Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Senator

Lugar, and members of the committee. If I could just briefly begin,

a little over 2 years ago you did me the great honor of supporting

my nomination to serve in this position, and it has been a great

privilege to serve the country and the President and the Secretary

and to work with this committee in particular, which we see as our

home committee. I appreciate the courtesy and the engagement

that we’ve had over these 3 years and I look forward to working

with you in my future capacity as well. So thank you all very much

for that.

I also want to thank you for holding this hearing and the opportunity

to update you on developments in Libya, and to answer the

important questions that both you and Senator Lugar and your colleagues

have and will raise. I want to also express my personal

appreciation and all of us for the tremendous dedication and commitment

of the men and women of the armed services who are

serving, as they always do, with dedication and courage and tremendous

skill and proficiency and do great credit to our Nation.

In his speech on Monday night, President Obama laid out our

goals and our strategy for Libya and the wider Middle East. I’m

grateful for the opportunity today to continue the ongoing exchange

between the administration and Congress that has been going on

as these events unfolded over the last several weeks.

Let me begin by reviewing why we are a part of this broad international

effort. As the President said on Monday, the United States

has played a unique role as an anchor of global security and an

advocate for human freedom. When our interests and our values

are at stake, we have a responsibility to act.

As this committee knows, the crisis began when the Libyan people

took to the streets in peaceful protest to demand their universal

human rights and Colonel Qadhafi’s security forces responded with

extreme violence. The U.N. Security Council reacted unanimously

by approving Resolution 1970 on February 26, which demanded an

end to the violence and referred the situation to the International

Criminal Court, while imposing a travel ban and assets-freeze on

Qadhafi’s family and government officials.

Rather than respond to the international community’s demand

for an end to the violence, Qadhafi’s forces continued their brutal

assault. With this imminent threat bearing down on them, the people

of Libya appealed to the world for help. The Gulf Cooperation

Council and the Arab League called for the establishment of a nofly

zone. This body voted itself to support the idea of a no-fly zone

on March 1.

Then, acting with partners in NATO, the Arab world, and African

members of the Security Council, on March 17 we succeeded

in passing U.N. Security Council Resolution 1973, which demanded

an immediate cease-fire in Libya, including an end to the current

attacks against civilians, which it said might constitute crimes

against humanity, imposed a ban on all flights in the country’s air

space, and authorized the use of all necessary measures to protect

civilians, as well as tightening sanctions on the Qadhafi regime.

As Qadhafi’s troops pushed toward Benghazi, a city of nearly

700,000 people, Qadhafi again defined the international community,

declaring ‘‘We will have no mercy and no pity.’’ Based on his

decades-long history of brutality, we had little choice but to take

him at his word. Stopping a potential humanitarian disaster of

massive proportion became a question of hours and not days.

On March 18, the day after the Security Council resolution, the

President, Secretary Gates, and Secretary Clinton discussed and

consulted with you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Lugar, and others, the

leadership of the Congress, to explain our perspective on these

issues, and then we acted decisively to prevent a potential massacre.

All of this has been accomplished consistent with President

Obama’s pledge to the American people that the American military

role would be limited, that we would not put ground troops into

Libya, that we would focus our unique capabilities on the front end

of the operation and then transfer responsibility to our allies and

partners.

As we meet, the North Atlantic Council, the NAC, with coalition

partners fully at the table, has taken on full responsibility for all

of the United Nations’ mandated action against Libya, including

enforcing the no-fly zone, policing an arms embargo in the Mediterranean,

and carrying out targeted air strikes as part of the U.N.

mandate to take all necessary action to protect civilians.

As NATO assumes command and control of military operations,

we are confident the coalition will keep pressure on Qadhafi’s

remaining forces until he fully complies with the terms of Resolution

1973.

We became involved in this effort because America has, as the

President said on Monday night and you, Mr. Chairman, have just

reinforced, an important strategic interest in achieving this objective.

A massacre could drive tens of thousands of additional refugees

across Libya’s borders, putting enormous strains on the peaceful,

yet fragile, transitions in Egypt and Tunisia. It would undercut

democratic aspirations across the region and embolden repressive

leaders to believe that violence is the best strategy to cling to

power. It would undermine the credibility of the United Nations

Security Council and its ability to uphold global peace and security.

Now, many have asked—Senator Lugar, you have asked—why

Libya and not in other cases where we have seen force used

against civilians? The President explained on Monday night, ‘‘In

this particular country, Libya, at this particular moment, we were

faced with the prospect of violence on a horrific scale. We had a

unique ability to stop that violence, an international mandate for

action, a broad coalition prepared to join us, the support of Arab

countries, and a plea for help from the Libyan people themselves.

We also had the ability to stop Qadhafi’s forces in their tracks

without putting American troops on the ground.’’

I’d also like to say a word about three nonmilitary tracks that

are crucial to the President’s strategy. First on the humanitarian

front, we are working with NATO, the EU, the U.N., and others,

especially Egypt, Tunisia, Turkey, and the Gulf States, to ensure

that aid gets to the people who need it, including the victims of

Qadhafi’s violence and the refugees.

