Mr. President, I,

too, thank the Senator from Indiana

for working very closely with Senator

BOXER and me on this very important

piece of legislation, which is a very

timely piece of legislation.

The House passed this legislation a

few months ago and sent it over here.

We have been working diligently with

both Senator LUGAR and Senator

BIDEN, and they have been most cooperative

in working with the administration

to craft a bill that I think

meets some of the concerns the administration

has, some of the concerns the

committee has experienced in dealing

with sanctions bills, and particularly

the issue of the waiver authority of the

President.

The House-passed bill did not allow

the President to waive sanctions on

military or dual-use items—‘‘dual use’’

meaning they could be used for civilian

or military purposes. I think the chairman

of the committee rightly expressed

concern about that, that the

precedent generally is that the President

have waiver authority in the case

of vital national security interests or

national security interests.

We negotiated as to what that standard

should be. We obviously wanted the

highest level of scrutiny before the

President could waive that which

would be vital national security interests.

The lowest level would just be

sort of a national interest test. And we

compromised on a national security interest

waiver. It is sort of a midlevel, if

you will, waiver authority or waiver

standard. We think that is appropriate

here for all of the items, all of the potential

sanctions that may be imposed

by the President under this act.

So the President, under the revised

bill we have before us, does impose

sanctions, but it gives the President

the flexibility to waive. But he has a

threshold he must meet and make the

case that that threshold is made in

order to waive these sanctions. So we

give the President the hammer that I

think is necessary and that so many

have talked about here.

Syria is a bad actor in the region. It

is part of the ‘‘axis of evil,’’ in my

opinion. It is a country that sponsors

terrorism, that supports terrorism,

that encourages terrorism, not only

against American interests, not only

against Israel, but it is occupying,

through setting up these terrorist organizations,

as well as their own military

force, what was a very moderate

and progressive Arab country, Lebanon.

That is a heinous act, and I find it

somewhat remarkable that the rest of

the Arab world does not continue to

condemn it and do what we do: try to

ratchet up the pressure on Syria to get

out of Lebanon, to allow the people in

Lebanon to determine their own government

and to freely elect people who

could serve the best interests of the

Lebanese people, not the dictator in

Damascus.

So we have, really, a purpose beyond

our national security interest, although

I would argue that a free and

prosperous Lebanon—and given the history

of that country, and being a

bridge between the Middle East and

West—that would be a very stabilizing

presence in the Middle East, to have a

country with a democratically elected

government, and not being the threat

Lebanon now poses, not because of the

people themselves but because of the

terrorists who reside in southern Lebanon,

because of the other heinous acts

that are conducted by the terrorist

groups based in Lebanon that they

project throughout the world.

This is a very important issue for national

security. It is a very important

issue for the peace in the Middle East.

I am very gratified that the Senate

could come to a conclusion on this bill

and bring it to the floor of the Senate

and have it pass on a day when we

honor our veterans, as we should. We

had people fight and lose their lives in

Lebanon, and they did so bravely and

courageously. But I have to say, it was

not one of the proudest moments for

me as an American to see our troops

withdraw from Lebanon and not stay

there to fight another day, with the oppression

Syria was imposing upon that

country.

This is a chance for us to begin the

process of reengaging in Lebanon, reengaging

the Syrians who have been

nothing but trouble and fomenting

trouble throughout the Middle East

and being disruptive of the peace process

in the Middle East.

I say to the Senator from Indiana,

thank you for the time. Thank you for

your willingness to bring this bill to

the floor and to move this bill forward.

I will enter into a colloquy with Senator

BOXER to discuss our desire and

our hope that the President not immediately

think about waiving these provisions;

that he think carefully about

any kind of waiver; that we try to impose

some sanctions and send a message.

Given the activities of the Syrians

in the Middle East and the activities

of Syria in Iraq, it is such an important

and relevant discussion, that

the President use these sanctions that

are available to him for him to do so.

Mr. President, I wish to enter into a

colloquy with my colleague, Senator

BOXER of California, concerning the

waiver authority extended to the President

for the sanctions contained in the

Syria Accountability and Lebanese

Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003.

Mr. President, as the original cosponsor

of the Syria Accountability and

Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act

of 2003, I want to clarify the bill’s intent

with the original sponsors, Senator

BOXER. Is it the Senator’s understanding

that—given the seriousness of

the charges against the Syrian regime

and the fact that the highest levels of

the U.S. Government have already

made it clear that there will be consequences

to the Syrians if there is no

change in their behavior—the national

security waiver contained in the bill is

meant to address only those circumstances

where United States national

security interests are indeed severely

threatened?