. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Congresswoman Watson indicated she hopes that there is no

military response that will even be on the table or ever be mentioned.

She hopes it is not part of the agenda.

I will tell you I think personally that, I mean, I pray to God that

we never have to reach that stage, but the most dangerous situation

I can imagine is to tell the world, tell Iran in particular, that

that is not on the table and to in fact not leave it as part of the

set of possibilities open to us.

Ed Luttwak, as you are familiar with I am sure, wrote a fascinating

piece in the Wall Street Journal on February 27 in which

he talked about the various divisions inside Iran that we should

concentrate on. Beyond just the economic problems there are, of

course, ethnic divisions, the Kurds, especially the Azaris, 20 million

Azaris, probably the largest single element inside the country that

you could call disaffected, and there are several others. Also, the

religious persecution that is ongoing.

I hope that you will in your testimony talk about that, sir, and

to what extent you think we can exploit those divisions.

. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Although not the original questions I had in mind, but your comments

both to Mr. Rohrabacher and then just now to Ms. Woolsey,

especially in terms of our lack of information about Iran and what

is happening inside Iran and the fact that you were not aware of

anything that had happened with regard to the MEK that would

change our designation of it from a terrorist organization. Those

two things prompt my question.

First of all, it is I guess in a way an elucidation more than a

question, but I just want you to know that this organization at

least was first brought to my attention by the ranking member,

and since then I have studied it to some extent.

One of the interesting things that you find is that they were

placed on the terrorist watch list by President Clinton. They were

placed there not because of any action they took against the United

States but because it was part of a deal that was cut with the Government

of Iran.

The mullahs, in order to develop some sort of rapprochement,

there was an agreement on our part to put the MEK on the terrorist

watch list. It was not because of any actions taken, and I underline

that, by them. It was that we were trying to placate the

Government of Iran at the time, and that is what they wanted.

They hate this organization.

Now I have no idea, and I couldn’t care less, whether or not they

have any popularity inside the nation itself. I do know that when

you realize that there is that kind of enmity there between the

leaders of Iran and this organization, it peaks my curiosity as to

why.

Even other members of the administration, by the way, have

been here and testified that information, valuable information, has

been provided to the United States of America by this organization,

by the MEK, specifically in regard to the nuclear capabilities in

Iran. Now, unless there is some elaborate ruse of which I am not

aware, that should be an indication that the designation as a terrorist

organization should be rethought.

Finally, there are the comments of a number of people who have

been involved with them, directly involved with them at Camp

Ashraf, which is where the MEK are now being kept on, by the

way, a protected basis, protected citizens. Not incarcerated, but

protected by the American military.

Here is the comment of General Raymond Odierno, the commander

of the Fourth Infantry and now the assistant chairman of

the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He commended the MEK at Camp Ashraf

for their cooperation and stated that the MEK should be reviewed

to determine whether they are still a terrorist organization.

Colonel David Phillips, another former commander at the camp,

said that he was exceptionally impressed with the dedication of the

MEK. Camp Ashraf was the safest place within his area of responsibility.

A New York Times article not too long ago in which it talks about

the fact that there was an extensive investigation of every single

person at the camp—the FBI went in and looked—and they came

to the conclusion that there was nothing there. There was no one

there that posed a threat to the United States or could be thought

of as a terrorist.

Now, I say all this because we are contemplating—I read someplace

not too long ago that we were actually thinking about—taking

as part of the negotiations, the Six Party negotiations with

Korea, taking them off the terrorist watch list. It is a thing we

might hold out there as a possibility.

It is incredible to me in a way, and again it wasn’t my original

set of questions, but because of the responses here and because of

the need for us to actually have this kind of access inside of Iran,

have the ability to know what is going on with people who do know

the language, do understand the culture and could be used by us.

I just wonder, Mr. Ambassador, whether it is not in our best interests

now to actually rethink this whole thing, especially, as I

say, if we want to push our desire to not have regime change. Our

desire is to simply force Iran into becoming a better nation in

terms of its relationship with the rest of the world.

If that is what we want, why would we not use this one at

least—it is a small thing I admit, but I think an important piece

of leverage that we may have with them in the possibility of taking

them off that list.