. I will go first. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Is that better? There we go.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the committee: It is my

privilege to appear before you today with Ambassador Haass to dis-

cuss the political situation in post-Taliban Afghanistan. I will be

brief and restrict my remarks to providing an overall perspective

on the political situation, as well as the current state of our provision

of humanitarian assistance. Ambassador Haass will cover reconstruction

and security matters.

Mr. Chairman, as we speak American troops are in combat on

Afghan soil and the United States is engaged in three closely

linked efforts: to isolate and destroy UBL’s al-Qaeda organization

and its affiliates, both in Afghanistan and elsewhere; to decapitate

the Taliban regime that harbored al-Qaeda and other terrorist

groups; and to assist the people of Afghanistan to restore freedom,

prosperity, and good governance to their country.

The elimination of bin Laden and his associates from Afghanistan

will be followed by a longer, internationally supported process

that aims to rebuild and bring lasting stability to the war-torn

country to prevent it from being safe haven for terrorists in the future.

Ousting the Taliban leadership and helping the Afghan people

form a broad-based representative government are high priorities in this process.

These tasks will not be easy, as you have said, and we recognize

that, especially given the ethnic and regional divisions within Afghanistan

that Senator Helms referred to. It is not for us, however,

to choose who rules Afghanistan. It is not for us to choose who

rules Afghanistan, but we will assist those who seek a peaceful nation free of terrorism.

Well before September 11, the United States had been working

with the United Nations, with a number of other governments, and

with the Afghan factions and with Afghan groups outside their

home country to develop a process of national reconciliation

through a traditional Afghan grand council, or Loya Jirga. Together

with our partners in this initiative, we developed a set of

guiding principles for a successor government that continue to have

meaning. It should be broad-based and representative of Afghan’s

diverse ethnic and religious groups. It should preserve the unity

and territorial integrity of the country. It should protect the human

rights of all its citizens, including women. It should not pose a

threat to any of its neighbors or near neighbors, and it must not

harbor international terrorists or export illegal drugs.

I am pleased to be able to report today that Afghanistan’s future

is looking brighter than it has in many years. December 5 marked

the conclusion of the U.N. talks in Bonn, which succeeded in pulling

together Afghan groups with widely differing views and agendas

and coming up with a framework for an interim government

in Afghanistan, as well as a place for the long-term future of that

country. We recognize that there is much hard work still to be done.

The international community is reviewing ways to support the

Interim Authority and the process leading to establishment of a

permanent, multi-ethnic, broad-based, gender-inclusive government.

There are meetings this week in Berlin separate from the

Bonn talks and later this month in Brussels and these will focus

attention on this important issue.

Afghanistan’s neighbors also play a critical role in helping support

this process. They are front line states for terrorism, narcotics,

and refugee problems emanating from Afghanistan and their role

in backing the transition will be very important.

During this time of crisis, we have been most grateful for the

support we have been receiving from the countries in South and

Central Asia. Many have become key partners and joined a wider

coalition of nations committed to stopping terrorism in its tracks.

Pakistan has taken on a crucial role in support of our war in Afghanistan.

One should not underestimate the serious political risks

President Musharraf took in doing so. His bold position at such a

critical juncture in international history will be remembered and

recognized for a long time to come.

India’s immediate and generous offers of cooperation also have

been greatly appreciated by this administration. India has also suffered

from Taliban-inspired terrorism and we recognize not only its

offers of support to the coalition, but also their generous plans to

provide humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people.

Tajikistan has provided staging areas for humanitarian and

other operations which serve as crucial launching points for humanitarian

assistance deliveries into Afghanistan. Turkmenistan

has set up a humanitarian depot and the U.N. is flying in food

shipments for further delivery to Afghanistan. Iran has been helpful

by allowing the use of its port Bandar a Abbas for transshipment

of wheat to Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan

for onward delivery to Afghanistan. Kyrgyzstan has also made

staging areas available for humanitarian assistance.

Finally, Uzbekistan has provided staging areas for humanitarian

and other assistance and they are working on opening the Termez

Bridge. U.S. forces are inspecting the bridge and, if sound, it could

be used to deliver much-needed humanitarian assistance to the region

of Mazar-e Sharif and we are optimistic that it will be open very soon.

Mr. Chairman, each of these states is well aware that it has everything

to gain from a secure, prosperous, and stable nation on its borders.

In the long run, we expect that the outcome of the Afghan political

discussions will be a central authority of some sort in Kabul

with control over specific issues of national concern, complemented

by a decentralized administrative system which delegates some decisionmaking

authority and control of resources to regional centers.

