Thank you, Senator Lugar.

General Gration, welcome.

And I certainly want to thank Chairman Kerry for holding this

very important hearing.

Let me first express my support for the Obama administration’s

effort to scale up our diplomacy and development efforts in Southern

Sudan to prepare for the referendum and its aftermath. And,

as you said, the stakes of the coming months are incredibly high,

not only for Southern Sudan, but for the entire country, as well,

and for the region.

We must do all we can to ensure that the referendum is held on

time, and that it is held fairly and peacefully. And we must help

the Southern Sudanese to get a handle on the many security,

development, and governance challenges before them.

At the same time, we have to be ready for all possible scenarios,

including one in which the National Congress Party seeks to destabilize

or disrupt the agreed-upon process at the same time that it

escalates the crisis in Darfur, or foot-drags on efforts to bring about

peace.

I’ve expressed concern at different times, including during the

Run up to last month’s election, that the administration has not spoken

out more forcefully about the abuses by the NCP, or sought to

hold them accountable. And although I am not opposed to engagement,

we need to be firm and to be sure that any engagement is

based on actual evidence that the NCP is willing to cooperate and

has made concrete progress on previous problems.

So, General, let me ask you a few questions. In your discussions

of the NCP, what have you conveyed would be the consequences if

they take actions to disrupt the referendum process? Have you prepared

a way in which we would act in that scenario?

I appreciate what you said. But my question

was: What would the possible consequences be? And are we in the

process of preparing, or have we prepared, a scenario if they act

this way? I don’t want to just hear about what the process would

be. I want to know if it’s happening. Are we ready?

Well, I appreciate that some of this shouldn’t

be shared in this setting. But, is there anything you can share,

with regard to the types of consequences that this government may

suffer if they mess around with this situation?

I look forward to that.

General, I have been very concerned, also, by the level of violence

within Southern—South Sudan. As you know, humanitarian

groups report that over 2,500 people were killed, an additional

350,000 were displaced, by interethnic and communal violence in

2009 alone. And the Lord’s Resistance Army continues to foment

terror in the southwestern corner of the country. To this end, what

can be done by the SPLA or the U.N. peacekeeping mission? How

can we help strengthen the existing disarmament program in order

to reduce these levels of violence and protect the civilians during

this very turbulent period?

And in regard to Darfur, despite some small

successes, obviously the situation there remains unresolved. Over

2 million people—displaced people—still living in camps. And earlier

this week, the JEM rebel groups suspended their involvement

in peace talks after alleging that the Sudanese Government has

launched fresh attacks on Darfur.

First, from what you know, is there any truth to these allegations?

And second, what impact has—which you’ve referred to—the

Chad-Sudan rapprochement had on the potential for viable peace

talks?

But, you have not denied here that the Sudanese

Government has launched fresh attacks on Darfur. You have

not confirmed it, but you have not denied it. Correct?

OK.