are moving democracy forward. But we dare not take our eye off what Iran is doing and is preparing. They are actively pursuing a nuclear weapons program under the nose of the rest of the world, with virtually no real attempt to limit that development.

When you see these statements combined with that, it is a flare that should be going up across the world of what we may be confronted with in the next months or years, with a nuclear bomb. This resolution is a statement that needed to be made. I am glad we passed this resolution. But we need to do more. I have authored a piece of legislation on Iran, which calls for the funding of pro-democracy groups within Iran. Others have offered ideas to provide increased sanctions on Iran.

If you look at people who study the country of Iran and tell you—we had a very good hearing that Senator COBURN chaired a few weeks ago. When you listened to the testimony at that hearing, which I had the opportunity to do for a little while, you hear that the Iranian street is one that is largely sympathetic to the United States and to the cause of freedom and democracy. They are oppressed people. Oppressed people generally do want and seek freedom. So we have, I believe, an opportunity, as we have had opportunities in the past, when we lent our ideas and our encouragement to help develop either exile movements or freedom movements within the countries that are a threat to the region and a threat to our country.

It is important for the Senate to speak out and say we stand with you—those of you who seek freedom, those of you who seek democracy, those of you who do not want to be threatening to your neighbors, or say, as the President of Iran has said, he wants to wipe Israel off the map. We have an obligation in the Senate, and I will be pressing very hard next year to pass my legislation on Iran.

I remember several years ago when Senator BOXER and I introduced legislation on Syria, and we did not get a lot of support in the committee and had trouble on the floor of the Senate. We had trouble at the White House. They were opposed to the bill. Eventually, the administration, the committee, and the Senate came along and we were able to pass the Syria Accountability Act. Literally, within a few months, we saw dramatic changes in Lebanon.

The Syria Accountability Act was a measure that called for Syria to get out of Lebanon and imposed sanctions on Syria for not doing so. The President, to my dismay, in some respects, didn't support it at first. Presidents don't often like Congress telling them what to do when it comes to foreign policy. But this President not only signed the Syria Accountability Act, he implemented the sanctions—a tough regime of sanctions—and it had a tremendous effect. I have had people come over from Lebanon and tell me of the importance of that particular legislation and the symbolism of America standing with the people of Lebanon against the evil dictator in Syria.

The symbolism of us passing this resolution today, and the more than the symbolism of passing the Iran Freedom and Support Act, is an important sign in a time now with these kinds of comments that Iran has popped its head up again—its rather unattractive head—in the area of influencing policy in the Middle East. We tried in this resolution to match the language of the Iranian bill I have introduced with the language, as I said, with this resolution, but unfortunately, we were not able to clear that language. I want to read the changes we had to make in the resolved section of the resolution that were struck as unacceptable for us to be able to pass it by unanimous consent. The portions we had to drop were two resolved sections. The three things that are in the final version that passed say:

Resolved, That the Senate

(1) condemns the recent statement by President Ahmadinejad that denied the occurrence of the Holocaust and supported moving the State of Israel to Europe;

(2) demands an official apology for these damaging, anti-Semitic statements that ignore history, human suffering, and the loss of life during the Holocaust;

(6) reaffirms the need for Iran to

(A) end its support for international terrorism;

(B) join other Middle Eastern countries in seeking a successful outcome of the Middle East peace process.

What was struck were two sentences:

The Senate supports efforts by the people of Iran to exercise self-determination over the form of government of their country.

That was not acceptable to some here in the Senate. And second is:

The Senate supports a national referendum in Iran, with oversight by international observers and monitors, to certify the integrity and fairness of the referendum.

So we could not adopt tonight in the Senate the Senate saying to the people of Iran that we support efforts of self-determination and a national referendum that was free and fair. That is, in my mind, a rather unfortunate occurrence. But I found, from my perspective, that it was so important to condemn these actions that we agreed to strike those two sentences from the resolved clauses. I don't necessarily understand why anyone would oppose either of those sentences, those resolved clauses. They state that we are for freedom and democracy for all people, including the people of Iran. Maybe it is because we are pursuing that and it becomes such an issue of partisan controversy in the country of Iraq—or saying we support that same thing in Iran would somehow taint their criticism of the current mission in Iraq. I don't know. I am still groping for answers as to why those two clauses were not acceptable.

