Mr. President, I

rise to support this legislation. I particularly

wish to thank the majority

leader for his steadfast and very strong

support for this important piece of legislation.

The majority leader has recognized

the serious threat that the proliferation

of ballistic missile capacity

and weapons of mass destruction to

rogue nations, such as Iran, represents

to our forces in the Middle East, to our

allies in the Middle East, and in the

not-too-distant future—maybe real

soon—to our allies in Europe, and,

heaven protect us, to the United States

of America, to our homeland.

We have talked a lot in this Chamber,

and outside, about national missile

defense. We crossed a bridge on this

issue last year, I think, with the bipartisan

legislation sponsored initially by

the majority leader’s colleague from

Mississippi, Senator COCHRAN.

But if we are now involved in an effort

to develop a national missile defense,

does it not make sense to use

whatever authority we have to deter,

to retard, and, if possible, to prevent a

rogue nation, such as Iran, from developing

the capacity to strike us and our

allies?

This is to me the other side of the

American effort to protect us and our

people and our allies from what, in the

years ahead, I am afraid will be the single

most serious threat to our security,

which is, the proliferation of ballistic

missile capacity and weapons of mass

destruction.

The majority leader has been the

leader on the bill we are considering

today, and I have been privileged to

work with him on it. I appreciate the

broad bipartisan support we have on

this measure. As the majority leader

said, this legislation could have been

stronger. It started out stronger when

we introduced the initial legislation,

but in the process of trying to get

something done, we modified it.

It still makes an important statement

to the world about the steadfast

commitment of the Congress of the

United States to do everything we can

to diminish the threat of weapons of

mass destruction carried by ballistic

missiles. It sends a message to our

friends in Russia about the intensity of

our concern about their part in helping

Iran develop weapons of mass destruction.

I believe it sends a message to the

Administration of the United States

about the broad bipartisan support in

Congress for tougher actions against

any nation, including Russia—with

whom we have a developing relationship—

if they are supporting Iran in the

development of this destructive capacity.

A reporter stopped me earlier today

on the way to the Chamber and asked:

Aren’t you worried about the effect

that passage of the Iran Nonproliferation

Act will have on the Government

of Russia or in the Presidential elections

coming in Russia? My answer, directly,

is no. But, obviously, we are all

concerned and hopeful that the forces

of reform will take hold in Russia and

bring stability and progress to that

country. But our first concern has to

be not what happens in Russia, but

what we can do to protect the security

of the American people in this country

and our forces abroad from the threat

of weapons of mass destruction carried

by ballistic missiles. If the Russian

Government will be true to its own

statements about working against proliferation,

then there will be no problem

for Russia as a result of the passage

of this legislation.

My colleagues have talked about

changes in Iran. The developments are

most remarkable in Iran. There is a

whole new generation of Iranians and,

if I am not mistaken, more than half of

it was not of age when the extreme Islamic

revolution, led by Ayatollah

Khomeini, occurred in the late 1970s. It

is a generation that appears to want

reform, better lives for themselves,

freedom, better relations with the

West, and better relations with the

United States of America.

Remarkably, in the midst of the very

authoritarian government that came

into power in the late 1970s and has

been there since, the Iranians have

continued to have elections.

Here is the power of the people at

work again. Last Friday, apparently,

more than four out of five eligible voters

came out to vote in Iran. I say, parenthetically,

what an embarrassment

it should be to us to recall that in 1998,

the last time we had a congressional

election—our own, if you will, parliamentary

election—36 percent of the

eligible voters came out to vote; only

one-third, as compared to more than

four-fifths in Iran. They are apparently

expressing very broad support for the

forces of reform.

Does that diminish the concern we

have about what Iran is doing? Not immediately,

unfortunately. Because the

power is still exercised by a small

group of leaders at the top. Not by the

reform-oriented, moderate President

Khatami, but by the religious leaders

at the top who still exercise and control

the agencies of foreign policy, defense

policy, and intelligence policy,

who still have the power to override

and veto any of the acts, even of this

new reform Parliament.

The focus of our concern about Iran

is that it has been our most implacable

foe in the recent past and that it has

been the single most intransigent supporter

of terrorism against this Nation

and our allies, a reality that remains

unchanged.

