Mr. President,

there are few in this body who have

worked harder on this issue than my

friend from Connecticut, and it has

been a real pleasure to work with him

on this legislation and on this issue.

The Iran Nonproliferation Act is an

important piece of legislation which

seeks to halt the flow of ballistic missile

technology and other weapons of

mass destruction from Russia to Iran. I

strongly support Senate passage of this

legislation.

Indeed, even as much of the U.S.

focus in the past year—and rightly so,

in my mind—has been on the peace

process and Israel’s relations with

Syria and the Palestinians, there may

be no greater long term threat to

Israel’s security and Middle East peace

than an Iran actively seeking ballistic

missiles and nuclear weapons.

That is why I believe that preventing

the transfer of illegal nuclear and missile

technology from Russia to Iran

must be at the top of the U.S. policy

agenda.

As my colleagues are aware, there

have been numerous reports over the

past several years of Russian missile

technology reaching Iran, sometimes

with a semi-official wink from government

authorities in Moscow, sometimes

by rogue operators.

Either way, the Russian government

must put a stop to these transfers.

As much as we want good relations

with Russia, cooperation in this area is

crucial. In some ways, I believe it is a

litmus test of what sort of player Russia

wants to be in the post-Cold War

international system.

Although Russia has denied that any

illegal transfers have taken place, it

has taken some tangible steps in response

to American concerns—such as

the cancellation of a 1997 contract between

a Russian missile factory (NPO

Trud) and Iran in which rocket engine

components were to have been shipped

under the guise of gas pipeline compressors.

Unfortunately, despite such progress

as cooperation with the NPO Trud contract,

since issuing an Executive Order

in 1998, the United States has been

forced to sanction ten Russian entities

for continuing to transfer technology

for the development of advanced ballistic

missiles and weapons of mass destruction,

and the Central Intelligence

Agency reports that Russian entities

continue to provide Iran with assistance.

Indeed, there are reportedly over

10,000 Russians in Iran helping Iran

with these programs.

For its part, and despite some positive

signs of moderation in Iran’s politics—

the recent elections notwithstanding—

Iran has not yet moderated

any of its policies with regard to the

support of international terrorism or

the pursuit of advanced ballistic missiles

and weapons of mass destruction.

Iran has flight-tested the Shihab-3, a

missile that can hit Israel and U.S.

forces in the Middle East, and is continuing

to work on other advanced missile

designs, including those capable of

delivering nuclear warheads.

Because of Russia’s mixed record—

and Iran’s outright dangerous record—

I believe that although we should try

to build on Russia’s record of cooperation,

we must also be prepared to take

tough action when the situation warrants.

In other words, we must be prepared

to work with Russia on this issue

and offer them a carrot, but, if our interests

and those of our friends and allies

are threatened, we must also be

prepared to use a stick.

To that end, last year I offered an

amendment on the Department of Defense

authorization bill, passed by the

Senate, which stated that it is the

sense of Congress that the U.S. should

increase the quota on commercial

space launch services provided by Russia

if the Russian government demonstrates

a sustained commitment to

prevent the transfer from Russia to

Iran, or other countries, of nuclear and

missile technology.

I continue to believe that pending

Russian cooperation this quota can be

raised to 20 and, if Russia continues to

cooperate, incrementally raised again

in the coming years. Each launch provides

Russia with approximately $100

million in hard currency. A $100 million

carrot is a good incentive to cooperate.

The bill we consider before us today

recognizes that in addition to such carrots,

we must also be prepared to take

tough action when necessary. The Iran

Nonproliferation Act has two parts.

First, it requires the President to report

credible information about any

foreign entity providing dangerous

technologies to Iran and authorize the

President to sanction these entities in

accordance with the President’s own

Executive Order.

Second, it requires that the President

must certify that the Russian

government opposes the proliferation

of weapons of mass destruction to Iran

and is taking steps to oppose such proliferation

before the Russian Space

Agency is provided with any additional

U.S. taxpayer money beyond what has

contracted for the International Space

Station. These are funds which the

U.S. is providing to Russia so that Russia

can meet its own obligations to the

International Space Station. If Russia

and the Russian Space Agency cooperates

with the U.S. on proliferation,

then cooperation between Russia and

Iran on the proliferation of advanced

ballistic missiles and weapons of mass

destruction must stop. If Russia and

the Russian Space Agency cooperates

with the U.S. on proliferation, then I

believe we can work in partnership

with them to increase commercial

space launch and to provide funding for

the International Space Station.

But there are few things more dangerous

or destabilizing to U.S. interests

and peace and security in the Middle

East than a nuclear armed Iran

which continues to support international

terrorism. And if Russia does

not recognize this and is not willing to

work with the United States to build a

more stable and more secure Middle

East, then we must not shy away from

taking the tough action necessary to

get results.