Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Let me

thank you once again for holding these, what are very important

hearings, and the agenda you’re got is a very, very good one.

I’d just like to ask quickly, if I could—the last time we had before,

Mr. Secretary—and I appreciate your being here today——

I raised the question of whether or

not we might hear from Secretary Powell prior to his appearance

tomorrow before the United Nations so that we would at least be

aware, and maybe in a closed-door session so as not to get into the

sources-and-methods issues. I wonder, Mr. Chairman, if you might

comment on what the situation is regarding that briefing?

Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I—let me

just, once again, express that I appreciate the chairman’s efforts,

who, as early as last week, indicated he strongly felt that we

should hear from the Secretary prior to the presentation. And I appreciate

the time constraints and the pressures the administration

is under. And my only purpose in raising the question, as you

know, is just that I felt, since many of us here need to answer

questions we’re getting ourselves, that, in addition to briefing world

leaders, that Members of Congress ought to be fully briefed, as

well, as to what facts and information they’re going to use to support

the administration’s position regarding Iraq. And I will just

express my disappointment that we’re not going to have that

chance before the presentation tomorrow. But possibly the meeting

with the President may help, Mr. Chairman, in that regard in the

morning, and I look forward to the briefing from the Chairs of the committee.

Let me, if I can, quickly turn—I’d just like to pick up on Senator

Sarbanes’ point here. The question he raised about how you

prioritize—and this is not just an academic exercise, because obviously

resources and attention are going to be important. And,

again, I’ll restate the obvious here, at least for my part. That is

that I think Iraq does pose serious threats. I’ve felt that from the

very beginning, felt it for a long time. I don’t retreat at all from that position.

But as we try to compare the immediacy of these threats, I look

at Iraq and where it is in its accumulation of weapons of mass destruction,

and I look at where North Korea is, and I see North

Korea, where it’s expelled the IAEA inspectors, it’s done all the

necessary preparations for a nuclear facility—and you’re nodding

your head in agreement with this.

As of this morning, the North Koreans may have already begun,

once again, to reprocess plutonium. The North Koreans may well

be on their way to building additional nuclear weapons to destabilize

the region. We know that they posses nuclear and chemical

weapons. And North Korea has one of the worst records when it

comes to selling ballistic weapons to other governments.

How do you draw the conclusion—and I, by the way, to the best

of my knowledge, while Iraq may have some of these, or we’ve all

at least been told that the nuclear arsenal is—might—may exist,

but the ability to deliver is some time away, and there’s no record,

that I know of, of them selling. Now, at least there may be some

the Secretary’s going to present tomorrow. But if you start comparing

these two records—and I acknowledge the threat posed by

Iraq, and yet nothing like this or similar to this, with regard to

Iraq, has made accusations. How do you draw the conclusion that

the North Korean problem is not a more serious crisis than Iraq?

Let me ask this on a—there’s a couple of very

specific questions, but let me get the question out, so it isn’t just

one question.

The Bush administration undertook a review of the U.S. policy

toward Korea shortly after it assumed office. I’d like to know, sort

of, when that review was completed. And following that review,

didn’t the State Department hold out the possibility of talks with

North Korea as early as June of 2001?

The reason I raise that with you, because it was a year-and-ahalf

later, almost a year-and-a-half later, when Mr. Kelly went to

North Korea, and I am curious that had the North Koreans not announced

during that visit—and maybe I should ask Mr. Kelly. I

don’t know if he’s going to be talking here or not. I’ve got, sort of,

questions for you, but I’m asking Mr. Armitage.

What if that announcement had not been made in North Korea?

What was the intention of the administration as a result of your

review—why did it take so long, a year-and-a-half almost, to then

go? And then had they not made this announcement—what was

the point of your visit? I mean, you could have found out the answer

to the question of whether or not they were already going to

break these early agreements without having to travel to North

Korea, so I presume the visit in October of last year had more significance

than just merely going to be told something that we probably

were aware of already.

Mr. Chairman, my time is up.

Well, thanks, Senator Biden. Thanks to my colleague,

Joe, very, very much.

And I said at the outset of my remarks awhile ago, in front of

Secretary Armitage, how important these hearings were. And let

me say again Mr. Chairman, how much I appreciate it.

This has been an incredibly informative hour or so listening to

these three gentlemen, who I have known and dealt with, to some

degree, over a number of years. I remember being in the Philippines,

I think, with Ambassador Bosworth about the same time

you were, Mr. Chairman, going back to the mid-1980s and the catastrophic

events and the tremendous job you did there. And, as well,

Ambassador Gregg, your work over the years and Secretary Carter,

as well.

So I thank you immensely. This testimony has been tremendously

worthwhile.

I am disappointed more of our colleagues are not here to hear

this. There are reasons. Today there is a delegation on its way to

Houston to participate in the memorial services. And so those

watching this may wonder why more members are not here to listen

to what you had to say. That had something to do with it.

But I would hope that members will pay attention to this and to

listen very carefully to what you had to say. Your testimony has

been tremendously informative.

Let me pick up the point that Senator Lugar was making, again,

and that is, I think all of us, at least those of us here, I think agree

that we need to have this conversation pretty quickly, these talks

with North Korea, and that any delay in that is foolhardy.

But obviously, before that can happen, the point that Senator

Lugar was raising is, we have to decide what we want. And I get

the sense, once again, as I watched the debate going on within the

administration about Iraq, I have a sense that is occurring. I think

a debate within the administration is healthy. I am not suggesting

they should not be. But I am concerned and I want to ask you about this.

In your mind, is this a significant debate that goes beyond just

what we want out of North Korea, but what we want, in a larger

sense, between the factions who advocate arms control or a Nunn-

Lugar approach, or those who advocate a missile defense approach?

I am concerned that what I am watching here is this debate that

almost—and I use these words very guardedly—but almost welcomes,

to some extent, this renewed threat. It gives cause and justification

for a whole new approach to dealing with the geopolitical

problem, and that is of a proliferation of weaponry and your response

to it. And I am very worried that there are those who—

when I begin to look over the last couple of years, I can accept the

fact that some poor choice of words is in a speech. Lord knows,

every one of us on this side of the table is engaged in that at one

time or another. I can accept the fact that you want to have a review

of a policy decision. I can accept a litany of these things. But

after awhile, you begin to wonder if there is not a pattern here that

goes beyond just, sort of, a series of accidents and begins to look

like something more planned and well thought out in terms of

what you are ultimately trying to achieve.

And I am worried, in a sense here, that those who advocate an

approach that would commit us to a massive missile defense system

are prevailing in this debate, and, hence, the reluctance to

have these kind of talks and to deal more forthrightly with this problem.

And so what do we want? What does the administration want?

Are my suspicions about this debate accurate, in your view? Do you

think that there is a larger debate going on here beyond North

Korea that is holding up a decision on how to deal with this? Or

is that an exaggerated view of mine? And if it is, I want you to tell me so.

Secretary Carter.

Sooner the better. And let me say, by the way, I

am not—it is not a question. I think there is an argument that can

be made—in fact, a need—for us to develop a missile defense system.

I am not suggesting that it is necessarily a choice between one

or the other, but it sometimes looks simplistic as I watch the pattern

here and as time goes by and as that clock continues to tick

on this question. And it is—and the longer we wait in engaging

this in a diplomatically aggressive way, it seems to me, then the

greater the dangers are, as all of you have pointed out here, as

each day goes by.

And the notion—one of you made the point of having some real

specialists on Asia, some real experts on Asia, involved in this—is

going to be critically important, and I think there is a bit of a vacuum

on that particular point, as well.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you immensely. And I thank Senator

Biden for his generosity.