Mr. President, I

thank the chairman of the Foreign Relations

Committee, Senator LUGAR,

who does such an outstanding job on so

many issues and really is a national

treasure for us on international affairs

and international issues, for allowing

me recognition to speak on this bill. I

thank the cosponsors, Senators

SANTORUM and BOXER, for their work in

bringing this issue in front of the body.

I urge its passage.

I urge usage of the Syria Accountability

Act by the President. Several of

these issues have already been covered.

I wish to address them with some specificity

by saying 43 and counting—43

and counting. That is the number of

dictatorships that are left in the world.

There were 45 at the start of this year.

Two have changed over. Dramatic

changes are taking place in some other

countries. But there are 43 dictatorships.

One of the harshest is Syria. It is a

state sponsor of terrorism, one of five

countries in the world that we recognize

is a state sponsor of terrorism. We

are facing terrorists coming from Syria

on a daily basis in Iraq. You can hardly

visit with any of our leadership working

on the issue of Iraq and bringing

democracy to that country without

hearing them talking about foreign

terrorists coming into Iraq. The largest

percentage of those is coming through

Syria. Another percentage is coming

from Iran, which is another country

that needs to go through a democratic

metamorphosis and become a democracy.

Iran is not a democracy today.

We need to confront that.

We need to confront, for the safety of

our troops, these foreign terrorists

coming in from Syria who are being

sponsored by the Syrian Government.

We know for some period of time

Syria has sponsored Hezbollah, one of

the leading terrorist organizations in

the world, certainly very active in the

Middle East, active in Lebanon, active

in Israel, active, it appears, in support

of going into Iraq. We know the historical

legacy of Syria associated with

Iraq and the Baathist Party regime

that controlled both countries. It did

control Iraq; it doesn’t now. It is a

ruthless, dictatorial, Stalinesque type

of organization. They use political prisoners,

torture, all sorts of means to

maintain control by the Baathist leadership.

The Syria Baathist leadership

is the same sort of leadership we saw in

Iraq. They are a bad lot. It is time we

put pressure on Syria to change.

President Bush last week made a

beautiful speech to the National Endowment

for Democracy calling for democracy

throughout the world and saying

that is the natural state of mankind,

to be free and at liberty. Yet we

see a dearth of liberty and freedom

throughout much of the Middle East,

particularly in countries such as Syria.

I hope the President will use the

Syria Accountability Act to bring

greater pressure on the dictators in Damascus,

on bringing them a clear point

that we will not tolerate this use of

terrorism; we will not tolerate their attacks

on our troops; that we will not

tolerate a regime that is a dictatorship;

that the people of Syria deserve

better. The people of Lebanon deserve

better than to be minding the dictator

paymasters that exist in Damascus.

The President really needs to use this

power that is being given by the Congress

to the administration for these

sanctions in Syria.

I urge that we pass this act. I urge

the President to use these sanctions.

And I urge us to use all the means at

our disposal to tighten the noose

around the leadership of the dictators

in Damascus. What they are doing in

Syria, what they are allowing to flow

out of their country, that would stop.

This is one of the few countries left in

the world that continues to be state

sponsors of terrorism on a very aggressive

basis. It must stop. We must show

resolve in that.

I state my support for the bill and

yield the floor.