

Sen. John Barrasso (R-WY)

Mr. President, I rise today to share my concerns as well about Iran and to express my support for tough sanctions against Iran. Iran poses a threat to the United States as well as to the international community. It continues to support terrorist organizations around the world, including Hamas and Hezbollah. Iran has also called for the destruction of the democratic State of Israel. These actions illustrate Iran's destructive intentions.

Iran continues to pursue nuclear capabilities. While Iran claims its nuclear programs are intended for civilian use only, this is very difficult to believe. In fact, reports from the International Atomic Energy Agency of February of 2008 and May of 2010 question Iran's claim of pursuing nuclear capabilities for purely peaceful purposes. Nuclear capabilities and proper management of these capabilities is a serious responsibility. Iran has neither earned the right nor the trust for this nuclear responsibility.

Iran continues to develop its nuclear programs without giving the International Atomic Energy Agency sufficient access, access to and information regarding its nuclear program. I understand the need for energy and the complexities surrounding the dual use nature of nuclear technology. However, Iran placed itself under obligations to the international community and agreed to comply with international safeguards and inspections.

Iran has not fulfilled its commitments. It has not fulfilled its commitment to be transparent with the International Atomic Energy Agency or to maintain obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

Iran does not want to join the international community efforts on curbing the development of nuclear weapons. I believe without serious consequences for the proliferation activities there is little if any incentive for Iran or any other country considering nuclear weapon-related activities to refrain from doing so. So I believe it is imperative that the United States work to increase comprehensive economic sanctions on Iran.

The United States and the international community continue to threaten Iran with more sanctions. On June 9, the U.N. Security Council adopted resolution 1929. This represents the fourth round of sanctions against Iran from the international community. It is past time that this Congress act, act to put teeth into our threats of additional sanctions. I believe it is time today to implement economic sanctions to the full extent possible.

Iran's leaders must be forced to realize that while they may be able to survive political isolation, they cannot ignore the adverse consequences to their ability to function in a global economy.

I believe the status quo is not working in our dealings with Iran. I do not believe Iran is a country that we can quietly watch and hope that nothing serious is happening behind

closed doors. Terrorism does not allow anyone to do so. It is time to act, and I all upon this Congress to support economic sanctions against Iran.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

Sen. Robert Bennett (R-UT)

Madam President, I was a member of the conference that dealt with the bill that is now before the Senate, and I wish to make a few remarks in favor of the conference report.

Iran poses an interesting threat to the United States and to our allies in the Middle East. The Iranian regime is arguably the most anti-American regime in the world. There may be some who would put forth North Korea or some other countries, and I won't debate with them where on the list they would be, but Iran is very much at the top of the list of regimes that hate America. Ironically, every indication is that the Iranian people do not support the position of their government and that the Iranian people, if they had a legitimate government; that is, one that was chosen by a legitimate election, would be strongly pro-America. So we have this very challenging dichotomy here of a regime that is bent on mischief or worse throughout the region, and a very clear hatred for America, presiding over a population that is strongly in favor of America.

I make that point because many people will say: Well, it is the people of Iran who will be punished if this sanctions bill goes forward.

I say it is the people of Iran who are desiring relief from their own government, and anything we can do to punish that government, make the situation more untenable, and ultimately help bring it down will be for the benefit of the people of Iran. So I am standing here as an advocate in favor of the Iranian population even as I have harsh things to say about the Iranian Government.

There are those who say: Well, the Iranians have every right to a nuclear capability. They are a sovereign nation. They have the right to build a nuclear plant within their borders so they can have the benefits of nuclear power. And you, Senator Bennett, are a supporter of nuclear energy, so why do you oppose the Iranian effort with respect to their nuclear program?

I do not oppose a program that would move toward peaceful exploitation of nuclear power. Indeed, I would welcome it and support it. In the world today, it is certainly possible, and, indeed, many countries do have nuclear capability without creating the capacity to produce a nuclear weapon. The two are not necessarily simultaneous and coterminous. A nuclear capacity to provide electricity, to provide power for the populous as a whole, is a good thing, a benign thing, and something I support.

The Iranians oppose any kind of effort to put limits on their plan, on their program. They say: We are doing this just for domestic power purposes. But they refuse to take the kinds of steps other nations have taken that will allow them to have all of the benefits of a

domestic nuclear plant and none of the challenges that go with the creation of a nuclear weapon.

There was a time--the Cold War and shortly after the Second World War--when nuclear weapons were seen as a very viable part of the military arsenal. We have such an arsenal. The Soviet Union did. Some of our allies joined us, and nuclear weapons were seen in the classic power struggle between nation states. Today, however, the situation has changed, and a nuclear weapon is seen primarily as a blackmailing device for one nation to threaten another nation in a circumstance different from the kind of confrontation we had with the Soviet Union. If Iran got a nuclear weapon, they would use it as a destabilizing instrument throughout the Middle East, which is already one of the least stable portions of the world, and other countries all around Iran would say: Well, if they are going to have a nuclear weapon for blackmail purposes within foreign policy discussions, we will have to have one too. And if Iran is allowed to get a nuclear weapon, the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the region will be enormous.

As long as they just use it as a blackmail weapon and talk about it, one could say it is really not that big of a deal. Inevitably, the creation of such weapons, the proliferation of such weapons in an area as unstable as the Middle East runs a very high risk that one of those weapons will be used. Then we will see the opening of a nuclear holocaust the likes of which we have not seen before. The last time a nuclear weapon was used was when we were in the midst of a horrendous war where the projections were that if we stayed in a conventional pattern and invaded Japan in a conventional way, the casualties would be overwhelming on both sides. And by using a nuclear weapon to bring the Second World War to an end, we tragically cost tens of thousands of lives in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but we saved millions of lives on the beaches and in the streets of Tokyo and in the other places that would have been lost if the war had continued with conventional weapons.

We cannot do anything that would encourage Iran with respect to its nuclear program, and that is why this act is so important.

People will say: Well, it is economic sanctions, it is financial sanctions, things of that kind. Yes, it is all of those things, but it is aimed primarily at and focused entirely on Iran's efforts with respect to the creation of a nuclear weapon.

Iran could get out from under these sanctions immediately if they would say: We will follow the pattern of other peaceful nations and pursue a nuclear domestic program for energy purposes in such a way that it will not lead to the creation of a capability for nuclear weapons. I stress again the division between the two: You can have nuclear power for energy and electricity without producing the kinds of things that are necessary to produce a nuclear weapon. Iran could go down that road if they choose to, and if the Iranian regime were to make that very wise decision--wise for themselves and their own ability to remain at the head of a country whose population hates them; wise for the region; wise for the world as a whole--I would be one of the first to stand and say that this bill of sanctions for Iran should be withdrawn. The initiative rests with them, not with us, as to what will happen in the Middle East.

All right. Some specifics about the legislation. If it is implemented, it would dramatically raise the price Iran will have to pay for their activities because it will increase the scope of sanctions already authorized under the Iranian sanctions act by imposing sanctions on foreign companies that sell Iran goods, services, or know-how that would assist in its nuclear sector. It includes a provision with respect to refined petroleum being exported to Iran.

It is interesting that Iran is one of the major sources of crude oil, but they do not have refined petroleum available to them in the quantities they need within their own shores.

So they import it and this sanctions act will seriously hamper the importation of refined products. The legislation mandates that in order to do business with the U.S. Government, a company must certify that it--or its subsidiaries--does not engage in sanctionable activities with respect to Iran.

Financial. The conference report imposes severe restrictions on foreign financial institutions that are doing business with key Iranian banks, and it bans U.S. banks from engaging in financial transactions with foreign banks doing business with the IRGC, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

In effect, the act says to foreign banks doing business with the blacklisted Iranian entity that you have a stark choice: Cease your activities, or be denied access to the American financial system.

There are other provisions, which I will not take the time to outline. I close by making it clear, once again, that this is not a knee-jerk reaction on the part of Americans in a fit of pique with respect to the Iranians because the Iranian President says stupid things in international fora. This is a deadly serious attempt to see to it that a significant threat in the region does not go forward. In the end, this is an attempt to help free the Iranian people from the tyranny of one of the most repressive and difficult governments that any country is forced to abide by in the world.

I yield the floor.

Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA)

Mr. President, I rise today in strong support of the comprehensive Iran Sanctions Accountability and Divestment Act of 2010. I wish to particularly thank my colleagues on the Banking Committee for working to bring this conference report to the floor.

I have said many times before that we don't have a moment to waste when it comes to Iran. We must focus like a laser beam on Iran's dangerous refusal to cease uranium enrichment in defiance of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions, because we know that Iran could not only use any weapons it acquires, but it could proliferate nuclear material and technologies to terrorist

groups and rogue regimes around the world. We must act today. Iran is a threat to the security of the United States, the Middle East, and the rest of the globe.

Let me list a few of the many important provisions of this bill. First, it would specifically target companies involved in refined petroleum sales to Iran and those who are supporting Iran's domestic refining efforts. This is critical, because countless experts have told us that the way to pressure Iran is to target its oil and gas sectors. I have believed this for a long time, and I have been pushing for this bill for a long time.

According to the Government Accountability Office:

In recent years, oil export revenues have accounted for 24 percent of Iran's gross domestic product and between 50 and 76 percent of the Iranian government's revenues.

So we need to go after their revenues, because they are being used to push forward their nuclear program, which is so dangerous. We have to take away those resources, and this sanctions bill is a very good way to do that.

Second, this bill would also prohibit U.S. banks from engaging in transactions with foreign financial institutions that continue to do business with Iranian banks and Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. I think Chairman Dodd and Chairman Berman captured best what this provision means:

Cease your activities or be denied critical access to America's financial system.

Third, the bill would also place significant penalties on Iran's human rights abusers. I don't think I have to explain why this is essential. Like many of my colleagues, I have watched human rights violations inside of Iran, including the brutal suppression of the opposition "Green Movement" that has sought to have its voice heard.

Fourth, I am especially pleased that the bill includes a provision requiring companies bidding on a U.S. Government procurement contract to certify that they are not engaged in sanctionable conduct. This is so important, because a recent GAO study found that the U.S. Government awarded \$880 million to seven companies between fiscal years 2005 and 2009 that were also doing business in Iran's energy sector. Taxpayer dollars from hard-working Americans must never be used to purchase goods or supplies from companies who are working to develop Iran's energy sector or who are engaged in any behavior that is prohibited by sanctions.

