this step only puts Iran that

much closer to having weapons-grade

fuel that could be turned into a nuclear

weapon. In fact, nuclear experts say

this level of enrichment represents 85

to 90 percent of the work needed to

produce weapons-grade fuel. Allowed to

continue on this course, Iran could potentially

complete the enrichment

process in a few months at a small facility,

according to former IAEA action

team member and physicist David

Albright.

The IAEA has also recently raised

new concerns about the military nature

of Iran’s nuclear program. In February,

the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency

issued a report that said Iran may

be working to develop a nuclear-armed

missile, adding further evidence that

Iran’s nuclear work is not for peaceful

purposes.

If Iran is successful in building a nuclear

weapon and fitting it into a missile,

the entire region will be at risk.

Iran already has missiles with a range

of more than 1,200 miles, which puts

Israel, Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan,

Pakistan, Egypt, and the Ukraine and

many other countries within striking

distance.

Advancements in Iranian technology

threaten nations further away from

Iran as well. Iran has launched a satellite

into space, demonstrating that it

has the technical capability that may

allow it to build ballistic missiles capable

of hitting American cities.

While nuclear proliferation is dangerous

in any context, there is greater

reason to be gravely concerned about a

nuclear-armed Iran. For years, Iran has

fought American presence in the Middle

East and has supported terrorist

groups that have targeted and killed

American troops. For example, American

officials believe Iran supported

the group behind the 1996 terrorist attack

on a U.S. military residence in

Saudi Arabia that killed 19 of our servicemen.

A nuclear-armed Iran would

surely put American troops serving in

the Middle East today at even greater

risk.

In addition, Iran’s leaders frequently

speak of a world without Israel. The

Iranian President has called for Israel

to be ‘‘wiped off the map.’’ If Iran gets

a nuclear weapon, its leader will have

the capability to do these hateful, destructive

things that they speak of.

Americans and Israelis around the

world would also be at likely greater

risk of a terrorist attack if Iran obtains

the bomb. Iran is already the

leading state sponsor of terrorism, funneling

money, weapons, and training to

terrorist groups, including Hezbollah,

Hamas, and other terrorist organizations.

These groups have goals and

ideologies inconsistent with our American

values. Emboldened by a nucleararmed

Iran, they may launch even

more frequent and deadly attacks on

innocent civilians.

Clearly, the consequences of a nuclear-

armed Iran are intolerable. To

stop Iran’s drive to a nuclear weapon,

we must act now and we must act decisively.

The House of Representatives

and the Senate have both passed legislation

to impose strong and comprehensive

sanctions on Iran. The Iran

Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act and

the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability,

and Divestment Act target

Iran’s reliance on foreign suppliers

to meet its fuel needs. Although Iran

sits on top of a wealth of oil and natural

gas, it lacks the ability to turn

much of that oil into gasoline. Consequently,

Iran imports 40 percent of

its gasoline needs.

The Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions

Act and the Comprehensive Iran

Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment

Act offer the best prospect of

compelling Iran to give up its pursuit

of nuclear weapons. Congressional leaders

must quickly resolve the differences

between the House and Senate

versions of these bills while keeping

the teeth of the sanctions intact so the

President can sign a final bill into law.

At the same time, the administration

and like-minded allies should impose

multilateral sanctions now while also

pressing reluctant nations to agree to

strong and comprehensive sanctions at

the United Nations. The administration

must also enforce current law and

levy sanctions against companies that

violate our laws.

Time is not on our side. The sooner

strong and comprehensive sanctions

are applied on Iran the greater chance

we have of preventing a nuclear-armed

Iran, saving the lives of many, and enhancing

the security of our own and

that of our allies in the region.