The hearing will come to order. Thank you very

much for being here to join us today.

And we’re very pleased to welcome an outstanding panel of witnesses

for this hearing. These witnesses, frankly, have a tall order

today, because we’ve asked them to help us understand the way

forward in dealing with one of the most urgent challenges that currently

faces all of us. I can’t imagine a better group to kick off the

first of 3 days of public and classified briefings and hearings on

Iran’s nuclear program and the policy options facing us.

I’m particularly happy to welcome back a couple of very familiar

faces. Ambassador Frank Wisner has been here many times, in

many capacities. And, Frank, we appreciate your willingness to

share the insights you’ve gained from a very long and distinguished

career in public service.

I’m pleased also to have Richard Haass here

across the table from us once again. There are few people better

qualified to provide us with a strong perspective on where Iran fits

into the world’s geopolitical map. And we appreciate your leadership

on the Council on Foreign Relations.

Mark, thank you, also, for joining us here. You bring a long experience

in the field of nonproliferation, and an analyst’s keen eye on

just how far down the road Iran has gotten since its secret nuclear

program was exposed 61⁄2 years ago.

Nobody has to emphasize, but I suppose we ought to restate, that

we are living through a very difficult and uncertain time. And we

are rightly focused heavily on the state of our economy. But, as a

nation, and particularly on this committee, we cannot afford to

ignore the challenges outside of our borders.

Right near the top of that list of challenges is Iran and its troubling

nuclear program. The impact of Iran’s steady nuclear

progress is real. When I was in the Middle East, just a few days

ago, I encountered deep worries in every Arab capital about Iran’s

ascendancy and the possibility that it will build an atomic weapon.

And, of course, in Israel the anxiety is not just high, it is an existential

threat.

What we know about Iran’s nuclear missile progress raises grave

concerns for us and our allies. Iran has built a uranium enrichment

plant approximately 75 feet underground at Natanz, where nearly

4,000 centrifuges are spinning away, enriching uranium, with hundreds

more centrifuges apparently ready to start up soon. Just 2

weeks ago, the International Atomic Energy Agency reported that

the plant has enriched enough reactor-grade uranium to, theoretically,

allow Iran to make an atomic bomb.

On Sunday, ADM Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of

Staff, confirmed the IAEA report, saying publicly that the United

States believes Iran has amassed enough uranium to build an

atomic bomb, if its leaders were to take the reckless step of further

enriching that stockpile to weapons grade. We are determined—

and I believe it is the appropriate policy—to stop Iran from taking

that very dangerous next step.

At the same time, Iran continues to defy the United Nations

Security Council by constructing a reactor at Arak, that, if it were

completed, looks to be very well suited for producing weaponsgrade

plutonium. The IAEA reports that Iran has recently impeded

its access to this facility. And Iran continues to test ballistic missiles

and to launch so-called space-launch vehicles that Iran can

learn from to expand its ballistic missile capability.

But, what we do not know about Iran’s program is even more

alarming. For 6 years, the IAEA has been asking Iran to answer

questions about the possible military dimensions of its nuclear program.

The questions have grown more substantive and pointed as

time has passed, and Iran has grown more defiant, ignoring sanctions

by the U.N. Security Council and obstructing the IAEA.

Because of its history of concealment and deception, we cannot

afford to take Iran at its word that its nuclear ambitions are solely

civilian. Its leaders must answer the IAEA’s questions fully and

quickly, and should comply, as other nations have complied that

are signatories to the NPT.

These gaps in what we know about Iran’s nuclear program are

significant, and they are dangerous. I hope our witnesses will help

fill some of them in.

For me, some of the most troubling unanswered questions were

raised in documents that were reportedly found on a laptop computer

obtained by the CIA in 2004. Among the thousands of pages

of data from that computer are, according to press reports, documents

that appear to show blueprints for a nuclear warhead and

designs for missiles to carry it. One of those designs apparently

tracked the flight of the missile and showed the detonation of its

explosives 600 meters above the ground. Well, folks, that’s a lousy

height for a conventional weapon, but it’s a devastating altitude for

a nuclear weapon intended to wipe out a city.