Finally, this bill codifies in law longstanding Executive orders that prohibit American companies from doing business in Iran. American firms, including through their subsidiaries, must never be allowed to value a quick profit over the national security of America.

I know we are going to pass this conference report today, and I know it will have strong support in the Senate. But what we must do next is be vigilant in ensuring that the new

sanctions created by this bill are enforced to the fullest extent possible. I asked the administration if they are ready to enforce this law should it pass, and they said absolutely.

The situation is grave. We must send a clear and resounding message to Iran that it will pay a very heavy price for its continued defiance of international law and its reckless behavior which, again, threatens the Middle East and threatens the entire world.

So I am looking forward to voting for this and making sure as a member of the Foreign Relations Committee that this sanctions act is enforced.

Thank you very much.

Sen. Christopher Dodd (D-CT)

Madam President, as chairman of the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee, and as the cochair of the conference committee, along with Howard Berman, the Congressman from California, I want to begin by thanking my fellow conferees.

You have heard from Senator Bennett of Utah, a conferee; Senator Menendez, of New Jersey; John Kerry, of Massachusetts; my colleague from Connecticut, Joe Lieberman; Senator Shelby of Alabama; Senator Lugar, the former chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee--John Kerry is currently the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, and Senator Lieberman is the chairman of the Homeland Security Committee. So we have had some very active members, along with the House conferees. Numerous members in the House, as well, have played a significant role in the development of this conference report.

I also commend the administration, and particularly the Secretary of State, our former colleague, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and her staff for the remarkable job they have done over these many weeks, when we have tried to craft this very important piece of legislation. They were excellent in their work and did a wonderful job.

Obviously, the President, first and foremost, deserves credit for insisting upon a multilateral approach, which they, to a large extent, achieved.

This legislation complements that international effort. Three decades ago, when I was serving in the other body--with a full head of black hair in those days, so that is going back in time--the House International Relations Committee collaborated with the Senate Banking Committee to produce what was called landmark legislation in 1977. It was called the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, known as IEEPA, which is how I will refer to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act.

To this day, IEEPA empowers Presidents of the United States to apply strong sanctions against any nation, organization, or person that poses an "unusual and extraordinary threat" to the United States. It is with these authorities that American Presidents, over the

years, have effectively enforced trade embargoes against, in this case, Iran, banning exports and imports, and freezing key Iranian assets.

While IEEPA authorities have kept the U.S. businesses from entering Iran, years ago, it had become very clear--abundantly clear--that much more was needed to be done, not only in the case of Iran but other nations as well.

That is why, in 1996, the Senate Banking Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee once again collaborated to develop new sanctions on non-U.S. businesses investing in Iran's energy sector.

Oil and gas was providing Iran's terrorist regime with key sources of revenue, and action was needed to be taken. In those days, the resulting Iran-Libya Sanctions Act--later named the Iran sanctions act because Libya complied with the concerns we had at the time. As a result of them stepping forward and renouncing terrorism, we were able to drop Libya from the title of that bill. As I heard Senator Bennett say--and I think other colleagues would join in this--there is no great joy in crafting this bill. We are doing so out of defense of our Nation and over a threat being posed by the Government of Iran. We hope that they will understand the seriousness of this endeavor, the collaborative nature of our efforts, and we hope they will see the light as Libya did, and we urge them to take the proper steps to remove the threat they are presently posing.

Regrettably, despite a very clear mandate, American Presidents have failed to comply with the law, ISA legislation, adopted back in 1996, despite billions of dollars in oil and gas investments.

How have administrations avoided complying with the law we passed in 1996? Frankly, that has been the subject of considerable discourse within the Banking Committee over the last number of years.

First, when the Iran sanctions act mandates that American Presidents ``shall" impose two out of a menu of six penalties on sanctionable foreign companies, it only says that Presidents ``should" investigate credible evidence of energy investments and ``should" make determinations that they have, in fact, engaged in sanctionable acts.

Thus, administrations since 1996 have simply avoided launching investigations and making those determinations.

Executive branch officials of both parties have conceded that they did not even want to waive sanctions. Waiving imposition of sanctions, they have contended, is an admission of a foreign company's guilt. If we are, in effect, imposing a sanction on a company, and then officially relieving them of U.S. penalties, we are impinging on those companies' reputation and implying that the companies outside the U.S. jurisdiction are nonetheless in violation of our laws.

Such extraterritorial provocations might be grounds for retribution--either through reciprocal sanction or trade barriers. Thus, administrations--Democrats and Republicans--have avoided even launching the ISA investigations called for in 1996 or, of course, making any determinations so as not to resort to sanctions waivers.

Administrations have certainly used the threat of imposing these sanctions to some effect. But as multiple reports by the Congressional Research Service and the GAO have indicated, investments in Iran's energy sector have continued, and the regime in Iraq has benefited from those revenues.

This measure that I am today managing, along with others, marks a new chapter in Congress's long history of confronting the Iranian threat. But far more importantly, the conference report, which we will be voting on later this afternoon, we are considering makes profound changes to the law, which, if implemented correctly, will bring about strong pressure to bear on Tehran in order to combat its proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, support for international terrorism, and gross human rights abuses.

The act says, in no uncertain terms, that Presidents shall be required, if they have established that credible evidence of a firm engaging in ISA-sanctionable activity exists, to launch investigations, make determinations, and ultimately impose sanctions on those companies investing in Iran's energy sector.

Moreover, it imposes new sanctions on companies providing refined petroleum products or helping to build Iran's domestic refineries.

In response to Tehran's terrible abuses of its own people--Senator Lieberman has gone on at some length about this, and he is absolutely correct, a major part of the report focuses on the Iranian people and what they are subjected to on an hourly basis by a government which the majority of people in that country abhor. In the wake of what they have been doing and Iran's fraudulent presidential election, the conference report and the act imposes visa, property, and financial sanctions on Iranians the President determines to be complicit in serious human rights abuses against other Iranians on or after the date of Iran's election.

The conference report and the act imposes a U.S. Government procurement ban on foreign companies doing energy business in Iran or helping the Iranian Government to monitor and jam communications among its people. No longer will U.S. taxpayers' money be used to support Iran's corporate sponsors.

The act further codifies trade restrictions in law and ends the few remaining Iranian imports allowed into the United States.

Similarly, the legislation also allows States, local governments, and private investors to exercise their own right to divest from companies investing in Iran's energy sector.

The act explicitly states the sense of Congress that the United States should support the decisions of State and local governments to divest from these firms and clearly authorizes divestment decisions made consistent with the standards of the act.

Elsewhere in the act and the conference report legislation is a provision cracking down on the international black market weapons trade, which rogue countries, such as North Korea and Iran, have long exploited. Under this act, the United States will identify countries that are allowing sensitive U.S. technology that can be used for weapons of mass destruction or terrorism to be transshipped into Iran, and it will force these countries to cooperate in establishing appropriate customs, intelligence gathering, and trade restrictions. If they refuse to cooperate with the United States, the act requires imposition of severe export restrictions on those countries.

Finally, the act establishes a very strong new banking section to be undertaken by the Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, Stuart Levey, and his colleagues. Stuart Levey has worked in two administrations now and should be highly commended, by the way, for the remarkable work he has done over the years. This is an official of the Treasury Department who is so knowledgeable on this subject matter and was invaluable in helping us craft this legislation. I especially mention him and thank him for his contribution.

This new section takes aim squarely at Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard Corps--or the IRGC, as it is known--and attempts to choke it off from an increasingly important source of power--international financial investment.

Section 104 of the act has two principal parts. First, the Treasury will direct American banks to prohibit or impose strict conditions on correspondent or payable-through accounts of any foreign financial institutions working with key Iranian entities.

For example, foreign banks conducting substantial business with the IRGC, its front companies or affiliates, will be cut off from its American accounts. Hypothetically, then, if an Asian or Latin American bank were to provide services to an IRGC-owned construction company, for instance, building a major gas pipeline, that bank would be shut off from U.S. correspondent banking.

In addition, foreign banks servicing the various Iranian banks blacklisted by the Treasury Department and the UN Security Council will also be targeted under this section.

Section 104 directs the Treasury to restrict correspondent banking for foreign banks directly involved in Iran's weapons of mass destruction proliferation and terrorist financing, as well as money laundering toward those aims.

In the end, the act presents foreign banks doing business with blacklisted Iranian entities a very stark choice: Cease your activities or be denied critical access to America's financial system.

The second part of section 104 would hold U.S. banks accountable for actions by their foreign subsidiaries. Under IEEPA, which I described earlier, U.S. companies have long been banned from doing business with Iran. Now under this act, this conference report, foreign entities owned or controlled by U.S. banks will also be prohibited from doing business with the IRGC. If their foreign subsidiaries continue to do so, the U.S. parent companies will be subjected to severe penalties--civil fines amounting to twice the value of the transaction or \$250,000 and criminal fines if there is proven willful intent, up to \$1 million, and 20 years in jail.

To be sure, we have included waivers in the act. We believe that the President of the United States must have flexibility in executing foreign policy. We all agree with that point. As I mentioned before, foreign nations consider ISA waivers to have extraterritorial impact on companies in their jurisdiction.

For the most part, waivers of the sanctions in this act may only be exercised if they are deemed necessary to the national interest or, in the case of energy investment and refined petroleum sanctions, if the companies are from nations cooperating in multilateral efforts against Iran. Reports to Congress are to be detailed about the particular investments or transactions considered sanctionable, as well as why these waivers are invoked.

Only in the case of refined petroleum sanctions do we allow for some additional flexibility. In that case, the President of the United States may delay making determinations about the sanctionability of specific transactions every 6 months if the President can demonstrate progressively greater reductions in refined petroleum transportations in Iran.

These are very tough unilateral measures, but Congress does not expect them to effect change in a vacuum. Unilateral sanctions are but one tool of statecraft available to American Presidents to effect such change. In my view, they are less likely to be effective than tough, coordinated, multilateral sanctions.

All of us recognize that acting alone we may achieve some results. Acting together, we have the opportunity to truly bring about the desired change we all seek.

These unilateral sanctions must be exercised as part of a comprehensive, coordinated diplomatic and political effort conducted in cooperation with our allies and designed to achieve the real results we all seek.

