Mr. Chairman, I rise to offer an amendment to attach to

this bill, the Sail Only If Scanned Act, the SOS Act. This act was

developed by me and Mr. Oberstar, with the support of Minority Leader

Pelosi, to address the issue of shipping container security.

This amendment would require that every shipping container be scanned

with the most modern technology and sealed with a tamper-proof seal

before it is placed on a ship bound for the United States so that we

can have absolute assurances that no nuclear weapons or radiological

bombs are being brought into our ports.

Only 1 percent of the more than 11 million shipping containers

destined for the United States are scanned before they are loaded on a

ship overseas. This is unacceptable.

The United States cannot own or control the entire global trade

network, but we can and should ensure the security of every single

container destined for this country. The controversy over the proposed

Dubai Ports World deal has woken up the American people and made them

think about how critical our ports are for national security. But who

owns the ports and who operates the ports, while important, is far less

important than what comes into the ports.

Ninety-five percent of all of the 11 million, 40-foot boxes that come

into our ports are uninspected, not scanned. Not scanned by x-rays, not

examined for radioactivity before they get here. Any one of them could

have an atomic bomb or radiological bomb. That is unacceptable.

If there is a bomb inside a container, it is too late to discover

that in Newark or Miami or Los Angeles. Reading the manifest is not

enough. Having shipments only from low-risk shippers is not enough,

because any one container could have a catastrophic bomb inside it.

My amendment is quite simple. It would require that all containers

must be scanned using the best available technology, including scanning

for radiation and density before they are loaded on a ship bound for

the United States.

The scans must be submitted to U.S. Government officials for review

before the container is loaded, and the containers must be sealed with

a device that indicates if the container is tampered with in transit,

and automatically notifies U.S. officials of any breach before the

containers come within a few hundred miles of the United States.

Steve Flynn of the Council of Foreign Relations and a port security

expert wrote in the New York Times a few days ago: ``This is not a pie-

in-the-sky idea. Since January 2005, every single container entering

the truck gates of two of the world's busiest container terminals in

Hong Kong has passed through scanning and radiation detection devices.

Images of the containers' contents are then stored on computers so they

can be scrutinized by American or other customs authorities almost in

real-time. Customs inspectors can then issue orders not to load a

container that worries them. The Department of Homeland Security has

greeted this private sector initiative with only tepid interest.''

Mr. Chairman, we cannot simply stand by while the Bush administration

twiddles its thumbs and fails to secure the movement of containers

before they reach the United States. The terminal operations in Hong

Kong prove we can scan 100 percent of the containers without disrupting

the economy or the flow of goods. The cost to scan a container is

$6.50.

The entire cost to amortize all of the equipment is $20 a container.

Given that it costs $4,000 to ship a container across the Pacific if

there is between 50 and $500,000 worth of merchandise in each

container, a $20 cost is trivial.

Congress needs to make 100 percent scanning the policy of the United

States. This amendment would do that. I realize, Mr. Chairman, this

amendment may not be allowed under the rules of the House.

I fully expect the Republicans to raise a point of order against it.

I would note, however, that the underlying bill includes a provision

blocking the proposed takeover of U.S. terminals by Dubai Ports World.

I support that provision.

But if we can include language on the Dubai deal in this bill, then

certainly the Republican majority should allow us to include language

that secures shipping containers and prevents atomic bombs from going

off in port cities.

At the very least, they could easily waive the rule and allow a vote

on this amendment. If they care more about these rules that they waive

every day than they do about protecting the American public from

nuclear bombs and shipping containers, I truly fear for our safety.

Mr. Chairman, I urge all my colleagues to support this amendment to

attach the Sail Only if Scanned Act, the SOS Act, to this bill. The

only way we will adequately protect our citizens is if the Republicans

in Congress join with us to force the Bush administration to take

seriously the issue of container security and make sure that every

single container is scanned and sealed with a tamper-proof seal before

being placed on a ship bound for the United States.