Mr. President, the

international community’s effort to

press Iran to suspend its nuclear enrichment

has been virtually grounded

as of late and there does not seem to be

a way out. This deadlock is of great

concern to me—particularly because of

the threat Iran poses to our national

security strategy but also because I do

not trust this administration to make

the right choices when it comes to our

safety and security.

As a known sponsor of international

terrorism, and in light of President

Ahmadinejad’s belligerent statements

calling for Israel to be ‘‘wiped off the

map,’’ we must redouble our efforts to

ensure Iran is no longer allowed to violate

international treaties, does not develop

nuclear weapons, and does not

become any more of a threat to our national

security than it already is.

History has taught us that we cannot

ignore the stated intent of those who

seek to destroy other nations. A nuclear

Iran would be a grave threat to

the region, to Israel, and to the entire

international community but that does

not mean we should act rashly or act

alone. Indeed, recent history has also

shown that we are at our strongest—

and most secure—when we are part of a

strong multilateral team.

And yet, the Bush administration’s

saber-rattling flies in the face of any

effort to legitimately build consensus

for effective dealings with Iran. Our allies

at the United Nations have worked

with us in the past to support a resolution

sanctioning Iran but they may not

be willing to work with us again if

these confrontations in the Persian

Gulf become habitual occurrences.

Such threats are stunningly counterproductive

as they embolden Iranian

hardliners to dig in their heels, undermine

our multilateral commitments,

and jeopardize our national security

significantly.

Iran’s ability to sniff out and exploit

fissures within the international community

and use it to their advantage

should not be underestimated. Knowing

this, it is in the interest of our national

security to ensure there is

strong unanimity among our allies at

the United Nations. Critical to this effort

is cooperation from Russia and

China. To ensure they are on board,

this administration must prioritize robust

diplomacy with these two countries

to ensure they are on board and

engaged. Without them, there can be

no real headway.

Just last month an International

Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA, report

said that Iran has not suspended its enrichment

activities and we must take

this claim very seriously. We must

work with our allies to take concerted,

decisive action to break this stalemate.

The Security Council must speak

with one voice and send a clear signal

that continued defiance of the international

community will not be tolerated.

It is essential that all U.N. member

states and the international community,

more generally, continue to condemn

the violent and defiant rhetoric

of Iran’s President. If his aggressive

words go unchecked it could signal approval

of the Iranian regime’s determination

to undermine its international

obligations.

This Congress can also take critical

steps to stop or slow Iran’s nuclear enrichment,

but we will not be effective

in doing so unless we acknowledge that

the United States must be in lock-step

with the international community if

we are to overcome decades of mistrust

and ongoing threats to our national security.