I believe President Obama has been both thoughtful and deliberate in his approach to pressuring Iran to change its conduct. Having just this month achieved UN Security Council approval of Resolution 1929 and European Union endorsement of additional energy and financial measures on Iran, the President of the United States is clearly setting the stage for what we all hope is strong, targeted, and effective multilateral and multilayered pressure on Tehran.

These measures are not ends but merely a means to an end, first and foremost, to suspend Iran's illicit nuclear program, to protect Israel and our other friends and allies, to combat Tehran's proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and express support for human rights in their country.

I see my colleague from Arizona. I believe it was his suggestion that the human rights effort be part of this legislation. I did not have a chance to mention him earlier in my remarks. I thank my colleague for this proposal which includes very strong language and a message to the Iranian people that this is not about them, this is about their government. It is very important that all of us in our remarks today make it clear that we are tremendously sympathetic to what they are going through and, therefore, part of our proposal has strong language that allows us to address--at least to try to address--the issue of human rights abuses in Tehran. Again, I appreciate all the hard work.

I mentioned the conferees earlier: my colleague from Connecticut, Senator Lieberman, Senator Menendez, Senator Kerry, Senator Shelby, Senator Bennett, and Senator Lugar, from the Senate perspective who were part of drafting this bill, as well as our House conferees, led by Howard Berman of California. I extend a special thank you to all of them for their leadership.

I also thank Senator Reid, the majority leader, and Senator McConnell. None of this ever happens without the majority leader of the Senate taking a leadership role and insisting this matter move forward, insisting it be addressed before we break for the July 4 recess period coming up next week and in the midst of all the other things in which we have been involved. My colleagues know we have been involved in a very lengthy conference regarding financial reform. I am delighted to take some time out from that effort to address this particular proposal and urge our colleagues to be supportive of this proposal.

I also want to support what I mentioned earlier--President Obama's approach--and I appreciate his team's work in helping us improve this important legislation. I mentioned earlier our Secretary of State and former colleague. We had extensive meetings with her, National Security Adviser, General Jones, Deputy Secretary of State Steinberg, Under Secretary of the Treasury Levey--I mentioned the tremendous work he has done, Stuart Levey in the Department of Treasury--Assistant Secretary of State Verma, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Cohen, and Office of Foreign Assets Control Director Adam Szubin. All of these people, and many others, along with our staffs--and I am particularly grateful to my staff for the work they have done, led by Colin McGinnis of my office, who did a remarkable job in pulling this together to see to it that we worked with our counterparts, and there are many others on my staff as well I should mention.

Neal Orringer from my office deserves great credit for his work as well. It has been a great pleasure working with Rick Kessler, Shanna Winters, Alan Makovsky, and Daniel Silverberg.

Additionally, I thank Ranking Member Richard Shelby, along with his talented counsel, John O'Hara.

I also thank Margaret Roth-Warren, our brilliant, detail-oriented legislative counsel who spent weeks on end working with my staff and me and others to make this, hopefully, the most comprehensive and effective sanctions legislation that we can include.

I have hopefully mentioned all the appropriate members of the staff. There is always a danger of leaving someone out. I do not want to do that. They work very hard. These are the unknown people we do not always get to recognize. They spent countless hours pulling this most comprehensive sanctions conference report together. We are very grateful to all of them and the tremendous work they do every single day.

I know my colleague from Maryland wishes to be heard. I yield the floor.

Sen. Diane Feinstein (D-CA)

Mr. President, I rise today to express my support for the conference report on the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act.

This conference report expands sanctions authorized by the Iranian Sanctions Act of 1996 to foreign companies who sell Iran refined petroleum, support Iran's domestic refining capacity or sell Iran goods, services, or know-how that assist it in developing its energy sector; bans U.S. banks from engaging in financial transactions with foreign banks who do business with Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps or facilitate Iran's nuclear program and its support for terrorism; establishes three new sanctions the President may impose on violators of the Iranian Sanctions Act and requires the President to impose at least three of nine possible sanctions authorized by that act; bans U.S. government procurement contracts to companies that export technology to Iran that inhibits the free flow of information; and authorizes States and local governments to divest from companies involved in Iran's energy sector.

The sanctions will terminate when the President certifies to Congress that Iran is no longer a state-sponsor of terrorism and has ceased efforts to acquire nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons and ballistic missiles and technology.

Let me be clear: I am deeply concerned about Iran's uranium enrichment program and its refusal to abide by United Nations Security Council resolutions calling on Tehran to cease its activities and, once and for all, come clean about its nuclear program.

A nuclear Iran would represent a serious threat to the security of the United States, Israel, and the international community.

The question is, What is the best way to convince Iran to abandon its uranium enrichment program?

During the previous administration, the United States sat on the sidelines and refused to talk to Iran.

We let the United Kingdom, France, and Germany do the hard work of negotiating with Tehran as we remained silent.

And it got us nowhere. Iran's uranium enrichment program accelerated and became more advanced.

We had to try a different approach.

I strongly supported the Obama administration's decision to break with this past and pursue a robust, diplomatic initiative with Iran.

I am disappointed we have not made more progress. Indeed, Iran has taken steps in the wrong direction.

A new, secret enrichment facility at Qom was uncovered.

Iran refused to accept a U.S.-Russian proposal to ship its low enriched uranium to Russia and France for further processing for medical isotopes.

And it continues to drag its feet on revealing to the International Atomic Energy Agency the full extent of its nuclear program.

But the commitment this administration made to diplomacy gave us the leverage we needed to secure the backing for a fourth round of sanctions at the United Nations Security Council.

There was no question that China and Russia were skeptical about additional sanctions.

Securing their support and maintaining the support of our allies required principled, sustained, and deft diplomacy and I congratulate the administration for its success.

Yet I recognize that the U.N. resolution could have been stronger and that unilateral action, such as the sanctions included in this legislation, will complement the U.N. efforts.

And that is why I support passage of this legislation.

Nevertheless, I believe it is critical for the United States to continue to pursue the diplomacy track.

We must develop a "Plan B" to deal with the possibility that Iran's nuclear ambitions progress.

Iran has been able to withstand previous sanctions initiatives and there is no guarantee that this latest round will be more effective.

We know that China and Russia are unlikely to support tougher measures at this time.

Military action is not a ``Plan B". A strike would likely only delay, not destroy, Iran's nuclear program and lead to more violence and instability in the region.

In my view, we must use the passage of the latest U.N. Security Council resolution and passage of this legislation as an opportunity to reach out to Tehran again on a fresh diplomatic initiative, not just on the nuclear program but on other issues where we can find some level of common ground and avenues of cooperation.

Two months ago I had lunch with Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, Mohammad Khazaee, and I was struck by the lack of trust and understanding between our two countries.

If we can find ways to build that trust, we may be able to secure progress on the most intractable issues.

As chair of the Caucus on International Narcotics Control, I strongly suggest that cooperation on counternarcotics efforts is a good place to start.

For example, Iran has suffered greatly from the influx of Afghan opium: based on U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime annual assessments, approximately 140 tons of Afghan heroin enter Iran each year from Afghanistan--105 tons--and from Pakistan--35 tons; the estimated heroin user population in Iran is around 400,000 individuals, consuming, at a rate of about 35 grams per year, almost 14 tons of heroin annually; drug trafficking is considered such a major security threat that the government has spent over US\$600 million to dig ditches, build barriers and install barbed wire to stop well-armed drug convoys from entering the country; and more than 3,500 Iranian border guards have been killed in the past three decades by drug traffickers.

Given that the Iranian drug use epidemic is providing funding for the insurgency in Afghanistan, it seems logical to begin a cooperative dialogue with Iran on this area of mutual concern to build trust between both sides and promote progress on other matters, particularly Iran's nuclear program.

I am hopeful that the passage of this legislation will not cease efforts on a diplomatic solution, but open the door to finding new ways to build trust and understanding between Iran and the international community.

There is no guarantee that we will be successful in convincing Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment program but we have to explore every possible avenue.

I firmly believe that we can still find a solution and work out our differences.

I am hopeful that this legislation will bring us closer to that goal.

I yield the floor.

Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC)

I take the floor today in support of the conference report that has been agreed to by the conferees regarding Iran sanctions. I wish to compliment Senators Dodd, Shelby, Lugar, Kerry, Lieberman and others who were involved in negotiating this compromise.

The Iranian sanctions bill will give the President tools he does not have today that will allow us as a nation to be more forceful when it comes to trying to alter Iranian behavior. I think most people in this body see the Iranian regime up to no good, that the Iranian regime has been oppressing its own people, and they present a great threat in terms of the region and the world at large. They are one of the greatest sponsors of terrorism of any nation in the world. This sanctions legislation, which is bipartisan, will allow the President more tools. It will prevent access to foreign exchange in the United States. It will prevent access to our banking system by people who do business with Iran in unhealthy ways, and it will prevent the purchase of property in the United States in case the Iranians are looking for a place to put their money. We are going to take our banks and our real estate off the table so they cannot use us to profit from their brutal behavior.

It gives the ability to the President to waive these sanctions when it comes to countries that are cooperating with us. The whole goal of this legislation is to empower the administration and our Nation with tools that would create a downside for the Iranian Government to continue to try to develop a nuclear weapon and support terrorist organizations.

I am hopeful this will have some deterrent effect. The United Nations is beginning to act. The European Union, Russia, and China seem to be more helpful to the Obama administration. Anything we can do to help, we will. The idea of trying to get Iran to change its behavior through internal cooperation is a worthy idea to pursue. I hope it works.

Senator Schumer and I offered legislation not long ago that would prohibit companies that do business with the Iranian regime in the area empowering the regime in terms of technology to interfere with the Internet and stop the people of Iran from communicating with each other. That made it into the bill. I want to thank the conferees. What Senator Schumer and I came up with months ago, right after the massacre of the students by the Iranian regime, one of the things that led to this people's revolt in Iran, was the ability to Twitter and talk to each other, use the Internet. The Iranian regime has been trying to suppress the ability of the Iranian people to talk to each other, and we created legislation that told the international community: Any company that empowers this regime to suppress the free flow of information among the Iranian people would lose business when it came to American business. That made it in the bill. I hope that will help.

The Iranian people have had a very difficult time. The election, as seen by the Iranian people and the world at large, of Ahmadinejad has been, quite frankly, a fraud and a joke.

