Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good to see you

again, and Senator Lugar and Senator Corker. And thank you for

asking me to appear again before this committee to discuss United

States policy toward Libya.

Let me just make clear at the outset that my statement and testimony

reflect my personal views and not those of the Council on

Foreign Relations, which takes no institutional positions.

What I thought I’d do is spend a few minutes on lessons to be

learned, up to now, and then a few minutes on where we might go,

going forward.

And I’ll summarize my remarks, in the interest of time.

Armed intervention on humanitarian grounds can sometimes be

justified. But, before the United States uses military force to save

lives, let me set forth a number of criteria: We need to be sure of

the threat; the potential victims should request our help; the intervention

should be supported by significant elements of the international

community; the intervention should have high likelihood

of success at a limited cost, including the cost to our other interests;

and other policies should be judged to be inadequate. And I

would say that not all of these conditions were satisfied in the

Libyan case.

Second, it was, and is, not obvious, to me at least, that what happened,

or will happen, in Libya will have significant repercussions

for what happens elsewhere in the region. Here, I’d associate myself

with Senator Lugar’s comments. The dynamics in Syria or

Bahrain or Egypt, not to mention Iran, Iraq, or Saudi Arabia, will

be determined mostly by local factors and forces, and not by what happens in Libya.

Just to be clear, I do not think

the purpose of international forces in Libya should be to join the civil war against Qadhafi.

About putting so much of our

focus on regime change, as if that were the solution. Because I

don’t think that is the solution. If it were to happen, it has to be

a part of something much larger.

I also believe that policymakers in this country and other countries

made a mistake early on in calling explicitly for Muammar

Qadhafi’s removal. Doing so made it far more difficult to employ

diplomacy early on to help achieve U.S. humanitarian goals without

having to resort to military force. By calling for his ouster, we

removed the incentive that Qadhafi might have to stop attacking

his opponents. It also put the United States at odds with U.N. Security

Council Resolution 1973. Last, it increases the odds that

many would see the intervention as failing, so long as Qadhafi remained in power.

A lot of emphasis has been placed on multilateral support for

this operation. But, let me say that multilateralism, in and of itself,

is not a reason for doing something. Multilateralism is a mechanism,

no more and no less, for distributing burdens. It can add to

the legitimacy of an action, but it can also complicate policy implementation.

Such pros and cons always need to be assessed, but

multilateral support does not make a policy that is questionable on

its merits any less so.

Now, many people have commented on the reality that our policy

toward Libya is inconsistent with our policies toward other countries.

On that, I’d simply say that inconsistency is unavoidable in

foreign policy. And, in and of itself, inconsistency is not a reason

for rejecting doing something that makes sense, or for undertaking

something that does not. Some humanitarian interventions may, in

fact, be warranted. But, that said, we also have to recognize that

inconsistency is not cost-free. It can confuse the American public,

and it can disappoint people in other countries, opening us up to

charges of hypocrisy.

Senator Kerry, you mentioned the idea that the United States

has a whole range of interests, up to ‘‘vital.’’ And I would say that,

in principle, it is acceptable to intervene militarily in situations

where we have interests that are less than vital. But, in those

cases—and I would call them wars of choice—it must be shown

that the likely costs are commensurate with the interests involved,

and again, that other policies would not have done equally well or

better. Otherwise, I don’t believe a war of choice can be justified.

As I expect you’ve gathered, I did not support the decision to intervene

with military force in Libya, but, as the saying goes, ‘‘We

are where we are.’’ So, where do we go from here?

First, we have to begin with intellectual honesty here. We must

recognize that we face an all-too-familiar foreign policy conundrum:

There is a large gap between the professed goals of the United

States and the means we are prepared to devote to realizing them.

Now, anytime there is such a gap between ends and means,

there are two choices: You can either reduce the ends or you can

elevate the means. It’s about that simple. And the Obama administration,

up to now, has largely emphasized increasing the means;

hence the no-fly zone to the no-fly zone plus, and now there’s apparent

interest in arming opposition forces.

