The hearing will come to order. I say to the witnesses,

both panels, that the Senate schedule is obviously going to

intervene and interfere, as it usually does here.

We have two very distinguished panels of witnesses, the first

representing the administration and then a second panel. We are

going to, I am told, although I never believe it until it happens,

have two to three successive votes beginning at 11 o’clock, which

if that were the case we would have to recess for probably 20 minutes

in order to be able to get those votes in. But sometimes they

announce that and it does not occur, as I know Richard and Christina

know, having worked here and know this place.

Let me begin by thanking my colleague Senator Wellstone for

suggesting and pushing we have this hearing. Our timing apparently—

as my father used to always say, still says, better to be

lucky than good. We were a little worried, Richard, I was a little

worried, calling you up here while things were still in train might

confuse things. But I am glad it worked out.

The past few weeks have been eventful indeed. The success of

the war effort in Afghanistan has caused some considerable celebration,

has silenced some skeptics, at least temporarily—you

never totally silence them—and has been celebration, not just here,

but in Kabul and also throughout the region.

I want to applaud the administration, our coalition partners, and

above all the men and women we have out there who are still as

we speak fighting and some dying.

Yesterday we received a stark reminder just how tough this is—

I know my friend from Nebraska knows firsthand what it is like—

when three Americans were killed and 19 were wounded. Pray God

that will be the end of that, but it is not likely that will be the case

in my view. So our thoughts and prayers are with the families of the wounded and killed.

But it also reminds us that this war is not over. Not only—we

keep talking about a second stage here, that we are preoccupied

with what we are going to do, if we do anything, in Iraq or Somalia

or anywhere else in the world. I think there is a second or third

stage in Afghanistan yet to go. The next stage in Afghanistan is

to complete our mission of wiping out al-Qaeda in that country, as

well as capturing and-or killing Osama bin Laden, and our military

has got a very hefty order and hefty job cut out for them there.

But then we have to get to what we want to talk about in this

hearing, and that is once Kandahar, which it appears as though reports

are may be ready to surrender the Taliban and once, God

willing, we succeed in our mission regarding al-Qaeda and bin Laden, what then?

I have been impressed from the outset by my discussions with

the President of the United States, my personal and private discussions

with him, how he has, as long ago as the day or 2 days after

our campaign started in Afghanistan, had already begun the process

with the two people in front of us of trying to figure out what

we do after the fact. So this is not something that the administration

is just thinking about as we sit here now, and I give the President

great credit for that, and his willingness to talk about, although

we do not use the word, the phrase, any more, ‘‘nationbuilding,’’

talk about putting in place a situation, a circumstance

that there can be some stability in a country that has been ravaged

by war and drought and famine for a long time and to put their

neighbors at ease that there is a prospect for this occurring, for if

we do not we are in real trouble.

We have to facilitate the creation of the regime—Mr. Chairman—

that adequately represents all the Afghans, women as well as men,

Pashtuns and Tajiks and Uzbeks and Hazaras. They all have to be

part of the deal, and we have to help lay that foundation so the

Afghan Government does not slide back into warlordism and anarchy

that existed in the past. As I said, we have to do it in a way

that calms down the neighbors, who do not have the same interests as one another do.

Now, I am going to forego the rest of my statement and just suggest

that the news out of Bonn seems—it exceeded my expectations,

the decisions they reached, and it stretches slightly my faith

that we will be able to do it on the ground. I imagine the news was

not greeted with enthusiasm in Kabul, but who knows.

So what we are going to want to talk about is where you are

now, where the administration thinks we have arrived in terms of

a new government, and also a question that cannot remain unanswered

very long, is what sort of security framework are we prepared

to try to help put in place. For I for one think one is urgently

needed. I do not think there is any other substantive steps, whether

political or humanitarian, that are going to be likely to be able

to be taken on the ground without a robust, combat-ready force

able and fully authorized to establish safety and stability in Afghanistan.

The headlines in all the major papers today are full of stories relating

not only to the success in Bonn, but also to the desperate

circumstance for refugees, displaced persons in Afghanistan, particularly

northern Afghanistan, discussion about whether or not

the Friendship Bridge will be opened and, if it is, is there safe passage.

