Mr. Chairman, like the other members of the

panel, I have submitted my full statement for the record. I will just

touch on a few points here.

I would submit that today the United States does not really have

a policy toward Syria if by policy we mean a series of measures and

initiatives rooted in a strategy for changing Syrian behaviors that

are inimical to our interests and eliciting more constructive behavior

from the Syrian regime.

Let me very briefly put a little bit of historical perspective on

that. During the 90’s, from the Madrid Conference in 1991 until

the summit between President Clinton and the late Hafez Al-Asad

in March 2000, the way that we thought about a strategy toward

Syria was in the context of the Syrian track of the Middle East

peace process. It was assumed that once we got Syria and Israel

to do the deal that all of our bilateral concerns with Syria, particularly

those related to its state sponsorship of terrorism, would be

taken care of in the context of that agreement.

But of course, that agreement never came, and with the effective

collapse of the Syria track in 2000 we have been left adrift in our

policy toward Syria without a strategy, without a sense of how to

accomplish what it is we want to accomplish with Syria.

I would suggest that—and I would respectfully disagree with

Ambassador Murphy and Dr. Jouejati on this—that it is a mistake

to make the basis for a new strategy toward Syria a resumption

of the Syrian track of the Middle East peace process. As important

as I think that a peace between Syria and Israel would be for the

region and for U.S. interests in the region, the reality is that we

are not going to have a meaningful Syria track any time soon.

Given what else is going on in the region, given the composition

and the positions of the present Israeli government, we are not

soon going to be able to restart the Syria track on terms that would

to have any meaning for the Syrian regime.

I think what we need is a strategy that will let us accomplish

our policy goals toward Syria without waiting for a climate that is

more conducive to a resumption of the Syria track.

I would pick up on something that Patrick Clawson said. We

need both bigger sticks and bigger carrots with regard to Syria if

we are going to construct such a strategy. There has been a lot of

discussion of sticks with regard to Syria. The Syria Accountability

Act is very much oriented in that direction. I do not hear very

much discussion nowadays about carrots for Syria and I think that

is a serious deficiency in the policy debate right now.

If we are not willing to talk with specificity about the carrots as

well as the sticks, we are never really going to be able to modify

Syrian behavior. Both when I was in government and even more

since I have left government and in some ways am able to speak

more freely with Syrians and others in the region, the consistent

message that I hear from Syria with regard to our policy differences

with the regime in Damascus is: You keep telling us you

want us to change our behavior, but you will not tell us what is

in it for us if we do.

I think we should make it clear both what is in it for Syria if

it behaves more constructively and what will happen to them if

they do not behave more constructively. Let me suggest a couple

of areas and how this approach might work in those areas.

With regard to terrorism and Syria’s designation as a state sponsor

of terrorism, that designation is eminently justified by the

record of Syrian behavior. But all we do, frankly, in terms of engaging

Syria on this is to reiterate over and over the same list of

complaints and tell them we want them to stop.

I think we need to create—to use a word that has been taken

over for other purposes, but I will use it here—we need a road map

for Syria on the terrorism issue. We should be very clear that we

want them to do specific steps—expel these leaders, close these offices,

stop these activities—but also indicate that if they were to do

those things in a way that was verifiable and we were confident

they had done them, that we would be prepared to take Syria off

the state sponsors list because at that point Syria would effectively

be out of the terrorism business as far as the United States was

concerned. We need to use both carrots and sticks.

Similarly, on getting them to take a more cooperative stance toward

what we are doing in Iraq, I could not agree more with Senator

Biden’s suggestion that what we need is an analogue to the

six plus two framework that was, I think, very, very helpful to us

in late 2001, early 2002, in dealing with Afghanistan. We need an

analogue for that with regard to Iraq.

I think that would be good for our own interests in Iraq, but in

the context of today’s topic I think it would be an important way

of reassuring the Syrians that what we are doing in Iraq is not directed

against their interests and that in fact their regional interests

could be accommodated in what we are trying to do in Iraq.

Again, we need both carrots and sticks.

With regard to the Syria Accountability Act, I certainly welcome

and encourage the efforts to put a national security waiver in. I

think if people are looking for other ways to increase the range of

flexibility that is granted to the executive in implementing the act,

assuming that it passes, I would also consider putting in sunset

provisions with the various measures, put in a time limit, so that

at the end of the time limit the executive and the Congress are

going to have to revisit the situation and see if these kinds of

measures are still appropriate.

Will such an approach, the kind of approach I have suggested,

really work with the Syrians, particularly given some of the things

that we have heard about Bashar Al-Asad today? I think that there

are a number of competing images of Bashar Al-Asad in public discourse

about Syria today. You heard one from Patrick Clawson:

Bashar is essentially the loyal son of the regime, may in fact be

even more ideological, more anti-American in his orientation than

his late father.

You have heard another from Mr. Jouejati, that Bashar is someone

who really does want to take Syria in a more constructive direction,

but is hemmed in by an old guard. Particularly in Israeli

analytic circles, you hear a third view: Bashar is simply inexperienced,

not up to the job, does not really know what he is doing.

I could argue the case for any one of those there views of Bashar

with a sort of selective application of evidence. I think that what

this suggests is that Bashar’s situation is very, very complicated

and that if we are going to engage him, if we are going to get anything

more than tactical adjustments in Syrian behavior, we are

going to have to be very clear, very explicit, about what we want

him to do, but also very clear about both rewards and benefits, depending

on the choices that he makes.

Thank you very much.

I think, to put it in context from a Syrian perspective,

one of the chronic concerns of the Syrian regime—this certainly

goes back to the time of Hafez Al-Asad, but I think it very

much continues in the way that Bashar and the people around him

look at the regional situation—the biggest fear from Damascus’s

standpoint is one of regional marginalization, that the United

States is going to be able over time literally to encircle Syria with

a series of pro-western regimes.

You have Israel and you have the whole history of efforts to

broker a separate peace with Lebanon. You have Jordan now very

firmly in the American camp; Saudi Arabia; go on around the region.

And now you have Iraq flip over in a big way.

Because at that point, if the Syrian track of the

peace process is still unresolved, there is, from a Syrian perspective,

no particular reason why the United States or the rest of the

world really has to pay attention to that issue. The United States

would have the strategic position that it wanted, Syria is in no position

on its own to threaten Israeli strategic interests in a fundamental

way, and at that point Syria could be ignored. I think that

is the biggest fear that a Syrian leader has.

What something like a six plus two framework for Iraq could do

in helping us manage the Syrian relationship is assuage that concern

and help the Syrian leadership to understand that we in fact

do want to accommodate their legitimate regional interests as part

of what we are trying to do in the region.

I believe that there is, Senator. I think that as a

result of the work that was done during the 1990’s on the Syria

track that we understand very well what the requirements are for

peace that would meet Syrian needs on return of territory, full

withdrawal of Israel from the Golan, and Israel’s needs for security

guarantees and normal relations with Damascus afterwards. We

know what that agreement would look like.

We are just simply not in a position at this point to deliver on

that or try to make it happen in a very feasible way. I think that

the Syrians, without any great altruism toward Israel, have basically

made the calculation that over the long run that is in their

interest, that is the best deal that they can hope for strategically

to help their place in the region, to help their position with us. I

think if we get back into an environment in which the kind of deal

I was talking about would be feasible, the Syrians would go for it.