The U.S. Government is providing $47 million to meet humanitarian

needs and support the work of NGOs on the ground. The

second track is to continue ratcheting up pressure and further isolating

Colonel Qadhafi and his associates. The contact group that

met in London on Monday sent a strong international message that

we must move forward with a representative democratic transition,

that Qadhafi has lost the legitimacy to lead and must go.

But President Obama has been equally clear that our military

operation has a narrowly defined mission that does not include

regime change. If we try to overthrow Qadhafi by force, our coalition

could splinter. It might require deploying U.S. troops on the

ground and could significantly increase the chances of civilian casualties.

As the President has said, we’ve been down this road

before and we know the potential for unexpected costs and unforeseen

dangers.

The approach we are pursuing in Libya has succeeded before, as

we saw in the Balkans and Kosovo. Our military intervention in

Kosovo was also carefully focused on civilian protection and not

regime change. That military operation ended with Milosevic withdrawing

his forces from Kosovo. But our effort to support democracy

and human rights in Serbia did not end there. We kept up the

political and economic pressure, and 1 year after the military operation

ended the people of Serbia ousted Milosevic and then turned

him over to The Hague.

So we’re moving ahead aggressively with nonmilitary measures

aimed at isolating Qadhafi and those who continue to enable him,

such as escalating financial pressure through vigorous enforcement

of international sanctions authorized under the two Security Council

resolutions.

In London we saw growing international consensus and political

and diplomatic pressure to this end. We’ve seen the impact of the

strategy just in the last 24 hours with the defection of Libyan Foreign

Minister, Musa Kusa, and the defection of the former Libyan

U.N. Ambassador, Ambassador Teki.

That brings me to the third track, supporting the legitimate aspirations

of the Libyan people. As in Egypt and Tunisia, we hope to

see a democratic transition in Libya through a broadly inclusive

process that reflects the will and protects the rights of the Libyan

people. Now, we know this won’t be easy, but we appreciate the

strong commitment that the council has made in its statements,

especially in the last several days, committing to democratic ideals

and its explicit rejection of terrorism and extremist organizations,

including al-Qaeda.

In London, the international community agreed to establish a

contact group that will coordinate activity and provide broad political

guidance on the full range of efforts under Resolutions 1970

and 1973. We’re pleased that Qatar will host the first meeting of

this contact group.

So there is progress to report. But we are under no illusions

about the dangers and challenges that remain. We know that

Qadhafi is unlikely to give up power easily and that the regime

still has substantial military capacity. This is a critical moment for

Libya, for the international community, and the United States.

We’re eager to continue our close consultations with you about the

way forward and hope to have your support, and I look forward to

our dialogue this afternoon.

Mr. Chairman, we’ve had increasingly intensive

conversations with the Transnational National Council and other

opposition forces both in and outside of Libya over the past several

weeks. The Secretary has met several times with one of the leaders

of the Transnational National Council. We’ve had an opportunity

to have others, including yourself, who have had these dialogues.

And we’ve begun to have dialogues with them in Libya as well.

We’re in the process of sending our own special representative

into Libya to deepen those conversations. I think we are growing

to know them better. There’s obviously a diverse group of people

there. But what we have seen through this dialogue is a strong recognition

on their part that there’s an expectation that to continue

to have the support of the international community they need to

demonstrate their openness to a broad democratic process, to inclusiveness,

to representation, a recognition that the international

community and especially the United States will be watching to

make sure that the values that we are seeking to support are really

carried out by those forces.

We recognize that part of the reason that we have taken this

step-by-step approach to engagement and the decision thus far not

to fully recognize them as the Government of Libya is a part of

making sure that we have a full appreciation and understanding

of just what their path is.

But I do put significance in the statements they’ve issued. We obviously

want to make sure that their actions reflect that as well.

I think it’s fair to say, Mr. Chairman, although

I would obviously, not being a professional in the matter, would

want to defer to some extent to our military colleagues, that this

is a group with limited military capability. Some of them come

from the Libyan military itself, but many of them are just courageous

individuals who are trying to defend something, the values

that they hold for themselves and their families.

I think one of the challenges going ahead is to understand just

how they can become an effective force. I think it’s also important

to state, because I know there’s been a lot of focus on the council

itself, that this intervention is not on behalf of the council. This is

an intervention on behalf of the Libyan people, to stop the massacre

and to create the conditions for a true democratic transition.

We see the council as an important expression of that, but this

is not the United States taking the sides of one group or another,

but rather supporting this broader goal of the democratic aspirations

of the people of Libya.

Mr. Chairman, I think it’s obviously difficult in

a situation where there’s been the kind of repression that Qadhafi

has undertaken and the fact that many people within the country

are under military siege and don’t have an opportunity to fully participate.

But what has impressed us is the recognition by the members

of the council that they do need to reach out, that they should

not be kind of a self-appointed group that’s deciding the future for

others, but recognize that as they move forward they want to

include larger voices and broader cross-sections of the Libyan

population.

So I think that that’s what’s significant here, is they’re doing

what they can under the circumstances that they are, but the fact

that they have recognized the need to broaden their base, to try to

be more inclusive, to try to find ways to reach out to those in the

west, for example, who aren’t as able to participate as those in the

east, I think is a positive sign that they understand their responsibilities

and what it would mean to move forward with a really

inclusive transition.