The bottom line of all this is it seems to me that—and this

is what I want to talk about today—is there is little prospect of

meeting the next stage of needs in Afghanistan without a security force on the ground.

Turkey has indicated again—the Secretary has indicated to us

previously—Turkey has indicated again today that they are ready

to send forces. I am told that Indonesia and Bangladesh may as

well be prepared to do that. Or it may be a UN-approved coalition

of the willing drawn partly from NATO countries.

Our first panel has been following and affecting developments

both in Afghanistan and in Bonn, where negotiations appear to

have yielded fruit. I look forward to their report on the progress toward

establishing both a lasting political agreement and a truly effective

security framework. Only in a secure environment can we

make real progress toward reconstructing Afghanistan.

When I say reconstructing, I know folks back home in my state

think we are talking about rebuilding some—this is not, we are not

rebuilding Sarajevo or Sofia. We are trying to do—our goal from

my discussions with the President, and I assume it is the same, are

to be in a position where there is education in the schools for girls

and boys alike, where we are going to be digging wells and irrigation

canals and paving roads, establishing medical clinics, and

clearing up the most heavily land-mined country on earth. We are

not building palaces or large and great parliamentary buildings.

We are just trying to get this place back to the point where there

is a prospect of the ability to govern, and you need to be able to

communicate to govern.

All this, though, is going to take a lot of money, according to the

Secretary General. He indicates the cost will be more than $10 billion

over 5 to 10 years, and I have heard similar estimates from

officials at the World Bank and a variety of private NGO’s and

some within the administration.

Now, President Bush has been clear on the need for American

leadership here. There is a task, though, that is not only ours. It

is a task for the world community. But the United States has been

leading. I expect it will continue to lead, and I would suggest it has

to lead or this is not going to get done.

The world’s attention is now focused on Afghanistan, but it will

not be for long. If the President’s pledge is to carry real weight, it

needs to be fleshed out right away. How much money is the United

States willing to commit, for what programs, and where will the funds come from?

I for one am committed to helping the President keep the promise

he so generously and wisely made. The future of Afghanistan

is and must be in the hands of the Afghan people themselves. But

we must do all we can to lead the world to assist Afghanistan in

the task of rebuilding their country, their society, and their lives,

so that we do not end up on the short end of the failure that occurs

in Afghanistan if it were to occur again.

I yield to my friend Senator Helms.

Mr. Chairman, if you will excuse the attempt at

humor here, I was telling Richard, who you and I know, all of us

know very well, have known for a long time, have great respect for,

I said: Congratulations. I said: You have got your work cut out for

you. I said: It reminds me of that story of the guy who jumps off

the ninetieth floor of a building and the guy on the fiftieth floor

sees him going by and yells out and says: How are you doing? He

says, he responds back: So far, so good.

But I have more optimism. Richard, it was a joke, only a joke.

With that, let us move on to our witnesses. We have two very

distinguished witnesses from the administration: Ambassador Richard

M. Haass, Director of Policy and Planning Staff of the Department

of State; and Christina Rocca, who is the Assistant Secretary

for South Asian Affairs of the Department of State, who is an old

hand around here, and we are delighted to have her back.

I might note parenthetically that I personally appreciate the access

and cooperation I have had when I have had questions, and

particularly you I have been bugging, Christina, since it is your

area of the world, and I appreciate it very much. You have been

very helpful.

However you would like to proceed, however you would like to do it, please.

Thank you.

Mr. Ambassador.

Without objection, it will be placed in the record.

Thank you very much.

I have been told, ladies and gentlemen, the votes have been postponed

until 11:40 and it may be only one vote then, so we may be

able to move this. In order to accommodate that, why do we not

have the first round 5 minutes, and let me begin with you, Mr. Ambassador.

The Secretary General asked to meet with Senator Helms and

myself, Senator Lott, and some others in my office last week to discuss,

among other things, the security side of this arrangement.

Let me say as a preface, I am fully aware, and I think my colleague

will sustain that I stated flatly to the Secretary General that any

security force that was put in place would not, could not, and

would not be allowed to in any way interfere with our actions relative

to prosecuting our efforts against al-Qaeda and Mr. bin

Laden, no matter what it took.

