Thank you. Thank you very much, Chairman Casey,

and for holding this important hearing.

Deputy Assistant Secretary Dibble and I have a written statement

that I’d ask be submitted to the record.

You said, in your——

Great, thank you.

As you said in your opening comments, now more than ever we

need to be redoubling our efforts to both speak out about the systematic

violations of human rights and democracy in Iran, but also

to engage our allies and to amplify the voices of democratic activists

inside of Iran.

This administration is firmly committed, deeply committed, to

promoting democracy, promoting human rights everywhere in the

world. And, as we see, and as you commented, all of the changes

going on in the Middle East region, the repressive crackdown, continued

crackdown in Iran is such a stark reminder of unfinished

business that we need to be attentive to.

So, I want to say a few words about our speaking out, a few

words about our efforts to engage multilaterally, and then what

we’re trying to do, via the Internet, to amplify the voices of Iranian

dissidents and activists.

You’ve cited a number of cases in your opening statement. I

could give you many more; they’re in our testimony. But, just to

give a flavor: In February, a number of protestors were killed in

Tehran. In April, more killed in ethnic Arab areas. We’ve paid a

lot of attention to the fate of the Baha’i community. And seven

leaders of that community who had prison sentences reduced from

20 to 10 years, had those sentences reinstated, the reductions reversed.

People in prison are given added sentences because they

send letters to their family members. Political prisoners are held

with common criminals and murderers in stockyards, in terrible

conditions. The list goes on and on.

We’ve seen executions, this year, of 135 people, including many

ethnic minority prisoners, their intense restrictions on free speech;

teachers and other workers who seek to assert their rights are

repressed for doing so. Universities that teach liberal arts are

deemed un-Islamic and they’ve been forced to close their doors. It’s

really an appalling list of restrictions on everything contained in

the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

I want to single out a couple of other particular cases, in addition

to the ones you mentioned.

One is a distinguished labor leader, Monsour Osanloo, who was

arrested in 2007. He suffers from a heart condition and they repeatedly

deny him medical care. Student leader, Bahriya Hedayat,

who was arrested in 2009, for the fifth time in 4 years, for being

a member of the One Million Signatures campaign, a women’s

movement to changes laws that discriminate against women. She

faces further charges for sending a public letter describing the conditions

in prison.

And I want to also—you mentioned Nasrin Sotoudeh, who’s also

the lawyer for Shirin Ebadi. In addition to the harsh prison conditions

she’s suffering from, other members of Ebadi’s Center for

Human Rights Defenders have been jailed or barred from practicing

law.

The list goes on and on.

President Obama, Secretary Clinton, and other senior members

of the administration are constantly speaking out about these

abuses. And we will continue to do so.

We’re also engaging, as you mentioned in your opening, in spotlighting

Iran’s gross violations of human rights at the U.N. and

with our allies. We were successful, in March, in persuading the

U.N. Human Rights Council to establish a Special Rapporteur on

Iran. In June, that person will be selected and will begin monitoring

and throwing more of a spotlight on what’s going on.

The intensity of Iran’s resistance to that speaks to the importance

of our doing so. And I’m very proud of the effort of our team

and our government to play a leading role in really getting that

resolution to be passed. We will continue to use the U.N., both in

Geneva and in New York, as a forum for raising these issues and

for, as you say, accelerating the pressure on the regime.

We’ve also been involved and are very aware that change in Iran,

and every country, starts from within. And Iran has a brave, courageous

population, many young people who are determined to

change their destiny and who are seeking to amplify their voices.

We seek to help them.

As you know, through Congress’ generosity, we have spent $22

million, in the last 18 months, on Internet freedom programming.

And just last week, we’ve notified Congress of our intent to spend

another $28 million more, this spring. We’re going to do that

quickly. And it’s, in part, to counter Iran’s increasingly active

Internet surveillance and censorship. We’re supporting grants that

will counter censorship—countercensorship technologies, increase

circumvention tools in Farsi, secure mobile communications, and

protect online activists against cyber attacks, which you also

mentioned.

We’ve now trained 5,000 activists worldwide, including Iranians,

in cyber self-defense. And we plan to expand all of these efforts to

teach democratic activists, journalists, bloggers, human rights defenders,

and others how to protect their online privacy and their

data so that they, in turn, can train others.