Mr. Chairman, as you can imagine, for operational

security reasons I don’t want to comment on the specifics.

But that we do anticipate in the very near future that a representative

from the United States to work with the council would be

able to be in Libya.

Mr. Chairman, as Secretary Gates has said, I

think it’s impossible to forecast anything of this sort with certainty.

I can only say that, as you know and the committee knows, we

have already begun the transition. NATO has taken over control

and the role of U.S. military forces has already begun that transition;

that the President has said and Secretary Gates has said that

we envision our role being focused on support of the others which

will be conducting the enforcement of the no-fly zone and the targeted

civilian strikes, that we are mostly focusing on support and

intelligence.

So obviously we’ll have to have a continued conversation with

this committee, not just at the 60-day point, but all throughout, as

to see how that evolves.

Thank you, Senator Lugar. Obviously, we very

much appreciate your focus on this. You’ve been a great leader and

an advocate for a strong role for the United States in the world,

but a careful role in the world, and we take that very seriously.

I can’t comment on this New York Times headline, to be honest.

I don’t recognize that as ringing particularly in terms of anything

that I’ve heard before and, with all respect for the Times, I don’t

think I necessarily know what they think they’re getting at with

that. So let me answer your question more broadly.

I think that what is very clear in our engagement with the opposition

forces is, first, we do expect them to avoid any humanitarian

disasters on their part, that they have an absolute obligation to

\ But again, Mr. Chairman, I think that one of

the—what I was going to go on to say was that one of the reasons

we are engaging with the opposition is because I believe the fact

that we are involved along with our NATO partners actually allows

us to shape this. And I think one of the deeper interests that we

have here—and both of you have alluded to this—is how this turns

out, because there is a conflict going on there. And we want this

outcome to be one that is looking positively toward the United

States, positively toward the values that we support, creating more

rather than less stability in the region.

And by being engaged, by being supportive of the legitimate aspirations

of the Libyan people and working to defend them against

these humanitarian catastrophes, I think the chances, I believe the

President and the Secretary believe, the chances that we will get

the kind of outcome that you want to see is much greater than if

we leave them to their own, because if they do this with the rest

of the world turning the back on them who will come to their

support?

We’ve seen others who we don’t wish well saying, well, they want

to try to take this over and see this as an avatar of their goals,

whether it’s forces of extremists or other countries. So I think there

is an opportunity here for us to shape this, to engage with the constructive

elements that are there that want to be associated, that

want to embrace the values that were in the Transnational

National Council’s statement.

So I think we can’t guarantee anything going forward, but I

think the best chances of having an outcome, of preventing extremism

from taking hold in Libya as this moves forward, is precisely

by having engagement.

I think, going on to your broader question, part of the reason

we’ve done this as an international coalition is that we don’t have

the full burden and responsibility for this. We’ve already turned

over and our costs and role on the military side has already begun

to decline. Similarly in terms of the support for the opposition. It’s

critically important that this is not just a made-in-Washington

effort, that this is something that we’re doing with our allies, with

the contact group.

The contact group discussions yesterday—Monday—were not just

about the military operations. It was how all these countries can

come together to support that. I think that again leads to a much

greater chance of an outcome.

So in terms of the objectives, you’ve raised all the right questions.

I think—we hope we’ve begun to answer those in terms of

what we’re trying to achieve, what the specific role of the military

forces is, what the other tools are. And obviously we look forward

to a more extensive conversation with you and your colleagues.

protect civilians, that they should not in any sense endanger civilians.

That is something we would hold anybody to.

Thank you, sir.

Thank you, sir.

No, sir. As I tried to make clear in my opening

statement, what I said was that the military operation, that is the

strikes themselves, are not—the test of their success will not be

regime change; but as was the case in Kosovo and Serbia, that we

have other tools available to us as we carry forward.

So after 78 days of bombing in Kosovo, we ended the military

operation because we had achieved the humanitarian objective,

but——

Correct, absolutely.

Senator, I think it’s growing as we deepen our

involvement there. A number of members of the administration

have spoken to that. I think that the general judgment is that we—

first of all, this movement was not impelled by al-Qaeda in the first

place; and that we don’t see at the moment a significant presence

there.

It’s something we obviously have to be alert to. It’s something

that we have to understand better. And we also have made very

clear that our continued ability to engage with and be supportive

depends on seeing in deed as well as in word the kinds of commitments

that they’ve made there.

But I think, as I said to Senator Lugar, I think the more we’re

involved the better chance there is that those who might try to

hijack it, whether it’s Iran or al-Qaeda, will be kept on the sidelines

because the forces that want to be associated with democracy

and freedom and the kinds of values that we share will be seen as

having the support of the United States, of NATO, and others.

So I think that the goal here is we have an opportunity for movement

which was not impelled by these forces to make sure, or at

least to substantially increase, the chances that it doesn’t go in

that direction.

I would just say—I won’t comment specifically

on intelligence matters, but that’s obviously a priority for us.

