Mr. President, I rise

to join my colleague from Pennsylvania

on underscoring the urgency that

surrounds the threat to our Nation and

the entire world community with Iran.

I listened to my esteemed colleague

talk about the Iranian repression of

women. I thought to myself, how sad;

Iran was a country that at times led

that part of the world in its respect for

women and women’s rights at a time

few talked about it. And how low they

have sunk.

It was 100 years ago Iran’s constitutional

revolution was the first genuine

democracy in the Middle East, over

half of the population of that part of

the world. When we look where we are

today, I have a touch of sadness in my

heart as I reflect upon the plight of the

Iranian people.

Make no mistake, as my colleague

from Pennsylvania noted, Iran is a nation

with painful rhetoric, rhetoric of

its president, who says: Our goal is to

destroy Israel. We should take people

at their word that is the goal.

This is not, by the way, the rantings

of a madman. This is the clear policy of

the regime backed by the ruling

mullahs. It is the clear policy, not the

rantings of some wild man. Take him

at his word, that is his goal, his objectives,

and Iran’s goal and objective.

Painful rhetoric is backed by their

concrete actions. They are the largest

state sponsor of state-supported terrorism

in the world. It is not just cheap

rhetoric; it is a disconcerting and

frightening reality we have to deal

with.

Now we have a regime that is clearly

in pursuit of nuclear weapons. We are

dealing with a lot of security issues out

there today. There is lots on the agenda

dealing with concerns about port security.

Let’s not let this issue slip

away.

Some say Washington is a town of a

thousand issues and few priorities. This

is a priority and continues to be a priority.

As I said before, they have been

clear about their regime and their desire

to destroy Israel and the western

civilization.

At the conference where

Ahmadinejad talked about destroying

Israel, I remember the picture behind

him vividly, a picture of an hourglass.

In this hourglass, the ball is dropping

through. This is posted not by accident

but by design. In the hourglass, the

fragile glass ball is falling through the

glass, about to be shattered. That is

Israel. But already lying on the floor of

the shattered glass is a shattered USA.

That is the vision, that is the plan.

We have to understand that. Clearly,

the vitriolic rhetoric is backed by a

clear vision and plan and it merits immediate

action by the international

community.

All in all, the Tehran regime’s previous

and ongoing activities indicate

that a nuclear-armed Iran would pose

an unprecedented threat to American

national security as well as to the existence

of the State of Israel. Have no

doubt about it; if Iran were to use a nuclear

weapon in the Middle East, we

are not protected, even being thousands

of miles away. We will all be impacted

by that. We are all in this. The

outcome of Iran’s vision and the destruction

of Israel is unacceptable.

Common sense and responsibility demand

that action be taken now. Time

is not on our side.

The scenario we face with Iran today

has many parallels to the 1930s when

the League of Nations failed to confront

the aggression of the dictatorships

in Japan, Italy, and Germany.

Hitler said what he would do and the

international community chose to ignore

that very clear red flag. In ‘‘Mein

Kampf,’’ Hitler meant what he said.

When he had the opportunity, he acted

on that.

The President of Iran has not written

a book such as ‘‘Mein Kampf,’’ but he

has been very clear about what his intentions

are, public about his intentions

to destroy Israel and the rest.

And at the same time he is pursuing a

strategy to campaign to obtain nuclear

capacity. Will the international community

continue to wring its hands and

allow this murderous regime to align

its intentions with its capabilities or

will it take action? The answer must

be yes. The answer must be now. And

the United States must be part of leading

that charge.

The IAEA has taken some action.

There is a meeting of the board of governors

March 6. They must continue to

put pressure on Iran. But that is not

enough. The reality is, negotiations are

not enough. There is a Russian proposal

on the table. The European three

have been negotiating with Iran. The

problem with this, it may seem as if

there is something there, but when you

pursue this negotiation you are presuming

that the other side wants a solution.

They are negotiating with

someone who is not looking for a solution

to divert a crisis but playing a

cat-and-mouse game to buy time. You

have to realize enough time for talk

and we have to take action. Talk is

what the other side wants as it buys

time. It is clear they are not looking

for a solution to avert a crisis. They

have a vision. They have a path.

They have demonstrated time and

again they are not serious about negotiating.

They deserve no further opportunities

to prevent them from being

held to account for their intransigence.

I think it is high time the international

community called the Iranian

bluff. They have had more than enough

opportunities to negotiate and have

brazenly violated every agreement.

The Security Council must take strong

action. This needs to be the focus of

our policy now and in the immediate

future.

While all of us recognize that actions

must be taken to deal with the imminent

threat of Iran’s nuclear intentions,

a true long-term solution to the

problem with Iran lies in efforts to promote

a free and democratic society. As

Secretary Rice has noted:

In his State of the Union Address,

President Bush made a direct appeal to

the Iranian people and voiced our country’s

support for their right to freedom.

Here in Congress, we need to act

to convert moral support into concrete

actions to help foster democratic

change in Iran.

I commend my colleague, Senator

SANTORUM, for his introduction of the

Iran Freedom and Support Act of 2005.

I am a cosponsor of that legislation. He

has talked about that and clearly seeks

to support the roots of democratic

change in Iran. We need to support democracy

in Iran. And supporting them

is not being an American voice preaching

moralistically about democracy; it

is an opportunity to connect with the

Iranians around the world, not just

there. There are folks who have been

fighting for freedom in Iran. Some are

still in Iran. We need to figure out a

way to connect with Iranian voices,

with dissidents in Iran and around the

world, to let them know we are there

to support freedom, we are there to

support democracy.

I urge passage of Senator SANTORUM’s

bill. It is a step in the right direction.

Finally, I would note that March 20

and 21 is the Iranian new year. I say

that because the regime is repressing

the celebration of the Iranian new

year. I want to conclude my comments

by wishing the Iranian people a happy

new year, one in which, hopefully, they

will be closer to freedom, closer to

freedom in the year to come. And we

will take those steps necessary to help

make that happen.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.