Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Haass, some historians who have tried to describe

governance in Afghanistan have suggested that at best there was

only a small central government, but largely a government of tribes

or entities that loosely got together in various ways. I mention that

simply because clearly the work that you and others are doing is

remarkable in the Bonn conference, in thinking through some central

government and some way it might relate to each of the various

forces that came together in Bonn and some that did not.

I am just wondering, as you take a look in the intermediate term,

quite apart from the long term, essentially Afghanistan’s fate will

probably be more of a function of its proximity to Russia and Pakistan

and Iran, maybe to some extent Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, in

other words their neighbors. All of these states share a desire for

a friendly, stable, or at least non-hostile situation there, and have

been prepared in the past to take steps to try to ensure that that

was the case through injection of their own influence.

Now, it is being suggested, not necessarily by yourself or the administration,

that the United States has a role here militarily, and

likewise we certainly are working very hard in a humanitarian

way, but we affirm that we are not nation-builders. We do not want

Americans on the ground there in any sense of permanence as a

security force or a governance force.

You are testifying that other nations who are volunteering for

this process want to know that large countries—like the United

States—are going to be there. But I just think that at some point

the critical issue will be what role does the United States really see

for the situation, because otherwise despite our best protestations

now, we will drift away in terms of our influence on the situation,

and others who are the neighbors will in fact take control.

This may not lead to a situation that is as catastrophic as the

Taliban, but we could meet 10 years from now and say we made

a bad mistake. We won the war, but we left, not as abruptly perhaps

as before, but we were out the door even as the war was ending.

I just wonder the extent to which you and your colleagues are

trying to think this through as to how the United States has any

influence in addition to the neighbors. The Russians already by

coming back in have indicated they certainly understand their situation,

and I wonder whether we understand ours.

. Let me just interrupt for a second before my

time is up. Will such indirect leadership work, as opposed to our

simply saying, these things do not work, without us taking control

and managing it?

Thank you.