The hearing will come to order. I apologize to

folks for starting a little bit late. It’s my fault. I was at the Finance

Committee, where we’re struggling with health care in preparation

for the White House meeting this afternoon. So I apologize that we

are delayed.

It is a really very, very special occasion. We’re privileged and excited

about the opportunity to have these two distinguished witnesses

here today. Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski and General Brent

Scowcroft are two of the most insightful strategic thinkers and distinguished

public servants in our country. We’ve been very, very

lucky, and Presidents of both parties have been very lucky to have

their advice and counsel through many, many years.

I can think of no better way to cap off this week’s series of hearings

on Iran and its troubling nuclear program. If America is going

to successfully overcome this extraordinarily difficult and pressing

foreign policy challenge—I don’t think anybody missed the Supreme

Ayatollah’s comments yesterday about Israel or about the

Obama administration—we’re clearly going to need the kind of wisdom,

the kind of insight which today’s witnesses have demonstrated

throughout their careers.

On Tuesday we heard from four top experts on Iran’s nuclear

program about the difficulties the United States and our partners

will face in dealing with this program. Ambassador Frank Wisner,

Ambassador Richard Haass, Mark Fitzpatrick, and Karim

Sadjadpour gave us some honest answers about the seriousness of

the challenge, the realities that we have to confront when dealing

with Iran, and the diplomatic efforts that will be required to avoid

some day being left with the potential unacceptable choice between

accepting a nuclear-armed Iran or attacking its facilities.

Yesterday the committee received a classified update from the

Intelligence Community, and most members of the committee were

there to get the latest update on the status of Iran’s nuclear missile

programs, as well as the internal political dynamics, and the regional

situation, to understand the playing field.

Today we’ve asked Dr. Brzezinski and General Scowcroft to help

us look broadly at the security challenge that Iran poses, so that

we can lay out a vision for the way forward. Both of these individuals

know what it’s like to walk into the Oval Office or to the Situation

Room and stare at an almost overwhelming list of problems

and have to figure out where the real priorities are and where the

real opportunities for progress might be. They also understand as

well as anyone in the country all of the risks tied to those choices.

They know how to construct and implement a multifaceted approach

to achieve an ultimate strategic goal.

If there ever was an urgent challenge that will require a multidimensional

solution, surely it is this apparent race by Iran to develop

a nuclear weapon capacity. We know this is a challenge that

we’re not going to deal with in isolation or hope we don’t have to

deal with in isolation. It’s not just an American problem. It’s not

just an American perception that suggests that it is a problem. And

it is best not just, and probably cannot be just, an American solution.

We know that, although Iran may have some distance to go before

it can test or deploy a nuclear weapon, it is daily producing

more reactor-grade uranium that can be further enriched to provide

the guts of a nuclear weapon.

I have long said that, following consultation with our allies and

partners, we have to engage directly with Iran, and I’m glad that

this idea’s day appears to be coming. But as I said on Tuesday,

we’ve got to be honest with ourselves. We’re not going to solve this

problem just by talking directly to Iran. While Iran was just talking

to the IAEA and the Europeans, it deftly sidestepped every

supposed redline laid down by the international community. While

Iran was just talking to the world, it moved to the threshold of becoming

a nuclear-capable state.

Iran’s leaders need to understand that the full weight of the

international community will bear down on them if Iran continues

to defy the United Nations Security Council and the International

Atomic Energy Agency.

I would remind people, Iran is a signatory to the Nuclear Proliferation

Treaty. Iran has obligations under that treaty. Iran also

has rights under that treaty, and those rights have not always

been appropriately put on the table. It is deemed by virtue of the

secrecy of their actions and their unwillingness to answer questions

that they are in violation of those rights, and that is essentially the

quandary, the place of confrontation that we find ourselves in.

So we need to understand also and Iran needs to understand

that the talks that we envision will not be a substitute for Iran’s

requirement to meet its international obligations.

At the same time as we engage, we have to understand that it

is by far better to get other countries on board with our strategy.