I would advise against taking this path. We cannot be confident

of the agenda of the opposition toward either the Libyan people or

various United States interests, including counterterrorism. Nor

can we be certain, at this stage, as to which opposition elements

with which sets of goals might, in the end, prove dominant. Arms,

once transferred, as we learned in Afghanistan, can be used for any

purpose. And, as we’ve learned in many countries in the greater

Middle East, situations, however bad, can always get worse.

The only way I know to ensure the replacement of the current

Libyan regime with something demonstrably better would be

through the introduction of ground forces that were prepared to remain

in place to maintain order and build local capacities in the

aftermath of ousting the government; essentially, nation-building.

But, I would also add that United States interests in Libya simply

do not warrant such an investment on our part.

I also think that it’s important to recognize that there’s little reason

to conclude that the Libyan opposition will, anytime soon, be

able to defeat the Libyan Government. The Libyan Government

may implode, but we cannot base our policy on this hope.

So, where does this leave us? It argues for reducing the immediate

aims of American foreign policy and giving priority to humanitarian,

as opposed to political, goals. This would entail undertaking

or supporting a diplomatic initiative to bring about the

implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1973, and

most importantly, to bring about a cease-fire.

What would probably be required—in order to gain the support

of the opposition—would be a set of political conditions, possibly including

specified political reforms and a degree of autonomy in the

east. Sanctions could be introduced or removed to effect the acceptance

and compliance by the government, or the opposition, for that

matter. Muammar Qadhafi might have to remain in office for a

time. The country might effectively be divided for some time. And

an international force could well be required on the ground to keep

the peace.

Such an outcome, I expect, would be criticized by some, but it

would stop the civil war and it would keep many people alive who

would otherwise perish. It would create a window for political reform

and possibly, over time, lead to a new government, one without

Muammar Qadhafi. And the United States could use this time

to work with the Libyans in the opposition and beyond—in the government,

for that matter—to begin the process of building national

institutions, which will be necessary, and to do so in a context

without the added burden of an ongoing civil war.

Let me also add that a compromise negotiated outcome would

also be good for the United States, as it would allow us to focus

our resources—economic, diplomatic, military, and political—elsewhere.

Far more important than Libya for United States interests

in the region are Egypt, Syria, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jordan,

and Iran. But, it is important not to lose sight that the Middle

East is not the entire chess board. The United States needs to reserve

resources for other parts of the world—the Korean Peninsula

comes to mind—for possible wars of necessity, for military modernization

central to our position in the Pacific, and for deficit

reduction.

Is whether you ought to do it.

I would say, no, for two reasons. One is the one, essentially, I’ve

just mentioned. I’m nervous about empowering people whose agendas

I’m not confident of. But, second, Afghanistan is something of

a warning here, where we arm people in one geopolitical context,

only to find that, when the context changed, the balance of power

among those who we armed changed, and the purposes to which

they used the arms was suddenly no longer in our interest.

Once you provide arms, you essentially forfeit control. We have

to understand that. Now, we may decide that’s necessary. I don’t

think it is in this case. And I would strongly argue against going

down that path.

So, let me close with a general thought. Foreign policy must be

about priorities. As you all know, the United States cannot do

everything, everywhere. This consideration would have argued for

avoiding military intervention in Libya. Now it argues for limiting

this intervention, what we seek to accomplish, and what is required

of the United States.

Thank you again for asking me back. And obviously, I look forward

to your questions.

I will respond to that, Senator Lugar. I’m

sympathetic to what you’re saying. We can’t roll back history, and

we can’t know how things would have turned out, had we not done

certain things. But, I’m unpersuaded, which many people assert,

that it was a known fact that a large-scale humanitarian catastrophe

was imminent. I don’t claim to be the world’s living expert

on Libyan society; Professor Vandewalle knows a lot more. But

when I look at Libya, I haven’t seen any large-scale massacres

in that country. I don’t see the soot of ethnic division, say, in a

Rwanda that we had between Hutus and Tutsis. I don’t see anything

like that in Libya.