Iran has refused to answer the toughest of these questions. And

just last week, a U.N. official acknowledged to my staff that talks

between the IAEA and Tehran have reached an impasse. The official

said he didn’t know what comes next.

Well, we do know what comes next. The Obama administration

has said that it wants to open direct talks with Iran. This is the

right first step, and I applaud the President for taking it. But, we

also need to be honest with ourselves: Just talking will not solve

this problem, even direct talks between Washington and Tehran.

While Iran was ‘‘just talking’’ to the IAEA and the Europeans, it

deftly sidestepped every redline laid down by the international

community. While Iran was ‘‘just talking’’ to the world, it moved

to the threshold of becoming a nuclear state.

I point this out, not to lay blame; I point this out, because we

cannot move forward to a solution without understanding how we

got to this dangerous juncture in history. The time for incremental

steps and unanswered questions is over.

Talking with Iran is the right starting point. I have supported

this idea for many years, and I’m glad that the day is coming. But,

the fact is that the United States must open these talks from a

position of strength. The President’s recent announcement of a

responsible redeployment plan for Iraq is a step in the right direction,

but we need the full backing of our allies in Europe, as well

as Russia, China, and other countries, as we sit down across the

table from the Iranians. This is not just an American problem, and

it will not be just an American solution. Our friends and allies need

to understand this.

And Iran needs to understand that these will not be drawn-out

negotiations. That’s a scenario that would give Tehran a green

light for more progress on enrichment and other nuclear projects,

some still being carried out in the dark.

We need to set a timetable for substantive progress, and we need

to make sure that Iran’s leaders understand that the full weight

of the international community will come down on them if this

issue is not resolved. And by ‘‘full weight,’’ I mean tougher economic

sanctions, such as further restrictions on trade and finance,

which will apply meaningful pressure on the Iranian regime at a

time when oil prices have plummeted and its economy is hurting.

The solution to this problem does lie within our reach. With our

friends and allies, we need to act boldly and wisely to engage Iran,

backed by real consequences for its continued noncompliance.

I look forward to the guidance that we’re going to receive from

our distinguished panel this morning, and from GEN Brent Scowcroft

and Zbigniew Brzezinski on Thursday morning.

And let me welcome, now, our one other witness who is here,

Karim Sadjadpour, now an associate at the Carnegie Endowment

for International Peace, whose intimate knowledge of Iran’s senior

officials, clerics, and dissidents offers the committee a genuine

insider’s perspective. Frankly, we’ve operated frequently without

understanding fully the realities on the other side of this critical

issue, and I think—we welcome your contribution to that.

With that, let me turn now to Senator Lugar.

Thanks so much, Senator Lugar. And I appreciate,

without collaboration, the sort of synchronicity of our comments.

And I think it’s important.

Normally by, sort of, rank, we would start with you, Ambassador

Wisner, but we want to, if you don’t mind, lay out, sort of, first—

we’re going to ask Mark Fitzpatrick to start with his testimony to

sort of look inside. Then we’d like to ask Karim Sadjadpour to look

inside the nuclear issue, and then—Karim will sort of lay out—and

then both of you can really lay out the policies, sort of, in response

to that. And I think it would be great.

So, if we could begin with you, Mark, we’d appreciate it.

Well, Mr. Fitzpatrick, thank you. It’s very important

testimony, very detailed, and we are very, very appreciative

for that update, and look forward to some questions.

Mr. Sadjadpour.

Is your mike on?

There it is, yes.

Thank you very much, Mr. Sadjadpour. It was

very interesting testimony. I know there’ll be considerable followup.

Ambassador Wisner, I should introduce you, probably, as Ambassador

to Everywhere.

You’ve had about as many ambassadorships as anybody I know.

Thank you, Ambassador. Ambassador Haass.

Welcome back. We’ve still got a few openings.

Well, thank you all very much. Very complicated

questions, obviously. Appreciate your testimony enormously.

Let me just begin by asking, right up front: What is the appropriate

redline? Is there a redline that needs to be drawn? Obviously,

the Bush administration drew some, and we passed by them

in sequence. So, the message is one of ambiguity, if not impotence.

And the question now to be asked by a new administration, and by

us here, Is there a redline? If so, what is it?

