Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you all for

coming and being here.

Mr. Ambassador, I understand that you are not the President,

but you’ve probably been in some conversations that I haven’t. One

of the reasons this hearing is so important is because I can kind

of take you on a journey right now. I want to ask you to go on that

journey with me. This journey is trying to figure out what our foreign

policy is, because I’ve had a very hard time doing that.

I’ve been stumped. I’m stumped on the answer in Syria, I’ll be

honest. I don’t know what the answer is, and part of the reason is

that we’ve waited so long to really do anything.

To an extent, it reminds me of how we were reactive in Iran in

2009 when we saw a really good opportunity to support a popular

uprising against the regime. So, we find ourselves in a situation

now where I feel, maybe I’m wrong, but I feel like we’re reacting

to the situation. And I wonder, if we go back to the beginning of

this conflict, we go back to the initial uprising against Assad,

where you have Iran basically supporting the Syrian regime on one

end, and you have theoretically Freedom Fighters on the other end.

Now, I understand that we didn’t know at that time who the

rebels were, and there were some questions. But, at that time you

can pretty much assume that extremism did not have the ability

to organize to the great extent that they’re probably organized now,

which gives us the concern in the Opposition on what we have.

So at the beginning, and I’m asking you because you were hopefully

in these conversations, what were our reasons for not supporting

an uprising with lethal aid, or non-lethal aid against a regime

that is supported by Iran, and continues to cause problems

in the Middle East? And I’ll ask you to keep it short because I actually

have a lot here I want to ask, so go ahead.

What was the reason for withholding lethal aid

at that time?

Respectfully, I understand that. I’m talking

about when it went to a shooting war. And again, as I’m saying

this, I am literally trying to figure this out because I don’t know

the answer today. This is a difficult quandary.

Let me ask another question. When we talk about the red line,

and we talk about the use of chemical weapons, I know this has

been hammered especially by the chairman, but we’re going to find

out what happened. It’s just a matter of time. We’re going to find

out if chemical weapons were used, and who used them. I feel like

we have a red line that is supposed to be exactly that: A red line;

a point you don’t cross. I heard what I assume the President was

saying is that if you use chemical weapons, that is the red line.

Now, I hear that there is a kind of a shifting red line to no, no,

no, we’re talking about the transfer of chemical weapons, and not

necessarily using them against your own people. So, it seems more

like a cyan line, or a yellow line.

I think in my mind, a red line is to make it very clear; if you

use chemical weapons against your own people, we will devastate

your ability to use chemical weapons. The result of that will be a

deep, deep thinking about whether we’ll use chemical weapons

against our own people, because we know our ability to do so will

be devastated.

Let me ask you just one or two more questions. How does Russia

and Iran specifically see our policy in Syria? Are they frightened

of our involvement of Syria because it will affect their interest, or

are they happy with our situation in Syria right now, and the approach

we’re taking, Mr. Ambassador?

Well, you probably have a gut feeling.

But, is it a nervousness because of the situation

on the ground, or because of specifically what we’re doing? I’m asking,

are we helping that nervousness, or are we just kind of not?

Right.

Good.

Right.

Thank you. And again, I do appreciate your service.

One thing that I want to add though, as I close, is that I hope

that this is not an extension of what was made famous a few years

ago, the lead from behind strategy. I think when America retreats

from the world, chaos ensues. So, I hope this is not an extension

of that. I’m not saying it is, but that’s something I wanted to say.

Thank you all for your service, and I yield back.