Thank you, Senator Casey.

Ambassador Ford, first of all, thank you for your service, and I

applaud your statement of what our policy is and your conveying

that to the opposition and what they need to do and how they think

about this.

Having said that, in looking at what is happening on the ground

over there, your statement about it being a complex society I think

is an understatement, but I understand. You know, you have the

Druze and the Kurds and the Sunnis and the Alawites and about

a dozen other even smaller groups.

The difficulty I have is how—I understand what you are telling

them they need to do where everybody is welcome, everybody is

going to be equal, and what have you. They do not have much of

a history of that, and our culture has trouble thinking along those

lines because they are so segregated. I mean, they are not like we

are where we amalgamate into one society. I mean, they are very,

very segregated. They marry within their groups. They stay within

their groups. They socialize, do business within their groups. So

saying that, well, you know, when Assad goes—and I believe he

will go—they are all going to get together and do this and particularly

looking at their organization right now, I am pretty pessimistic

about that. So I hear what you are saying and I think it is

a good position to take, but from a purely pragmatic standpoint,

could you maybe analyze your own analysis of it from that standpoint?

Do not want to know what you watch.

That is an interesting observation. The question

I would have is, does that spill over to their cultural hard-wiring

that they have, if you would? Obviously, they were raised by parents

in a society that protected them from the other minorities or

other sects in the country. Is that breaking down at all? Do you see

that at all? Are they intermarrying? I guess that would be probably

the most telltale sign of that.

Thank you, Ambassador Ford. I appreciate your

optimism on the subject. I hope you are right.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.