This is likely the only politically viable solution in a country

marked by regional and ethnic tensions, which unfortunately have

increased during the 20-plus years of conflict.

We plan to continue to provide directly to the Afghan people

through the U.N. and accredited NGO’s, and at some point it will

be realistic to discuss the possibility of providing multilateral assistance

to a representative Afghan Government and to local governments

and councils. This type of economic assistance will give

local governments and councils a stake in the rebuilding and economic

wellbeing of the nation as a whole.

Targeting assistance will also assist in reintegrating women into

Afghan economic and political life. Under the Taliban, women and

girls in Afghanistan were the victims of serious and systematic

abuses. The Taliban’s unacceptable treatment of women will leave

a mark on Afghanistan’s long-term development. The U.N. reports

that female literacy is approximately 4 percent versus 30 percent

of males. The Taliban has also significantly reduced women’s access

to health care, with resultant negative lasting consequences

for maternal and child health.

We are pleased that the Bonn talks included Afghan women and

that the Interim Authority will include several women, including a

vice chairman who will handle women’s affairs and the minister of

public health. This is an important step for Afghan women and one

that we strongly support.

In the past, women were a vital part of Afghan society. Having

them back playing important roles in Afghanistan’s public life, in

government, schools and hospitals will help to rebuild Afghan society.

Obviously, some of our goals for a stable, secure Afghanistan will

be reached more quickly than others. In the mean time, we also remain

focused on the severe humanitarian crisis facing us in Afghanistan

and we must continue to provide the Afghan people with

basic necessities. Let me provide you with a brief snapshot of

where we now stand with regard to humanitarian assistance.

I know you have heard this before, but we believe it bears repeating

that prior to September 11 the United States was the

world’s single largest donor of assistance to the Afghan people, and

the complex humanitarian crisis currently gripping Afghanistan

started several years ago, coincident with the rise to power of the Taliban.

On October 4, President Bush announced that the United States

would make available an additional $320 million for humanitarian

programs, underscoring the message that the United States would

come to the aid of the Afghan people. On November 20, Secretary

Powell and Secretary O’Neill launched the international planning

effort for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Afghanistan. As

the Secretary stated, our message to the Afghan people is that we

will not leave them in the lurch.

The humanitarian situation remains very serious, though. There

is still considerable insecurity in many parts of the country, which

inhibits the ability of the humanitarian agencies to do their work.

In particular, no food convoys have entered Afghanistan through

the important Quetta-Kandahar corridor for the past 3 weeks and

the international relief agencies have not had access to some

60,000 internally displaced Afghans under Taliban control in Spin Boldak.

In the north, the critical logistics hub at Mazar-e Sharif is not

open due to the insecurity in the area. Concerns over security have

also delayed the opening of the essential land supply route from

Uzbekistan, which I mentioned earlier, but which we do hope will

be resolved soon.

Finally, winter is descending. The U.N. assessment is that between

5 and 7.5 million people are extremely vulnerable and in

need of international assistance. The relief community, led by

USAID and the World Food Program [WFP], has done an outstanding

job getting food and other supplies into the country under

very difficult circumstances. WFP reports that it achieved its overall

target of 52,000 metric tons of food in November and it set the

ambitious goal of moving 100,000 tons in December. In November

UNICEF completed its polio vaccination campaign for 5 million children.

UNHCR has continued to work with Pakistan to allow refugees

to enter and to be accommodated in new camps where they can receive

international protection and assistance. The numbers arriving

in Pakistan have been relatively small, some 135,000 since September

11, and with the success of the opposition forces there are

already spontaneous refugee return movements occurring, especially

from Iran.

Against this backdrop, there are a vigorous assessment and planning

actions under way for the rapid expansion of humanitarian

assistance where and when security permits. The U.N. has reestablished

its presence in Kabul, Herat, and Faizabad and convoys are

able to reach those locations. The international donor community

is reviewing the integrated U.N. relief strategy for the winter at a

meeting this week in Berlin that I mentioned earlier. Donor

pledges, some $800 million in total, will cover the requirements

presented in the U.N. plan.

In 2 weeks in Brussels, the steering group for the reconstruction

will meet to set the course and start the resource mobilization effort,

endeavoring to integrate planning for recovery and rehabilitation

work with the existing humanitarian strategy. This effort will

also aim to establish the interface between the Afghan Interim Authority

and the U.N. and international financial institutions.

The road to peace and prosperity in Afghanistan will be long and

difficult. We must all work toward this goal, not only for Afghanistan

but for the region and the rest of the world.

Thank you for your attention.

. I believe that is correct, Senator.