Senator, we are working with the Justice

Department on the questions about how we can get additional information

about accountability on this and take advantage of all

the new information that is emerging out of this. Because it’s, as

you will understand, related to grand jury and other investigations,

it’s difficult for me to be more specific than that. But it is——

Senator, I think, as you know, this is something

that Secretary Clinton takes very personally, and she has been

very focused on this issue and we’ve made clear with our colleagues

and others in our own engagement that we expect and we are

focused on that.

On the issue of Musa Kusa, one of the things I think that’s important

to recognize and was emphasized by the British Foreign

Secretary in his statement today is that no offers of immunity have

been given to Musa Kusa and that they do intend to make him

available to authorities for information. So the answer is yes, we

are pursuing this. Yes, we think it’s important. We have a very

strong commitment to the Pan Am 103 families and others to make

sure that all the information comes out and that it falls to its logical

conclusion.

We also have the very strong mandate of the Security Council,

which has established a frame of reference for all this to the International

Court of Justice, as well as our own criminal proceedings.

Well, thank you, Senator. I think we certainly

see this as more than a question of just getting lucky in terms of

his leaving. Part of the reason I come back to the analogy of

Milosevic and Serbia is because I do think we have some experience

about some of the tools that can be used and, although I don’t

want to overstate the significance of the two defections that we saw

today, the fact that the Foreign Minister and the former U.N. Ambassador

at this stage of events have now decided to break from

the regime is at least some sign that there is internally concerns

about what’s going on there.

We intend to continue that pressure, to make clear that there are

consequences and that people will be held to it. And we believe

that this is a strategy that can lead to success.

In terms of the nation-building dimension, I think one of the

things that the President is very conscious about is the limited

commitment that we have made and the fact that within 2 weeks

of beginning this military operation we have already begun to scale

down our engagement I think is a strong reflection of his strong

conviction about the kind of role the United States should play.

One of the reasons why this meeting in London was so important

was not simply on the military side to facilitate the transition to

NATO, but also on the civilian and political side, to engage the

broader international community, to have a contact group which is

not chaired by the United States but by Europeans and Arabs, who

are going to take the principal responsibility for carrying that

forward.

I think we do have a role to play. As I said, we’ve done $47 million

in humanitarian assistance. There may be other kinds of

democracy assistance that it would make sense for us to continue

to play. But I do think this is one in which we recognize that the

United States can play a supportive role, that it’s useful for us to

be part of this overall effort, but we are not taking the kind of

responsibility that we have in other circumstances.

Again, the conversations began in London in

terms of the role of this contact group, the role that the EU will

play, the role that the U.N. will play. The reason for creating this

contact group is to create a body that isn’t dependent on the United

States to plan this, but rather for other partners to take a key role

in shaping this so that there’s an understanding that as they help

shape this that they have a responsibility for the financial resources

behind it.

A couple of points, Senator. First, as you know,

from the perspective of the administration we had concerns about

only a no-fly zone. So from our perspective we never had a no-fly

zone that then converted to something else. We worked very hard

in the Security Council resolution to broaden that, because our concern

was if we only had a no-fly zone that we would encounter precisely

the situation that you describe, that we would be taking his

planes out of the action but he would be able to mass armor and

commit the kind of atrocities that we’re afraid of.

So I think we were very pleased that we were able to fashion the

Security Council resolution in a way that did have that broad

authority so we didn’t have some of the dangers that you first—

you identified.

Second, we don’t define the mission as a fair fight. We define the

mission as preventing these massive humanitarian attacks on civilians

by Qadhafi, and that is what the focus is. And that is something

that continues to be within the mandate of NATO and that

is within both the mission that NATO has adopted and the role

that the NATO forces that include both allies and others, to actually

implement. And the NATO commanders will have a set of

rules of engagement and a concept of operations as events unfold,

if they see those kinds of events unfolding, within the mandate

that they——

I think the mission that we agreed to, that

NATO agreed to, and that was authorized by the Security Council

resolution is to prevent the kind of massive attacks that we were

concerned about in Benghazi. We have—as I say, that’s the military

mission. But there’s the broader mission. We recognize that

ultimately the security and safety and the stability of Libya does

depend on Qadhafi and his team going, and that’s why we have a

broader set of tools.

But, as Secretary Gates has said several times over the last few

days, we have more than just the hammer in the tool chest. The

hammer is one piece of it. It can stop the most egregious attacks,

like the air campaign by Qadhafi, like massed armor. It doesn’t

stop all of it, but there are other tools that we have available and

we believe that the combined application of all of those tools can

be successful in the mission.

Thank you.

Senator, I think it’s fair to say they’ve requested

almost anything you could imagine that one might want under

these circumstances. And we obviously take their requests very

seriously. What we’re trying to do is evaluate them, not just ourselves,

but with our partners, in terms of what makes sense under

the current set of circumstances, what they can use effectively, how

that will affect the overall set of circumstances, how we can avoid

unintended consequences, particularly if it should come to the issue

of military equipment, and making sure that that doesn’t go to purposes

that we would not be comfortable with.

I think we recognize in these circumstances that, on the one

hand, the situation is time-urgent. At the same time, we do want

to do this deliberately and not do this in ways that would lead to

unintended consequences. That’s part of the reason why we have

this intensified engagement with the opposition.