I indicated to him, I think Senator Helms will recall, that I could

not speak for everyone, I know everyone in the room agreed, but

I thought I spoke for a vast majority of Democrats as well as Republicans in that regard.

But, having said that, it seems as though you have a bit of a dilemma

here. The pressure—‘‘pressure,’’ wrong word. The concern

from the Defense Department and other places, legitimately, of

having a multilateral force in place that we could end up stumbling

over or having to coordinate with relative to al-Qaeda and bin

Laden is a reasonable concern. But it seems—and this is an observation,

may not be accurate—it seems to have slowed up what—

let me put it another way.

If we already had bin Laden in custody and al-Qaeda had been

eliminated, I would be dumbfounded if we would not have by now

already had a security force in place. So it seems to me that the

security force being put in place, which is obviously necessary—in

today’s New York Times in section B, there is a schematic map of

the area still controlled by or impacted on by the Taliban.

Obviously, Mazar is an area where—I did not think the reason

why we were not using the Friendship Bridge was the lack of its

capacity to sustain vehicles crossing it, although that is a concern,

but the lack of the capacity to sustain the safety of those folks once

they cross the bridge.

So there is this competing dilemma here. When we spoke at some

length with Kofi Annan, he indicated that there were three alternatives

that he had discussed. One was a blue-helmeted operation;

the second was a total indigenous force; and the third was a coalition

of the willing led by the United States, not having anything

to do with blue helmets.

He thought that the second of the two—I do not think I am putting

words in his mouth; I think that what he said—the second of

the two is the only real alternative. When we asked him about Turkey

and Bangladesh and other Islamic nations, he said that his

clear view was that they were willing, and smaller countries—and

Turkey has a serious military capability—and smaller countries

were willing to participate as long as, he said, some of the big guys

were there, primarily us, but also the Brits, the French, the Germans,

and they have offered.

So that is a long preface to a relatively short question. How do

you—talk to us about this timing element, if that is any part of

getting security on the ground to get the aid in place, because specifically

the discussion about why Pashtun leaders were not willing

to go to Kabul, in addition to not wanting to walk into the circumstance

where they would have their fate settled politically because

it would not be done at Bonn, there was a security concern as well.

So talk to me about this relationship and what kind of security

force you are envisioning or thinking about. My time is up.

We are talking about a force for enforcement, are

we not, as well as peacekeeping?

Ambassador HAASS. I think we are talking about something more

I hope we do not discuss it too much and I hope

we do not rely too much on their input and I hope we exert our

influence very firmly and soon, because our experience in similar

circumstances has been when we do not it does not work well.

But I thank you very much. I yield to the chairman.

I think she just forgot you are still here.

Mr. Secretary, you should be optimistic and the

reason to be optimistic is look at Afghanistan on the 5th of September

and look at it on the 5th of December. That is enough of

a reason. You should take some pride as well in the work you have done.

Our subcommittee chairman for this area, Senator Wellstone.

Without objection.

As they say in this business, I associate myself

with the remarks of my friend from Wisconsin, and I suspect Chancellor

Schroeder would, too.

Minnesota. I beg your pardon.

I am the Senator from Maryland. I yield to the

Senator from Wisconsin—no, to Senator Lugar from Indiana.

Thank you very much.

Senator Hagel.

If I may follow that, when I was out of the room

taking a call it may have been answered. If it has—but there were

Russian press reports indicating it was about Chechnyan rebels,

that the reason they had forces in there was to be able to determine

whether among the al-Qaeda-related and Taliban-related

forces there were Chechnyans who were on their list, and that is

why they were in place.

I know that was the rationale offered. I just wondered

if you had any evidence to respond.

I am not questioning it. This was a Russian

press report, a Russian press report.

Senator Chafee.

The hearing will come to order. I apologize for

the confusion. I just wanted to ask one more question of the witnesses.

I will not hold them long and I will not hold the second

panel, on which at least one member has a time constraint, on the second panel.

