Thank you, Senator Kerry.

Mr. Steinberg, first of all I want to say that I don’t want what

I’m going to say here to be taken as combative. I really really want

to support the administration on this. When we’re talking about

these matters, we’re all Americans and it’s important that we pull

the wagon together.

But I have some—I’ve listened to the President. I’ve listened to

Secretary Clinton, Secretary Gates, and yourself talk about the

goals that I just have real trouble reconciling. The goals from a

political standpoint is regime change, but not a military standpoint.

And then the goal of humanitarian protection of citizens is

the military objective, but not the political objective.

I just have real trouble. I don’t know who came up with this, but

for instance, if you leave Qadhafi in power and you don’t use your

military might as you’ve already pulled the trigger and done, how

in the world can you say that you’re going to stop atrocities or protect

the civilian population? If he stays in power and this thing collapses,

there’s going to be a humanitarian catastrophe there that

is going to be incredibly large, it would seem to me.

I just don’t understand how you can justify these. I’ve listened

carefully and it’s articulated that they’re different, that these are

different goals. But I just can’t reconcile it.

Do you really believe that if we withdraw our

military might, which apparently we’re going to today or tomorrow,

whenever it’s going to be, and Qadhafi stays in power and the

rebels collapse, that there isn’t going to be a humanitarian slaughter

there that’s going to be of an epic nature?

They tell me the NATO forces don’t have what

we have. They don’t have the A–10s, which are absolutely critical

in this situation, from what I understand. Am I right on that?

I hope you’re right.

Let’s move to another subject, and that is another issue that I

have real difficulty with here is who we’re helping. People have

made reference to it here, but, with all due respect, I just don’t feel

we’ve gotten a decent answer on that. I’ve heard the administration

say, well, we’re getting to know them better. Well, that’s not good

enough for me.

If we’re going to start killing people on behalf of someone, I want

to not get to know them better. I want to know who they are before

the trigger is pulled. That’s the difficulty I’m having here.

Now, everybody can agree that Qadhafi is a really, really, really,

bad guy, and as a result of that I think the temptation is to say,

well, the people that are trying to get rid of him must be OK, or

at least OK. I’m not there. I’d like a better understanding of who

it is that we’re helping here.

I hear about the council. I hear about different—I hear the talk

of al-Qaeda being involved. But I haven’t heard names. Who is

this? What is the group? I want to look at the track record of these

people before I decide whether it’s a good thing to put American

lives at risk or, for that matter, American treasure at risk. Help

me out.

Who are they? Who are they?

Please.

Is there a putative leader? Is there somebody

that stands up and says ‘‘follow me’’ and people do? Is there a

name associated with this?

My time is up and I understand that. I guess you

haven’t helped me out as to who these people are. I’ve heard the

general description that you’ve given, but I don’t know any more

than when I sat down here as to who it is that we have expended

our treasure for to protect. Can you help me any more?

Put me in the column as agreeing that I also

want to find out who they are.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.