Qadhafi’s approach to the rebels was that they were politically

opposing him. It was not a tribally based or an ethnically based situation;

it was a civil war. And people take up arms in civil wars,

and people who take up the arms kill and get killed. And civil wars

tend to be, as we know from our own country’s experience, the most

brutal sort of encounters.

But, before we intervene, we have to be sure humanitarian catastrophes

on a scale beyond what one would normally expect to come

from fighting in a civil war are imminent. We also have to ask ourselves,

Do we have other tools that we think could do some good?

And I don’t think the United States adequately explored what we

could accomplish through diplomatic means to prevent this situation

from unfolding. And I don’t think we’ve persuaded ourselves

that our intervention will necessarily make a bad situation better.

There’s a lot of history that suggests intervention in civil wars prolongs

them. And we might be seeing that here. And, as a result,

an awful lot of people could be killed, and indeed will be killed, if

this civil war goes on for months or even longer.

So, you’ve got to look at these situations on a case-by-case basis.

We do end up with an inconsistent policy. I don’t think we can

have a one-size-fits-all policy here. But, I’d be wary of taking too

many lessons from the Libya case—any more, Senator, than from

the Bosnia case—in setting up a foreign policy construct based on it.

Let me just say that we are looking at an

enormous set of needs emanating from Libya. There’s actually

some consensus on this panel, if not on how we got to where we

are, about the future. You are looking at a country that essentially

lacks national institutions, has tremendous resources, but these

resources never really have been put to the use of the country.

You are going to need, whether the country is unified or not,

whether Qadhafi’s there or not, some sort of an international physical

presence, boots on the ground. Whether it’s peacekeeping or

aggravated peacekeeping, I don’t think we know. It could be a mixture

of the two.

I predict you are looking at an enormous multiyear effort to help

this country essentially become a functioning country. Otherwise,

I think we are looking at the potential that Libya begins to take

on shades of Yemen, a country with significant ungoverned spaces,

ongoing fighting, a strategic nightmare for ourselves, as well as,

potentially, a humanitarian and political and economic nightmare

for the people there. I don’t think the world has begun to wrap

itself around that.

But you have a resolution, as you know, in 1973, that specifically

precludes an international force. People have not begun a serious

conversation about who’s going to maintain order in the country,

much less, if and when order is secured, how are we going to

undertake the process of rebuilding.

There are enormous Libyan assets, but, in Iraq, we saw that

the fact that you have national assets doesn’t necessarily automatically

translate into a neat funding mechanism for international

activities.

So, my hunch is we haven’t really begun, what, in military jargon,

would be the ‘‘phase 4’’ part of this. And I think we are looking

at a multiyear effort that’s going to require a large international

role. People have not begun to plan for it, as I can tell, and have

not begun to politically prepare their own publics for it. NATO

hasn’t in any way transitioned to that; the Arab League hasn’t. So,

my hunch is, the debate is not even close to being where it’s going

to need to be, Senator.

We don’t need to, and we shouldn’t. But

there will be a need for international boots on the ground as we

transition in Libya.

Let me just say, I——

Just to be very clear, that I do not think

there will be any chance of getting an international force to do

that. And I don’t think it would be wise, if you could.