About a year ago, a little over a year ago, a young lady captured international attention and the hearts and minds of the world--I think her name was Neda--who was killed in the streets of Tehran. She was a beautiful young girl who had taken to the streets to try to defy this regime's oppressive behavior.

So as we look at the world here in the middle of June regarding Iran, there is a lot of hope I have that the Iranian people have turned the corner in terms of what they want for their future. We need to be their partner in a constructive way. It is one thing to empower the people, it is another thing to empower the regime that oppresses the people. Some of the sanctions we are proposing would make life difficult for the every-day Iranian, but I think they would welcome that, if it would give them the ability to weaken the regime they no longer tolerate or support.

The sanctions route with Russia and China has potential. If the world will speak with one voice and support President Obama in terms of making the consequences that the Iranian nuclear program is a support of terrorism unacceptable economically, including refined petroleum products, it would be good for the world at large.

Our friends in Israel are very concerned, as they should be, about the way Iran is moving toward supporting Hezbollah and Hamas and other organizations that are bent on the destruction of Israel. A nuclear weapon in the hands of this regime would be a nightmare for the world at large, but it would be horrible for the State of Israel. It is my hope we can avoid that. I hope sanctions work. However, the world must understand that sanctions is a tool to change behavior. It is worthy of our time to try to change behavior with these sanctions.

What is unacceptable is to practice a policy of containment, to accept a nuclear-armed Iran and hope that we contain it. To me that is a folly. That is a scenario that would lead to the unthinkable. If Iran ever does acquire a nuclear weapon, you are not going to contain it. You are going to have a Mideast where other people want a nuclear weapon to hedge their bets against Iran. You will have a world where a regime has a nuclear weapon and could be no better friend of the terrorists than Iran. I think President Clinton, when I was in Israel with him, spoke well of this.

He talked about his biggest fear if Iran got a nuclear weapon. It would not be so much an attack against Israel or our allies as would be it falling into the hands of a terrorist organization that would use it against Israel or our allies. I think President Clinton is correct in being worried about that.

So this is a good day. We cannot agree on much here in Congress. We are in a pretty partisan environment right now. I hope that will pass one day. But when it comes to Iranian sanctions, we came together as a body. We are giving tools to the administration to hopefully change the behavior of this regime. I am proud of our colleagues who negotiated this deal with the House. I am hopeful it will help.

I will conclude with one final thought: Whatever tools it takes to change the behavior of the Iranian Government we need to keep on the table, and the best tool is a peaceful tool. But if military force is ever required to change Iranian behavior, I hope that will be at least considered as the last option, not the first option. I hope we never go down that road. But it may be a road you have to explore if all this fails.

I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

Sen. John Kerry (D-MA)

Mr. President, today, Congress takes an important and forceful step to address one of our most serious national security challenges to America and our allies. A nuclear armed Iran would pose an intolerable threat to our ally Israel, risk igniting an arms race in what is already one of the world's most dangerous regions, and undermine our global effort to halt the spread of nuclear weapons.

These steps to increase pressure are necessary because Iran continues to defy the international community, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the U.N. Security Council. Iran's publicly disclosed stocks at its Natanz enrichment facility now include more than 2,400 kilograms of reactor-grade low enriched uranium. It is especially troubling that Iran has recently begun enriching small quantities of uranium to a concentration of around 20 percent, crossing yet another nuclear threshold.

That is why, as part of a comprehensive and international effort to persuade Iran to alter its current dangerous course, we in Congress have worked together to pass tough new sanctions that will increase the cost that Iran must pay for its continued defiance. In particular, this legislation targets businesses involved in refined petroleum sales to Iran, support for Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps, and Iran's nuclear program. It imposes strong penalties on those in the Iranian government who have abused the rights of their own people. It tightens the enforcement of those sanctions already on the books. And it takes important steps to ensure that companies receiving U.S. Government contracts are not also doing business that enables, directly or indirectly, Iran's nuclear program.

This cannot be an American effort alone and, thankfully, it isn't. Our own efforts are now joined by U.N. Security Council Resolution 1929, as well as a range of follow-on efforts from European and other allies. It is very important that we work to ensure that all of these efforts are coordinated into a comprehensive strategy--and I am confident that we have done so.

As we implement these new sanctions, expanding and preserving a muscular international effort must remain a priority. The joint explanatory statement accompanying the act suggests that, before exercising the 4(c)(B) waiver, a determination of sanctionability must be made. We understand that some may believe that the closely cooperating waiver may be available without a determination having been made. While different from the views in the joint explanatory statement, we accept that this may be a fair reading of the obligations under section 4(c)(B).

In the face of a serious threat, Congress has put aside bipartisan divisions to act decisively. Even as we negotiated the details, we were united by a common goal: to bring maximum leverage to bear on Iran to change its behavior and abandon its nuclear weapons ambitions.

It is important to note that the President's willingness to explore a diplomatic solution is a crucial reason why today it is Iran--not those who seek to pressure Iran--who is isolated. Recent experience suggests that neither sanctions nor engagement alone will convince Iran to abandon its nuclear program. Only by combining both pressure and diplomacy into a comprehensive and coordinated strategy will we have a chance at altering Iran's behavior.

Finally, we do not seek to punish the people of Iran, but to persuade the Iranian regime to do what is in their best interests and the world's. These sanctions bring us one step closer to peacefully resolving this grave threat.

Sen. Jon Kyl (R-AZ)

Mr. President, I wish to speak on the Iran sanctions conference report which I assume we will be approving in a matter of a few minutes. This is a very important event in the Congress and could play a very significant role in the history of our country. I support the conference report. It is designated as H.R. 2194. I reiterate, I believe it is crucial that the Senate approve the conference report and that the President sign it into law as soon as possible. I fully predict both of those things will occur.

Let me mention three of the most important provisions of the bill so we know what it does. It deals with sanctions against Iran. There are two reasons: No. 1, to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear capability, and No. 2, to support the aspirations of the people of Iran for a more representative government.

What the bill does first is to expand the scope of existing sanctions against companies that invest in Iran's energy sector, and it includes measures to punish firms that export gasoline to Iran. We would think a country such as Iran would have plenty of gasoline, but they do not have refinery capacity to create the finished product which their people must use. So something on the order of at least 40 percent of their gasoline has to be imported. Because of this heavy dependence on imported gasoline, it is vulnerable to outside pressure, and that is why this particular sanction is an important step. By putting a squeeze on Iran's gas supplies and dissuading energy firms from investing in the country, we can hopefully force the Iranian regime to make difficult decisions about its finances, thereby further increasing its unpopularity.

Second, the bill limits nuclear cooperation agreements between the United States and countries which sell illicit materials to Iran. It also limits licenses under any such current agreements. A country that allows its citizens or companies to provide equipment or technologies or materials to Iran that make a material contribution to its nuclear

capabilities should not benefit from nuclear cooperation with the United States, and we make it clear that won't be permitted under this provision.

The third thing the bill does is it includes the so-called McCain language that requires the President to compile a list of Iranian officials, specific people who have brutalized the Iranian people, and to impose sanctions against those particular individuals identified as human rights violators. The administration can use the new authority it is given in this legislation to publicly identify those people in the Iranian Government who are actually responsible for perpetrating human rights violations in Iran since the fraudulent elections in June of 2009. It can hold these people accountable through these targeted sanctions. The measure also requires that such persons be subject to restrictions on financial and property transactions. It also makes such persons ineligible for U.S. visas.

We can see there is a broad array of targeted kinds of sanctions that, combined, could have a significant impact on our policy with Iran.

While I am pleased that the conferees concluded their work and the legislation is here on the floor, I do wish to note in passing that it is long overdue. At the request of the administration, Congress has repeatedly delayed action on bilateral sanctions legislation. Because sanctions take time to work, we have given up some time here.

In some respects, we have wasted too much time waiting for the United Nations to finally act, as it eventually did earlier this month. The U.N. Security Council resolution, however, will do very little to slow down or stop Iran's nuclear weapons program or even prevent its support for terrorism around the world. Its provisions--the bulk of them--are voluntary. They don't deal with Iran's energy sector. This is primarily because of the demand of the Chinese Government. It also excludes Russia's cooperation with Iran on the Bushehr powerplant as well as the sale by Russia of the S-300 missile system to Iran, a very modern and effective anti-aircraft system which could certainly play a role in defending Iran against an attack on its nuclear facilities.

In addition, the divided vote of the Security Council displays to Iran that the world is not united in dealing with its illicit conduct. In fact, I argue that, in a way, we are in a worse position than we were 18 months ago when the President started his diplomacy in dealing with Iran. Up to then, all of the resolutions that had been passed against Iran had been unanimous. This one was not unanimous. In some respects, we have lost ground.

It is clear that the President's effort to get the Iranian regime to negotiate for that 18-month period did not achieve anything except allow the Iranians more time to develop their weaponry. The U.S. sanctions resolution is not going to be very effective in going any further than that, in my view, nor will the European Union add much to the U.N. resolution, although they will add something.

Before I conclude, let me ponder for a second a question others have asked, which is, How important is it that we do everything we can to prevent Iran from acquiring a

nuclear weapon? What would happen if it did acquire a nuclear weapon? What would be the big deal?

Imagine a world in which Iran does have a nuclear weapon. Lay aside the fact that we have a picture of the Iranian leader, Ahmadinejad, with a nuclear weapon and just imagine what he would do with that. Would it really be possible to contain a nuclear Iran using conventional deterrence mechanisms?

Some would say: We lived with a nuclear-armed Soviet Union for four decades. It worked with Moscow; why would it not work with Tehran? To some extent, it depends on the definition of "work." Will it work?

Remember that while the Soviets never actually used their nuclear weapons, the fact that they possessed the weapons made a big difference in political events over those 40 years. It allowed them to subjugate Eastern Europe, and we had no way of responding. Had we tried to respond, there was the nuclear threat against us. It allowed them to foment a Communist revolution around the world and to sponsor a range of international terrorist groups during this period of time. When the Soviets invaded Hungary in 1956 in order to crush a democratic uprising, they knew the risk of a nuclear exchange would prevent the United States from responding with military force. I remember at that time the disappointment of the Hungarians who thought the United States had led them to think we would be supportive. In effect, there was nothing we could do that wouldn't potentially provoke a nuclear attack by Russia, and nobody wanted that. In other words, Moscow's nuclear arsenal served as the ultimate deterrent. It allowed the Kremlin to undermine U.S. interests across the globe without fear of an American reprisal. The Soviets didn't need to use their nuclear weapons in order to achieve results; the mere fact that it had nuclear weapons dramatically increased both its strategic power and its leverage over foreign policy and, to some extent, over the United States.

