



Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman
H.R. 2194, the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act of 2009
December 15, 2009

Madame Speaker. Each week brings more disturbing evidence of Iran's nuclear advances, its defiance of UN Security Council demands and its refusal to comply with the requirements of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The latest news, since the revelation earlier this year of an undisclosed nuclear enrichment site in Qom, is Iran's work on technology to set off a nuclear bomb. The regime is already believed to have enough low-enriched uranium available to, with further enrichment create at least one nuclear bomb. Together with its ongoing work on ballistic missiles to deliver a nuclear warhead, Iran could have a nuclear weapon within months.

In an attempt to stop the Iranian program from moving ahead, President Obama has made a concerted effort to engage Iran in direct talks. Together with the permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany, the United States has offered a clear path for Iran to end its status as a pariah state.

So far, Iran remains intransigent. If international concern over the Iranian nuclear program is to be resolved diplomatically, we must increase pressure on Iran to come to the table. The bill before us does exactly that by establishing stringent sanctions to limit Iran's ability to import refined petroleum. It also provides waiver authority that preserves the Obama Administration's flexibility as it moves forward in its diplomatic efforts.

Iran imports up to 40% of its refined petroleum supplies to power cars, planes, factories and other key economic infrastructure. With a disruption in supply, the Iranian government will be forced to grapple with the serious cost of its reckless choices. I regret that the Iranian people, already victims of a tyrannical government, could also face economic repercussions as the result of these sanctions. But I believe it is imperative to do everything possible to bring about a successful diplomatic resolution of this crisis and avert the need for military action.

The danger of a nuclear-armed Iran is only underscored by President Ahmadinejad's unstable regime, its belligerence toward the United States, its calls for the destruction of Israel, its robust support for terror groups like Hamas and Hezbollah and its blatant disregard for its own citizens.

I urge my colleagues to vote yes and take serious action to pressure Iran to change course.