As I said earlier, I think we believe very strongly that we have

a much better chance of shaping how this group evolves and how

the future evolves for Libya if we’re part of it and that they see

that a decent amount of support from countries in NATO and other

countries in the region can lead them to feel that they will have

support to pursue a moderate course and not allow this to be

hijacked by extremist groups.

But we are certainly engaged with them on the humanitarian

side, on the possibility of nonlethal assistance, and there is a discussion

as to whether other assistance may make sense.

I do have that, Senator. If you wouldn’t mind,

I’d prefer to provide it more precisely for the record. But I can

check my notes here if you’d like me to.

As you mentioned, Senator, and you know well

from your own work, the IOM and others, the U.N. Commission on

Refugees and others, are deeply involved in this, and we’ve been

actively engaged with them. So in addition to our own direct assistance,

IOM, HCR and others, have been supportive. They have addi-

tional appeals coming out for their work there. So I think there will

be a need for support both directly to the international organizations

and to the affected countries, and that’s an area that we’ve

been very focused on.

Absolutely. I think your reference to the Iraq situation

is a very cogent one, because we obviously have a long-term

problem there that we’ve been struggling to get and to make sure

that we do have the resettlement, both internally within Iraq and

externally.

Just to give you what I have for right now, approximately

390,000 refugees have left Libya. That includes both Libyans and

third country nationals who have left since the conflict began.

Yes; no question about it.

Absolutely.

Senator, I think what we’ve tried to say is that

there are many tools that are available to achieve policy objectives

and that we’re trying to adapt the right tools for the right job. The

reason I’ve mentioned on several occasions the situation in Kosovo

is because I think we demonstrated there that it was possible to

have a limited military intervention to stop an imminent and massive

humanitarian crisis, which we did through the air campaign

in Kosovo, which caused the end of the ethnic cleansing and the

withdrawal of Milosevic forces. But the longer campaign to restore

democracy and to get rid of Milosevic took longer, but did not

depend on military tools, and we were successful.

Similarly here, we believe that it is possible to combine the different

tools with a focus on a limited application of force to stop

the kind of aggression against civilians that Qadhafi was taking

with the broader efforts that include economic sanctions, political

pressure, and other tools that we have that will lead to the removal

of Qadhafi from power. There’s not a guarantee that it will work

here, but it has worked in the past.

So I think that’s how we’ve tried to explain the two together. It’s

not unprecedented and it has been something which has been

proved to be successful in other circumstances.

Senator, the coalition isn’t withdrawing its military

power. The United States is moving to a different role, but the

NATO mission and mandate stands, and that——

Senator, I used to serve as a staff member on

the Armed Services Committee, so I could pretend to go back to my

old expertise. But I’d rather defer to my military colleagues in

terms of what’s needed. But I do think we believe that NATO has

the capacity to carry out this mission, and that was the important

consideration. I think SACEUR, Admiral Stavridis, was quite

insistent on making sure before he took that on that he felt that

he had the tools available to conduct the mission.

Senator, the way we see it is we’re not intervening

on behalf of the Transnational National Council. We’re

intervening to stop a humanitarian massacre against the Libyan

people. We are working with these individuals who are beginning

to try to see if they can organize opposition forces, to see if we can

move them in a direction so that they are supportive of the kinds

of long-term future that we want for Libya.

There are some who criticize——

If I could just, a little bit more.

Some have criticized us for not formally recognizing

the council. Precisely the reason we haven’t is because

before we want to move to that step we want to make sure that

they are representative, that they are consistently supportive of the

values and principles that we believe in. So that’s why what we are

doing is intervening, not on behalf of them, but for the Libyan people,

and looking to see whether this council can become a representative

group that can be a good partner for the United States

in the Libyan people.

It’s a diverse group of people, there’s no question about it. We

have a fair amount of detail. Some of it you’ll understand we’d

probably want to share with you in a closed session. But the fact

is what we have seen is a group which understands the need to

reach out to others, which has been very explicit in its public pronouncements

in support of democratic principles and values of tolerance

and moderation, have been explicit in rejecting the idea of

any support from al-Qaeda or terrorist organizations.

Those are positive steps. We need to encourage those things. We

need to continue to make sure that what they do in practice is consistent

with those deeds. I think that’s the best way to engage with

them.

Again, Senator, I don’t think this is not a government.

This is a group of people who are coming together to try

to oppose Qadhafi, just as the democratic forces in Egypt came

together. It wasn’t a single leader. There were a number of people.

This over time we believe can lead to a process that would lead

to a representative government there. But again, the council is an

element of the various individuals and forces in Libya trying to

come together to form a different future for the people. We haven’t

blessed them. We haven’t said these are the people who are the

only people we’ll deal with or they are the right people to deal

with.

Ultimately they will need to get the validation of their own people

to confer legitimacy on them.

Senator, as I said, the people we’ve expended our

treasure to help are the young men and women, the children, the

mothers, of Benghazi and elsewhere who are under attack. That is

the basis of our intervention. It’s not an intervention on behalf of

this group.

This group may form over time the kernel of a new representative

democracy there. We obviously want to understand who they

are and what they’re doing. As I said, we could go through individuals.