What was not acceptable were the comments and the actions of developing nuclear weapons by the terrorist regime in Iran.

I appreciate my colleagues for agreeing to pass this resolution. I thank all of the cosponsors. There were some 20 cosponsors of this resolution. The first Democrat was Senator MIKULSKI. I also thank my colleague in the chair for his patience and allowing me the opportunity to speak here tonight. He is also a cosponsor of the resolution. No one is a stronger advocate for peace and the mission we are trying to accomplish in the Middle East, and as well for the protection of the state of Israel, than the occupant of the chair. It is a pleasure to have the Senator from Minnesota in the chair while I am delivering these remarks. The Senator from Minnesota is truly one of the great leaders on the Foreign Relations Committee in this regard. I commend him for his efforts. I know he will be working with me on the Iran bill, on which he is a cosponsor, in trying to send a statement from the Senate that Iran is a threat—a real threat—and we need to do something other than simply stand back and jawbone international organizations—feckless international organizations— in some respects, as the Senator from Minnesota knows, corrupt international organizations—to do something that they have shown no desire, willingness, or ability to accomplish, and that is to spread democracy, to lift people out of bondage into freedom.

We in the United States have to begin to take steps. The steps we are talking about in this resolution and the bill we hope to pass next year are not military steps. That is the last resort. But we need to start acting. Sitting silently by, doing nothing as a crazy man as president of a country, potentially developing nuclear weapons in the most sensitive area of the world is not acceptable for the Senate and is not acceptable for this country.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VITTER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

USA PATRIOT ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this morning the Senate voted to continue debating on the conference report on the PATRIOT Act. Clearly, Senators believe we can do better in protecting the privacy of innocent Americans while we fight terrorism. No one seriously believes that the expiring provisions of the PATRIOT Act should be allowed to lapse while this debate continues.

I am disappointed that our distinguished majority leader objected twice to a unanimous consent to extend the expiring provisions of the act for 3 months. I cannot believe that my distinguished friend, the majority leader,

wants these authorities to expire. I do not believe the President of the United States would be willing to let these provisions expire when we all agree they are important tools for our Nation's law enforcement authorities. It would be irresponsible and a dereliction of duty for the administration to allow these provisions to expire. By refusing to reauthorize these parts of the PATRIOT Act, the President and the Republican leadership are playing politics with the American people's safety.

We have bipartisan support for reauthorizing the PATRIOT Act. That was proven in a unanimous vote in the Senate. We want a 3-month extension of the PATRIOT Act in its current form so that we can pass a better bill than the one that came before the Senate today in the form of a conference report, a better bill that will have the confidence of the American people. The American people are afraid. They are afraid of Big Brother. We, this great country, should not become Big Brother. We need more checks in this law to protect the privacy of ordinary American citizens who have nothing to do with terrorism. I support giving the Government the tools it needs to fight terrorism. I voted for the first PATRIOT Act, but we need more oversight and checks to protect against Government overreaching and abuse of these tools.

We have had these years to find out how the first PATRIOT Act worked. We know there were problems with the first PATRIOT Act. We need to correct these problems. Just as Senator MCCAIN persuaded the President, we needed to check potential excesses in interrogation tactics. We also need to ensure that we have put in place checks on the Government's power to trample on the privacy of innocent Americans.

I would hope people would understand that legislation is the art of compromise and that the Republican leadership in the Senate, in the House, and the White House should move to work on a compromise, accept our 3-month suggestion, giving Senators LEAHY and SPECTER, the leaders of our Judiciary Committee, time to work out the differences.

ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Mr. President, I wish to quickly comment on another matter of vital importance to the country. It appears that the majority is strongly considering whether to hold our troops hostage at a time of war in order to sneak in a last minute special interest rider that cannot be passed within the Senate's rules. Senate Democrats support the Defense appropriations conference report, but it would be an egregious abuse of power on behalf of the oil and gas industry to allow the thing we call ANWR to violate the Senate rules and attach a special interest provision in this legislation. Because Republicans cannot get the support for this provision in the House, the Senate would be asked to violate our rules so that the majority can reward its friends in the oil and gas industry.

We had procedures in the Senate where we lost on ANWR. It was placed in a bill called reconciliation. The House stripped it out. We did not. Let us play by the rules.

I do not support ANWR. It is the most important issue in America to the environmental community. There is no issue more important than ANWR. It is a sign of what this country is all about environmentally. If the majority proceeds along this course and is permitted to abuse its power and run roughshod over the Senate rules, there will be no prohibition against exceeding the scope of conference on any conference report. To further show the cynicism of people who are pushing this, they are telling people: Do not worry about it, we will violate the rules today, change precedent, and we will change them right back tomorrow.

This is an abuse of power. It would have far-reaching consequences for this body. It would be a huge mistake for the Senate and the American people. We can do better than that. Let us have a fair fight where we have winners and losers. That is the way ANWR was done. I was disappointed when that was lost, but it was lost fairly and squarely. Do not violate the rules. That is what I tell my friends on the other side.

We realize that with the 45 votes we have, we cannot do it on our own. We need help from people of good will on the other side of the aisle. There are people who believe as fervently in this environmental standard as I do, and I would call upon them to vote their conscience, to do what is right for this body and do what is right for this country. This is a procedural vote that makes the Senate different from any legislative body in the history of the world. The Senate is the greatest deliberative body in the history of the world. Do not be playing fast and loose with the rules that govern this Senate.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE PATRIOT ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, we have been informed that President Bush's radio address tomorrow will be about the PATRIOT Act. It is not a surprise. This is an important issue. It is one we should discuss and should discuss as a nation.

We passed the PATRIOT Act because of our concern about the threat of terrorism. It is an act with over 100 different provisions in it. It was passed with only one dissenting vote in the Senate. It included sunset provisions on some controversial parts of it, so that 4 years after we passed it we could take another look to make sure that, in fact, we had done the right thing, we were not overstepping. We want to give our Government enough power to protect us, but we certainly don't want to surrender our basic rights and liberties if it is not needed.

So we had the reauthorization of the PATRIOT Act up before us and debated it in the Senate Judiciary Committee on which I serve. We reached a bipartisan consensus for reauthorizing that act, a unanimous vote at the Senate Judiciary Committee. I have never seen it on an issue of this magnitude, but it happened. I believe it was an indication that there is a reasonable way to craft the PATRIOT Act so that, in fact, it serves our needs of national security but does not go too far. That bill then passed the Senate on a voice vote. There was no controversy, no debate, because we had struck a legitimate bipartisan compromise.

Then the bill went to conference, and in conference other forces were at work. As a result of their work, the bill was changed. It was changed in significant ways, ways which I believe went too far, too far in giving the Government authority and power over our personal lives and privacy that is unnecessary. I believe that any person suspected of criminal or terrorist activity, any activity that is considered to be part of a terrorist network, should be treated in the harshest and most serious way. I want to keep America safe. I want my family, my children, everyone's family, to be safe. But I want to make certain that when we draw up this PATRIOT Act, we do not go too far.

As a result of the conference committee, a bipartisan group of Senators, Republicans and Democrats, came together in opposition to this conference report—a bipartisan group of Senators. Today, this morning, we had a vote on the Senate floor. This vote was what we call cloture, whether we will close debate, and as a result of the vote the matter is still open, still unresolved.

It is important to know one thing before the President's address. I hope the President will honestly tell the American people tomorrow what happened today in the Senate.

Early this morning, Senator FRIST, who is on the floor at this moment, the Republican majority leader, met with Senator HARRY REID, the Democratic leader, to discuss this important topic. At the time, Senator REID told him that we believed we were not going to close down debate on the PATRIOT Act and asked if there was a way that we could reach an agreement on a bipartisan basis to extend the bill, extend