Burton:

Mr. BURTON. I thank the gentlelady, our ranking member from

Florida, for her generosity, I really do. I think table tennis and basketball

is great, good relationships with anybody is going to be,

hopefully, an improvement. We have talked about economic sanctions,

I don’t know since 1996, and back in 1979, we put sanctions

on them and sanctions simply have not really generated much success.

You talked about North Korea. Our former U.N. Ambassador

disagrees with you on the progress that has been made with North

Korea because North Korea has lied and lied and lied, and he

thinks they’re still progressing with their nuclear program. You

talked about Libya, and Libya turning around because of diplomatic

pressure. It wasn’t because of that, it was because we

bombed the home of Muammar Kaddafi and he saw the light. I am

not indicating we should go to war with Iran. I think we should

apply every kind of diplomatic and economic pressure on them as

possible. But it has to be across the board with every country in

the world. And right now that is not the case, even with the United

States.

The information that we received today, that we have been giving

economic assistance or doing, trading with Iran during the time

that we say we should be cutting off and putting pressure on them

doesn’t make sense to me. I understand it is the government we

are after and not the people. But nevertheless, if the people are

upset, they are going to put pressure on the government, and so

pressure on the people over there by cutting off trade with them

in certain areas that they want would also be very beneficial. And

you talk about their ability to develop nuclear weapons and how it

is down the road some time, nobody really knows. Some people say

years, some people say 5, some people say 10 years. They had 3,000

centrifuges producing nuclear material we know of and now they

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are coming up with 6,300 more centrifuges. That does not sound

look a country that wants to negotiate an agreement.

And it really bothers me that we don’t sound a little bit stronger.

Nobody wants to go to war. We had enough problems over in Iraq

and Afghanistan and our troops are stretched pretty thin and we

don’t want another conflict. But there has to be extreme pressure

exerted by the United States and our friends on all of the people

that are dealing with Iran. And right now I don’t see that. Now

Putin said, ‘‘We are going to do what we can,’’ and they have made

some overtures that they were going to work with us because they

wanted the nuclear fuel sent back to them after it was used but

in November 2007, less than a year ago, they signaled a change,

signaled a change, signaled disagreement with further pressure on

Iran and they began taking steps to fuel the reactor at Bushehr on

September 17, 2007. It began shipping fuel so it doesn’t sound like

they are really in total agreement with us on putting economic

pressure.

France is not doing everything it can. A number of our allies are

not doing everything they can. So when you give this presentation—

and I thought it was very good, Ambassador Burns—it

troubles me that we are getting kind of a semi-rosy picture about

this, you know. Their general in charge, General Salmi, the head

of the Air Force command on the elite Revolutionary Guard said,

‘‘Our hands are always on the trigger, and our missiles are ready

for launch.’’

And they tested these missiles the other day to show the world

they have them. Now if they are able to develop a nuclear war

head within a year, and we don’t know if that is the case or not,

but we know they are sure creating more centrifuges and they are

creating more nuclear grade material—at least that is what they

are working on. We have got to be prepared for that. And we can’t

sit back, in my opinion, and just say, Well, if we put economic pressure

on them, if we do this or do that it is going to change things.

It ain’t going to change it unless we put extreme pressure on them

and that has to be uniform across the world. And so far, I just don’t

see that. And so I think that the United States’ signals should be—

and if they sink some ships in the Strait of Hormuz, 20 percent of

the world’s crude is not going to be able to get to market, probably

40 percent of the energy we get is going to be cut off, or at least

short term loss and we are not going to be able to produce electricity

and gasoline for our cars for a lot of people in this country.

I am not trying to paint a real bad picture. I am just trying to

paint it the way I believe it really is, and it seems to me it is extremely

important that we level with the American people, with

France, with Russia, and with everybody else and say, Look, we

cannot allow Iran to develop a nuclear weapons capability. Number

one, they have got the missiles; number two, and I wouldn’t use

Korea as an example, unless we are actually sure they are compliant.

Mr. BURTON. Thank you.

Once again, I want to thank the gentlelady, our ranking member

from Florida, for being so kind. It is very rare that I agree with

Mr. Ackerman; I mean, maybe 1 percent of the time. But I agree

with him.

Mr. BURTON. Never mind. Never mind.

Exports have been going on. You didn’t mention GE. If you watch

O’Reilly, you will find that subsidiaries of GE and GE itself have

been doing an awful lot of business with Iran for a long time. That

is a major corporation here in America, GE. A lot of the people in

this country own stock in GE. And yet we haven’t been putting

pressure on them to stop doing business with Iran when we say we

are imposing every kind of sanction possible. The amount of business

we have been doing with them, with Iran, has increased twentyfold

in the last 7, 8 years. Now, you know, I know it is cigarettes

and brassieres and other stuff like that, but nevertheless trade is

going on. And there is also some important trade going on with

companies like GE. And I can’t understand why we continue to indicate

we are working real hard to put pressure on Iran, when we

are obviously not doing it ourselves, and we are telling the rest of

the world that we are and they ought do it, but we are not setting

the example. And I think they all know that.

I wish you would explain, though, you know, I want to talk about

one more thing real quickly. One of the big issues in America today

is the energy crisis. Gasoline is over $4 a gallon. And a lot of us

have been talking about energy independence and drilling here in

America off the Continental Shelf, 50 miles off beyond the horizon

so people can’t even see it, and ANWR, and using coal shale. Two

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or three ships sunk in the Straits of Hormuz, and, as I said, 20 percent

of the world’s oil supply, crude oil, ain’t going to get there, and

we are not ready for that.

And the administration—and I have always been a pretty big

supporter of President Bush—the administration and the State Department

and our Defense Department need to get together and

really send a strong signal to the rest of the world and inform the

United States of what is at stake, because if things get out of control

over there, and they very well might—I mean, Israel just sent

up a signal; Iran just sent up a signal. If things get out of control,

the energy supply for the rest of the world could be at real, real

jeopardy, and we have to do something about that. And I don’t

think that the message is getting clear to the American people

what is at stake. And it is not getting clear to the rest of our

friends and allies, who we want to work with, to put pressure on

them.

If pressure doesn’t work, if economic pressure doesn’t work, if

diplomatic pressure doesn’t work, what is the other alternative but

to stop them building nuclear weapons? And Israel is letting everybody

in the world know that they are prepared to do that. That is

why they had that exercise the other day.

So I just hope—and you can respond to this. I have only got a

couple minutes left. I would like to know what the State Department,

the Defense Department, and the President are going to do—

and don’t raise your hand out there, lady, or we will have you removed.

You can sit there and listen, but don’t raise your hand. I

would like to know what the State Department, the Defense Department,

and the administration is going to do to make sure that

the message is getting clear to everybody what is at stake. And I

will yield to you.

Mr. BURTON. Let me just once again reiterate the importance to

America if things get out of control over there. We get about 20–

25 percent of our oil from Venezuela, and President Chavez has

been working with Iran. They have got nonstop flights back and

forth from Venezuela to Tehran every single day. And if they start

working together, and we have an oil cut-off over there because of

a conflict, this country is going to be in huge trouble. The rest of

the world as well, but this country, which uses so much energy, is

really going to be in trouble. And we are not prepared to use alternative

fuels.

And so I would just like to say to my colleagues as we run out

of time, I hope everybody will think about that, because we really

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need to move toward energy independence, and we need to do it

quickly.

If you have any other comments, you are welcome.