The same would be true if Iran acquired nuclear weapons. Even if the mullahs never actually detonated a nuclear bomb, their acquisition of a nuclear capability would forever change Iran's regional and global influence, and it would certainly forever change the Middle East. If Iran went nuclear, its neighbors--thinking particularly of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey--might feel compelled to pursue their own nuclear arsenals. Tehran could easily trigger a dangerous chain reaction of nuclear proliferation. Once they had nuclear weapons, the Iranians would be much more aggressive in supporting terrorist organizations that are killing even American troops, for example, in Iraq. The Iranians would also ramp up their support for Hezbollah and Hamas and possibly provide them with nuclear materials. They would be emboldened to conduct economic warfare against the West, for example, by disrupting oil shipments traveling through the Straits of Hormuz. Iran would also be more confident about expanding its footprint in Latin America, where it has established a close working relationship with Venezuelan strongman Hugo Chavez. Governments around the world would lose faith in America's reliability as a strategic partner. U.S. credibility would be irrevocably weakened.

Remember, this is not the worst-case scenario. We are assuming that a self-preservation instinct would dissuade the Iranians from ever launching nuclear weapons against our allies or even the United States. But then again, is this really a safe assumption? Iranian leader Ahmadinejad has repeatedly expressed his desire to destroy the State of Israel, and given his radical, millenarian religious views and the viciously anti-Semitic ideology espoused by the Iranian theocracy, we can't simply dismiss the idea that Iran would attack Israel with nuclear weapons.

Because the United Nations took so long to act and because its sanctions are relatively weak, there is also the possibility, as the Jerusalem Post pointed out in an article entitled "Too Little, Too Very Late," that U.N. sanctions could lull the international community into a false sense of security. That is where the action we take today could really help.

Here is what the Post wrote:

Breaking and evading these sanctions--

Talking about the U.S. sanctions-- ought to be a breeze for Ahmadinejad. A full year after Iran's deceptive elections, which spurred countrywide demonstrations, he may be less popular but his position is stable. After the regime brutally quashed his opposition, it is very doubtful that stunted sanctions will destabilize his hold on power. [The U.N.] sanctions are not the antidote to the Iranian nuclear threat that Israel had hoped for and that the free world so badly needs. In some ways, they may even exacerbate Israel's predicament. They will lend the appearance of an international mobilization to curb Iran's nuclear weapons ambitions, but in actuality will achieve nothing--the worst of all worlds.

That is why I think the United States separate sanctions authorized by the legislation we will vote on shortly are so important to come in behind the United Nations sanctions and what the European Union might do to supplement those actions in a way that will truly be meaningful.

Finally, I want to note something that, frankly, is as important as everything else I have said and should be seen as part and parcel to our action in adopting this sanctions legislation. It has nothing to do with nuclear weapons, but it has everything to do with human rights. We need to make it very clear to the Iranian people that we care about them, we care about their aspirations for more freedom, for more representative government, and for the ability to take advantage of the opportunities their country should be presenting for them.

We can help the people of Iran achieve those aspirations by putting pressure on the people who prevent that from occurring, the regime in Tehran, the mullah-led government. These sanctions can have an impact on those mullahs and, in turn, help the Iranian people achieve their goals.

We need to be lending moral and rhetorical support to the Iranian activists. These are the people who poured into the streets last summer in protest of a fraudulent election. Just as

we championed the cause of Soviet and Eastern European dissidents during the Cold War, I believe we should promote the efforts of Iranian freedom fighters and, frankly, shine a spotlight on the regime's brutal repression. That can be done especially through the McCain provisions that are part of the Iran sanctions legislation we are considering.

Had the United Nations imposed strong sanctions on Iran a long time ago when it was first found to be in violation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, I would be more optimistic about our chances of success. Iran's economy would have been under severe strain for an extended period, and the government would have had fewer resources to fund its nuclear program and less power to repress its people.

As I said, there is still time, and because we are able to approve this conference report today and send it to the President for his signature, we are able to add to the sanctions that the rest of the world is willing to impose in such a way as to not only have an opportunity to dissuade the Iranian leaders from pursuing their nuclear program but, as I said, just as importantly, to demonstrate to the Iranian people we aim to support them in their quest for greater freedom.

So I hope my colleagues will send a very strong message with a unanimous vote for the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2009. I hope the President will sign this legislation immediately and begin to implement its provisions.

Mr. President, there is a long list of folks to thank: Representatives BERMAN and HARMAN and CANTOR in the House of Representatives are just some who come to mind; Senator Lieberman and Senator Bayh, colleagues in the Senate; the leaders, Leader Reid and Leader McConnell, who have worked to bring this report to us for a vote today in an expedited way. I think this is a very good example of cooperation both between the House and the Senate and between Democrats and Republicans to accomplish something that is not just good for the people of the United States of America but people around the world--in the Middle East, and in particular the people of Iran.

So I urge my colleagues to unanimously support the conference report when we have an opportunity to vote on it shortly.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

Sen. Carl Levin (D-MI)

Mr. President, the conference report before us today attempts to deal with one of the most important and difficult national security challenges we face: the Islamic Republic of Iran--a country whose leaders disregard international norms, abuse the rights of their own people, support terrorist groups, and threaten regional and global stability.

Iran's continued refusal to be open and transparent about its nuclear program jeopardizes the security of its neighbors and other countries in the Middle East. There is a strong, bipartisan determination in this Congress to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

President Obama has focused considerable effort towards that goal. He has said "the long-term consequences of a nuclear-armed Iran are unacceptable" and that he doesn't "take any options off the table with respect to Iran." I support that view, and if Iran pursues a nuclear weapon, all options, including military options, should be on the table.

The United States and the international community remain committed to trying to solve these especially difficult problems peacefully. The administration has sought through a variety of means to engage the government of Iran and make clear the benefits to their nation and its people if Iran complies with international norms. Through six U.N. Security Council resolutions, the latest passed just this month, along with numerous U.S. laws and executive orders, the United States has sought, unilaterally and with our international partners, to persuade Iran to abide by its international obligations. The goal of all these actions has been to make Iran understand in practical terms the consequences of its actions.

So far, Iran has refused to listen. That is why the conference report we consider today is so important. If we are to resolve our differences with Iran, hopefully without resorting to military action, we must exhaust every opportunity to make clear, without any room for doubt, the price Iran will pay for its continued violations of U.N. resolutions.

The measure before us will sanction Iran for its willful misbehavior, and it will penalize multinational firms that support Iran. More specifically, it will sanction firms that sell Iran refined petroleum or refining products, or goods, services or information that help it develop its energy sector; ban U.S. banks from transacting with foreign financial institutions that do business with Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, an organization that combines a key component of Iran's military establishment with an extensive business empire that represses Iran's citizens; broaden sanctions available under the Iran Sanctions Act by adding to the menu of available sanctions a ban on access to foreign exchange in the United States, a ban on access to the U.S. financial sector and a ban on U.S. property transactions; ban companies that assist Iran in blocking the free flow of information or restricting its citizens' freedom of speech from contracting with the U.S. Government, and require that companies bidding on U.S. Government contracts certify that they and their subsidiaries do not engage in sanctionable conduct; and strengthen the U.S. trade embargo against Iran by putting into law longstanding executive orders and limiting the goods exempted from the embargo.

While passage of this conference report--just like the U.N. Security Council's passage of Resolution 1929 on Iran--is important, it is critical that this law be implemented vigorously. It also will be critical that the U.N. panel created by Security Council Resolution 1929 is active in its efforts to identify non-compliance of any U.N. member states. Iran's continued unwillingness to disclose fully and completely information about its nuclear program surely means that Iran is either pursuing a nuclear weapon or preserving options to develop a nuclear weapon. It is only from full implementation of this law and pressure from the international community that Iran may be dissuaded from this course.

The measures contained in this conference report would exact a real price from Iran for its continuing threats to international peace and security. Only by forcing Iran to pay such a price, and by penalizing the abettors of Iran's actions in violation of U.N. resolutions, can we bring Iran into compliance with its responsibilities under international law and human rights standards.

Sen. Joe Lieberman (D-CT)

Mr. President, the Senate has now turned its attention to the conference report on the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions Accountability and Divestment Act of 2010.

It is a very significant piece of legislation, an excellent conference report that holds some hope of being effective and as important as anything. It is totally bipartisan which, as we know, does not happen here every day. It speaks to the unity of Members of Congress and the American people on the threat represented by the nuclear weapons development program of Iran.

More than a year ago, Senator Jon Kyl of Arizona, Senator Evan Bayh, and I joined to introduce the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act. Over the course of last year, more than three-quarters of the Members of the Senate decided to cosponsor our bill. The core provisions of that legislation have now been incorporated into this conference report. To me that means that today, as a body, we have the opportunity to reaffirm the overwhelming bipartisan support for Iran sanctions that exists in Congress and, by doing so, send an unambiguous and united message of determination and strength to the fanatical anti-American regime in Tehran.

It was my privilege to serve on the conference committee that produced the legislation that is before us. This bill, when enacted, will be the most powerful and comprehensive package of sanctions against the current regime in Iran that has ever been passed by Congress. I am tremendously grateful to the leadership of the conference cochairs, beginning with my senior colleague and dear friend for so long, Senator Christopher Dodd of Connecticut and, on the House side, a great legislator and leader, Congressman Howard Berman of California. These two guided this critically important legislation to the point we are at now, which is the verge of passage by both Houses of Congress.

I also want to say how grateful I am to the majority and Republican leaders of the Senate, Senators Reid and McConnell, for their steadfast bipartisan leadership in ensuring we adopt this time-sensitive legislation as soon as possible. Particularly, the goal was before July 4. I hope and believe the Senate will pass this legislation today, and the House of Representatives will do the same shortly thereafter, maybe even before. I also hope and believe President Obama will then sign the bill into law.

