Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I wish also

to express that this is a very good idea to have the hearing about

Iran, and again that is very timely.

Also, I wish to mention that I have been benefited by being educated

here tremendously in the U.S., and in fact, Senator Alexander

was the President of my university, the University of Tennessee,

at the time at which I was graduated, and that is an honor

and privilege, in fact, for me.

There are a number of points which I would like to discuss. Of

course, I have extensively elaborated on them in my paper, but

briefly I would love to mention the ones which I consider are very

timely and important.

First of all, unfortunately, I would like to characterize the relationship

between the U.S. and Iran predominantly as a mutual failure

since the revolution. I hope we change the course, we change

the paradigm, and try to go for a much better relationship which

is in the best interests of both countries and very much a possibility.

To me the Iran-U.S. cold war is over. We are for all practical purposes

in fact neighbors. Iran is facing the U.S. in Afghanistan. It

is facing the U.S. west of Iran in Iraq and also in the south in the

Persian Gulf. For all practical purposes we are neighbors, and I believe

we just cannot continue any further to have a sort of a cold

war. Either we have a choice of confrontation or reconciliation,

which my argument would be basically we are much better off to

go for reconciliation rather than confrontation which I am not sure

would serve any one of our countries’ interests.

There are a number of important common interests which are

just mentioned, but I am not going to elaborate on them. We have

a huge interest in Afghanistan, narco-terrorism there, terrorism,

and the problem of refugees for Iran. Also, having a stable and

strong government in Kabul is in the interest of both Iran and the

United States.

In Pakistan, we have both, in fact, a very important interest

there to see a not-failed government there. Extremism on the rise

there, and Pakistan is a nuclear power. Pakistan is our neighbor.

Thus, to see a prosperous and stable Pakistan I believe is in the

interest of both countries again.

The same thing is Azerbaijan. In fact, the coming to power of

now President Aliev and the unresolved dispute with Armenia

there and the possibility of instability there and having a large minority

of Azeris in Iran, to see a stable Azerbaijan again is in the

interest of both of our countries.

In the Persian Gulf, the same thing. It is very important to have

a safe and stable Persian Gulf, particularly the safe passage of oil.

The next issue is Iraq. On Iraq, I would like to elaborate more.

I would emphasize a little bit on the issue of the nuclear programs

in Iran, on Iraq, and the idea of regime change. These are the three

points which I would like to elaborate a little bit more.

In regard to WMD or basically the nuclear weapons, I would like

to say that you have to be a little bit considerate of the domestic

situation in Iran. We have five major views in Iran which are debating

with one another.

The first view which would not be fundamentally different from

the American view is those who would argue that Iran in fact even

needs not to have nuclear energy and we do not need to acquire

extensive nuclear knowledge and technology. The powerful Deputy

Speaker of the Iranian parliament, Behzad Nabavi, in fact has supported

this view. He is a very important reformist as well. But this

is a very teeny minority view.

The second view is the view that Iran is entitled to have, in fact,

nuclear energy and also acquire nuclear technology and nuclear

knowledge. In fact, the very point that Iran signed the NPT is because

of access to this technology. Many people would support this

view. In fact, 500 students from Sharif University which is the

most important and prestigious engineering school in Iran, incidentally

the same type of students which have protested against the

Iranian Government and which have been welcomed by many here,

the same students have publicly stated—they have published in a

statement in support of having access to nuclear knowledge and

nuclear technology. In fact, they have called those who—if the government

officials want to prevent Iran from such access, they have

called it this is treason.

The third group is a group which would say that we have to have

access but different from the second one, but they argue against,

in fact, nuclear weapons. They would say that would not increase

and enhance Iran’s national security environment, that would lead

to a sort of arms race in the region, and that would not serve Iran’s

best interests. This is a third group.

And the fourth group is the one which would say that we have

to have nuclear weapons capability. The first three do not link the

nuclear technology to security, but the fourth group would link it

to the security issues. There are two major parts in this fourth

group.

One would argue for the fuel, even if the fuel is being somehow

provided for us. They would like some sort of assurances that

somehow those countries who are providing the nuclear fuel for

Iran is not going to be persuaded by one part or another to stop

providing Iran’s nuclear fuel. Thus, they are somewhat concerned

about that. That is a security issue, but a different kind of security

issue.

But there is another major portion of them which would think

that because of Iran’s national environment, because of Iran’s vulnerability,

because chemical weapons have been used against Iran,

we need to have nuclear capability and that would be very much

a deterrent factor for Iran and that would provide sort of a deterrence.

Many people would support this view too.

And the fifth view is the one which is supportive of, in fact, withdrawing

from the NPT and going altogether for having the weapons.