We’re also very determined and will continue to support their

efforts to convey their own messages, to speak in a loud voice with

each other and with the rest of the world. These are tools, but

they’re important tools, and they’re an important part of our overall

effort to try to keep pressure on the Iranian Government and

to make sure that people in Iran know that we haven’t forgotten

about them.

Thank you very much.

Thank you, Senator.

There are two different ways in which the administration is approaching

particularly important sensitive issues. One is to appoint

special envoys or experts. And the other is to make it part of the

everyday business of the Department and the government.

And I don’t know that I—you know, maybe some political scientists

one day will evaluate which of those works well. We’ve

opted for the second, here. And I would say, from my perspective,

obviously this is an area where both Deputy Assistant Secretary

Dibble and I are both very deeply involved. But, the main messengers

here are the President and the Secretary of State. There

is no issue, in my portfolio on human rights, where the President

and the Secretary of State have been more outspoken more often.

And I want to keep it that way, frankly. I want there to be a

sense—we talk about a whole-of-government approach—I think if

we send a signal that the most senior officials of our government

are paying attention, as they are, I think that’s actually the most

powerful message we can send.

So, from my perspective there are many, many fronts around the

world where I’m trying to get more attention from senior leaders.

This is not a place where I have a problem doing that.

There is support throughout the Department. We work very

closely with NEA, with the Middle East Bureau. And we work very

closely with the White House. And I think we are all in alignment

here. This is a priority for the United States. Human rights is a

central part of our policy. We recognize the deplorable conditions

in Iran. We know we need to keep the pressure up and even to extend

it. And I think, as a practical bureaucratic matter, we’re working,

actually, very well together.

As I said in my opening comment, the intensity of

the Iranian Government’s opposition to the establishment already

sends a signal that this is an important undertaking.

It’s important in three ways.

One, the Rapporteur will be seized, throughout the year, with

gathering comprehensive information, shining a spotlight, making

that information available, and leading the debate in the United

Nations about what is going on and what should be done about

Iran.

Second, that person will be the focal point for activists, both inside

and outside of the country—outside of Iran—who are always

eager to tell their stories and to have an official of the U.N. listen.

So, that’ll be the point-person, within the U.N. charged with gathering

the information, dealing with the activists, and trying to

address day-to-day concerns.

And I think the third piece, which is critically important, is that

it will force every government, not just the United States or Western

Europe, but every government that’s part of the Human Rights

Council and part of the U.N. system, to reflect on the fact that this

is now an obligation that’s been undertaken by the U.N., as an institution.

So, it allows us to go in, in a different set of conversations,

to say, ‘‘This is not the United States saying it, it’s not Western

Europe saying it, this is a United Nations expert who’s come

to these conclusions.’’ I think it opens the door for a range of other

conversations with other governments.

The person—the new Rapporteur will be selected at

the June session of the Human Rights Council, next time they

meet. They will undoubtedly seek permission to visit Iran. It won’t

shock me if the Government of Iran is not cooperative. And we’re

under no illusions, here. The government’s going to be highly resistant

to this exercise, from start to finish. But, that doesn’t keep

the Rapporteur from meeting with Iranian dissidents, democracy

activists out of the country, to communicating in the ways that we

now can communicate within—across borders, and getting information

from other governments, including our own.

We will do everything we can to support this effort. I’m sure

other governments will, as well as the NGOs who are so active in

this field. So, I think there will be no problem getting the information.

The information exists, as we all know. The next question is,

How do you use this Rapporteur to ramp up the pressure, as you

say, to make it clear that this represents an escalation of international

diplomatic attention, to really put pressure on the regime?

I would say no. I mean, the Special Rapporteur was

just designated. I mean, the position was just——

[continuing]. Created, and nobody’s yet in that position.

I—there’s certainly——

No. What is interesting, though, is, again, the

extent to which the government is hypersensitive about the U.N.

getting involved, here. They devoted huge resources, diplomatic resources,

across the world to try to defeat this. And we’ve been at

this, in a way, for a couple of years. But, it’s really extraordinary

for the government to put so much of its diplomatic capital behind

defeating it. So, that, to me, says there’s a sensitivity or a vulnerably

to this kind of multilateral action that is much greater than

just the United States or U.K. or others criticizing them.