Just as importantly, it is critical that the Obama administration forcefully and proactively implement the provisions of this legislation once it becomes law. The measures imposed by this conference report, together with the sanctions adopted at the United Nations and by like-minded nations, including particularly our allies in Europe and around the world,

offer our last best hope of peacefully preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability and thereby making our world much more dangerous than it is today. The stakes for our security are great, and time is of the essence.

It is also critical that the Obama administration quickly makes use of these new authorities provided by this legislation, particularly the new authority to cut off foreign banks from the U.S. financial system, if they continue doing business with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, its front companies, and designated Iranian banks. We are, in this legislation, when implemented, giving foreign banks a choice. Do they want to do business in the United States or do they want to continue to do business with the fanatical regime in Iran? Our government must investigate and then impose sanctions--and I will use Secretary Clinton's words, ``crippling sanctions"--on those foreign companies that prop up the Iranian regime by continuing to invest in its energy sector or by exporting refined petroleum products to Iran.

This legislation gives the administration a strong new opportunity to make clear also that America is on the side of the Iranian people, the brave Iranian people who are struggling against the repressive regime in Tehran. What the administration can do is use the new authority it is given in this legislation to publicly identify those individuals in the Iranian Government responsible for perpetrating human rights violations in Iran since the June 12, 2009 election and holding those people accountable for those abuses through targeted sanctions.

It is always important to remember--and we have seen this throughout history--that a nation that represses the rights of its own people is much more likely to be a nation that will be a danger to the people and countries in its neighborhood and, with modern weapons, intercontinental ballistic missiles, nuclear weapons, ultimately, the people of the entire world.

I am pleased that this provision on human rights in Iran is in this sanctions legislation, because I believe history has shown that America's foreign policy is always at its best and most effective when we are true to the fundamental human values that defined our Nation at its birth and at our best ever since--the self-evident truth that all people are created equal and endowed by our Creator with those equal rights to life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The people of Iran are denied those rights by their own government. We are saying in this legislation that that ought to be also, as well as the support of their nuclear weapons program, a sanctionable offense.

I hope and pray the combined sanctions--U.N., EU, and now U.S.--will change the mindset, the calculations of the Iranian regime. But we must also recognize that every day that passes brings Iran closer to the point of nuclear no return and greatly increases the danger and insecurity throughout the Middle East and throughout the world. With every day that passes, the Iranians enrich more uranium and their stockpile of fissile material grows. Ultimately, we must do whatever is necessary to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons capability.

Almost everybody--really everybody I have heard speak on this subject--regardless of party or position in the American Government, makes that statement. It is unacceptable to the United States and the world for Iran--this fanatical state, this rogue state--to acquire nuclear weapons capability, and we must do whatever is necessary to prevent this from happening--through peaceful and diplomatic means, if we possibly can; through military force, if we absolutely must.

Iran must not be allowed to become a nuclear power. That is the bottom line. That is precisely why I am so grateful and proud and hopeful, as we take up and--I am confident--adopt this conference report and this legislation today.

Sen. John McCain (R-AZ)

Mr. President, I congratulate the Senator from Maryland on her good remarks and her continued advocacy for human rights throughout the world.

I rise to speak on behalf of the legislation before us--the Iran Sanctions Accountability and Divestment Act. It has been a long time in the works, and a lot of Members and staff have put a tremendous amount of work into it, and I appreciate that commitment. This is an important piece of legislation. It comes at a critically important time.

Despite a year and a half of engagement, the Iranian Government continues to respond to the President's outstretched hand with an unclenched fist. The regime continues to support terrorism and violent Islamic extremist groups that are destabilizing governments and societies in the region. It continues to race toward a nuclear weapons capability, in full violation of its international agreements and contrary to the repeated demands of the community of civilized nations. Beyond all of this, the Iranian regime, now more than ever, continues to brutalize and oppress its own people, denying them their most basic human rights.

This bill represents the most powerful sanctions ever imposed by the Congress on the Government of Iran. It will target industries--especially Iran's energy sector--that help to sustain the Iranian regime's pursuit of nuclear weapons. The bill will create significant new incentives for multinational companies to divest from the Iranian economy. Because of this legislation, we will be posing a choice to companies around the world: Do you want to do business with Iran or do you want to do business with the United States? We don't think that is much of a choice, but we will force companies to make it. They can't have it both ways.

I didn't wish to confine our sanctions efforts only to those persons in Iran who threaten our security and that of our allies. I also wanted to bring the full force of America's economic power to bear against those in Iran who threaten that country's peaceful human rights and democracy advocates. That is why, earlier this year, my good friend Senator JOE LIEBERMAN and I joined with a broad bipartisan group of Senators to cosponsor legislation to create a new regime of targeted sanctions against human rights abusers in Iran. The provisions of our legislation have been included in this comprehensive

sanctions legislation, and I would like to thank the conferees and the leaders of both parties for agreeing to include it.

Our part of this comprehensive sanctions bill has two parts:

First, it will require the President to compile a public list of individuals in Iran who--starting with the fraudulent Presidential election last June--are responsible for or complicit in human rights violations against Iranian citizens and their families no matter where in the world those abuses occur. It doesn't matter whether these individuals are officials in the Iranian Government or serving as their agents in paramilitary groups and other bands of thugs; we will find and uncover them all. I want to stress that this will be a public list, posted for all the world to see on the Web sites of the State Department and Treasury Department. We will shine a light on Iran's human rights abusers. We will publish their names and their faces, and we will make them famous for their crimes.

Second, this bill will then ban these Iranian human rights abusers from receiving visas and impose on them the full battery of sanctions under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act--that means freezing any assets and blocking any property they hold under U.S. jurisdiction and ending all of their financial transactions with U.S. banks and other entities. These provisions mark the first time the U.S. Government has ever imposed punitive measures against persons in Iran because of their human rights violations. In short, under this legislation, Iranian human rights abusers will be completely cut off from the global reach of the U.S. financial system, and that will send a powerful signal to every country, company, and bank in the world that they should think twice about doing business with the oppressors of the Iranian people.

It also sends an unequivocal and powerful message to the people in Iran who are demonstrating and working peacefully for their human rights that we share their interests and their struggles. We are not simply focused on the regime's nuclear program, although that remains a key concern, nor are we solely focused on the regime's support for terrorism, although that too remains a high priority. We are also making the human rights of Iran's people an equal priority of our government.

Now more than ever, it is urgent and essential that we support the peaceful aspirations of the Iranian people. One year ago, the conventional wisdom in the West held that the prospect for political evolution in Iran was dim and distant. But, as it often is, that conventional wisdom was utterly wrong. After the Iranian people were denied their right to a free and fair election, the world watched in awe as a sea of protestors--by some estimates, as many as 3 million Iranians--swelled in the streets all around the country. Ordinary Iranians realized they could not remain neutral in the struggle for human rights in their country, and they became part of it. As a result, history was made before our very eyes. One year ago, democratic change in Iran looked rather improbable. Just 1 week later, it looked virtually inevitable.

Unfortunately, the ensuing crackdown has been and continues to be as swift as it is brutal. Peaceful protestors have been attacked in the streets by masked agents of the

Iranian regime, then dragged away to the darkest corners of cruelty. Many have been raped and worse. Many of Iran's best and brightest have been forced to flee in fear from the land they love and to seek asylum in places such as Iraq and Turkey, where they remain today as refugees. We have all read the desperate pleas of terrorized Iranians as they shout for help through whatever cracks they continue to try to make in Iran's government-censored Internet. And, of course, on June 20 of last year, the entire world watched as a young woman named Neda bled to death in the streets of Tehran. On that day, I believe we witnessed the beginning of the end of this offensive government in Iran.

The past year's events have demonstrated the true character of Iran's people: proud, talented, the stewards of a great culture, eager to engage with the world, and relentless in their quest for justice--and a nation that should be a natural ally of the United States.

The past year's events have also highlighted the true character of the Iranian regime: a violent and militarized tyranny, self-serving and unconcerned with the welfare of Iran's people, with no shred of legitimacy left to justify its rule.

Anymore, we cannot separate the behavior of Iran's government from its character. After all, is it any wonder that a regime that has no regard whatsoever for the rights, the dignity, the very lives of its own people would also show the same blatant disregard for its own international agreements, for the sovereignty and security of its neighbors, and for the responsibilities of all civilized nations? And is it any wonder that this Iranian regime has been and will always be uncompromising in its pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability--not just because it would be a source of power in the world but perhaps more importantly because it would be a source of safety and survival for its corrupt, unjust system at home.

My friends, I believe that when we consider the many threats and crimes of Iran's Government, we are led to one inescapable conclusion: It is the character of this Iranian regime, not just its behavior, that is the deeper threat to peace and freedom in our world and in Iran. Furthermore, I believe it will only be a change in the Iranian regime itself--a peaceful change, chosen by and led by the people of Iran--that could finally produce the changes we seek in Iran's policy.

Even now, though, we hear it said again that Iran's democratic opposition has been beaten into submission. And I would not deny that a regime such as this one, which knows no limits to its ruthlessness, will achieve many of its goals for now. But when Iran's rulers are too afraid of their own people to tolerate even routine public demonstrations on regime holidays, as they recently have been, that is not a government that is succeeding. It is a cabal of criminals who understand that their morally bankrupt regime is now on the wrong side of Iranian history.

The question we must answer is, What side of Iranian history are we on? We must also ask ourselves another question: Is the goal of our sanctions and those of our friends and allies to persuade Iran's rulers to finally sit down and negotiate in good faith, to stop pursuing nuclear weapons, supporting terrorism, and abusing their own people? I truly

hope this is possible, but that assumption seems totally at odds with the character of this Iranian regime.

For that reason, I would suggest a different goal: to mobilize our friends and allies and like-minded countries, both in the public sphere and the private sector, to challenge the legitimacy of this Iranian regime and to support Iran's people in changing the character of their government--peacefully, politically, on their own terms, and in their own ways.

Of course, the United States should never provide its support where it is unrequested and unwanted, but when young Iranian demonstrators write their banners of protest in English, when they chant "Obama, Obama, are you with us or are you with them?" that is a pretty good indication that we can do more, and should do more, to support their just cause.