Sure. Ambassador Haass, Ambassador Wisner,

and then I’d like——

I couldn’t agree with you more, but let me say,

as a preface to the rest of your answer, many countries, ourselves

included, have already made many public declarations about the

unacceptability of a nuclear weapon in Iran, and that is the current

policy that’s also been adopted by the sanctions regime and otherwise.

So, the question is, Are we prepared to enforce that? And if

so, how does one?

Correct.

There are a series of sanctions, which we’ve

talked about here——

That can get much tougher.

You’d be prepared to do that, notwithstanding

whatever potential impact there might be on oil prices?

Mr. Wisner.

Well, I understand that.

I understand that.

Well, here’s the problem. Here’s the problem

with that. And it’s the problem with our overall policy, it’s the

problem with the road we’ve traveled. You know, these folks are

smart. People know how to read the tea leaves. You either have

consequences or you don’t, in foreign policy. And if people believe

that you don’t, they’re going to make a set of judgments, accordingly.

It would be my preference, and everybody on this committee’s

preference, that Iran understand, you know, we’re not—you

know, regime change isn’t on the table, we’re not sitting here—you

know, we’re looking for a way to engage and to find the positive.

But, if they continue to try to develop a bomb, which is the judgment

most people are making they are doing——

There’s a question whether they’re

developing the capability or whether they’d then go to the

weaponization. And so, that’s sort of part of my question, Do we

draw a line that we mean something about, and then go out to the

international community—because either the arms race of the Mid-

dle East is unacceptable—I mean, Egypt, Saudi Arabia—if they feel

threatened and decide this, then the whole thing begins to unravel.

So, we have to decide, What is the line at which we are serious,

at which the world is prepared to take steps? And the Iranians

have to understand that, do they not?

Doesn’t do a lot, I agree.

What we might do. Fair enough.

So, Mr. Sadjadpour, how do we make certain that, as we engage

in that process, that the talking—the delay is not—the process is

not misinterpreted, that there is a clarity to what we believe is

real, and it’s communicated in a way that it isn’t a threat, that it’s

a reality, but not a bullying, if you will, not a sort of, you know,

pressure point, it’s just a reality, and we reduce the tensions, but

they don’t misinterpret the fact that we’re engaging in the diplomacy

as an excuse to then put us in a position where alternatives

have been taken away from everybody.

Well, my time is up. I want to recognize Senator

Lugar. But, as I do, let me just say that I agree completely—

I think it was Ambassador Haass who said—you know, I don’t

think we should pretend that we have the ability to affect the Iranian

elections. We don’t. But, I don’t think we should give any read

of any kind of interpretation, in the next months, that allows anybody

to exploit it or play games with it. And I completely believe

that we must be organizing the international community’s clear

understanding of what this line is or isn’t, of what we’re prepared

to do, or not, and then engage in the diplomacy that makes it as

attractive and as feasible and as possible to be able to, all of us,

move down a different road.

I was struck by the fact—I mean, there is—there really is a positive

side to what a relationship could produce, in terms of Afghanistan,

Iraq, energy, any number of other issues. And those are much

bigger than any of the other kinds of things that have been allowed

to define this. So, I hope we’ll take advantage of that.

Senator Lugar.

Mr. Sadjadpour.

Thank you, Senator Lugar.

Senator Casey.

Mr. Sadjadpour, I know you want to respond

quickly, so why don’t you do that, if you’d just keep it tight——

Thank you very much.

We’re going to resist the temptation to talk about foreign policy

and Rush Limbaugh.

Senator Risch.

Thank you, Senator Risch. Very important line

of questioning. Appreciate it.

Senator Kaufman.

Thank you very much, Senator Kaufman.

Let me just say to the panel, we have a vote that’s gone off. Senator

Menendez will have his full time for questioning and still be

able to get over to make the vote. And I will leave it to him to

adjourn the hearing.

But, I just want to thank you, on behalf of the committee. This

has been enormously instructive, very, very helpful. There are

many other questions. We are going to leave the record open, and

we would like to impose on you to submit some questions for the

record, if we can.

And this is a conversation that will continue. We

have several days of hearings, some classified. And subsequently,

we’d like to engage as we sort of think about the road forward.

But, this has been enormously helpful today. We thank you.

Senator Menendez.