Mr. Speaker,

in 1953, the United States was already

competing in an international

arms race. Recognizing that the danger

of a buildup of nuclear weapons posed

considerable, risk to the United States,

President Eisenhower proposed not

merely eliminating the use of nuclear

technology for military purposes, but a

mechanism to remove nuclear technology

from the hands of soldiers and

place it in the hands of those who could

adapt it to the art of peace. The entity

formed to accomplish this task was the

International Atomic Energy Agency.

Under the auspices of the IAEA, nuclear

technology has made substantial

contributions to sustainable development

across many sectors, including

energy, health, agriculture and hydrology.

It has also provided a platform for

nuclear states to verify and monitor

each other’s compliance with nonproliferation

treaties. This is why I oppose

H.R. 3743, the so-called Iran Nuclear

Proliferation Prevention Act of

1998.

Cutting U.S. contributions to the

IAEA will not advance any legitimate

United States interest, but it will increase

risk to the United States and to

civilians living in the Middle East.

Without IAEA supervision, Iran will

certainly turn to the Russians for help

in constructing nuclear reactors.

Would we really prefer that Iran’s reactors

be constructed by those responsible

for Chernobyl? No offense to the

Russians, but that would not even be in

their own security interests.

If the IAEA withdraws from assisting

Iran, as the sponsors of this bill would

have it do, there will be even fewer organizations

interacting with Iran. I

would suggest that this is precisely the

wrong course of action. The past few

months have brought tentative first

steps toward a more engaging relationship

with Iran. We should not now push

them away. We should try to find

whatever positive opportunities there

exists. I know the difficulties, but we

need to support the moderates in Iran

and not to give support, unintentionally,

but in reality, to the most extreme

elements. This bill, in fact, will

give ammunition to the most extreme

elements just as these kinds of resolutions

directed toward Cuba, only serve

to strengthen Fidel Castro’s hold.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, we are undeniably

subjecting the IAEA’s actions to

domestic politics. I suppose that we

should not be surprised, because in the

same way that U.N. dues are held hostage

every year to family planning and

abortion debates, IAEA funding is now

fair game for those that may disagree

with its programs in Iran or Cuba or

other nations who are fair game to political

sanctions.

This is an irresponsible and dangerous

road to go down, Mr. Speaker.

Nuclear safety is simply too important

to be held hostage to the political

whims of Congress. This Congress

should vote against this resolution.