We need to stand up for the Iranian people. We need to make their goals our goals, their interests our interests, their work our work. We need a grand national undertaking to broadcast information freely into Iran and to help Iranians access the tools to evade their government's censorship of the Internet. We need to name and shame, pressure and even penalize any company that sells Iran's government the tools it uses to oppress its people and block their access to information. We need to let the political prisoners in Iran's gruesome gulags know they are not alone, that their names and their cases are known to us and that we will hold their torturers and tormenters accountable for their crimes.

Finally, we need the administration to use the new authorities this bill creates to impose crippling sanctions on Iranian human rights abusers--to go after their assets, their ability to travel, and their access to the international financial system.

If there were ever any doubt, the birth of the Green Movement over the past year should convince us that Iran will have a democratic future. That future may be delayed for a while, but it will not be denied. Now is the time for the United States to position ourselves squarely on the right side of Iranian history. The Green Movement lives on. Its struggle endures, and I am confident that eventually--maybe not tomorrow or next year or even the year after that--eventually Iranians will achieve the democratic changes they seek for their country. The Iranian regime may appear intimidating now, but it is rotting inside. It has only brute force and fear to sustain it, and Iranians won't be afraid forever.

I am pleased we have finally finished this important piece of legislation. I am pleased it contains tough, targeted human rights sanctions. I urge my colleagues on a bipartisan basis to pass this bill.

Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY)

Mr. President, I rise to briefly comment on the Iran sanctions conference report, which we will be voting on shortly.

I am pleased with the bill before the Senate, as I have been urging enactment of this legislation for some time. I brought it up with the President on numerous occasions over the last 6 to 8 months. I cosponsored it in the last Congress and in the current one.

Congress has been slow to act as the Iranian program to enrich uranium has progressed.

Iran has also taken advantage of the delay to blunt the impact of this measure.

Just today a headline in the Washington Post read that "Iran is prepared for fuel sanctions."

But this legislation should be viewed as only a part of a broader, comprehensive effort by the U.S. to harness the various means of national power to ensure that Iran does not secure a nuclear weapon.

As President Obama has stated, Iran's "development of nuclear weapons would be unacceptable".

We must work with our allies in the gulf to make clear to Iran that the cost of developing a weapon exceed the prestige they think they would gain from acquiring this capability.

First and foremost, the sanctions in this legislation need to be implemented and implemented quickly, not waived.

The time for further delay is past.

The collective strength of the recent U.N. Security Council resolution and this conference report must be combined to strike at Iranian shadow companies and the regime's leaders.

The need for urgency should be obvious because the threat posed to the U.S. and its allies by the revolutionary Iranian regime is grave. Its president has called for Israel to be wiped off the map. An Iranian nuclear weapon threatens to set off an arms race in the Middle East, and embolden the regime in its support of terrorist groups.

Passage of Iranian sanctions is an important first step, but only a first step.

I agree with the President that the U.S. and our allies must make clear to Iran that the development of a nuclear weapon is unacceptable.

That is why I urge passage of this conference report and all other necessary measures to deter the Iranian regime.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ)

Mr. President, I rise today in strong support of this conference report for robust sanctions against Iran. I was proud to serve with, among others of my colleagues, Senator Dodd, on the conference committee. I want to recognize the hard work he has done to create a strong sanctions bill.

These sanctions, I believe, will deter the threat Iran poses to U.S. national security because of its suspected nuclear weapons program. A country that has huge oil reserves clearly does not need nuclear power for nuclear energy. Therefore, the difference between its stated goals and its actions creates, I believe, a threat to the national security of the United States.

I have been eager for today's vote. During the process of the conference committee, I have advocated for the strongest sanctions possible.

I believe deeply that we must apply maximum pressure to the Iranian regime, that it is a growing threat to the region, the world, and a threat to its own people. In my view, tightening the screws on the Iranian regime genuinely advances the cause of stability and peace in the Middle East as well as our own national security. These sanctions are an essential means to that end.

I have seen what the United Nations has done, and I am glad we got some multilateral response. But, in my view, they are not strong enough. That is why I think it is essential that we continue to lead many of our allies, who will be more robust in their actions if we pass this legislation today.

In my view, it is essential that we freeze the assets of Iranian officials who have supported terrorism--with this legislation we will do that--that we impose sanctions against companies that engage in oil-related business with the Iranian regime--and with this legislation we will do that--that we monitor Iran's usage of energy-related resources other than refined petroleum, especially ethanol, to ensure Iran is not allowed to replace its current petroleum needs with ethanol which would, in essence, severely undercut the intent behind these sanctions. So I am glad we have pushed for language that will follow that.

We need the ban on trade with Iran to be strong, to be significant, and to be airtight. We need to press the Iranian Government to respect its citizens' human rights and freedoms, to identify Iranian officials responsible for violating those rights and impose financial penalties and travel restrictions on these human rights abusers.

We need to prohibit the U.S. Government from contracting with those companies that export communication-jamming or monitoring technology to Iran. We simply cannot allow the regime to restrict communications between Iranians and between Iran and the outside world as happened during the postelection protests.

We clearly see there is a desire among the average Iranians to be able to change the nature of their lives. We saw those willing to risk their freedom, willing to risk their lives. We cannot have the U.S. Government contracting with those companies that export communication-jamming or monitoring technology to Iran that in essence allows the regime to do exactly that.

We need to ban trade with Iran with exceptions for the export of food, medicines, humanitarian aid, and the exchange of informational materials.

There is something I included in the Senate bill before it went to conference, and I am glad to see it is largely still in the legislation we will vote on today. We needed targeted sanctions against the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, its supporters and affiliates, and any foreign governments that provide the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps with support.

I am pleased to see this report will ban U.S. banks from engaging in financial transactions with foreign banks that do business with the Revolutionary Guard or facilitate Iran's illicit nuclear program. The Revolutionary Guard has now spread like a cancer throughout Iranian society, and it is involved in almost everything in Iran. We need to specifically target the IRGC, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, and this legislation does that.

The robust sanctions against the Iranian regime that I will vote for today, and that I helped fashion, are a positive and necessary step to increase pressure on Iran so the regime fully understands the world will not only not tolerate its deceit and deception any longer, but it cannot tolerate its march to nuclear power and ultimately nuclear weapons. I will vote for these sanctions because they are robust, because they are in our national security interests and in the interests of the region and the world.

I hope my colleagues, on a strong bipartisan basis, will join in casting similar votes because when we do, we send a message, No. 1, to the administration that there is, I hope, near unanimous support for the type of sanctions we are advocating that strengthens the hand of the President as he deals with other countries in the world, as he deals in the international forum, and it sends a clear message to Ahmadinejad that the United States is serious about stopping its march to nuclear weaponry.

With that, I yield the floor.

Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD)

Mr. President, I rise to support the passage of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions conference report.

Mr. President, you know me. I am a plain and a straight talker, so I am not going to use the flowery language of diplomacy or Senate speak on a lot of the language. I am going to say this in plain English.

Today, if you want to improve the safety and security of the United States of America, you want to pass this bill. If you want to make sure we ensure the safety and security of our allies in the Middle East, you want to pass this bill. If you want to identify who is one of the major enemies of the United States and our allies, it is Iran.

If one looks at the world, peace in the Middle East lies not through Jerusalem but lies through Tehran. What does Tehran do? Tehran funds Hamas, which is causing untold heartbreak and bloodshed in Gaza. No. 2, it funds Hezbollah, funding untold terrorist activity in the north of Israel and in Lebanon. No. 3, it is also working to develop nuclear weapons. We do not want Iran to have nuclear weapons.

What has Iran been doing over the last several years? They have had a record of denial and deception in developing nuclear weapons, in processing weapons-grade uranium. They have also been developing the method for delivering nuclear weapons, the so-called Shahab-3 ballistic missile. It is capable of striking Israel, U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, and even parts of Europe. We do not want Iran to continue to develop nuclear weapons.

We have been down this road before. And people say: Right, let's stop them, let's go to the U.N., hoo-ha for the U.N. We have done hoo-ha with the U.N. We have had several sanctions. We had one most recently passed that our administration worked very hard on, and we thank our allies for that. But the U.N. sanctions, though a good first step, are quite tepid. They are tepid because there are other members of the Security Council who want to keep doing that business with Iran. You might want to do business with Iran, but Iran has no business developing nuclear weapons.

The United States, therefore, has to pass these unilateral sanctions. That is why I support them. It is the United States, the indispensable Nation, that can come up with the muscle to be able to do this.

This is a very serious matter. If Iran continues to develop these weapons, it is going to destabilize the world. First of all, it emboldens the regime that is currently in power. That regime is no friend to peace, it is no friend to stability, it is no friend to us or our allies.

Second, a nuclear Iran would destabilize pro-western Arab states. Those states with strong ties to the United States are apprehensive about Iran continuing to develop nuclear weapons capability.

Also, nuclear arms and missiles could pose a major threat to the United States. A nuclear Iran would spur in the region a nuclear arms race, and it would end a lot of our antiproliferation efforts.

These sanctions are absolutely important. I think they are very creative, and I think they go right to the heart of the Iranian leadership's pocketbook.

One of the most creative aspects of this legislation is the sanctions on Iran's petroleum industry. Iran has oil wells, but it does not have a major refining capacity. It imports over 40 percent of its gasoline.

This legislation in this bill that targets refined petroleum products I believe could have a crippling effect. With its importation of 40 percent gasoline and the need for them to have enormous subsidies to keep gasoline low with their population will be very effective.

It also targets Iran's banking system. Essentially, it says it requires foreign financial institutions to choose between doing business with Iran or doing business with U.S. banks. Make your choice. If you think the future lies with doing business with Iran, that is one view. But if you see your future doing business with U.S. banks, I think the path is clear, and they will choose the safety and security and reliability of doing business in the United States.

I also like the fact that it strengthens the prohibitions on activities on the nuclear program.

What was also spoken about--and I salute my colleague from Arizona for also insisting on this--is the support for human rights in Iran.

We all remember that awful day when this wonderful, heroic young woman who wanted to engage in the civic activities in her own country--Neda--was gunned down in her own country by her own people. Recently, I watched a very telling and poignant documentary about Neda and the dissidents in Iran. What a wonderful group of young people there is in that country. Wow, wouldn't we like to see them flourish? Wouldn't we like to see a modern Iran that joins the community of nations, promoting peace, stability, increased literacy, and opportunity in that country?

