Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I appreciate your indulgence in allowing me to testify and giving

me priority status above the chairman and ranking member in

being able to present such testimony. So thank you, and I appreciate

you holding this hearing today. This is, as you are well aware,

one of the most important issues facing this country and what we

do in dealing with the problem—national security problem—that

Iran is to this country.

I do not have to remind you, Mr. Chairman, you are very well

aware of the Government of Iran’s track record of being a supporter

of terror and treating its own people in a terroristic manner.

Iran is a state sponsor of terrorism. Iran created Hezbollah, actively

support Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and the Popular

Front for the Liberation of Palestinian-General Command.

Iran has been implicated in activities associated with al-Qaeda in

the 1996 attack on U.S. military personnel at Khobar Towers in

Saudi Arabia.

Troubling of recent note is Iran’s continuing involvement in Iraq,

with some very disturbing news as to their involvement with the

Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq and the organization’s

Badr Brigades, which, of course, leads us to be concerned

about the manipulation of the Iraqi police and military forces.

In addition to their actions on the terrorist front, the Government

of Iran is no less known for its violations of human rights.

The State Department’s recent report on Iran notes the occurrence

of summary executions, disappearances, extreme vigilantism, widespread

torture, and other degrading treatment. I have had numerous

people come and talk to me about the religious persecution that

occurs in Iran.

One thing you can say about Iran, they are indiscriminate in discriminating.

They discriminate against Christians, Jews, the

Biha’i, other Muslim sects. This is a very religiously intolerant regime.

Again, another troubling aspect to Iran is their now very evident

pursuit of a nuclear capability. This has been well documented and

I will not redocument it.

Mr. Chairman, I have asked that my full statement be made a

part of the record, where I provide all that documentation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The recent 27 to

3 vote by the IAEA board to report Iran to the U.N. Security Council,

in my mind, creates an opportunity here for the United Nations

to look at sanctions as a way to chill to the fervent attempt by Iran

to pursue their nuclear weapons capability. Obviously, it is not

clear whether we can get the support of China and Russia and

other members of the Security Council to support sanctions. Nevertheless,

I think we should be pursuing that within the United Nations,

and things such as a travel ban on Iranian leaders, a ban

on international flights by Iran Air, a ban on receiving cargo carried

by Iranian governmental-owned ships, and aggressive action to

make sure the governmental leaders in Iran responsible for human

rights abuses and executions are brought to trial. I think it is important

that we stress with the United Nations that actions need

to be taken.

I would also suggest that the Congress needs to take action to

show support for our President’s policies with respect to Iran. We

need to show that we are willing to take action at this time, that

we are not just calling for the United Nations to do something, but

that the Congress itself recognizes the threat that Iran poses to the

security of the world and certainly our own national security, and

that we should act in support of constraining Iran’s ambitions.

I, along with 60 other Members of the U.S. Senate, have supported

S. 333, which is the Iran Freedom and Support Act. It calls

for vigorous support for peaceful change in Iran. The Iran Freedom

and Support Act, a bill I authored, has been referred to your committee

and is currently under consideration, and I would urge you,

Mr. Chairman, to report that legislation to the full Senate.

The legislation seeks to make it harder for the Government of

Iran to have access to foreign investment and revenues to support

terrorist activities and to pursue nuclear activities. The bill also

codifies sanctions, controls, and regulations currently in place

against Iran by executive order. The bill declares that it should be

the policy of the United States to support efforts for Iranian selfdetermination,

in other words, free and fair elections.

Finally, the bill authorizes $10 million for the assistance of prodemocracy

efforts, although it is my intention to modify that in

light of the fact that the State Department has come forward with

a supplemental, hopefully inspired by this bill and others in the

House, to fund prodemocracy efforts in Iran to the tune of $75 million.

So our intention is to actually up the ante to $100 million.

Some have asked whether this funding would make a difference in

Iran and I would say the answer to that is really just to look at

the composition and the demographics of Iran. A majority of Iranians

were born after the Islamic Revolution in 1979. These young

men and women have grown up under brutal oppression in conditions

which they hate. These people are the folks that we must appeal

to and try to enjoin in doing something about changing the

governmental status within the country of Iran. These are folks

who listen to Western media and broadcasts for news and they

question the authority, as lots of young people do, and they are

looking for greater individual freedoms. They are also technologically

savvy and so there are ways in which to communicate and

to gather support.

The funds authorized in my bill would support elements within

Iran who are dedicated to democratic values and respect for human

rights and particularly the rights of women.

So calling for free and fair elections, providing United States assistance,

combined with the codification of sanctions, means that

Iran’s shaky economy could be exploited to advance the cause of

freedom. Abbas Milani of the Hoover Institute notes that the private

sector investments have virtually stopped, private banking is

in severe crisis, and the government has been lowering interest

rates.

Others note some of the regime’s surprising vulnerabilities. Despite

its massive oil reserves, Iran has little capacity to produce

gasoline or jet fuel, two important refined petroleum products. Iran

also lacks the ability to develop and exploit its vast natural gas reserves.

The international community needs to leverage these and other

weaknesses to dissuade Iran’s leaders from pursuing nuclear weapons.

Together with smart sanctions, such as freezing the assets and

confiscating the property of the regime’s leaders, an overt policy

declaration by the Congress that supports prodemocracy movements

in Iran will encourage the forces of change within Iran.

Finally, I want to emphasize that the Iranian Freedom and Support

Act is a nonviolent way to bring about change within Iran.

You hear lots of talk about the military option being left on the

table and we cannot take it off the table. I would agree with that,

but I think that does not mean that we are paralyzed to act, that

we need to do some things and the Congress can act to support the

prodemocracy forces within Iran. The administration has recognized

that this can be pursued. I hope the Congress would step for-

ward with this authorization and express its support for the Iranian

democracy movement.

I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and the ranking member for

the ability to come here and testify before your committee and certainly

urge your support for S. 333. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.