Some of it we’d want to do with you in closed session. We can

talk about individuals, but I don’t think that really is what the

purpose of our intervention is. This is not two combatants where

we’re taking the side of one side or the other. We are intervening

on behalf of the Libyan people, who are under attack by their own

government.

Senator, we’ve made that a priority in our engagement

with them. We obviously used our own information and

sources to try to make our own judgments about that. As Admiral

Stavridis and others have said, we don’t see significant al-Qaeda

presence. There obviously was some elements of al-Qaeda in the

past and we have to be attentive to make sure that they don’t come

back.

We have made it very clear to the individuals that we’ve been

dealing with there that we expect them to be categorical in rejecting

support from or engagement with or advocacy on behalf of

terrorism, violence, or any of the extremist views that al-Qaeda

takes. I put significance on the fact that the Transnational

National Council yesterday came out with a categorical statement

rejecting any affiliation or involvement with al-Qaeda or extremist

organizations.

Now, we obviously have to make sure that’s carried out in deed

as well as word. But they get the message from us about the

importance of that and, as I’ve said before, I think the more we

engage and are seen to support their legitimate aspirations and to

work with the progressive and tolerant democratic forces, the better

chance that what emerges in the post-Qadhafi era will embody

those things.

So we’re very attentive to that concern. I think that we see a real

possibility of it moving in the direction that we want, and we’ve

certainly made clear to those individuals that we’re interacting

with in Libya that we will have zero tolerance for the presence of

al-Qaeda there.

No, sir.

I think it’s a very diverse group. They have people

from different walks of life. There are professionals, there are

academics, there are people who have been involved in politics,

there are people who had some involvement in the previous regime.

There are former military officials.

It’s a very diverse group. There are some young people. There are

some more senior people. This is a group that has, as we’ve heard

from our discussions today, come together to try to bring as much

of a broad-based coordination of the opposition to Qadhafi. But it’s

a work in progress and it’s not a kind of structured organization,

it’s not a government. I think that they are themselves struggling

to have both a sense of political coherence and also military

effectiveness.

One of the reasons that we do engage with them is to try to understand

better what their strategy is and hopefully to make it possible

for them to evolve in a way so that they can be both more

effective and also have a more coherent political strategy going

forward.

We’ve been encouraged by what we heard, particularly with the

Secretary’s interactions with Mr. Jabril, both in Paris 2 weeks ago

and in London this past week, that they are beginning to understand

the need to organize themselves, to develop a coherent platform

going forward. What we’ve seen in the statements that they

issued both on Monday and Tuesday is some evidence that they’re

beginning to be responsive in that respect. Again, it’s a work in

progress.

First, certainly not with taxpayer funds. Second,

there are a variety of reports out there, but to the best of my

knowledge we don’t have any confirmed reports of others providing

lethal military assistance.

With respect to Resolution 1973, I think our position is very

clear, which is that the provisions that authorize the use of all necessary

means to civilians makes it possible—that is, it’s permissible

under the resolution—to do it. But our administration has

made no decision to do that.

Yes; paragraph 4, which says——

What it says is ‘‘Notwithstanding any provisions

of previous resolutions, that members are authorized to use all necessary

means to achieve the objective.’’ ‘‘All necessary means’’——

But ‘‘all necessary means’’ means all necessary

means. So it is our clear reading that ‘‘all necessary means’’ means

that it is not precluded. The transfer of arms is allowed in international

law except where it’s prohibited, and this clearly makes

clear that it’s not prohibited.

At that level of precision, Senator, I’d have to

ask our colleagues in the intelligence community to give you the

briefing on that. I can’t give you specific numbers.

I think the numbers are small, but to be more—

to give you an actual number, I’d have to defer to those who are

doing the bean-counting for us in the intelligence community.

Thank you.

Correct.

I think, obviously, nothing is certain in life. But

Qadhafi had said that was his intention, was to show no pity to his

people.

Correct.

Again, Senator, that’s why we have made clear

that our political objective here is to make sure that Qadhafi goes.

I would certainly say it’s a very substantial risk;

yes.

Yes.

No question about it.

Again, without commenting on some of the specifics,

he has certainly been implicated in——

In a lot of activities.

There’s again no question that he had an active

nuclear weapons program. I think one of the great successes of the

past decade was the ending of that program. But he was certainly

pursuing a nuclear weapons program.

Well, we haven’t—I mean, the mission has not

been to attack him. The mission has been to——

[continuing]. To attack those forces which were

threatening——

I don’t suspect he thought it was a friendly act.

I think it’s hard to know whether he’d be

emboldened or not. I think on the one hand he knows that we have

taken action against him. But I think whether he’s emboldened or

not, that’s part of the reason—we think the threat is sufficient that

we believe it would be important that he go.

Well, I wouldn’t—on the nuclear weapons thing,

I would not—I couldn’t make that judgment as to whether he

would feel that he was free to do that again. But I do think that

we have said that we think that we cannot envision a long-term

stable solution for Libya that involves——

We share that view, Senator.

Yes.

Hours. I think the judgment we had was hours,

not days.

