Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Both of you know how personally I am a fan of the job that both

of you are doing. I think you and your respective two bosses are

some of the finest appointees in the whole administration. I would

use this subject of Afghanistan just simply to say to Secretary

Armitage, as I have already said to Secretary Wolfowitz, let us do

not make the mistake that we made in Iraq when we left the

downed pilot, who happens to be from Jacksonville, Florida, who

was declared dead, Commander Scott Speicher.

We did not go back to get him. There were a series of mistakes.

Then after a live sighting, his status has been changed to MIA, and

there is consultation now going on as to whether or not his status

ought to be changed to POW. But in the meantime, a few weeks

ago, we have confirmed his appointment to captain. I take every

opportunity as I can to remind you all of this, on behalf of Senator

Pat Roberts, Senator Bob Smith, and myself. I will be offering an

amendment to the DOD authorization bill today, again, putting

this issue front and center.

Now, what I want to talk about Afghanistan, I would like you all

to respond, please, is that in my case, having been to Afghanistan

twice since the first of the year, having talked to our troops, having

seen that inhospitable kind of environment, having been so proud

of the phenomenal military success that our Nation had at the outset,

as summarized by that photograph on the front pages of

marrying high tech and low tech of the special operations troops,

on horseback, with the Northern Alliance calling in the pinpoint air

strikes. We had this phenomenal success, to begin with, and then

we came to Tora Bora, and it looks like that we let the back door

stay open so that they could get out; and our prime objective of al-

Qaeda, bin Laden himself, escaped, and part of trying to remedy

that is us trying to help close that border, or have hot pursuit.

I have spoken directly with the President of Pakistan about that

issue, and he has to say one thing publicly, and I understand that,

but it’s just like Bonnie and Clyde in the 1920s, they would rob a

bank, and they would go across the state line, and the sheriff that

was pursuing them could not go after them. He would have to stop

at the state line. Well, we need to be able to pursue. But there was

a lot more involved in Tora Bora.

There were questionable loyalties; why did we, for example, go

with a guy named Hazret Ali, instead of Ghamsharik, and then he

hired a guy named Ilyas Knel, and there is some question about

them actually giving cover to the retreating al-Qaeda, so that they

got across the border.

Can you enlighten us, in light of our phenomenal military success,

how did we goof there? And then further answer the question,

if you would, I take it that we tried to correct some of our mistakes

when we went in on the Anaconda mission?

Well, as a matter of fact, in Anaconda, it is my

understanding that you actually ran a feint of the old Soviet model

of the frontal attack, and when that was repulsed, the al-Qaeda

were high-fiving about how they had done it again, just like they

had done to the Soviets over a decade earlier, but then you

swooped in on them from the rear, and you are certainly to be commended for that.

Did over 1,000 al-Qaeda get away in Tora Bora?

Did many get away in Anaconda?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The last time that I was in Afghanistan, I was

just struck with the enormity of the task that we have in trying

to bring about stability there, the lack of infrastructure, the lack

of law and order. The United States, in a heroic effort, not only in

our military operations, but then in our military operations as an

outreach to the community, helping them build institutions, you

know, it came foursquare.

To me, as we went from Baghram to Kabul, to visit with our Ambassador,

and they were still trying to de-mine the grounds of the

U.S. Embassy, and as we proceeded from where we landed in the

helicopter to the embassy, suddenly someone stopped us in the

road and said, ‘‘Wait a minute, we just found a mine a hundred

yards up the road, on the side of the road.’’ And they blew it up.

We are in this now so much for the long haul, and yet it is so

important to us. They had a huge drought there when I was there in January——

And that is going to make it difficult

to try to get farmers to grow crops, instead of growing poppies,

and so forth. Give me some reason to have optimism.

When Senator Shelby and I were last there, we

found ourselves in the unusual situation—as we were having our

luncheon meeting with Chairman Karzai in the old king’s palace,

with the plaster cracking on the ceilings, and so forth, we found

ourselves in the unusual situation of impressing upon him the need

for him to be more careful about his personal security. We urged

the same thing when we met with President Musharraf.

What can you tell me about our attempts there to surround him

with troops that would be loyal, and to get him to stop from wading

in the crowds, and that kind of stuff?

Well, I figured that Senator Shelby and I were

instruments to be used by you in trying to convey that message

when we were meeting with him. This was several months ago.

Let me ask again about how, Secretary Wolfowitz, did we get in

the situation where we were having to decide on the Tora Bora assault

between two warlords, one of whom seemed not to provide the

closure of that rear exit, and what did we learn from that, that we

can avoid those kind of mistakes in the future? Tell me just what

you can for the record here, as we prepare for the future on trying

to go get the No. 1 guy, who we still do not have.

Mr. Chairman, may I followup with one additional

comment? I want to commend you all for your success in the

diffusing the extremely high tensions—they are not completely diffused—

between India and Pakistan.

But I bring that up, having been there myself, having gone from

Islamabad to New Delhi with Senator Shelby, arguing the same

things that you all have done very successfully recently, and I congratulate

you on that. But I bring up this issue in terms of not only

what that would mean to world peace, were they to get into an exchange

of nukes, but what that would do to our effort to go after

al-Qaeda. Because I believe that porous border of highly mountainous

terrain, with Pakistan/Afghanistan, is where a lot of the al-

Qaeda still are; and yet, we see the troops at least being threatened

to be pulled off of there, the Pakistani troops, to the Kashmir

border, and, therefore, not guarding that rear door. Tell us what you can about that.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am grateful for the little things, Mr. Secretary.