Mr. Speaker, I strongly oppose

any move to initiate further sanctions on Iran.

Sanctions are acts of war, and expanding

sanctions on Iran serves no purpose other

than preparing the American people for an

eventual attack on Iran. This is the same pattern

we saw in the run up to the war on Iraq:

Congress passes legislation calling for regime

change, sanctions are imposed, and eventually

we are told that only an attack will solve

the problem. We should expect the same tragic

result if we continue down this path. I urge

my colleagues to reconsider.

I oppose economic sanctions for two very

simple reasons. First, they don’t work as effective

foreign policy. Time after time, from Cuba

to China to Iraq, we have failed to unseat despotic

leaders or change their policies by refusing

to trade with the people of those nations.

If anything, the anti-American sentiment

aroused by sanctions often strengthens the

popularity of such leaders, who use America

as a convenient scapegoat to divert attention

from their own tyranny. History clearly shows

that free and open trade does far more to liberalize

oppressive governments than trade

wars. Economic freedom and political freedom

are inextricably linked—when people get a

taste of goods and information from abroad,

they are less likely to tolerate a closed society

at home. So sanctions mostly harm innocent

citizens and do nothing to displace the governments

we claim as enemies.

Second, sanctions simply hurt American industries,

particularly agriculture. Every market

we close to our nation’s farmers is a market

exploited by foreign farmers. China, Russia,

the Middle East, North Korea, and Cuba all

represent huge markets for our farm products,

yet many in Congress favor current or proposed

trade restrictions that prevent our farmers

from selling to the billions of people in

these areas.

We must keep in mind that Iran has still not

been found in violation of the Non-Proliferation

Treaty. Furthermore, much of the information

regarding Iran’s nuclear program is coming to

us via thoroughly discredited sources like the

MeK, a fanatical cult that is on our State Department’s

terror list. Additionally, the same

discredited neo-conservatives who pushed us

into the Iraq war are making similarly exaggerated

claims against Iran. How often do these

‘‘experts’’ have to be proven wrong before we

start to question their credibility?

It is said that we non-interventionists are

somehow ‘‘isolationists’’ because we don’t

want to interfere in the affairs of foreign nations.

But the real isolationists are those who

demand that we isolate certain peoples overseas

because we disagree with the policies of

their leaders. The best way to avoid war, to

promote American values, and to spread real

freedom and liberty is to engage in trade and

contacts with the rest of the world as broadly

as possible.

I urge my colleagues to reconsider this

counterproductive and dangerous move toward

further sanctions on Iran.