

I rise today as a cosponsor and supporter of H.R. 1327, the Iran Sanctions Enabling Act.

The apparent pursuit of nuclear weapons capability by the Government of Iran cannot be met with silence. Iran's history of concealing its nuclear facilities and programs has rightfully alarmed the international community about Iranian Government's ambitions. The revelation last month of a previously undisclosed uranium enrichment facility under construction near Qom adds to a growing list of deeply troubling actions by the Iranian regime. President Obama stated clearly that this new facility does not appear to be configured for the production of fuel for nuclear power reactors. Iran has a responsibility to fully comply with the International Atomic Energy Agency inspections and to definitively clarify the status and nature of the Qom site.

Unfortunately, the mistrust and skepticism surrounding the Iranian nuclear issue are a result of more than Iran's covert efforts. The provocative and threatening rhetoric that we have come to expect from the President of Iran is cause for great concern both for our allies, such as Israel, and for our own interests in the region. In addition, we have witnessed the Iranian regime carry out brutal acts of violence against Iranian citizens as they gathered peacefully to express their political beliefs. The United States cannot ignore this violation of basic human rights, but neither can we ignore the stark reminder about the potential consequences of a nuclear weapon in the hands of a government that expresses such disregard for the lives and liberties of its own citizens.

Taken together, the Iranian Government's actions are inconsistent with those of a nation seeking peaceful nuclear energy technology. It is incumbent upon the Government of Iran to demonstrate unequivocally to the international community that it is not attempting to cultivate nuclear weapons.

Until the Iranian regime fulfills this responsibility, Iran will face the consequences of noncompliance with this internationally recognized obligation. The provisions of the Iran Sanctions Enabling Act should be part of those consequences. This bill would authorize state and local governments to divest their assets from, and prohibit investment in, any company that invests \$20 million or more in Iran's energy sector. It also protects from legal action any asset managers who choose to divest assets from, or avoid investing in, persons or companies with the same level of financial ties with Iran's energy sector.

These are common sense measures that enable state and local governments or individual U.S. citizens to choose not to allow their financial investments to support companies or persons that contribute to the prosperity and strength of the current Iranian government.

I firmly believe that the United States must do everything in its power to prevent Iran from further destabilizing the Middle East by obtaining a nuclear weapon, and I am encouraged by the Obama administration's vigorous diplomatic efforts to achieve that end. The Iranians should be given credit for their recent tentative agreements to meet international expectations, but these words must be matched with sincere and transparent actions that convince the international community of Iran's peaceful intentions. To that end, I note that the provisions of H.R. 1327 would terminate upon certification by the President that Iran is no longer designated a state sponsor of terrorism and has ceased the pursuit of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. It is my hope that this sunset clause serves as a potent reminder to the Iranian government that while all actions have consequences, the United States always stands ready to match positive actions with positive consequences. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.