Mr. President, I rise today

in support of the Iran Nonproliferation

Act. For the past few years, I have

been concerned about Iran’s efforts to

acquire the technology for ballistic

missiles and nuclear, biological, and

chemical weapons from Russia and

China.

When reports began to surface in 1997

about Russian missile assistance to

Iran, I met twice with Russia’s Ambassador

to the U.S. and the administration’s

special envoy on this issue to express

my concern about this dangerous

trade and to urge the Russian government

and the Clinton Administration

to take steps to stop it.

I also gathered together a group of 99

Members of the House and Senate, who

wrote to the President to urge him to

invoke sanctions to halt this trade.

The President refused.

Along with a bipartisan group of

House and Senate Members, I went to

the White House to meet with Vice

President GORE to urge the administration

to take concrete actions to end

Russian transfers to Iran. Again the

administration refused, citing the need

to let diplomacy work.

That summer, I successfully offered

an amendment that was adopted by

unanimous consent to the fiscal year

1998 Foreign Operations Appropriations

bill barring U.S. aid to Russia if missile

assistance to Iran continued. In

conference, the amendment was

changed to give the President the ability

to waive this prohibition on aid to

Russia, which he subsequently did.

In November 1997, the Senate unanimously

passed a concurrent resolution

that I sponsored, expressing the sense

of the Congress that the President

should sanction the Russian organizations

involved in selling missile technology

to Iran. The House also passed

this resolution overwhelmingly by a

vote of 414 to 8. Again the President refused

to impose sanctions.

The Congress tried again to spur the

administration to action 6 months

later when we passed the Iran Missile

Proliferation Sanctions Act mandating

sanctions on any organization involved

in assisting Iran’s missile or weapons

of mass destruction programs. This bill

passed the Senate by a vote of 90 to 4.

Yet, when it reached the President’s

desk, he vetoed it.

Instead of voting to override this

veto, the Congress acceded to the

President’s request for more time to

let diplomacy work. The verdict is in

on that decision. Transfers of nuclear,

biological, chemical, and ballistic missile

technology to Iran persist demonstrating

the Congress erred in deciding

not to override the veto. While the

administration has imposed so-called

administrative sanctions against a

handful of Russian entities, it cooperated

with the Russian government to

identify the target organizations such

that the sanctions would have no

meaningful effect, completely undermining

the value of the action.

While I will not go into the same detail

here, let me simply say the administration

has a similar record on Chinese

proliferation to Iran, where it has

failed to enforce U.S. laws calling for

sanctions, again noting the need to let

diplomacy work.

Since the administration would not

take steps to halt proliferation to Iran,

I offered an amendment to a supplemental

appropriations bill that the

President signed into law in May 1998.

The amendment appropriated $179 million

to accelerate the development of

U.S. theater missile defenses, including

$45 million for Israel to begin purchasing

equipment for a third battery

of its Arrow missile defense system in

order to counter the increased Iranian

missile threat.

As these examples show, the Clinton

Administration is simply not willing to

take the tough actions necessary to

prevent proliferation. As a result, intelligence

assessments indicate the

problem is growing worse all the time.

In an unclassified report to Congress

last month, CIA Director George Tenet

stated;

In the report, Director Tenet went on

to note that Iran continues to seek biological

warfare technology from Russia

and Europe and despite being a party

to the Chemical Weapons Convention

has ‘‘already has manufactured and

stockpiled chemical weapons . . . and

the bombs and artillery shells for delivering

them.’’ He also said that

‘‘Tehran continues to seek production

technology, expertise, and chemicals

that could be used as precursor agents

in its chemical warfare program from

entities in Russia and China.’’

Finally, the report indicated that despite

promising never to acquire nuclear

weapons, when it ratified the Nuclear

Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT),

Iran has a nuclear weapons program,

stating:

In fact, according to the Washington

Post, the CIA recently concluded that

it could no longer rule out the possibility

that Iran is already capable of

producing a nuclear weapon. This is

terribly troubling in light of the

progress Iran has made in its missile

program. Earlier this month, Director

Tenet testified to the Intelligence

Committee that:

Finally, Director Tenet outlined a

new type of proliferation threat from

Iran in his testimony, warning that:

It is clear that meaningful measures,

and not simply another round of feckless

diplomacy or a flawed international

treaty such as the Comprehensive

Test Ban Treaty CTBT, is

needed to combat this growing threat.

Last Fall, the Administration accused

the Congress of undermining U.S. nonproliferation

efforts in rejecting the

CTBT. But that treaty was unverifiable,

would have undermined America’s

nuclear deterrent, and would have done

nothing meaningful to combat proliferation.

As I mentioned earlier, Iran along

with 191 other nations has ratified the

NPT, and thereby promised never to

acquire nuclear weapons. It is violating

this treaty. It is also violating the

Chemical Weapons Convention and is

acquiring missile technology. All of

these actions should trigger U.S. sanctions,

but the Clinton Administration

has refused to take action.

If arms control treaties like the NPT

and other nonproliferation efforts are

to be useful, they must be enforced. I

urge the administration to finally get serious about this matter and for my

colleagues to vote for the Iran Nonproliferation

Act. Iran’s possession of

nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons,

and the missiles used to deliver

them poses a clear and present danger

to the United States and our forces and

friends in the region. It is long past

time that we address this threat.