Thank you, Madam Chairman; and thank you for

calling this timely and important hearing.

Since taking office, the Obama administration’s policy toward

Iran and Syria has been characterized chiefly by its engagement

with the ruling regimes. Whether or not that was the right policy

at the time, the situation we face today with respect to these two

countries is vastly different than it was back in January 2009.

Recent actions make this conclusion irrefutable. Damascus is not

only continuing to arrest, beat, torture, and murder its way

through the current protests, but it is now exporting its brutality

to Lebanon in flagrant violation of international law. Over the past

several weeks, the Syrian army has on numerous occasions violated

Lebanese territorial sovereignty. One recent incursion culminated

in the death of a Lebanese farmer after Syrian armored vehicles

allegedly penetrated approximately 21 ⁄2 miles into Lebanese territory

in clear violation of U.N. Security Council Resolutions 1559

and 1701. Meanwhile, Tehran, as we all know, plotted to assassinate

the Saudi Ambassador to the U.S. on American soil.

The actions by both regimes show a disdain for international law

and norms that is incompatible with the values and interests of the

United States. Plainly speaking, the blood on their hands and the

impunity with which they continue to act shows that these regimes

are beyond salvation.

But anyone who is surprised that the thugs in Tehran and Damascus

would take these actions has been living in a dangerous

state of denial. Both regimes continue to respond to carrots and

sticks alike with ridicule as they mock the legitimate concerns of

the international community.

From the outside, however, it appears that this administration’s

policies have remained distressingly unresponsive. In the case of

Iran, for example, I am concerned that there are still those in the

administration who hold out hope of a grand bargain on the nuclear

program. It is long past time to jettison this dangerous fantasy

as it is presently warping our entire policy toward the region.

There is no question that the illicit Iranian nuclear program

must remain at the top of our priority list. The nuclear program

is, however, a symptom of the disease, rather than the disease

itself. I want to be clear: The Iranian nuclear program is a paramount

challenge to U.S. core national security interests as well as

those of our allies, and it must be addressed. But to speak of the

nuclear program independently of the regime which pursues it is

in effect putting the cart before the horse. A nuclear program is not

in and of itself what makes the regime nefarious. It is the perverse

nature of the regime that makes the nuclear program so dangerous.

It is for this reason that it is time to close the door on engagement

with the regime in Tehran and call for its departure. Not only

has the regime shown itself unwilling to budge, but continued engagement

only risks abandoning and alienating the Iranian people

who I hope—sooner rather than later—will be in the driver’s seat.

I yield back.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

As I noted in my opening statement, I am deeply concerned that

we are pursuing essentially the same Iran policy as we had on January

20th back in 2009, namely engagement and pressure. And

that, after 3 years, it is safe to say that this policy has failed, as

far as I am concerned, to cause Iran to fundamentally alter its commitment

to achieving a nuclear weapons capability.

I would like to take this opportunity to read a few quotes from

the administration that I believe illustrate this concern.

On May 18th, 2009, at a press conference with Israeli Prime

Minister Netanyahu, President Obama outlined the contours of the

administration’s policy when he said, and I quote:

‘‘We are engaged in a process to reach out to Iran and persuade

them that it is not in their interest to pursue a nuclear

weapon and that they should change course. But I assured the

Prime Minister that we are not foreclosing a range of steps, including

much stronger international sanctions and ensuring

that Iran understands that we are serious.’’

I will read another quote. On July 12th, 2009, just over 1 month

after the regime in Tehran perpetrated one of the most flagrant instances

in election fraud history, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

stated,

‘‘Neither the President nor I have any illusions that dialogue

with this Islamic republic will guarantee success of any kind,

and the prospects have certainly shifted in the weeks following

the election. But we also understand the importance of offering

to engage Iran and giving its leaders a clear choice whether to

join the international community as a responsible member or

rather to continue down a path to further isolation. We remain

ready to engage with Iran, but the time for action is now. The

opportunity will not remain open indefinitely.’’

And then nearly 2 years later, on July 3rd of this year, National

Security Advisor Tom Donilon outlined the exact same policy, and

I quote again:

‘‘We offered the Iranian Government quite directly a bona fide

offer of engagement. The Iranian Government, the leaders of

Iran, have chosen not to take that up. So the pressure tack,

unfortunately, I think is where we are today, again, with the

opportunity for the Iranians, if they are willing to take it, to

have a conversation with us and the world community about

their nuclear program.’’

And yet again this morning, Madam Secretary, in your written

statement just a little while ago, in the statement you have, and

I quote: ‘‘We will continue to increase the pressure until the Iranian

regime engages the international community with seriousness

and sincerity.’’ And then it goes on: ‘‘We have offered to meet with

Iran and have proposed confidence-building and transparency arrangements

that offered practical incentives.’’

You know, it sounds like more and more carrots to Iran to me.

As we approach year three of this policy, it seems to be painfully

obvious that our policy not only remains unchanged but that it has

failed to achieve our core objective, and that is persuading the regime

in Tehran to abandon its pursuit of nuclear weapons capability.

I am sure that our witnesses can outline numerous measures

that the administration has taken in support of these policies, but

these measures are merely means of trying to coax or pressure the

regime to change its calculus, not policies in and of themselves.

So my question is, first, how has the administration’s overall policy

actually altered—not just what we have done but how have we

actually altered Iranian actions or its strategic calculation regarding

its nuclear program? And, conversely, why has 3 years of Iranian

rejection and escalation not altered our policy?

And I will yield. And I am almost out of time. I don’t want to interrupt

you, but I will, just to say this. And, again, my question, how

has it altered their policy? You are saying we have done different

things.