The one question I have is, there have been reports—and for either

one of you to answer. There have been newspaper reports and

other reports that Chancellor Schroeder, as we all know, took a political

chance and survived a vote of no confidence in terms of his

commitment to participation in our effort in Afghanistan, including

the use of German forces, which was unprecedented since World War Two.

There are further reports that he and-or his government was

somewhat miffed, once that decision had been made, essentially

being told: No, not now; maybe later we can use your help in terms

of forces. I know for a fact our French friends, which is not unusual,

were a little miffed about our unwillingness to have them

participate with their ground forces.

Can you tell me a little bit about both those issues? Is there contemplation

on our part to take advantage of the German offer, and

what is the status of the French commitment with regard to committing

forces on the ground for a security force?

You say we need an Afghan partner to work

with. We went in without an Afghan partner. We agreed to provide

humanitarian aid. Had things not progressed as they have, we

would still be trying to get humanitarian aid into areas notwithstanding

the fact that we had no Afghan partner of any consequence

to do it, would we not?

As I said, I do not want my last question to be

read as my being critical of your effort, because I think you have

done a good job. I hope, from my perspective, if we reach the point,

which you have been able to avoid, that we reached 7 days ago and

you have overcome, where the former President sitting in Kabul

nixed a security force being put in place, that we would tell him:

You have no choice, you have no choice. Because if we decide to do

this by consensus we will not only be, in my humble opinion—I realize

the Balkans are different than Afghanistan, but I would suggest

that there is a bit of a lesson to be learned between the differences

how we moved in Bosnia and how we moved in Kosovo,

and I hope—at any rate.

No, it was not there. No, no, no, no, no. That is

why I said you succeeded, except the guys there do not have the

rifles. The guys there have the political capability so far. Now, they

may very well—this may all translate. I am not suggesting that—

I said at the outset, I think you did a first-rate job.

All I am saying to you, if you get to the point, if it gets to the

point where that political consensus that was arrived at in Bonn

falls apart because the guys with the rifles back on the ground conclude

they do not like the deal, they should understand they are

at the other end of our bullets next time. This should not be something

done, in my humble opinion, other than firmly. And you have

been very firm. I just, I had a moment of brief concern when the

response by the former President about the presence of the security

force was mixed and, although I had hope and some expectation

you would be able to resolve that in Bonn, I was—I am just saying,

had you not been able to resolve it and it had to be resolved, there

is no possibility in my view—unsolicited advice and take it for what

it is worth, which is not much. There is no possibility of our longterm

goals being able to prevail in Afghanistan without there being

security forces on the ground in control of access for aid as well as

access to localities. That is the only point I wish to make.

That is where you and I have—that is where I

think you are being mildly Pollyannaish and I am not as optimistic

as you. I hope we both agree—but I do not disagree with the

premise that the day comes that it is an Afghan force, just like I

look forward to that unified military in Bosnia that I am still waiting

for, I will herald the moment and the day.

At any rate, I thank you both very much. Christine, if you want

to add anything, but the question has been answered. I thank you very much.

Mr. Thomas Gouttierre, the dean of International

Studies and director of the Center for Afghanistan Studies,

University of Nebraska in Omaha, Nebraska; as well as Ms.

Gailani, an advisor to the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan,

from Providence, Rhode Island. I welcome you both here.

I find I have to tell the Senator from Nebraska I am increasingly

relying upon Nebraska, the University of Nebraska, these days. As

the chairman of the Criminal Law Subcommittee yesterday, I had

a professor, a colleague of yours from the University of Nebraska,

who did a first-rate study and the only intensive study, 5-year

study on the efficacy of the crime bill and the COPS bill, and was

thorough, and now here I am seeking Nebraska’s input again.

This is good for me. I do not know about Nebraska, but it is good for me.

I welcome you both. I am told one of you has a time constraint.

I think you, sir?

Dean, well, why do you not, with the permission

of Ms. Gailani, proceed first.

There is an old expression attributed to Samuel

Johnson: ‘‘There is nothing like a hanging to focus one’s attention.’’

They are not the same agenda.

You are talking about the Irish or the Afghans?

You do not have to translate. I got it.

We do, we do.

It is the cheese.

You are about to be cutoff if you make another comment like that.

