Mr. Speaker, I

thank the ranking Democrat on the

Committee on International Relations

for yielding me time, even though I

know he does not support my bill.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the

gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN),

the distinguished chairman of

the Committee on International Relations,

for both calling the bill up for

consideration as well as for his support

here today.

First let me say that as the sponsor

of the bill, I recognize the importance

of the International Atomic Energy

Agency and its role in ensuring the

safety of nuclear sites around the

world. In recent months we have witnessed

their struggle to carry out inspections

in Iraq.

This bill, however, will not affect the

IAEA’s safeguard program. The bill

does not seek to withhold any funds to

IAEA’s safeguard programs in Iran or

elsewhere. The only funds affected by

this bill are voluntary, not assessed,

contributions to the IAEA’s Technical

Assistance and Cooperation Fund for

Iran.

Prior to 1994, U.S. law required the

withholding of proportional IAEA voluntary

funds to all countries on our

list of terrorist states, and, despite the

change in the law, the administration

continued to withhold those funds for

two more years, until 1996.

What this bill does is require the administration

to reinstate proportional

withholding of IAEA’s voluntary funds

for Iran. It also requires our Secretary

of State to undertake a comprehensive

review of all IAEA programs and

projects in other states which sponsor

international terrorism to determine if

the IAEA is sponsoring any other

projects which conflict with U.S. nuclear

nonproliferation and safety goals.

As it is, since the IAEA’s inception

more than $52 million for the Technical

Assistance and Cooperation Fund has

gone to countries on the U.S. list of

states which sponsor terrorism. The

United States is the largest supporter

of the IAEA. We provide them with

more than 25 percent of their annual

budget.

In the Technical Assistance and Cooperation

Fund we contribute in addition

32 percent, or $16 million annually,

in voluntary funds, and it is from those

funds that the IAEA intends to provide

$1.5 million to assist in the development

of the Bushehr power plant between

1997 and 1999.

Now, the Clinton Administration has

publicly stated its opposition to Iran’s

development of nuclear reactors and its

concern about the development of the

Bushehr nuclear power plant. In Senate

testimony last year, Deputy Assistant

Secretary Bob Einhorn explained,

In essence, this technical cooperation

assistance is in fact helping them move

up that learning curve that the Assistant

Secretary spoke about. Given

Iran’s historic support for terrorism,

coupled with the fact that Iran boasts

immense oil and natural gas reserves,

and the seismic activity near Bushehr

which just recently took place, we

must question Tehran’s motives for

constructing expensive nuclear reactors.

Moreover, the development of the nuclear

reactors has been an economic

nightmare for the Iranians. Clearly

Iran does not need additional energy

sources, nor is nuclear energy an economic

choice for Iran.

So we need to ask a few basic questions.

Given Iran’s test last week of a

medium range ballistic missile and reports

that Iran is seeking technology

for a long range missile, is it responsible

to take Iran’s word that it is also

not developing nuclear weapons?

Despite the IAEA’s presence in Iraq,

we were surprised to learn of that

country’s extensive chemical and biological

warfare programs. Why do we

trust Iran?

Given the recent trial and imprisonment

of the Mayor of Tehran, a political

ally of President Khatami, do we

really think President Khatami can

control extremist elements in Iran?

And, lastly, does it make sense for

the United States and U.S. taxpayers

to provide any kind of support for the

construction of a nuclear reactor which

we clearly and justifiably oppose, or

any type of technical assistance in the

operation of such a plant that we do

not want to see? The answer clearly

must be no.

This bill seeks to protect the U.S.

taxpayers from assisting countries like

Iran who sponsor international terrorism,

denounce the United States, and

seek to develop weapons of mass destruction

which may be used against us

or our allies. It is ludicrous for the

United States to support in any way a

plant, even indirectly, which could

pose a threat to the United States and

to stability in the Middle East.

I urge my colleagues to support this

legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I

thank the gentleman for yielding time

to me.

First of all, I respectfully clearly disagree

with my distinguished colleague,

the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HAMILTON),

although I respect fully his

thoughtful, as always, analysis of the

issues from his perspective.

I do want to not let a few things go

unbalanced. Number one is it has been

said that the safeguards are at risk

here. Our contributions, our mandatory

contributions to the IAEA is

about safeguards, and those go untouched,

untouched by this bill. So

whatever we are providing by way of

safeguards we will continue to provide.

What we do not want to see, and I

think even the administration would

agree with my distinguished colleague,

the gentleman from Indiana, in his

analysis of maybe we should permit nuclear

reactors for civilian use, we have

the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Mr.

Einhorn, saying that this is not a

project that we want to see built. This

is not a project that we want to see

built. He talks about the learning

curve.

In essence, this is more than about

sending a message to Iran. This is

about slowing down, in any possible

way, that learning curve that gets

them to the point to put this reactor

project online.

Also, we cannot believe that when

the United States provides over 25 percent

of the IAEA’s budget, and 32 percent

in addition, of its funds, that $1.5

million is going to make a dramatic

difference to the IAEA, and that the

IAEA is going to collapse, or that the

U.S. role in the IAEA is going to be significantly

diminished. I do not believe

that that is possible.

We cannot have it both ways. Either

this assistance is of value to Iran, in

which case we should be looking not to

provide assistance that is of value, or

it is of no value, in which case we

should not be spending our money on

it.

The fact of the matter is that President

Hatemi may be the hope we have

for an Iran that is democratic in the

future. He may be the hope that we

have for a democratic Iran in the future,

but he does not have the power.

Recent analysis, statements by the administration,

in fact say that whether

or not he continues in power, that the

missiles that we talked about today

and that were recently tested in Iran

will be in fact consummated.

The question is, do we want those

missiles, as dangerous as they already

are, to carry a nuclear warhead, have

the potential to carry a nuclear warhead?

Do we in any way want to assist

those countries that are on our list of

terrorist states in helping them in that

learning curve? I would suggest we

clearly do not want to have U.S. taxpayer

dollars for that purpose.

This is not about safety. Safety is

part of our regular program. We will

continue to provide safety.

This is still continuing to have a

major U.S. role in the IAEA, but it is

an attempt to slow down the learning

curve, not have any U.S. assistance, involuntary

assistance to what the administration

witnesses before the committee,

when I questioned them, said,

yes, we are providing assistance that in

fact helps in an operational nature.

Why would we provide assistance in

an operational nature to something

that we do not want to see operate, to

something that the administration has

testified against? If this is unsafe, then

why did the administration after 1994,

when it was no longer the law, continue

to withhold funds for 2 years?

Clearly, during that period of time, if

the argument is true, it could be said

that it was unsafe to withhold funds.

This is not about safety. It is about

having the United States not participate

with its taxpayer dollars to assist

a terrorist state that we may have

hopes for that will be democratic in the

future but that is not now, and having

a learning curve that permits a nuclear

reactor to be developed.