Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome, Secretary Armitage.

Mohammed Ali famously said, when he refused

induction, ‘‘I ain’t got a gripe with the Vietcong.’’

Here as we analyze what is our gripe with Iran, you say we seek

to counter the Government of Iran’s negative and destructive policies

and actions and then later articulate those destructive policies

and actions as human rights record, pursuit of weapons of mass destruction,

also interference in the Arab-Israeli peace process. So obviously

this is very important to our relationship with Iran.

Can you tell us where we are in the Arab-Israeli peace process?

From the Iranian point of view, obviously they

would be concerned. Nothing is happening. We have no involve-

ment from what you just said. Ambassador Wolf is not there.

Meanwhile in today’s news Prime Minister Sharon is OK’ing the

provision of services to some illegal outposts, a new break. The Palestinians

are naturally objecting vociferously that this is a break

in the Road Map process. Do we have a position on today’s news

and what Prime Minister Sharon is doing? Are we involved at all?

Yes, I agree with you and I think it would be

naive for anyone to think it would be easy. Of course, not. It is not

going to be easy. The perception I think here and in the Arab

world—and it is not tangential. We are having a hearing on Iran

security. I think it is important. As you say in your written statement,

these are the gripes that we have with the Iranian Government.

They are interfering with the peace process. But when you

look at it from their point of view, the peace process is disintegrating,

and even from your testimony here, Condoleeza Rice may

be over there talking, Ambassador Wolf’s people are there. He is

not even in the region. He is our point person for the Road Map.

He is not even there, and I do not believe that there are any plans

to send him back. It is disintegrating and it is relevant to what is

happening in Iran and the region, Iraq also.

I would not dispute what you said about our

abhorrence of some of what is happening on the other side. But

meanwhile, nothing is happening, they might argue, on the side of

Israeli agreements to the Road Map. That is my question to you.

What is happening? What are we doing on that side? From what

I have heard so far, absolutely nothing.

One last question. Is the administration in

favor of a Palestinian state?

Thank you, sir.