Well, if you do not mind, since he has to leave,

could we postpone, and I am going to yield to my friend from Nebraska

to be able to question the dean.

Did you go to the University of Nebraska?

Now is your chance. Now is your chance to get back.

Well, it was by me, though. It was by me.

Professor Gouttierre.

You are a real sophisticated guy and you know

what is significant in Afghanistan and I know you must have a

sense of what is going on politically here. There is a debate that—

I cannot say with certainty. I can tell you, after 29 years being

here, there is a debate within the administration, among the Members

of Congress, as to what our role really should be when it gets down to the detail.

Everybody is going to say, you said there is great agreement, and

there is. It is interesting, and I am really pleased the President

early on—I cannot remember whether Chuck was with me or not,

but a couple of us were down with the President and he asked

what should be done, and one of my colleagues had said to me in

a different context: You know, he said—and I repeated it. I said:

Mr. President, when World War Two started, we were getting beaten

and Roosevelt had the foresight to assemble a group of men in

the basement of the White House and say: Tell me what we do,

how we reconstruct Europe.

People said: Wait a minute; we have not even—I mean, we are

still getting beaten in battle after battle, and you are asking us to

put together a plan for the reconstruction of Europe.

I said: Mr. President, that is what you should be doing now, put

together a plan for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. He not only

welcomed it, he had indicated he had already been thinking about it and he had begun it.

Without identifying the party, after one long meeting with the

President asking me very pointed questions, not because of my particular

prowess here but just because I guess I represent sort of the

leadership of the other side of the political equation here on the

foreign policy equation, asking me and us finding ourselves very

much in agreement, and as I went out a very prominent member

of the White House followed me down the hall and said: Are you

going to stop and talk to the stakeout, the press where they wait

for us when we walk outside. I said: I do not have to.

He said: No, we want you, to show that we are talking, it is bipartisan;

but I hope you will not mention nation-building. I said:

You mean what the President talked to me about for the last hour

and 20 minutes? He said: Yes, yes, that is what I mean. I said: No,

I will not mention nation-building.

The point is there is a real struggle here to define how you cut

the political knot the President faces. Like Democrats face on the

center-left, there is one faced on the center-right now. That is: OK,

we are not going to nation-build because Clinton did that and we

spent 8 years beating the living bejeezus out of him for doing that,

so we are not going to do that, but we have got to be in there with

both feet or we know nothing is going to happen.

So this is going to get tricky. This is going to get tricky. One of

the things that I want to ask you, just a broad question. I am going

to make a statement and then you tell me whether—take off from

the statement any way you feel that is appropriate.

I cannot envision any realistic prospect of us meeting the goal

which you have heard articulated by Democrats, Republicans, administration

and Senate, which is that we want a stable Afghanistan

where all the ethnic groups are represented, where women,

who represent close to 60 percent of the population, over 55 percent

of the population, where women—and I can see someone saying 65.

Well, I know it is over 50 and I hear 55, 60, now 65. Anyone for

70? But a super-majority of the population.

We all say these things, and you say the Afghan people are our

friends and care about us and like us and look for us to lead. My

experience with being deeply involved in another part of the world

where there were deep divisions based upon originally tribal backgrounds,

although with a patina of more sophisticated, only the

patina, though, of more sophisticated institutions, is that they are

fully aware that in the near term they are not likely to be able to

resolve the really hard questions, and they want somebody they

trust coming in and in effect laying down the law when they cannot agree.

Second, it appears to me that the Six Plus Two is not a workable

solution. Ask my friend right here who spent time in Afghanistan

during that period that you were there realizing it does not work—

it did not work. Let me put it this way: It did not work, not likely to work.

So I guess my question is—and we all say we want and need to

deal with the six-plus million people who may be seriously physically

injured and-or die as a consequence of not getting enough nutrition.

All the goals are the same. Everybody states they have the

same goal. Is there any way the near-term and long-term goal in

your view can be met without very specific U.S. leadership?

In a speech written for me by the gentleman behind me on my

immediate right, before the administration asked for the $320 million

in aid, I went to the floor and suggested we commit a billion

dollars right then and there to show our good faith, to actually deliver

it, to deal with taking up the immediate need, which we did

not know would not last all winter, to take care of the entire ticket,

which we could afford to do. That in my view would then generate

genuine response from other countries.