For diplomacy to succeed, we need the full backing of our allies in

Europe, as well as Russia, China, and other countries that trade

extensively with Iran. We must quickly engage with those countries

and construct a robust and sustainable energy.

The President’s recent announcement of a responsible redeployment

plan for Iraq, which comes with bipartisan support and with

the support and endorsement and input of our leading generals—

General Petraeus, General Odierno, and others—can be an additional

source of leverage in dealing with Iran because it repositions

us. But we will only be negotiating from a position of renewed

strength if we also reassure our allies in the region that they will

not be cut adrift for the sake of making progress with Iran.

So in short, we need to act boldly, wisely, and quickly with our

allies and partners to win agreement on the way forward and to

engage Iran backed by real consequences for its continued noncompliance.

I want to emphasize, as I’m confident that both of our witnesses

will and I’m sure that my colleague Senator Lugar will, we are not

seeking a confrontation, nor do I believe that there’s some overt effort

that we’re stuck on with respect to regime change or anything

else. I think it is better for the world to see the possibilities of constructively

moving on issues of mutual interest. On Tuesday we

heard many of those issues of mutual interest, ranging from Afghanistan

to Taliban to counternarcotics efforts and many other

things.

So I am hopeful that a solution to this problem will lie within

our reach through diplomatic processes, and I’m looking forward to

today’s discussion on our witnesses’ guidance and recommendations

on how we can achieve the best way forward.

Senator Lugar.

Thank you so much, Senator Lugar. I appreciate

enormously again sort of the jointness of the statements we made.

I might add that I join you in that call for the interest section,

which I had hoped we would have achieved last fall actually, before

the change in administration. But I think it would be beneficial to

move forward on that soon.

Gentlemen, thank you again for being here. Dr. Brzezinski, if you

would lead off. We’d ask you both if you’d sort of give summaries

of testimony so we can maximize the give and take with the committee.

Dr. Brzezinski, if you’d lead off. Thank you.

Thank you, Dr. Brzezinski, for a very, very interesting

and helpful approach and I look forward to following up with

questions.

General Scowcroft.

Thank you, General. Thank you both again for

very, very important testimony.

We are going to proceed with a 7-minute round because of the

number of Senators here, and we want to make sure everybody

gets a chance to ask questions.

First of all, Dr. Brzezinski, you twice in your testimony said:

‘‘Don’t set limits on ourselves’’; and a second time you said: ‘‘Avoid

time limits.’’ Is there not, by virtue of Iran’s own activities and

Israel’s perception of those activities, as well as our own intelligence

community’s interpretations of those activities, isn’t there

an automatic timetable thrust on us as a consequence, unless there

is some indication by Iran of a willingness to change that timetable?

Let me ask you both. Time sort of runs so rapidly

on these things, but I want to follow up, I want to follow up

on that because the equation of perception of deterrence for Israel,

given the nature of the region and the challenges that are being

thrown at them is somewhat different, I think, than the nature of

the deterrence that we went through for those years of the cold

war. And we could probably have a good discussion about that, but

before we do I put it on the table.

I want to ask both of you. The Iranians are listening to this. A

lot of members of the Arab community are listening to this. The

world is listening to this. You are two very experienced, thoughtful

folks who people respect around the world with respect to this kind

of an issue. So as we begin this hearing and lay this out, I do think

it’s really important to put into context.

We have a bad record with the Iranians: 1953 and the CIA involvement

in the overthrow; their perceptions of what we did in

Iraq; the Congress’s public embrace of a regime change resolution

and concept. If you’re sitting in Iran and you see the history of

that, you’re going to make some judgments. The United States

pulled out of the ABM Treaty. The United States has refused to

ratify the CTB Treaty. You can run—it’s important in these processes

always to think about how the other person sees you, and you

know that better than anybody else.

So would both of you please lay out why this—from their perception

as they think about our intentions and the seriousness of our

purpose here, why is this more, when we say they shouldn’t have

a nuclear weapon, why is that more than just us saying something

vis-a-vis Israel? Why is that more than the United States holding

onto its Perm-5 status with the other four members of it plus those

who have already sort of broken out?

