Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I’d like to add my

thanks, to Assistant Secretary Posner, for allowing us to testify

this morning.

As Assistant Secretary Posner has noted, the Iranian Government’s

repression of its citizens has intensified in recent months.

But, as Iran’s leaders have increased their repression, we have intensified

our diplomatic efforts to call attention to those abuses and

to press the Iranian Government to end them.

President Obama and Secretary Clinton have spoken out more

than a dozen times, this year alone, on behalf of the hundreds of

Iranians whom you have correctly identified as having suffered at

the hands of their government. At our urging and on their own initiative

other world leaders have done the same.

Secretary Clinton opened the March session of the Human

Rights Council of the U.N. in Geneva. And her remarks helped us

galvanize the cross-regional support we needed to create the

Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Iran. This is the first such

action by the Human Rights Council under its new mandate. And

that historic action sent an unmistakable signal to Iran’s leaders

that the international community will not ignore their systematic

abuse of their citizens’ human rights. But, more importantly, the

Special Rapporteur will serve as an essential voice for those

Iranians being persecuted in Iran for their political, religious, and

ethnic affiliations.

The second stream of actions comes under the Comprehensive

Iran Sanctions Accountability and Divestment Act, under which we

designated and sanctioned, as you noted, 10 Iranian officials for

serious abuse of human rights. We continue to investigate others

for designation under the act, as information becomes available and

as events unfold.

After that first set of designations under CISADA, I joined my

counterpart in the State Department’s Bureau of Democracy,

Human Rights, and Labor, leading a group of experts from our two

Bureaus, the State Department’s Legal Advisor’s Office, and the

Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control to Europe, and to the

European Union headquarters in Brussels.

We discussed, with our counterparts there, ways to strengthen

cooperation in combating the repression of human rights in Iran,

including by speaking out together; by expressing solidarity with

victims of torture, persecution, and arbitrary detention; and supporting

one another’s assets freezes and travel bans against Iranian

officials. Partly a result of that engagement, the European

Union, on April 11, sanctioned, as you noted, again, 32 Iranian officials

for human rights abuses. We followed that action with our

own travel ban on the officials the European Union has sanctioned.

We are now considering how to expand the scope of our own

human rights-related visa bans. And we have also begun working

with other international partners to explore similar actions they

might be able to undertake.

What I’m trying to underscore here is that we have a very fruitful

and productive interaction with our European partners and

beyond Europe on this question.

We will, of course, continue to work closely with the EU and

other like-minded partners to ensure that the cause of human

rights remains at the forefront of policies, with respect to Iran.

We are also, as Assistant Secretary Posner noted, again, looking

for ways we can help Iranians more effectively act and speak on

their own behalf, whether on the Internet, in journalism, or in the

arts. As we do throughout the region, the State Department and

USAID provide members of Iran’s civil society with capacity-building

training and new media tools to help them hold their government

accountable and to strengthen their call for greater freedoms,

transparency, and the rule of law.

Despite growing international consensus and a resounding condemnation

of their actions, the Iranian authorities continue to try

to ignore the aspirations of their own citizens. But, we think there

is hope. Hundreds of Iranians continue to engage in the most basic

human rights work, holding their government accountable for acts

of violence against its own citizens and for its stubborn unwillingness

to permit the exercise of universally admitted human rights,

including those enshrined in Iran’s Constitution.

The efforts of this administration on the issue of human rights

in Iran involve several different agencies and departments. Along

with my counterpart in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights,

and Labor, I cochair an interagency working group that directs and

coordinates U.S. Government action on Iran human rights issues.

And those include initiatives regarding Internet freedom, implementation

of human rights sanctions, engaging with like-minded

partners, and working through multilateral institutions. As cochair

of this group, I look forward to continuing our dialogue with the

Congress on the best means to effectively deal with these issues.

I cannot conclude a discussion of human rights without expressing

our deep and continuing concern for the safety and well-being

of all American citizens currently detained in Iran. In particular,

we urge the Iranian Government to promptly release Shane Bauer

and Josh Fattal so that they may return to their families. We note

that, this morning, the trial that was scheduled to resume today

did not resume. We’re not quite sure what that means, but we hope

it is a positive omen.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, if I could add——

[continuing]. One comment to that. I agree with everything

Mr. Posner said, of course. But, I would point to the effort

that was made to establish the Special Rapporteur and what that

means, in terms of international support. We were able not only to

get the votes of the European group, which we expected, having

worked on them very heavily, but also votes from leading members

of the nonaligned movement that Iran was counting on to support

their position. And the signal to Iran of those votes going in our

direction or in direction of supporting the Special Rapporteur, I

think was a very, very strong one and that we should not undervalue.

Thank you.

Senator, if I could add——

[continuing]. A couple of points.