I will conclude by saying this: I cannot think of any time that

I have been in this committee where on matters relating to the

aftermath or the ongoing physical conflict in a country where anything

has been resolved without U.S. leadership. I cannot think of

one, not a single one. That leadership has been that we usually

have forces on the ground. We want to run the show; you usually

have to have somebody with an American flag on his arm on the

ground. When it talks about aid, we have to come with the first

down payment. When it talks about political stability, we have to

be the one in there doing it.

Talk to me for a moment about what is the U.S. role, not in this

broad generic sense about, well, we have to lead. Give me some insight

as to how much of the nitty-gritty are we responsible for putting

together in these various political, economic, emergency aid as

well as rebuilding as well as dealing with the physical security.

I agree with you.

Everyone I have spoken to, except occasionally

my collective staff, I got the same response you said here today:

They are not looking for an all-Muslim force.

As a matter of fact, I am getting the opposite.

Knowing how seriously Nebraska takes its sports

teams, I will not ask you whether you were there to recruit.

I know, I know, I know, I know.

I know, I know. And I am not even from Colorado.

Look, let me ask one last question and then yield the rest of the

time to my friend from Rhode Island. Our next witness is from a

respected—is respected in her own right, but from a very respected

family as well, and a Sufi family. The Wahabis and others have

been the more radical, represented the radical elements.

Tell me a little bit about, which we have not talked much about,

how much of the division that exists between and within Pashtun

and the other three major ethnic groups is a reflection as much of

a division based upon Islam as much as it is geography? How much

of a role is this going to play as this gets played out in Afghanistan?

But how much does that represent? What I am

trying to get at is——

Some would argue that was a driving force for

the splintering of Afghanistan as well, though, is it not?

I am trespassing on your time.

No, I do, but I am going to ask you to maybe

come back at some point so we can go into more detail on this aspect

of Afghanistan, so we educate this body more. People here

have one vision of Afghanistan. The idea that women held office,

that women had responsible positions, that women were totally integrated,

that women were educated and went to the university is

something that is sort of counterintuitive to Americans now because

of all that they have been exposed to.

So when we say we want to reconstruct and we want women in

society, I have Delawareans say to me: Well, wait a minute; let us

not go overboard here. They should be, but look, I am not sending

my son over there for you to reconstruct and modernize a country.

And I say: No, no, no, no; all I am trying to do is get Afghanistan

in a sense back to where it was in the sixties and early seventies,

and they will take care of it from there themselves. And people go:

What? You mean to tell me—so we have an education process under way.

But now I have gone way beyond my time and I have trespassed

on our next witness, but, most importantly at the moment, on my

colleague’s time. So the rest of the time is yours and then we will excuse you, dean.

The status is you have as much time as you

want to question the dean, who is going to then go catch a plane,

and then we are going to hear from——

Well, if I knew that I would not dismiss you——

Because no other hearing could possibly

be as important as this hearing.

Fire away.

I thought you were going to say that you coached

Ms. Gailani and she could play in the WBA. I thought you were

going to tell me that.

Thank you for your commitment and sticking

with it, and we will continue to rely on you as a resource.

Ms. Gailani, I thank you very much for your indulgence

and I am very interested and anxious to hear your testimony.

We have as much time as you have.

Would you define for the record what you mean by ‘‘we’’?

Thank you very much.

Out of courtesy to my friend from Rhode Island, maybe I will let

him begin, since you are in Rhode Island these days.

Well, I think it is a pretty good answer. I know you do, too.

Well, I applaud your courage. I will be brief. You

state the conundrum, Islam and modernity. You talk about them,

as everyone else does, as if they have to learn to live with one another

and they are not one and the same, that Islam has had difficulty

absorbing modernity, becoming modern, and democracy is

associated with modernity, with modern.

The thing that I always find, the conundrum I always find myself

when I listen to Islamic experts like my friend Jonah Blank behind

me, who is a former Harvard professor of anthropology and

a student of Islam and a professor, is that on its face, that conundrum,

that democracy is not in the eyes of those what do not understand,

or maybe understand, Islam is inconsistent with Islam.

