Madam Speaker,

on Wednesday, the House Committee

on Foreign Affairs will hold a

long-overdue markup of the Iran Refined

Petroleum Sanctions Act. Some

of our colleagues are focusing exclusively

on Iran’s nuclear ambition, as it

was the nuclear program in itself that

was the catalyst for the concern.

But if Iran were comprised of a responsible,

democratic government,

would we be as apprehensive about

their nuclear activities? Of course not.

But we are talking about an Iranian regime

which just this year conducted

two missile tests and continues to

work on the range of its missiles and

on enabling them to carry a nuclear

payload. We are talking about a regime

whose leaders throughout the years

have made it abundantly clear that

they will stop at nothing to destroy the

Jewish State of Israel. We are talking

about an Iran which for nearly three

decades has been designated by our

U.S. Department of State as the

world’s leading state sponsor of global

terrorism. The clerical regime is fomenting

bloodshed and promoting

chaos in the West Bank and Gaza and

Lebanon and the Persian Gulf, as well

as in Iraq, where it is actively assisting

in the murder of our U.S. soldiers.

On the battlefields of Afghanistan,

Iran is also playing a deadly subversive

role. As early as 2002, allegations

emerged that Iran was supporting insurgent

groups in Afghanistan, including

its former archenemy, the Taliban.

However, the first significant report of

Iranian weapons in Afghanistan came

in April of 2007. Then-chairman of the

Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Peter

Pace, announced: ‘‘We have intercepted

weapons in Afghanistan headed for the

Taliban that were made in Iran.’’

Since 2007, several large shipments

have been seized near the Iranian border.

U.S. officials say that Iranianmade

weapons have been found in Afghanistan

and used by Taliban-led insurgents.

These weapons have included

Tehran’s signature roadside bomb, the

explosively formed penetrator, EFP,

AK–47s, as well as C–4 plastic explosives

and mortars.

On August 29 of this year, just a few

days before General McChrystal submitted

his request to this administration,

Afghan and NATO forces uncovered

a weapons collection in Herat with

EFPs, Iranian-made rockets and dozens

of blocks of Iranian C–4 plastic explosives.

In the August 2009 declassified,

leaked version of his assessment, General

Stanley McChrystal stated that:

‘‘Iran plays an ambiguous role in Afghanistan,

providing developmental assistance

and political support to the

Afghan government while the Iranian

Qods force is reportedly training fighters

for certain Taliban groups and providing

other forms of military assistance

to insurgents.’’

We cannot allow Iran to undermine

U.S. efforts and kill our soldiers in Afghanistan.

We cannot allow Iran to return

Afghanistan to the status of a

failed state and pave the way for attacks

against the West using Afghanistan

as its launching pad. We cannot

allow Iran to develop nuclear weapons

capabilities which threaten the United

States and our allies.

If we are to be vigilant in protecting

the lives of our men and women—military

and civilian—in Afghanistan, we

must increase the pressure on the Iranian

regime and impose immediate

sanctions on Iran. This should be our

first option.

We don’t have the luxury of time, to

wait for an eventual Iranian response

to U.S. diplomatic overtures. We cannot

wait for the U.N. Security Council

to come around. We cannot wait for

our European and other allies to decide

to do the right thing. The United

States must lead by example. It is time

to cut off the Iranian regimes’s economic

lifeline. As such, we should not

stop at this week’s Foreign Affairs

Committee markup.

I urge the majority to bring the

strongest possible form of the Iran Refined

Petroleum Sanctions Act to the

floor next week for a vote, followed by

quick Senate action so that it gets to

the President’s desk before the end of

the year. We must do this now.