I, on the other hand, am a chronic pessimist. But,

even I will agree that, having now established this new tool, in the

form of the Special Rapporteur, we have another mechanism which

will force the Iranian Government to talk to the international community

about these questions. We’re not the—the Special

Rapporteur is the beginning of yet another process that we are putting

underway to not just offer encouragement to human rights and

civil society activists within Iran, but to force the Iranian Government

to account for itself to the international community. And we

have that in the U.N.’s third committee in the General Assembly,

and now in this, as well. So, at a minimum, we will have that. And,

you know, if things work properly, then we may have the result

that Mike Posner has described.

Absolutely. And I would add that, watching the

Arab Spring unfold and watching the Iranian Government’s reaction

to it, its efforts to, one, claim credit for it, but then, at home,

of acting in ways that were entirely at odds with that position, certainly

we can disclaim, in every forum.

With respect to the connection between the Arab

Spring and the current tensions between the Supreme Leader and

the President, it’s very hard to see a connection that’s any kind of

direct connection, because tension between the institutions of Government

in Iran have been present for some time. I think we don’t

quite understand what the basis for the current disagreements

might be. We obviously notice—we notice them. We observe them

closely, but it seems to have as much to do with power as anything

else.

I think none of the current institutions of Government in Iran

would be particularly advantaged by the unfolding of an Arab

Spring-like event in Iran right now. It would be to everybody’s disadvantage

who is currently in government. So, unfortunately, I

think that the repression that we’re seeing in Iran is repression

that is undertaken by all the members of all branches of this

government.

It hasn’t shut down everything. We’re seeing that

civil society remains very active. The Green Movement has, in its

own way, echoed the activities of the Arab Spring, with demonstrations

that it called for in January and March. Now, none of those

threaten the regime, but they are clear evidence that the Green

Movement and other opposition groups, as well as civil society

itself, remain active and vital in Iran. Whether they’re a threat or

not is something for, I think, a classified briefing, perhaps. But, I

think we can certainly say that they’re there, they’re active, and

they take inspiration where they can find it.

I will take the liberty of talking about sanctions

broadly; not just the human rights sanctions, but also the economic

sanctions that have been put in place, internationally as well as

unilaterally, by the United States and other governments.

We haven’t yet seen a change in Iran’s strategic calculus as a result

of the sanctions. Nevertheless, evidence that we are getting

suggests that the Iranian Government has been forced to look for

alternative ways both to procure, to sell, to engage in normal commerce

in sensitive areas, that it did not require before. So, we do

see the economic sanctions as having an impact; not the decisive

impact that we’re looking for, yet, but we are looking at ways to

intensify the pressure.

With respect to human rights, as I think we’ve detailed, this is

not an easy sell. The government will resist, from the beginning.

None of the governments that were subject to the Arab Spring were

happy about what happened in their countries; they resisted. The

Iranians have had practice; they will resist even harder.

I think we’re always looking for ways in which we can intensify

the pressure, specifically on the human rights field. We do have a

very strong international sense of cooperation and solidarity on this

question. And we should exploit it wherever we can.

I think one of the new phenomena that we need to look at more

carefully is the interest among the nonaligned, especially leading

countries in the nonaligned—for example, Brazil—in joining with

us on the question of human rights in Iran. They did so on the

question of the Special Rapporteur. I think they would be sympathetic.

And we will be looking at how to work with them and with

others to advance this issue even further.

I hesitate to make any recommendations with regard to legislation

or statutes. We think we have the authorities we require to

mount a very aggressive and productive human rights campaign on

Iran. I think we’ve outlined what we’ve been able to do and what

we’ll continue to do. But, we’ll be happy to continue our conversation

with the Senate and with the House to see what more can be

accomplished. We don’t think we have the final word, by any

means.

I hope so. I think we are enforcing the law. We have

imposed sanctions. Some of the cases, that I’m sure you have in

mind, are very difficult ones, from the perspective of the other

issues that they bring in their train. And the decisions to sanction

or to waive or to defer are way above my paygrade, at this point,

because of the very nature of the relationships that are involved in

that.

We have however, using CISADA, using ILSA, before that, basically

dried up petroleum-sector investment by foreign companies in

Iran. And, using the assurances that we have been able to provide,

we have gotten major international oil companies out. So, in that

sense, we have had an effective policy, based on ILSA and

CISADA.

The Treasury Department has designated any number

of—apologies.

The Treasury Department has designated any number of Iranian

banks, and has taken to the road, if I can call it that, to warn

international banks and banks in third countries about the penalties

that they are looking at if they continue to do business with

these designated banks. That has been an effective campaign.

I can’t give you specifics, but I’m happy to come

back to you with more information.

We were appalled by the attack on Camp Ashraf.

We believe we had assurances, from the Iraqi Government, that

they would treat the residents of Camp Ashraf in a manner that

was humane. And they didn’t. We have made our views very clear

to the Iraqi Government. We have also, however, begun to develop,

with them, some ideas on how to relocate the residents of Camp

Ashraf somewhere where they can be more safe—more—better protected

and less in harm’s way. We are also starting to talk to the

leadership of the camp, and seeking their cooperation in that effort;

the idea being, eventually, to relocate the residents to third coun-

tries through some sort of resettlement program. That’s the longterm

objective.