The thought that weapons of mass

destruction, carried by ballistic missiles,

would be in the possession of this

nation, effectively still controlled by

this small group of enemies of the

United States, should fill us with the

most profound fear and anxiety.

It is from that fear and anxiety that

this bill emerges. It is not the first

time we have expressed our concerns

about these developments in Iran. In

previous enactments we have given the

Administration the tools to try to address

this problem, specifically in the

Arms Export Control Act and in the

Iran-Iraq Sanctions Act. But we were

not satisfied with those measures and

the way they were being used, so we

passed the Iran Missile Proliferation

Sanctions Act in 1997, a measure similar

to this legislation we are considering

today.

Unfortunately, the President chose

to veto that legislation. That is why

H.R. 1883 was introduced and why it

passed the House overwhelmingly, 419–

0, with every Member of both parties

who voted supporting it.

Since 1997, our concern about the

problem has not diminished. It is widely

and reliably reported—this is why

we are back with this legislation—that

entities and people in Russia continue

to provide both technology and assistance

to Iran to build these dangerous

weapons. Iran has made worrying

progress on its missile program, as the

majority leader indicated and as the

intelligence reports, classified as they

are, which are available to our colleagues,

clearly state.

I cite also an unclassified source. According

to the Congressional Research

Service, with help from Russians and

others, notably North Koreans and Chinese,

Iran has produced a Shahab 3 ballistic

missile with a range of 800 miles

and tested it; on July 22, 1998, to be

exact. Although the first test was apparently

unsuccessful, the Congressional

Research Service reports that

the Shahab 3 is now thought to be operational

and in production. There also

have been credible reports that Iran is

in the process of developing yet another,

more advanced missile, the

Shahab 4, which would have a range of

up to 2,000 miles, more than double the

range of the Shahab 3. We have some

basis for believing the Iranians are now

working on intercontinental ballistic

missiles.

If combined with weapons of mass destruction,

these existing Iranian missiles

can threaten American forces and

our allies and friends in the Middle

East and, soon after that, as indicated,

our forces and allies throughout Europe

and, of course, eventually, the

American homeland itself. This is a

frightening prospect, given Iran’s large

chemical weapons program and aggressive

attempt to acquire a nuclear weapons

capability. The American Government

has made it clear that Iran is attempting—

in this case largely with

China’s help—to reach self-sufficiency

in the manufacture and stockpiling of

chemical weapons, though Iran continues

to deny that charge. Concerns

have also been expressed by authorities

in our country that Iran is seeking to

become a nuclear arms state by attempting

to buy material for such

weapons or by using nonmilitary nuclear

assistance to build up its knowledge

about nuclear weapons.

These programs in Iran can profoundly

change the balance of power in

the region and strike a very serious

blow to our efforts to contain Iran

until it becomes a responsible member

of the community of nations, until the

forces of change which are blowing so

hopefully through Iran, even as we

speak today, reach fruition and a

change of policy.

I am sure most everyone in this

Chamber will look forward to a day

when sanctions of this kind will not be

necessary because a new government,

representing what seems to be the

clear will of the Iranian people, would

be in power in Tehran; a government

with which the United States of America

and our allies could have constructive

and peaceful relations. But until

that time, the kinds of weapons capabilities

that are being developed allow

Iran to threaten, for instance, friendly

Arab States, making it harder for them

to cooperate with the United States.

These weapons capabilities would raise

the risks to U.S. military forces in the

region and could threaten the free flow

of oil out of this critical region which

could, of course, create crises in the

United States, in Europe, Asia, and in

any other place in the world that depends

on fuel from the Middle East to

power their economies.

It is self-evident and axiomatic that

we have to do whatever we can to try

to deter this dangerous capability, to

delay it, to retard it as best we can,

given the Iranian Government that

now exists. Part of that is making

clear, as I believe this legislation does,

to our friends in Russia in no uncertain

terms that we are serious about this.

The time for hit and miss, slower, bob and-

weave progress toward shutting off

Russian assistance to Iran for the development

of these dangerous programs

is over.

In addition to other sanctions, we

have focused in this bill on holding up

extraordinary, as we call it, American

funding for the international space station

to the Russian space agency, unless

Russia takes sufficient action to

halt any part it is playing in proliferation

to Iran. This is our attempt to

demonstrate the seriousness of our

concern about this matter, even to the

extent of stopping the funding of a program

that is not only important to

us—that is, space cooperation—but important

to the Russians.