I think, Senator, as you know, the President

brought in the leadership of both bodies. He spoke with the chairman

and the ranking member here and others of the key committees,

because he recognized that time was of the essence and he

was going to need to act quickly, but he did want to reach out to

the membership.

I certainly think that the exigency of time was

an important factor, correct.

Yes.

Yes, sir, absolutely.

Thank you.

Our position, Senator, is that the President

under these circumstances notified Congress consistent with the

War Powers Act and notification was given within 48 hours of the

beginning of hostilities. So the President under the circumstances

initiated a limited military action, but that he did notify Congress

consistent with the provisions of the act.

Senator, as I say, he acted consistent with the

War Powers Act, but the President also has constitutional authority

as Commander in Chief to engage in action, particularly where

it’s limited in duration, scope, and when the circumstances are

exigent.

I think in the case where the President decides

it is in the interest of the United States in his capacity as Commander

in Chief, that he has the authority where the action he

contemplates is limited in scope and duration to take those measures

he feels is necessary.

I’m not sure I’d put it in terms of shifting burdens,

but obviously we would welcome action by Congress to support

the actions of the President.

Yes, sir.

Senator, I think it would be imprudent to try to

predict exactly how long this will take. I do think it’s very clear

that the President is committed to transfer the primary responsibility

for this military action to our allies, both within NATO and

elsewhere. We’ve already begun that transition. NATO has taken

control; and that we do see ourselves in a support capacity.

I think that that’s evidence of his strong intention as to how he

sees our role going forward. I think, as you know well and as you

say, it’s been a long discussion, that Presidents of both parties

under exigent circumstances where the intervention and the activity

was limited have used that authority. But we very much want

to stay in consult with you. As you know, the President reached out

to the leadership on March 18 before we felt the need to act, to

make sure that there was consultation with Congress, and we look

forward to continuing that.

Again, I think that this is a conversation that we

are actively engaged with. Secretary Gates testified this morning

about the military dimensions. On the civilian side, up until now

we’ve provided about $47 million in humanitarian assistance. One

of the focuses of our efforts and Secretary Clinton’s efforts in London

was to strengthen the international coalition supporting not

just the military operations, but the civilian operations as well.

Again, Senator, we would welcome as broad a

support for not just the military actions, but support on the financial

side as well.

Senator, I’ve read newspaper reports. I personally

am unaware of reports to that degree. But what we have said

and we’ve made very clear is that, to the opposition forces, to the

Transnational Council, that we hold them to a very high standard

in terms of their own commitments to basic human rights and to

terrorism of civilians.

The fact that we have intervened on behalf of civilians to prevent

atrocities puts a special responsibility on those who are opposing

the regime to meet the highest standards.

Stopped the export? I’m not sure I can answer

that question, other than to say that if there is any ongoing export

the funds would be going to blocked accounts.

I would guess that it is. I don’t know if my colleagues

have an answer to that. I’d have to get that for the record.

But what I do know is that the regime is not in a position to benefit

from the sale of oil.

We have blocked over $30 billion. Some of it is

not resident in the United States, but because of the way the banking

system operates we are able to block those funds even though

they are not physically located here.

Not fully.

We’ve blocked their transfer, but we do not have

full control. Over some of them we do, but not all of them.

It’s different in different circumstances. But typically

they are either part of an adjudication over claims or there

are other forms of settlement on the blocked funds.

What we have said is that, pursuant to the Security

Council resolution, those funds are held in trust for a future

democratic government of Libya.

Pay for?

I’m trying to think whether—I’m not sure that

we would at this point sort of recognize his control over those. Part

of the reason for blocking them——

Senator, I think that we’re exploring a variety

of options in terms of what might be available, and I’d be reluctant

at this point to, before we’ve had a chance to explore all the

options—one of the things that we want to make sure is that we

do this in a way that’s coordinated with allies, because a lot of

other people have substantially blocked funds and we’d want to

make sure that whatever we did would not trigger actions by others

that we were not fully comfortable with.

So I think it’s important to have a consultation with others, but

we recognize there’s a lot of interests in this and I think it’s a dialogue

that we would welcome to continue with you and your colleagues

as to how to handle this.

Again, Senator, I think it’s squarely on the table

and it’s a conversation that we’re prepared to engage in a discussion

with you and your colleagues about.

And through international banking structures

and processes.

I’m not an expert in this, Senator. The only one

that I’m aware of is that in the case of Iraq some of those funds

were made available, and that’s the only one that I’m aware of.

In many other cases, we have had support of

others who have helped defray the costs of the operations, yes.

Senator, I’m always very cautious about commenting

on specific military operations. I do know we have begun

the process of transitioning to a support role, and we certainly do

not contemplate going forward that we will be conducting enforcement

of the no-fly zone or the targeted strikes on the ground.

But whether that process—where we are in that process and precisely

what assets are involved there I’d rather defer to the Secretary

and the chairman.

I checked this morning before I came over and

I was told that the coalition, in any event—I don’t know whether

that’s the United States or just the coalition—has been conducting

strikes on the ground.

