First, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you and

the ranking member for allowing me to attend this subcommittee,

which I may not be a formal member of, but have followed closely.

And thank you for your leadership.

And I thank the witnesses for being here.

It was about 2 months ago that I had a meeting with a large

group of Muslim Americans in Chicago of Syrian descent, and naturally

they are following this very closely and are very concerned

about it. And they asked several questions which I will ask.

First, Mr. Bronin, whether or not the sanctions which we have

imposed have gone far enough. And several things that they asked

about I told them I would follow through with, and that is whether

or not we are, for example, targeting Lebanese banks involved in

Syria and whether or not we have expanded our sanctions regime

where we are currently targeting oil exports to include other elements

of the oil and energy sector of exploration and production and transport.

And what about expanding the sanctions pursuant

to the suggestion of Senator Gillibrand, which I have joined in,

to go beyond oil exports into other aspects of the oil and energy sector?

That is good to know.

Mr. Feltman, a question was asked as to why we are not pursuing

at the U.N. Security Council the referral of Mr. Assad to the

International Criminal Court. Can you tell me?

Mr. Feltman, I applaud what the administration

has done through Ambassador Rice, and I think calling for the

vote in early October in the United Nations, even though it failed,

it at least brought the issue to the forefront and forced nations to

stand up and vote. And the question I am asking, since the Arab

League has intervened and that effort has clearly failed and we

have pronounced that, why are we not following up again at the

United Nations Security Council either with a similar resolution or

specifically directing the efforts of the International Criminal Court

toward Mr. Assad.

I followed through a little bit on this after

thinking about it and working with my staff on the question of the

U.N. Security Council. And one can certainly come up with a

rationale for the Russian position that may have something to do

with arms sales, a rationale for the Chinese position which is fairly

consistent with their foreign policy. But I have really struggled

with Brazil, India, and South Africa.

And I asked the Ambassador, Mrs. Rao, to come in my office and

talk about the Indian position on this. And she said to me what I

think others have said, and I would like you to comment on it. She

believes there is evidence—at least she told me there is evidence—

that the opposition in Syria is armed and violent. And I have not

heard that, not from any credible source. Have you?

I think that is a constructive suggestion.

Mr. Chairman, I really hope other colleagues on the committee

can join me in inviting the ambassadors from these countries that

are stymieing the efforts of the United Nations Security Council to

come and explain to us. Many of these are our friends, historically

our friends, South Africa, for example, and India for that matter.

And it would seem to me to be at least valuable to note that we

see their opposition and would like some explanation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, witnesses.