While we cannot expect to prevent all

technology transfers to rogue states,

we do have the ability to check the

flow of some of it by adopting the

kinds of sanctions in this legislation

that are aimed at persons engaged in

such activity. We are able and therefore

must act to take measures against

those governments that condone such

activity, whether or not they are organizing

and abetting the transfer, or

merely looking the other way when

their citizens engage in these activities.

Senator LOTT quoted CIA Director

George Tenet. Director Tenet has made

quite clear that despite the noticeable

shifts within Iran, it remains ‘‘the

most active state sponsor of terrorism.’’

Iran’s support for dangerous

terrorist groups such as Hezbollah,

Hamas, and the Palestinian Islamic

Jihad, through training, money, and

weapons, has just not ended. There are

people in our country, people whom I

respect, who continue to sustain the

belief, based on evidence they have

gathered, that Iran was involved in the

1996 attack on American service personnel

at Khobar in Saudi Arabia,

though no definitive conclusion has

been reached on that matter.

We have been engaged in a dialog

across a wide spectrum with our

friends and allies in trying to address

the issue of proliferation to Iran. The

prospect of a nuclear-capable, militarily

powerful Iran armed with ballistic

missiles is clearly a threat to our

national interests and to those of our

allies; therefore, we must act to stop

it. The sanctions we are proposing will

further stop the diffusion of this technology

and lead to a more stable Middle

East.

I echo the words of the majority leader:

The passage of this measure may

actually encourage the forces of reform

in Iran which are now so boldly and inspiringly

expressing themselves. It certainly

does seem that those forces of

reform want to have better relations

with the West, with the United States.

Part of what we are saying to them is,

this matters to us. You must stop your

support of terrorism. Stop your development

of these weapons of mass destruction,

and we can develop a much

better relationship.

The bill itself is simple and direct. It

requires the President to submit reports

to Congress on foreign entities

where there is credible information

that these entities have transferred

certain goods, services, or technologies

to Iran. That part of the bill would

apply to any entities anywhere in the

world, not just the Russians. It authorizes

the President to impose measures

against these entities, but does not

mandate him to do so. It allows him to

consider exculpatory material, material

that argues against the guilt of the

entities.

And with an amendment that will be

adopted, submitted by the Senator

from Michigan, Mr. LEVIN, those entities

will be given an opportunity to respond

to those allegations before any

sanctions are considered.

Finally, the bill prohibits these extraordinary

American payments to the

Russian space agency until certain

conditions enumerated in the bill are

met. The purpose is to say to the Russians

specifically that we keep seeing

compelling evidence that entities in

Russia are supporting the development

of these dangerous programs within

Iran.

As much as we want to continue to

work with Russia on joint efforts in

space, we will not do so if they are contributing

to this grave threat to our security.

Finally, I thank Senator LOTT, Senator

BIDEN, Senator HELMS, and others

on both sides who have worked together

to bring this bill to the floor,

where I have reason to believe it will

achieve strong support. I was pleased

to hear representatives of the Administration

indicate to some of us a short

while ago that, though they may not

specifically support the bill, they

would not recommend that, in its current

form, the President veto it. I

think we are on the way to making a

unified statement, which is a constructive

one, and which takes a small but

significant step toward protecting us,

our children, and grandchildren from

the threat of weapons of mass destruction

carried by ballistic missiles.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

Mr. President, I

thank my friend and colleague from

Delaware for his kind words and the

spirit of cooperation in which we have

worked on this and on so many other

matters over the years. I could not

agree with him more on what he said.

There is an irony here. It is as if folks

in places such as Russia are still doing

what we sometimes criticize people in

our country for doing—going by a cold war

mentality. But it is a cold-war

mentality heavily not only affected by

communism, but what the Senator has

said, capitalism. So they are selling for

short-term gains that, before very

long, will endanger them more than us.

This is our attempt to say: We are in

this together. We are threatened by

what you are doing, but watch out,

friends, you are going to be threatened

soon yourselves.

I thank the Senator for his characteristically

straight talk—although he

is not on the Straight Talk Express. He

is a straight talker in the Senate

Chamber. I thank him for his support.