Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All of us appreciate

your scheduling this significant hearing. We hold a lot of hearings

that could be postponed, but this one need not be postponed, it

must not be.

Before we begin our consideration of the political questions before

us today, I sort of feel obliged to express our appreciation to

our military and homeland defense forces. They are serving the

American people well and I am proud of them and I know everybody

in this room is. From the Capitol Police on the corner of First

and C to the Marines outside of Kandahar, they are giving heart

and soul to their country and America’s values.

This has been going on a long time in this country and I suppose

as long as this country exists it will be going on from time to time.

Now, we are here today, as you have indicated yourself, Mr.

Chairman, to discuss the political future of Afghanistan or, perhaps

more realistically, the political future of Afghanistan—question

mark, is it going to continue. Now, one of the reasons Osama bin

Laden is in Afghanistan today is because the United States—and

let us be candid about it—the United States walked away from victory

after the fall of the Soviet occupation. The massacres and

counter-massacres that followed the Soviet departure made the

Taliban look appealing to the Afghan people.

Now that victory is in hand again, we are back to status quo

ante bellum: the same players, same power vacuum, same rivalries.

The Bush administration and the United Nations knocked heads to

force the factions to agree. This was in Germany this week when

they got together. But how are we going to continue to make them

agree? Who is going to do it?

Some have suggested we need a peacekeeping force in Afghanistan,

to which there is a one-word answer and it is pronounced ‘‘Somalia.’’

Anti-Taliban warlords are already fighting each other for

control of the liberated areas of Afghanistan. The Russians wasted

no time landing a contingent in Kabul, or ‘‘KOB-ble,’’ as some pronounce

it. The Iranians as usual will be up to no good, and the

Pakistanis have interests that may or may not necessarily coincide

with us in Afghanistan.

So these two folks and the others to follow you are the experts,

and I personally appreciate your being here and I appreciate you

being willing to testify.

Now, how can we enfranchise the Afghans and disenfranchise

the busybodies in the region who made such a mess of the place?

That is to be determined. How do we use all the goodwill we have

won by freeing the people of Afghanistan without being trapped in

another fruitless nation-building nightmare? Boy, you sure do have

your work cut out for you, and I look forward to hearing what you

are going to do.

Move your microphone so we can hear you.

Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Secretary, do I not recognize you? Have I not seen you

on the Senate floor a time or two with a fellow named Brownback?

We miss you.

I hope you are enjoying your work.

Last week the United States Ambassador to Pakistan toured a

Pakistani textile factory and while there she said—and let me

quote her: ‘‘The patriotic thing to do if you are an American is to

buy Pakistani products, because the stronger the partner we have

here in Pakistan is a stronger partner against terror in Afghanistan.’’

I have got the article here where she said that.

Now, perhaps she is unaware that there are two sides to that

story. Like old Shoeless Joe used to say, ‘‘it ain’t necessarily so.’’

The United States textile and apparel industry last year lost more

than 60,000 jobs, including, if you will forgive me, 20,000 in North

Carolina. These are people whose children serve in our police forces

and our military and they pay taxes and so forth, but they are not

qualified to take the jobs that are made possible by Research Triangle

Park further east in North Carolina, and they are out of

work because, simply said, there is nothing else for them to do.

I hope that the statement by Ms. Chamberlain does not represent

the view of this administration and I am going to make inquiry

of the President about it.

Do you have any view on that?

Well, I hear that and I do not mean to offend

you, but that is the same song and dance I hear from the administration

all the time. They do not give—and not only this administration;

prior administrations.

These people do not have anything to do, and they have been

hard-working people whose jobs were ripped away from them by

the close of textile mills.

Now, let me see. I want to ask you something, sir. Without second-

guessing the parties on their choices for the interim government

of Afghanistan—you cannot hear me?

I am not going to second-guess anybody regarding

the choices for the interim government of Afghanistan and I do

not think you are, either. But I do wonder whether any of the individuals

involved have the nationwide stature inside Afghanistan to

keep the government together. I want to know how you assess the

prospects for stability there.

Very quickly, you heard the chairman discuss

Kofi Annan’s coming to his office and we talked. Do you believe

that a U.N. force is going to be necessary there?

Comprised of whom?

Comprised of whom?

We better plan on what you are saying.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am sorry, we are going to have to close this

down because we are way overtime on the vote over on the floor.

Let me thank both of you for your testimony today.

Well, the vote is almost over now.

So what you are asking is to be kept open?

Is that satisfactory to you two?

I do not understand the answer. Will your schedule

permit you to stay further? Now, we have a second panel who

have been waiting.

I think I shall let the chairman decide this. I

know what I would do if I were chairman still, but we got jeopardized

several weeks ago and I am no longer the chairman.

We will stand in recess and Senator Biden I am sure will be back

in a few minutes.