Well, I’m not real enthusiastic about assassination

as a tool of American foreign policy. And also—and it gets

back to Senator Shaheen’s line of questioning—we need to be confident

that we have something better to put in its place. However

flawed this regime is—and God knows it’s flawed—in my experience,

31 people can’t run anything. So, the idea that you have a

serious alternative to Qadhafi in play somewhere in eastern Libya

or in London is a nonstarter. It just doesn’t exist. Revolutions go

through phases. If Qadhafi were to disappear, there would be a

falling out, there would be a splintering; often the immediate successors

are not the ultimate ones. We have to be careful——

I would answer it this way. I don’t think the

U.S. role has to be particularly in the lead, here. The Europeans

have a much larger stake, for reasons of geography and history. As

Senator Kerry said, the idea of a pay-as-you-go formula ought to

be the going-in assumption. We don’t have to turn the place into

Singapore. I don’t think that’s necessary. I wouldn’t say our goal

is necessarily to produce, any time soon, democratic institutions. I

think it is functioning institutions that you want. You want to prevent

Libya from being a failed state. And I think it’s a fundamentally

different challenge if you’re trying to do this amidst continued

fighting or if you have, essentially, a secure environment. But, I

would think that the U.S. role in this would be minimal, in terms

of people involved, and certainly in terms of our resources. That

should be our going-in position. There are so many other places in

the world where there’s no substitute for American leadership,

where we have to carry a disproportionate burden. I see absolutely

no reason why the United States should be taking a central role

in the future of Libya.

You’re asking me to express an opinion

about what’s essentially to me, more a matter of tactics than anything

and of tradeoffs. I just don’t know how valuable it would be

to get his cooperation on certain subjects. Or whether the example

of him would be worth, if you will, whatever you’d get for unfreezing

certain assets. That’s a level of tactics.

I expect there are some parallels here to the

criminal justice system. I don’t have background in that. But,

you’ve always got to ask yourself what sort of tradeoffs you want

to make, and whether it’s worth it. And you’re right to raise questions

of principle and morality. But if you knew, however, that getting

the cooperation of a certain individual, even though he had

done certain heinous things in the past, could save all sorts of lives

in the future, that might be a consideration you would have to

make.

And all I’m saying is, sitting here today, I’m not in a position to

make these sorts of judgments, Senator.

Senator, the only way I know to answer that

question is that you can’t know who are going to be the potential

successors. We could know each one of these 31 people well, we

could have roomed with all of them in college. We don’t know what

they would do if they were to come to power. We can’t assume that

all 31 will come to share power equally. Indeed, the one thing we

can assume is, they will not. And, whether it’s the Russian Revolution,

the Iranian Revolution, or virtually any other revolution we

can think of, people who initially come into power, when the ancien

regime is ousted, invariably, themselves, are ousted. In civil wars,

the people who come to the fore are not normally the Jeffersonians,

they’re often the guys with guns.

So, I think we can persuade ourselves of almost anything about

what a successor government would be in Libya. And we can sit

here and say it would be benign, or we could say it would be terribly

malign, or somewhere in between. I don’t think we know. And

I don’t think we can base our policy on that.

That’s true not just of Libya. That’s true of virtually all the situations

right now in the Middle East. We don’t know what Egypt’s

complexion is going to be a decade hence. If Assad were to disappear

tomorrow in Syria, we don’t know what sort of political

leadership would take its place in Damascus and what its foreign

policy would be toward Israel or anybody else.

So, we have to approach all these situations with a degree of

humility. And we almost end up in the land of Don Rumsfeld, talking

about unknowns. In virtually every one of these cases, the succession

issue is, to a large extent, beyond our power to control and,

in some cases, even to anticipate.

You can make it legal through a finding. So,

that, to me, is not the real issue. The bigger issue——

Can I just add one thing on that?

History, again, suggests that if and when

the rebels succeed in their initial goal, which is to get rid of

Qadhafi, then that glue disappears. And we have to then assume

that arms we provide for that purpose will be used for the purpose

of the power struggle. We will be fueling the subsequent civil war,

not between the rebels and the government, but between and

among the rebels. And so, if we are going to go down that path—

which, again, I don’t think we should do—we should do it with our

eyes open, knowing that the arms do not disappear the day the

goal for which they were provided is achieved.