But, I can’t tell you that there has been a great improvement in

human rights in Iran. We just don’t see that right now.

You know, I guess what I would say—I’m a chronic

optimist. I’ve been in the human rights world for a long time, and

I——

Yes. Because I——

[continuing]. You can see that things do change. And

they change because people hold their nerve and because, ultimately,

governments, like the Iranian Government, that try to suppress

their people, are fighting a losing battle. It’s a young population,

a population that sees what’s going on in the rest of the

world and in the region, and increasingly impatient with the kind

of autocratic policies that this government employs.

So, I don’t—I can’t tell—I can’t give you a timeline. I can’t say,

‘‘In 6 months, X is going to happen.’’

But, I think all of these efforts, collectively—our

efforts, the multilateral efforts—empower and strengthen democracy

human rights activists. And then you sort of wait. All of the

sudden something happens and there’s a moment. And that moment

represents the beginning of real change. We’re not there yet,

but I think, if we hold our nerve and we maintain our principles

and our commitment to universal human rights and democracy, in

the longrun we’re going to prevail.

I think there are three things that have changed.

One is that our presence in the Human Rights Council since 2009

has begun to change what is a very terrible—a poor environment.

The Human Rights Council is, in many respects, not a healthy institution.

It’s been very politicized and very weak. But, we’ve begun

to push on country-specific situations. This is one; Cote d’Ivoire is

another; Syria, a couple of weeks ago; and Libya. And so, there’s

a sense that the institution itself is more open to change.

Second is the Arab Spring. There’s no question that the world is

changing and the dynamics of the global diplomatic community is

changing with it.

And then, the third thing is that the events on the ground are

so grim that I think people recognize this was long overdue.

Yes, I think there are. I mean, one of the lessons

is that the desire for democratic participation, political participation,

is very deep-seated. It’s particularly deep-seated among young

people, who are increasingly better educated and look around them

and they say, ‘‘Why are we living like this?’’ The governments that

are autocratic and brittle tend not to know how to deal with these

things, and that, because of the Internet and because of television

and because it’s so easy to travel, people are making comparisons.

So, I think, you know, for a government like the Iranian Government,

the lesson they’re learning is, ‘‘Oh, my God,’’ you know,

‘‘everybody here is looking around the neighborhood and saying,

‘Why not us?’ ’’ And I think that does provide us an opportunity.

Again, I don’t want to be Pollyanna and say, ‘‘In 3 months or 6

months, there’s going to be a dramatic change.’’ But, I have no

doubt that there are millions and millions of Iranians—young Iranians

that are looking at Egypt, looking at Tunisia, and saying, you

know, ‘‘We also aspire to freedom. We want a better life. We want

a decent job. We want a stake in our society and our political future.’’

And those are the people that I think are going to be in the

vanguard of change when it occurs.

Well, I think one of the things is——

Yes, well, I think——

[continuing]. One things that we’re doing here is to

be public, in our own government, about expressing our concern,

our solidarity with people who are on the receiving end of these

terrible abuses, so they don’t feel alone.

Second, I think there are ways, through the U.N.—and we’ve

been talking about that—that we can, you know, build more momentum,

globally, diplomatically. And then, I think some of the

technical support and training and support for Internet expansion

and so forth, all of that range of things that amplify the voices,

that provide a safe space for people within Iran to communicate

with each other, that’s vital. People need the ability to talk with

one another and compare notes and know what’s going on. Inevitably,

that will accelerate the pace of change.

Is the ‘‘they’’ the government or the people?

You know, this is a government that’s dug in. And

certainly it’s not on a democratic trajectory. And so, you know, they

view everything I just said as a threat. But, it is the reality in

which they now live. And again, they can’t operate in isolation.

They’re part of the global economy; they’re part of a global political

system, where, increasingly, they’re isolated. And that, undoubtedly,

provides us more opportunity. But, they’re not going to—this

is not going to be an easy sell. We’re not going to find——

[continuing]. Willing partners who want to come and

talk about how to democratize.

No, thank you.