Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I’d like

to begin by thanking you for holding this important hearing. Previous

Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings, to consider responses

to the horrendous violence in the Darfur region of Sudan

in April 2005 and September 2006, were canceled, so I’m glad that

this committee is making this crisis a priority. However, I am dismayed

by how little has changed since that first hearing was

scheduled, a couple of years ago. I’m hoping this will mark the

start of a different trend.

Mr. Natsios, while playing an important role in trying to bring

peace to Darfur and smooth the relations between Chad and

Sudan, Libyan President Gaddafi’s involvement has seemingly been

unhelpful of late. Do you believe that Libya’s involvement so far in

Sudan has done more good than harm? And what role do you foresee

for Libya in facilitating a sustainable political settlement in

Darfur and the region?

Well——

That’s not how it works.

Well you know, I don’t want to force you to

do that, at this point. We can talk at greater length in some other

setting. But does Deputy Secretary of State Negroponte’s upcoming

visit to Libya—as the highest ranking government official to visit

that country since diplomatic relations were renewed, last May—

does that symbolize an intent for greater and more regularized

U.S. coordination with the Libyans?

But does it—does the visit of Mr. Negroponte

to Libya have any significance, vis-a-vis the Darfur situation——

Or not?

OK.

Last month, I chaired a hearing on the regional

impact of the conflict in Darfur to highlight the destabilizing

impact that this crisis is having on the neighboring countries of

Chad and the Central African Republic. And your comments here

have already highlighted these spillover effects. How have you

sought to address the regional dimensions of the Darfur conflict?

And what contingencies does the United States have in place to address

this spillover aspect of the problem?

OK. What impact do you think a U.N. peacekeeping

force for eastern Chad and the northern Central African

Republic would have for Darfur? And is the United—is the administration

still actively supporting——

A strong U.S.——

Peacekeeping force? And how are

you then, if that’s the case, going to gain Chadian President Deby’s

consent for the peacekeeping operation?

Right.