It has been something that has not been embraced very many places.

So the concern I think raised by Senator Chafee as I read it is

a concern that I have. There are three things which you seem to

have said today. One is that all agree that there must be a society

in Afghanistan at least open enough to accommodate different

views and political outlets for people’s views, extreme or otherwise,

and that it must embrace women in terms of being full participants,

but it must not do it the Western way, it must do it the Islam way.

My question to you is is not democracy per se the Western way,

or is it consistent with Islam? Because one of the things that—as

a Christian and a Catholic, I went to a religious school. When you

misbehave in school, the religious teachers, the nuns, would make

you stay after school and be disciplined. The way you were disciplined

was writing on the blackboard a number of times something

you were supposed to absorb.

It happened to me quite often, quite often.

One of the things that I used to have to write, I can recall writing

it 500 times while I could hear everyone else out on the playground

playing baseball while I was writing this, it went like this.

It said: The road to hell is paved with good intentions, because I

would find myself saying, why did you speak up in class, Mr.

Biden, and I would say: Well, sister, I was trying to settle that argument

behind me. And she would say: You may have had a good

intention, but you are paving your own road to hell here, not literally but figuratively.

We have good intentions right now. The women on this committee,

the women in this body, who are very much part of Western

feminism, have very good intentions to help women in Afghanistan.

One of the hardest things that is going to occur I think is us figuring

out how we help without interfering.

How much of an impact on the deliberations in Bonn that resulted

in all agreeing that women would have a place in the new

government was a consequence of a dicta coming from this administration

saying: By the way, there is no alternative here; you must

include women. How much of it was a consequence of that versus

just a spontaneity among the players?

Because, as you know much better than I, it was not only the

Taliban that has mistreated women. The Northern Alliance when

it held power, many elements of that coalition treated women with

alarming brutality. Some groups imposed restrictions hardly less

extreme than the Taliban, and rapes and sexual slavery and so on.

So how much of it was a consequence of a Western power imposing

a dicta on all of you assembled and how much of it was just

pure spontaneity, love and generosity?

There’s another Western expression that seems

appropriate here: Be careful what you wish for, for you may get it.

I am not being facetious when I say that. In a democratic Afghanistan,

do you believe that women will be represented? I know they

represent more than a majority of the population. Do you think

that the participation of women, who I would think after 20-some

years might be understandably less courageous than you and understandably

more reluctant to engage in what we saw on the television,

whether it is true or not—and let me make it clear to you,

I do not profess to be an expert on your country. I am chairman

of this committee, the most vaunted position in foreign policy in

our government other than in the administration.

I have spent my academic and my political career mastering

strategic doctrine and U.S.-Soviet relations and ‘‘the Middle East’’

as it relates to the Palestinian-Israeli struggle and Europe generally,

et cetera. But I do not profess to have an expertise.

But what I observed on the international broadcasts were when

the Taliban was driven out of Kabul men flocking to barber shops

in resistance to shave off their beards, but none of that happening

in rural areas; women still wearing burkas in rural areas, whereas

in Kabul women defiantly demonstrating that—it is like there is a

mantra in a child’s fable, ‘‘Ding-dong, the witch is dead.’’ Everybody

can come out now. Well, ding-dong, the Taliban has gone, I can take off my burka.

But that did not happen other places. So I guess what I am asking

you is—and I realize it is asking you to be a bit of a fortuneteller—

is how long do you think it will take and what circumstances

have to exist to provide an environment where, even if

there is a democracy, women will feel the confidence to come forward

without fear of being raped, molested, beaten, subjected to indignities, and-or just shunned?

Hey, I will manage your campaign. I am for you,

kid. I am with you. I can tell you are a winner. I do not have any

doubt about that. But all kidding aside, how do you get women? I know you are.

I do not doubt that. All I am saying is that you

have had more than 2 decades of misery and subjugation and brutality

that women have been the victims of.

I know that. But I am just focusing on that for the moment.

All of us. occasionally.

To use your phrase, I would love to have an opportunity,

when you have the opportunity, to spend some time with

you and my staff and some of my colleagues in an informal setting

in my office to discuss just that.