The first and the last view are among the minorities, but there

are a lot of supporters for the other three. I believe the international

community in general and the U.S. in particular is much

better off, rather than emphasizing the first position, emphasizing

the second position, recognizing Iran’s right to access knowledge

and technology and nuclear energy, but also addressing the legitimate

concerns of the fourth group which is the security and fuel

through sort of assurances for the fuel and a sort of exploring the

idea of how the insecurity, which is being perceived by the supporters

of that group, can be addressed and can be provided for. I

believe that is the only way you can convince a determined nation

not to follow the path for nuclear weapons. If Pakistan 30 years

ago with limited resources could develop nuclear weapons because

they were determined, for sure Iranians if they are determined, if

they are being confronted with possibly—there are people who

would argue that we have to follow the other way.

Since my time is up, I wanted to discuss about Iraq and about

the regime change, but I probably have to stop here, and in the

question and answer I will try to do that.

Thank you.

I wish to make a couple of points. First of all, in regard

to North Korea and Iran, there are a number of important differences.

First of all, as I said, in Iran there are differences of opinion.

There are different groups. There is a public opinion which

makes it much harder in fact what should be done.

Also, from the outside the decisionmaking process, because of

many institutions, many informal networks, many individuals are

involved, may seem very chaotic, but in fact usually important decisions

are very much consensually made and you can trust those decisions

which have been basically made consensually.

But in regard to terrorism and Iran’s link with terrorism, I very

much agree with Dr. Cordesman also that we have to distinguish

between different kinds of terrorism. Just putting Hamas,

Hezbollah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and al-Qaeda as one category,

calling them terrorism and prescribing some policies to containing

them I believe is not going to work. Iran’s relationship with

each one of these organizations is very different. In fact, I can say

Iran can play a very important, constructive role in dealing with

or in fighting with terrorism.

I would make that terrorism, at least for the sake of our discussion,

in two main categories: ideologically oriented terrorism and

politically oriented terrorism. Ideologically oriented terrorism,

which is much harder fight with, is the al-Qaeda type. They are

performing a duty or a task. They are not very much concerned

about the consequences of their acts, unlike the politically oriented

terrorism, which is like an extension of politics. There is a cost/benefit

analysis of the center of that activity. In other words, you can

deal much easier with the politically oriented terrorism than dealing

with ideologically oriented terrorism.

To me, Iran can be really helpful in dealing with this second kind

over the ideological one. In fact, dealing with it or fighting with terrorism,

you need an alternative ideology to fight with that. For

fighting with Islamic radicalism, you need a reformist Islam to

fight with it. You have to deconstruct the main tenets of that ideology.

And Iran is very much well equipped because of the experience

of radicalism. We are well equipped to fight with that kind of

terrorism. In fact, that is an area which is in the common interest

of both Iran and the U.S. to explore, and Iran really can support

the U.S. in its fight with ideologically oriented terrorism. But, of

course, with the political as well, but I would describe it a little bit

later.

Oh, yes. I mean, for sure. I can say that a number

of my colleagues have for sure have been involved with a number

of the people who can make a decision.

There is also one important point which I would like

to mention, and that is in regard to the myth of regime change because

I believe probably that is the operating assumption of a number

of people in the administration that somehow the Iranian regime

is on the verge of collapse or we are in a pre-revolutionary

state.

To me, as a 25-year observer of the Iranian revolution, the reality

cannot be farther away from this myth. In fact, conservatives

are in full control. They have a lot of resources at their disposal.

They have an ideology which binds them together and makes them

committed to their cause. They have leadership. They control all

the coercive resources, and they have a lot of political economic resources.

In fact, if you look at what happened a few months ago

in the summer in the student demonstration, considering the population

of Tehran, which is about 10 million, only probably 7,000 to

8,000 people participated, not a large number, considering the level

of discontent which exists in Tehran and among the universities.

In fact, the regime did not use massive force to contain them. That

was relatively easy with the police. No tanks were there. No Revolutionary

Guard were in the streets. So they could contain it easily.

Thus, conservatives are in full control.

Second, the real organizing impetus, both intellectually and politically,

for reform and change is generated from within the ruling

elite itself and not from outside of the regime, notwithstanding the

presence of others in the struggle for reform.

Third, in fact, the elite, both conservatives and reformers, and

the public at large are quite intense if not paranoid about the sense

of independence and dignity of the country. So it is very important

to take into consideration this sense of independence. In fact, it has

begun more than 100 years ago. It will be very crucial that once

we are, as Secretary Armitage said, presenting the fact or promoting

and provoking this sort of action, many of these TVs and

radio stations in Los Angeles are not just displaying information or

disseminating information. These are basically provocation for a

sort of action. And I doubt any country would allow another country

from the other places call the people come and take hostile action

against another government. So it is very crucial once we consider

how to deal with these TVs and ex-patriots, Iranian, in Los Angeles.

Also, the fourth one, there is a real frustration in Iran and outside

Iran about the pace of reform in Iran. The reality is that there

have been significant and irreversible changes in Iran. Frustration

over unmet and justifiably high expectations should not overshadow

the fact. In fact, yes, it is true we wanted much more. We

expected much more, and we want much more. There is no doubt

about it. But how to get there is very important issue. These facts

should not overshadow what we have already achieved in the re-

form movement. It is a painful, long-term process, but that would

serve, I believe, Iranian interests best and possibly the others as well.