. Thank you.

. Senator, I believe Ambassador Chamberlain’s comments

were made in the context of our efforts to show support to

General Musharraf and to recognize the sacrifices that Pakistan

has been enduring as a result of the war. This is a war which we

would have much greater difficulty winning without Musharraf’s

strong and bold support and it is in that context that she made

those comments.

That said, obviously we appreciate the situation in the U.S. textile

industry and we are committed to working with the Congress

to ensure that our support for Pakistan is done in a manner which

will minimize the impact on the textile and apparel industry.

. Senator, just very briefly, I will just add to what my

colleague here said that we are of, taking into account what Ambassador

Haass said about not being able to provide the security

in the manner in which one would—which would make the assistance,

the humanitarian assistance, efficient, we are very much

aware of the problem. We are working very closely with the WFP

to find ways. There are people on the ground working for WFP who

have experience in these matters and who are working very hard

to find ways around the problems, and we are working closely with them.

. He covered it comprehensively. I do not really have

much to add other than the fact that they have been playing a very

positive role in this endeavor.

. It is our understanding that it was just sort of a disconnect,

which they quickly reassured us that the contents of those

planes were humanitarian assistance and we got back on track afterwards.

. No, Senator. I actually met with the Chinese Foreign

Minister, Vice Foreign Minister, just last week and we had a long

discussion about Afghanistan. Primarily their view is the same as

ours. They have the same goals that we do. They also want to see

a broad-based, broadly representative government, and a country

that is at peace and that no longer exports drugs or terrorism.

The narcotics aspect and the terrorist aspects are obviously very

high on their agenda, as it is on all the surrounding countries.

They have a large humanitarian program which they have been actually

implementing. They have been sending things through Pakistan

into northern Afghanistan. So they are active in providing humanitarian

assistance, and they are supportive overall of what we

are trying to achieve and what the international community is trying

to achieve there.

They were not in Bonn as far as I know.

. The representatives in Bonn were essentially, the

foreign representatives, were the surrounding countries, the Six

Plus Two countries, as well as the countries that had played host

to various exile groups of Afghans.

. If I could just add to that to bring in also, they also

have a terrorism concern, an indigenous terrorism concern, some of

which emanated from Afghanistan. So they have a very clear interest

in essentially meeting the same—supporting the goals that we

are all trying to achieve there.

. Senator, these are very good questions and with Afghanistan’s

past the answers are not necessarily clear if one is

going to take the past as a guide. However, as Ambassador Haass

said in his statement as well, they are getting a second chance.

What we took out of, what we read into the spirit of the Bonn

agreement is that there is a real yearning for peace and stability

and rehabilitation among the Afghan people, and that the representatives

in Bonn were representing that feeling.

The Bonn agreement has a few things in it which I would just

like to read to you because they are quite remarkable, and the fact

that these people, that this group is signing onto this I think is a

very good sign: ‘‘The Interim Authority shall, with the assistance

of the United Nations, establish an independent human rights commission,

whose responsibilities will include human rights monitoring,

investigation of violations of human rights, and development

of domestic human rights institutions. The Interim Authority

may, with the assistance of the United Nations, also establish any

other commissions to review matters not covered in this agreement

along these lines.

‘‘The members of the Interim Authority shall abide by a code of

conduct elaborated in accordance with international standards.

Failure by a member of the Interim Authority to abide by the provisions

of the code of conduct shall lead to his or her suspension

from that body. The decision to suspend a member shall be taken

by two-thirds majority of the membership of the Interim Authority

on the proposal of its chairman or any of its vice chairmen.’’

These are remarkable statements and, as I said, it indicates

where they want to go and what the intent is. We are optimistic

that they will take advantage of this second chance. They are certainly

speaking along—the Foreign Minister, so-called, of the

Northern Alliance has said on numerous occasions and was actually

saying at the beginning of the Bonn conference: We are getting

another opportunity; this is our chance not to fail; we failed in the

past. That spirit is pervasive right now.

On the issue of women’s rights, there were two women at the

conference. One of the ministries is going to be run by a woman.

There is actually going to be—instead of the Ministry of Vice and

Virtue, which was engaged in repressing women, we have got a

ministry for women that is going to be run by a woman. I think

that also indicates commitment, as does the fact that one of the

vice chairmen of the Interim Authority will be a woman.

These are all very good signs. We intend to work with the U.N.

to keep them to these commitments and to remind the international

community and remind the Afghans that this is what they

signed up to and this is extremely important for the future and the

rebuilding of Afghanistan.

There is also talk—and I will let you, Richard, expand on this——