I will end where I began my questioning with the professor,

where I ended my questioning with him. I asked him how much,

as you recall, 20 minutes ago I asked him, how much of the divisions

that exist on public policy within Afghanistan are reflective

of adoptions of different versions of Islam as opposed to their tribal

lineage, and how do they intersect.

I have tried my best, and I have a long way to go, through Jonah

Blank and others on my staff who are scholars on and relating to

Islam, as well as those who are practitioners, to educate myself

more about Islam. As my mother would say, a little bit of knowledge

is a dangerous thing. I have a little bit of knowledge and I

suspect maybe a little bit more than a little bit of knowledge.

But there are such interesting parallels between the bitter and

bloody and divisive fights that exist within Christendom among

Christians over the interpretation of the Bible, that I see from the

historical perspective the same thing occurring from the fourth caliph on within your religion.

So what I need to be educated more about, and I hope there are

members of this administration who I have respect for what they

are attempting to do, attempt to school themselves on how much

of a part the different readings of the Koran which result in different

sects, whether it is Sunni or Shia, whether it is Sufi, whatever

iteration of Islam is the most predominant, because, as you

point out, you are able to, capable of, and willing to debate any

member of the Taliban, who is probably Wahabi or some other

version of Islam different than your version of Islam, on what the

Prophet meant when he spoke and what he wrote down.

We call that in the West, as you know, a religious debate. There

is a famous American jurist named Oliver Wendell Holmes who

said the following. He said: ‘‘Prejudice is like the pupil of the eye;

the more light you shine upon it, the more tightly it closes.’’

I have found as a student of Western religions—and I mean that

seriously; theology is my avocation—that there are very few debates

about religion that are resolved based on logic. They should

be resolved based on logic. I will conclude with one example. Even

within Protestant sects of Christendom, there are wide variations,

not resulting in jihad, but wide—even the definition of what is

meant by ‘‘jihad’’ is disagreed among you—wide differences between,

let us say, Episcopalians and Pentecostals on how you read

certain, the same paragraph from the same Bible.

There are disagreements about whether or not the way to read

the Bible is with an educated person translating it, in effect, for

you or take it literally. I am always reminded of a phrase in the

Christian Bible talking about, and it goes something like this: It

is as difficult for a rich man to get to heaven as it is for a camel

to get through the eye of a needle.

There are very deeply devout, honorable, decent fundamentalist

Christians who believe that is literal, the Bible said that. Most

educated theologians point out to you that there is a gate in the

wall of Jerusalem, referred to as the ‘Eye of the Needle,’’ that camels

had to get down on their knees to be able to get through, and

the reference in the Bible refers to that a rich man has greater obligations

than a poor man because he has been given more, and to

those who have been given much much is expected in Christendom,

and so the interpretation is that a rich man better not just enjoy

his riches himself, he should make them available to his fellow

man, otherwise he will have difficulty getting to heaven. But taken

literally, it means a rich man can never get to heaven, because no

man can get through the eye of a needle.

You have the same kinds of divisions within Islam in terms of

interpretations of parts of the Koran. So it gives me hope that you

are pursuing equity and democracy within your country. It gives

me pause and concern to think that you must do it through Islam,

not because I am critical of Islam, but because those kinds of in

effect religious debates are seldom if ever resolved.

It took Western Europe 500 years of bloodshed to finally resolve

that they could live together. That is part of my concern, and I

need to be educated and maybe you would help educate me.

But they do. They say you should not be educated.

Am I not correct?

No, here as well

Maybe you should manage my next campaign.

You are very good. You are very good.

Well, I am confident you will, and I would argue

that the honor of a woman cannot be met without allowing her to

be educated.

But having said that, you are obviously very educated, very sophisticated,

and very charming. We appreciate the fact you have

taken the time to be here. We have learned from you. I have

learned from you, and we will call on you again if you would be willing.

Thank you, and I wish you all the good luck in the world. Just

remember, some day when you are Prime Minister and you are told

by your secretary that there is a guy named Biden in the outer office

with his granddaughter who wishes to meet the Prime Minister,

you will not say, ‘‘Joe who?’’

We are adjourned.