I thank the chair, and I want to thank Chairman

Kerry for his leadership in making sure we have a particular

emphasis on Iran this week. I think it has been very useful.

I particularly want to thank these distinguished witnesses, not

only for their superb careers, but in particular for the quality and

the clarity of the testimony today. It’s just so helpful and interesting

to listen to. Thank you very much.

As you both know, Iran poses a threat for a number of reasons,

including its nuclear ambitions, its missile capabilities, and its support

for terrorist groups. How would you rank these in terms of

how direct the threat is to the United States and its interests and

its allies and in terms of the urgency and seriousness of the threat?

And also, how should we factor in the missile threat to Europe into

our threat analysis?

Doctor, do you want to comment on that?

I think your point is well taken on that. I

would add that Iran is a very disturbing country, but any country

that watches another country invade the country to its west and

the country to its east is going to get a little nervous and edgy,

which of course is exactly what we’ve done. So that people have to

understand the mutual perceptions between our two countries, the

history is a very disturbing one ever since Mossadeq was taken out,

and that this is something that we have to look at from both points

of view.

At a Foreign Relations Committee hearing earlier this week, one

of the witnesses, Karim Sadjadpour from the Carnegie Endowment

argued that building confidence with Iran is critical to a productive

dialog, a process that he said ‘‘will be easier if our efforts initially

concentrate on areas of shared interest, such as Afghanistan and

Iraq, rather than those of little or no common interest, such as the

Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the nuclear issue.’’

Do you agree with this approach? If you start a dialog on points

of common concern, how do you then direct it toward other national

security concerns like the nuclear program or support for terrorist

organizations, or whatever term you want to use, doctor?

General, did you want to make a quick comment

on the strategy for negotiations that the doctor responded to?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.