Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for having

this hearing.

Mr. Steinberg, thank you for your service. I very much appreciate

it.

I know there’s been reference made about the congressional

schedule and all that. I do hope that everyone in the administration

knows that if we’re going to begin a war all of us are glad to

catch a flight back to Washington and talk about it. I hope the congressional

schedule won’t be used again as a discussion point.

At the same time, I do appreciate the fact that the administration

tried to build a coalition. I know a lot of people have criticized

that. I think that was a good move. I know it’s one of the most narrow

coalitions that we’ve built in recent times. But we did build it

and I know that we are turning over activities.

I think here’s the question that a lot of us have. You know, we

look at what happened in Afghanistan. We basically had a very

narrow mission. In the beginning it was in some ways about one

person. And let’s face it. We can talk about narrowed mission in

Afghanistan all we wish, but by the time it’s all said and done we

will have engaged in one of the most mammoth state, nation-building

efforts in modern history. I mean, that’s what we’re doing there

right now, is we have a huge, mammoth state and nation-building

effort under way today.

So we look at—we look at Libya. We began talking about a nofly

zone. Within 48 hours, a no-drive zone. Now we’re reading news

reports of CIA being on the ground. I think a lot of us have this

question. I mean, the old adage that’s become a cliche: If you break

it, you own it. We’re talking about not taking Qadhafi out militarily,

but I think the administration’s hoping at this point to get

lucky and he leaves or maybe slightly less lucky and he’s assassinated

through covert operations or some other type of activities,

but he’s gone.

The question is, What kind of discussions have we had relating

to nation-building there? I mean, there are no democratic institutions.

Where do we go once he leaves? What have we talked about

with our allies as far as our commitments on the ground, and can

it become much like what we’ve seen in Afghanistan?

So we’ve had zero discussions about our involvement

in building democratic institutions post-Qadhafi, whenever

that occurs?

So we started this no-fly zone to make it a fair

fight, and my understanding is we’re pulling out our A–10s and our

AC–130s now, which basically—again, we started no-fly zone, then

it became a no-drive zone, and it appears that we feel like we’ve

now made it a fair fight. If Qadhafi goes into Misurata and starts

killing folks—now he’s got folks in the back of pickup trucks with

machine guns, just like the opposition does—and we are able to

watch this on television, what is the—I guess I’m confused as to

what our goals are, if we see that happening on the ground, which

likely—I mean, it certainly is a possibility now—what is going to

be our response?

So we have 700,000 folks in Misurata and now

everybody’s kind of fighting the same way, out of the back of

pickups and Toyotas. So again, I don’t see how you do that from

the air if he goes into Misurata and starts killing folks, which it

seems to be that’s where he’s headed right now. How do we prevent

that with our NATO forces when we do it strictly from the air?

Mr. Chairman, I thank you. I do want to say

I thought that the briefing we had yesterday—I thought both Secretaries

handled themselves very professionally, and I thought that

was an outstanding hearing. And I appreciate the way the administration

has tried to build a coalition.

I’m one Senator who has witnessed Afghanistan up close and

personal several times and have seen huge mission creep and

evolving reasons for our involvement, and I guess I’m just expressing

concern about—I don’t think anybody has really thought

through the end game yet. I’m not saying that maybe we even can

at this point, but it is of great concern watching the mission creep

that we’ve had in the past.

But I thank you.