What is it that is so critical here that brings the Russians, the

other countries in the region, the Europeans, and the United States

to say, with justification, it might bring us to a point of confrontation,

that Iran should not have a nuclear weapon? Would you both

sort of articulate that as clearly as you can?

Building into that, as you answer, Dr.

Brzezinski, you very wisely left out sort of how people perceive

those threats. And what you say, if those threats become too public

and if there’s too much concentration of people, does it become a

matter of nationalistic expression of right, if you will, if not pride,

that they say: The hell with all of you; we’re going to do this because

you are ganging up on us, in a sense. Is there a counterimpact?

Dr. Brzezinski?

Could you pull the mike a little closer.

Could you just finish the part of the question

about the articulation of why it is so imperative that Iran not have

this weapon, and the justification for our unified actions to achieve

that?

But they don’t answer the questions put to them

by the IAEA——

[continuing]. About what they do in secret.

And you do agree with General Scowcroft on the

rationale for why they should not have it?

Senator Lugar.

Thank you very much, Senator Feingold. I appreciate

it.

Senator Menendez.

For people who don’t keep track of the dates,

that’s the other President. [Laughter.]

Thank you very much, Senator Menendez.

Let me just say that, through the wonders of Blackberries, I can

tell you that Secretary Clinton, who is now in Brussels, has announced

that the Obama administration is going to be convening

a meeting on Afghanistan on the 31st of this month. And Robert

Wood, the spokesperson for the State Department, has publicly

stated that that meeting will include Foreign Minister and/or

equivalent from Iran, because obviously that’s important to Afghanistan.

So I think a process is already under way and I think that’s a

wise—first of all, it’s wise to meet on Afghanistan. Second, it’s wise

to be inclusive.

Senator Casey.

Let me just also announce—I apologize, Senator—

there’s a vote that I think has been scheduled now for 12:10.

So we’ll try to push through here and I think we should be able

to wrap up by that time, because I know both of these folks have

another engagement.

Thank you, Senator Casey.

It’s an important and it’s an important answer.

Senator Kaufman.

Thank you so much, Senator Kaufman, for a terrific

line from both you and Senator Casey. Good questions. I think

you covered the bases that we left open.

We for once have serendipitous timing with the United States

Senate here, because we’re actually starting the vote just as we’re

concluding the questions. So that’s pretty good.

Yesterday I had the privilege of speaking at Brookings Institute

on the Middle East and laid out some thoughts about Iran. I

think—and not just Iran, but the entire peace process. I really am

grateful, as Senator Lugar is, for your testimony here today, which

dovetails into that. I am convinced we’ve got to be smart, restrained,

thoughtful, skilled in our diplomacy, so that we have an

opportunity to really pursue every avenue with the greatest potential

for success. It would be silly to shut those down ourselves.

I thought Dr. Brzezinski’s opening comments about how you can

certainly structure a negotiation to be unsuccessful, I think it was

a very polite way of looking backwards without necessarily saying

he was looking backward. But the reality is that I am convinced,

as I think our witnesses are today and Senator Lugar, that there

are much better prospects than the current climate would seem to

tell us.

There’s a reason, obviously, for all the negative sides of the

choices we face, to hold out hope that we can take advantage of

those. So I hope the leaders of Iran are listening carefully, that nobody

has come here today seeking the down side of this relationship,

but rather hopefully diplomacy in the next months can

produce a productive transition that can be effective not just for

Iranian-American relations, but for the entire region, and indeed

set an example hopefully for some transition that could take place

on a global basis.

The interconnectedness of these issues is really critical for all of

us to see, and as we look at the increased tensions and volatility

of Afghanistan and Pakistan, Yemen, Sudan, Somalia—and you

can run the list—we have to understand how these steps are really

going to be related to how people perceive us and what we can

achieve in those other places.

So we thank you for contributing to this dialogue this morning.

I would not disagree with the notion that somehow the two of you

ought to be very much engaged in this effort with respect to Iran,

and I will do my part to—and hopefully it won’t be against your

will—to see that we can get your expertise to work.

Senator Lugar, do you want to say anything?

Thank you so much.

We stand adjourned. Thank you.