I am for those human rights' people. I am not only going to mourn Neda as a symbol, but I think the way we can mourn Neda is to back the people like her in Iran. And I really do support this human rights activity by imposing travel restrictions and financial penalties on those who crack down on human rights in Iran.

Some countries on the Security Council, as I said, are more concerned about their relationships with Iran for investment purposes. We have to start thinking about investing in the safety and stability of the world.

I urge the passage of this Comprehensive Iran Sanctions Act, and I say this is a good and important step. And those who vote for it--and we are going to do it on a bipartisan basis because when we do that, we govern the best--are also going to have to stand ready to really have a very muscular and aggressive approach to the enforcement of these sanctions.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to minimize the opportunity for Iran to continue to get its nuclear weapons and to practice its denial and deception, to promote a free and open Iran, to stand with the dissidents, and to promote

human rights. Let's look for a more modern Iran in the 21st century. They have a great history. I want them to have a great future and to join the community of nations in a nonproliferation environment and work for the good of us all.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV)

Mr. President, the world has watched as Iran has oppressed its own people, violated United Nations resolutions, challenged America, and threatened Israel.

The Senate is taking an important step forward today as we pass the conference report that will impose tough new sanctions on Iran. We are passing these sanctions because we believe we must stop Iran from developing a nuclear weapon--a weapon that would surely threaten the national security of the United States and Israel. Our goal is to target Iran where it would hurt the regime the most. These new economic sanctions are related to Iran's refined petroleum sector and international financial institutions that do business

The Senate has worked hard to pass this legislation. I thank Senator Dodd, who worked tirelessly with Senator Kerry and the other conferees to get the final version of the bill completed. I also thank a man who came to the House of Representatives with me years ago, HOWARD BERMAN, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, who led the effort on the other side of the Capitol.

Once these sanctions become law, they will expand the multilateral sanctions passed by the United Nations and the new sanctions the European Union is discussing. The Senate has a critical role to play by taking clear and decisive action to get the Iranian regime to change its behavior, and we have done that with passage of this conference report. I look forward to its passing later today.

Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY)

Mr. President, I rise today in strong support of the conference report for the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act.

First, I would like to commend Senator Dodd for putting forth a comprehensive plan to arm the administration with the tools they need to put a stop to Iran's rogue nuclear program.

I believe when it comes to Iran, we should never take the military option off the table. But I have long argued that economic sanctions are the preferred and probably the most effective way to choke Iran's nuclear ambitions.

The Obama administration initiated direct diplomatic negotiations with Iran, but that government, led by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, stubbornly refused to suspend their nuclear program despite President Obama's genuine attempts at diplomacy.

Iran's nuclear weapons program represents a severe threat to American national interests because their acquisition of nuclear weapons could lead to the proliferation of nuclear weapons throughout the Middle East and beyond, ending any hopes for a nuclear weapons-free world.

Make no mistake, a nuclear Iran would be destabilizing to its neighbors, encourage terrorism against the United States and Israel, and the risk of both conventional and nuclear war in the Middle East would rise considerably.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has already threatened to "wipe Israel off the map," so we know for a fact that a nuclear Iran would pose a potential threat to our closest ally in the region, the State of Israel.

These tough new sanctions have such overwhelming support because Members of the House and Senate, Democrat and Republican, are united in doing what is necessary to stop Iran's drive to obtain a nuclear weapons capability.

It will also impose sanctions on financial institutions doing business with Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps or with certain Iranian banks blacklisted by the Department of Treasury.

The bill sanctions companies that export gasoline to Iran. This is one of the few pressure points where we can act unilaterally and have a real effect. The world knows Iran does not currently have the refining capacity to meet its domestic gasoline needs and is dependent on imported gasoline. So now is the time to reduce Iran's energy supply if it fails to suspend its nuclear enrichment program.

I am also glad we will be strengthening export controls to stop the illegal export of sensitive technology to Iran. During the recent Iranian elections, we witnessed the Iranian regime go so far as to block the Internet and mobile phone communications of their own citizens.

That is why Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM and I introduced the Reduce Iranian Cyber Suppression Act, or RICA, a bipartisan bill that would bar companies that export sensitive communications technology to Iran from applying for or renewing procurement contracts with the U.S. Government. I am pleased these provisions have been preserved in the conference.

I also applaud the conferees for not carving out companies from countries that are U.S. allies. There must be one standard when it comes to punishing companies that continue to invest in Iran.

So, in conclusion, Chairman Dodd has done an excellent job crafting a comprehensive plan to arm the administration with the tools it needs to put a stop to Iran's rogue nuclear program. I strongly urge my colleagues to support this plan, and I look forward to the

President signing this important legislation. It is a tremendous accomplishment for Congress, and it is going to go a long way to address the real security threat that Iran poses to the United States and our world.

I yield the floor.

Sen. Richard Shelby (R-AL)

Mr. President, I rise today to speak in strong support of the conference report to accompany the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act. I want to thank my colleagues, Chairman Dodd, and House Foreign Affairs Chairman HOWARD BERMAN and Ranking Member ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN for working cooperatively to complete work on this conference report.

There is general agreement that the existing Iran Sanctions Act has not worked either in practice or in its intent to stop Iran's nuclear program or its support of terror. Iran, today, is a more dangerous rogue state than ever before.

Though not a silver bullet, the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act is undoubtedly one of the toughest sanctions measures that Congress has produced and promises to be more effective than current law.

The act continues to prohibit investments of \$20 million in Iran's energy sector, but now we have closed an earlier investment loophole that allowed for sales of petroleum-related goods, services, and technology to Iran.

The act also broadens the categories of transactions that trigger sanctions to include sales to Iran of refined petroleum products and prohibits any assistance to Iran to either increase or maintain its domestic refining capacity.

In addition to the existing menu of six sanctions, we have established three new sanctions on foreign exchange, access to the U.S. banking system, and against property transactions. Under current law, the President must choose two from a menu of six sanctions. He now must impose at least three of the nine sanctions.

Despite dozens of credible reports of investment violations over successive administrations, there has been but one Presidential determination of a violation made 12 years ago. In that particular instance, the President waived the imposition of sanctions.

This act will put an end to that practice. The sanctions regime will now require the President to investigate a report of sanctionable activity and make a determination whether a violation has occurred. That determination must be reported to Congress and if a violation has occurred, the President must impose sanctions or give the specific reasons why a waiver of the sanctions is necessary. Prior law merely authorized a President to investigate. It did not require a President to investigate or make a determination if he chose to investigate.

A brand new mandatory financial sanction imposes severe restrictions on foreign banks doing business with Iranian banks or the IRGC--Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps--and its affiliates, which are increasingly seen to command vital sectors of the Iranian economy.

The act also establishes a legal framework for States and local governments and a safe harbor for fund managers to divest their portfolios of foreign companies involved in Iran's energy sector. We have also created a system to address black market diversion of sensitive technologies to Iran through other countries.

In order to accommodate the President's constitutional authorities in the conduct of foreign affairs, we have had to preserve the prior construct of waivers and exceptions to these sanctions throughout the act. We have tried, however, to give the President as narrow an opening as possible for diplomatic delays. Even though the window for delay remains slightly open, this legislation is a vast improvement over prior law, and ensures that the President must make a determination to impose sanctions or provide Congress with a timely and written rationale for any delays or waivers.

During the conference process, the administration insisted that we include a so-called closely cooperating countries exemption. Such an exemption would spare a country and its firms from any public risk to reputation and imposition of sanctions because an exemption, as opposed to a waiver, allows the country in question to avoid the specter of an investigation altogether.

Instead, an already existing waiver for countries that cooperate with the United States in multilateral efforts to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons technology was modified to give a country and its firms, on a case-by-case basis, more time to cure their behavior.

This waiver for cooperation can only be used, however, after the President first initiates an investigation, makes his determination whether sanctionable activity exists, and then certifies to Congress who would get the waiver. He must then explain exactly what actions that particular government is taking to cooperate with multilateral efforts and why the waiver is "vital to the national security interests of the United States."

Once enacted, this law will allow the Treasury Department to put key companies and countries on notice that the clock is running, investigations are to begin immediately, and there is little room to avoid determinations of potential violations. In other words, there is no place left to hide.

Once again, nothing that we have done in this conference report will curb Iran's nuclear ambitions. But, targeting Iran's oil and gas sectors will certainly raise the stakes for Iran's leaders, perhaps enough for them to consider confining their nuclear ambitions to peaceful uses.

Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-ME)

Mr. President, I rise today in strong support of the conference agreement on H.R. 2194, the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010.

Through both its actions and statements, the government of Iran has proved itself to be a destabilizing and dangerous regime in an already volatile region. The Iranian government's ongoing uranium enrichment program, its deplorable human rights record, and its material support of terrorist organizations dictate that we confront the threat it poses to the world.

Two weeks ago, the United Nations Security Council voted to approve a fourth round of sanctions against Iran, and I commend President Obama and his Administration for working with our partners at the U.N. to send a powerful message about the willingness of the global community to stand firmly in the face of Iranian aggression. However, the specter of an Iran which has the fissile materials necessary to fuel a nuclear weapon is too great a threat to leave entirely to multilateral institutions. The United States and other concerned nations must buttress the U.N. Security Council's actions individually to ensure maximum pressure on the Iranian government.

That is why I am proud to vote today in support of the conference agreement on the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act. The bill before us would impose new economic penalties against foreign companies that sell Iran goods and services that assist it in developing its energy sector, and it would give the President the tools to hold accountable those entities linked to Iran's brutal Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, its illicit nuclear program, or its support for terrorism.

By broadening the categories of transactions that trigger sanctions and increasing the number of sanctions available to the President, this legislation will bolster our diplomatic efforts by targeting the Iranian regime at its weakest point: its economy, which is still highly dependent on its petroleum sector.

Lastly, while this legislation represents a vital step forward in our efforts to constrain the Iranian government's hostile policies, it is absolutely crucial that this Congress work closely with the administration to make certain these new tools are implemented and applied effectively to achieve our objectives. Many of our global partners maintain trade and investment ties with the Iranian regime, and I implore the President and the Secretary of State to utilize this month's growing momentum to ensure the global community is speaking with one voice when it comes to preventing the rise of a nuclear Iran.

I am proud to join my colleagues in the Senate in passing the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act, and I am hopeful this will send a compelling message to the rest of the world as the global community works together to halt Iran's uranium enrichment program.