Senator, the one thing I would say, again without

getting outside my lane, is that in the process of transferring

the command to NATO, NATO developed the concept of operations,

the military plans, based on the judgment of SACEUR, Admiral

Stavridis and others, that they had the capacity to carry out the

mission.

So it was certainly a factor in their own thinking about what

kind of assets they needed, taking into account what countries

were prepared to make available.

I’ll actually, if I could, Senator, I would say,

since part of my early service in government was working on exactly

that problem in the Carter administration and the problem

of Iran, I think, without commenting specifically on what transpired

during the revolution there, I think your broader point is

one that we share, which is that there is an opportunity here—and

I know there has been a lot of discussion this afternoon about who

the Transnational Council is and who these people are. But we feel

very strongly that by engaging and working and trying to support

the progressive, the freedom and democracy-supporting elements of

Libyan society, that we have a chance to shape that, which will not

only have a positive impact on Libya, but beyond, and will have an

impact on the transitions in Tunisia and Egypt.

So I do think that we do see the reason for being involved here,

not just on the military side, but on the political side, and engagement

with the opposition forces is a chance to be on the right side

of history here and to help shape it in a direction that’s in the

interest of both the people of Libya and the United States.

Thank you very much, Senator.

I’ll be interested if you could tell me what they

had to say.

Senator, I think we are having conversations

with a number of countries and we’re certainly urging the broadest

possible Arab participation in this. There are a variety of ways that

they can participate. Obviously, one important way is actually in

military operations and in air operations. But some countries have

already provided overflight and other kinds of support. What we

made clear is that we expect that all the countries in the Arab

League, having taken that stand, provide some form of support,

whether it’s financial or in kind or military, and those conversations

very much continue.

Senator, as you understand, for the reasons that

Secretary Gates probably didn’t say specifically in his testimony,

we’re obviously in conversation and it’s probably in terms of getting

a positive outcome that we do this in confidence now. But we could

perhaps say more in closed session.

I think the positive side of the African Union is

that they have made very clear the necessity of support for a democratic

transition. The various statements of the African Union,

including at their special summit last Friday, they gave a very

strong statement, which was not as explicit as the contact group

in saying Qadhafi must go, but the clear message was that a democratic,

inclusive transition had to take place. That I think was a

very important message.

There’s no question that it’s a complicated picture in the African

Union. Many countries have received financial support from

Qadhafi. There are mixed views there. We’ve had some very powerful

statements, most impressively from Paul Kagame of Rwanda,

whom many of you have read his op-ed here, which is very poignant

given his own country’s history, but also from President Khama

in Botswana and others who understand the importance of responding

here.

Other African countries have a more complicated relationship. I

think that we’re not likely to see them having a military role, but

we do want to see them make clear that they are not going to be

tolerant of continued repression by Qadhafi, and we continue to

work very closely with the AU on that.

I think there were two broad important outcomes

of the meeting, because there were two separate groups that

met. They were overlapping groups, obviously, but one was the

group of the troop-contributing or force—I shouldn’t say ‘‘troop,’’

but force-contributing nations, which helped pave the way for this

transition that’s now taken place to NATO control, but also to

make sure that others who, although not formally part of the North

Atlantic Council, could be associated with this and feel some ownership.

I think that was an important step in terms of strengthening

the military dimension of the coalition.

But equally important was the establishment of this contact

group. It was chaired in London by the U.K. and Qatar. They will

now be—or the meeting was there. The formal contact group was

established. The next meeting will be held in Qatar, chaired by

Qatar, and we envision rotating co-chairs. It was a very broadbased

group of countries, some of which are part of the military

effort, but others who go beyond that, who are providing humanitarian

assistance, political assistance, elsewhere.

There was a very strong statement by Secretary Hague on behalf

of the contact group in terms of the political objectives that you’ve

all been discussing today, including a clear message that although

the military is focused on ending the humanitarian catastrophe,

that we have a broader political objective here, which is democratic

transition.

I think that the fact that there were important participants from

the Arab League there as well is a strong signal that this is not

just an effort by the United States or NATO. There were others,

like Jordan for example, which participated in the contact group.

So it is sending a powerful signal of an engagement by others and

a strong commitment to keep this broader effort together beyond

the military strikes themselves.

I think it’s always perilous to assert a direct

linkage. You can only sort of watch what’s happening. But I think

if you look at countries where we have seen problems with the

reaction against peaceful demonstrations, that I do think there is

some sense that people recognize that there are costs and risks

associated with this.

I think in our engagement with our friends in Bahrain and elsewhere

I think it’s helpful for them to see that we do respond when

there is unjustified violence against civilians. I hope the message

is clear to President Assad. I think tomorrow will be a very important

day in light of the speech that he gave and the failure to

address many of the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people.

Thank you.

I think, Senator, if I could just say in closing,

that we have encouraged representatives to come here, as you’ve

said. I think it’s important that there be more engagement. I think

we haven’t mentioned it, but I think it’s also Ambassador Aujawi,

who is here, Ambassador Shagam in New York. There are a number

of important voices that we’re hearing, and we encourage them

to engage both with the American public and with you, and we

obviously encourage you to engage with them.

I understand the sense of frustration of not fully knowing them,

but it is a work in progress, and we can shape this by our own

positive engagement.