Mr. Chairman, I regret very much that my

schedule was such that I have not been able to be here with you

through the day, but I want to commend you for scheduling these

hearings at a very busy period just before the recess. I think it is

extremely important that you have undertaken this effort, and we

are having another full day tomorrow, as I understand it, and that

you are also contemplating resuming the hearing process when we

come back in September.

I think it is imperative that we have launched on this enterprise.

Every day we get a new report in the national press about U.S. policy

toward Iraq and its implications. We had a headline in the

Washington Post, ‘‘Some Top Military Brass Favor Status Quo in

Iraq, Containment is Seen Less Risky Than Attack.’’

Another in the New York Times just yesterday, ‘‘Profound Effect

on Economy Seen in a War on Iraq, U.S. May Bear Most Costs, Experts

Weigh Likelihood of an Oil Price Shock, Another Disruption

of Markets,’’ and then even today the Times had its lead story, ‘‘Air

Power Alone Cannot Defeat Iraq, Rumsfeld Asserts, Secretary Side-

Steps Question of Sending in U.S. Ground Forces to Oust Hussein,’’

which then, of course, draws you into the debate, can you do it with

air power alone, or can you not do it with air power alone, et cetera.

Now, it seems to me imperative that there be a broader examination

of all of these questions, and you know, this term, brutal regime

in Iraq, raises major and complex questions for U.S. policy,

and how they are answered will have consequences for the region,

for our own country, and more broadly around the world for a long

time to come, and obviously we need to embark on the process you

have launched sooner, I think, rather than later. We have to have

well-considered, well-informed policies, and we have to take into

account the full measure of potential benefits and risks, and it has

to be fully explicable to our people.

In that regard, I was very much taken by the op ed piece that

you and Senator Lugar have in today’s New York Times, and I am

very strongly supportive of the approach contained therein, including

your statement, ‘‘without prejudging any particular course of

action we hope to start a national discussion of some critical questions.’’

I think that is extremely important, and I therefore again

commend you for undertaking this careful examination of the situation.

You and Senator Lugar set out there some questions which I

think form the framework for these hearings. What threat does

Iraq pose to our security? How immediate is the danger? What are

the possible responses to the Iraqi threat? Third, what are our responsibilities

if Saddam is removed? Fourthly, what would it take

to rebuild Iraq economically and politically?

I know you are trying to do these panels I think focused on particular

aspects of that question, but if I could go outside of that——

Let me close by putting a question or two

down: What would we have to undertake afterwards with respect

to Iraq; and how long are we talking about being present; and what

kind of resources would we have to commit?

And as you answer that question, could you put it in the context

of our staying power; what we have reflected on that question in

Afghanistan. Now, you know, we went into Afghanistan, and we

did an important military operation with considerable success, but

we’re left with problems afterwards.

Now, how adequately are we addressing that, and how commensurate

has our commitment been? And as you look at the Afghanistan

situation, what questions may that raise about the Iraqi situation,

post Saddam Hussein? That’s the question I would like to

leave at this time.

Well, Mr. Chairman, I’ll be very brief, because

I’m, along with everyone else, anxious to hear these witnesses.

I just want, again, to commend you for scheduling these hearings.

I know this is a very busy period before the

recess, but I think it’s extremely important that we’ve undertaken

this effort. The New York Times, only a couple of days ago, had an

editorial entitled ‘‘Filling in the Blanks on Iraq,’’ and it began with

this sentence, ‘‘With the Bush Administration openly threatening

to overthrow Saddam Hussein, a public airing of the pros and cons

of intervention is long overdue. Thanks to the Senate Foreign Relations

Committee, which has planned hearings about Iraq this week,

that national discussion may finally commence.’’

And it has, indeed, commenced, and that editorial concluded—

and I just want to read this into the record, because I think what’s

being done here is very important, and I think your efforts in bring

this about are extremely significant—‘‘Wisely, Senate Republicans

have worked closely with the Democratic committee chairman, Joseph

Biden, in planning this week’s hearing. The White House has

been similarly cooperative. Further exploration of these issues will

be needed after the Senate returns from its August recess. Before

any major decisions are taken, the Nation needs to learn as much

as it can about the available choices on Iraq and their likely consequences.’’

And these hearings which you’ve launched are obviously intended

to do that. In fact, you and Senator Lugar had an article

in the New York Times yesterday—just yesterday and, in the

course of which, you said, ‘‘Without prejudging any particular

course of action, we hope to start a national discussion of some critical

questions,’’ and I think it’s very important to have that national

discussion. I think the way you’ve structured it, in terms of

the questions that have been outlined to be addressed, provide a

structure and a format for this discussion. I’m very happy to participate

in it, but I’m particularly pleased to acknowledge, the very

significant leadership you’re exercising on this very important issue.