

**POPULAR UPRISING IN THE MIDDLE EAST:  
THE IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY**

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**HEARING**

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS**

**UNITED STATES SENATE**

**ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS**

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## **POPULAR UPRISING IN THE MIDDLE EAST: THE IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY**

**THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 2011**

U.S. SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:03 a.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Office Building, Hon. John F. Kerry (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Kerry, Menendez, Cardin, Casey, Webb, Lugar, Corker, and Rubio.

### **OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN F. KERRY, U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS**

The CHAIRMAN. The hearing will come to order. Good morning, everybody. Happy St. Patrick's Day to all and welcome to this hearing on the Mideast—on events within the Mideast.

And I am particularly pleased, the committee is particularly pleased to welcome here one of our most able and distinguished diplomats. And he will be discussing what is obviously one of the most pressing regions of concern and one of the areas of greatest consequence to the foreign policy of the United States at this particular moment in time.

Under Secretary Bill Burns has served in the Foreign Service for nearly 30 years, including as Ambassador to Jordan, Russia, and as Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs. And in the years that I have served on the committee, I am sure Senator Lugar shares this and Senator Corker, I think he is one of our more capable diplomats, Foreign Service professionals that we have had the occasion to be able to work with.

I thank you, Mr. Secretary, for making time to be with us today when we know that you are enormously pressed and we look forward to your filling us in on the inspiring and troubling events that are unfolding in the Arab world.

From the experiences that you have had in Jordan and elsewhere in the Near East as Secretary, clearly you have as strong a perspective on the changes that are sweeping across the Middle East as anybody, and we are fortunate to have your experience at this historic moment.

In 2 short months we have seen stirring triumphs in Tunis and Tahrir Square, unprecedented protests in Sana and Manama, brutal crackdowns in Tripoli and obviously concerning events unfolding with respect to Benghazi now. And these uprisings clearly constitute one of the most remarkable, momentous developments of

our time. They also present a huge challenge for all of us, for the people of the region and for America's relationship with the people in the region.

So how we respond, as I said yesterday in comments I made at the Carnegie Endowment, how we respond is really going to shape our strategic position with respect to the Middle East as well as how people in the Middle East and around the world, and particularly Muslims, are going to see us. And I think it will shape that view for years to come.

Clearly the remarkable transition that took place in Egypt, the events of Tahrir Square, that transformation was a victory, above all, for the people of Egypt. They did it. And they did it in a most amazing way. But, it was also a victory for democrats, small "d" obviously, democrats around the world, because it showed that political change, even change of that level of consequence, can be brought about peacefully.

If this now can be translated, the liberation that has taken place in Egypt can be translated, and Tunisia, into lasting democracy, then the entire new Arab Awakening is going to carry a vital message, and that is that ordinary people can take their future into their own hands and have the ability to be able to command it, have a huge impact and determine for themselves how they are going to be governed.

I want to also underscore, and again, I pointed to this yesterday but I want to repeat it, because I think it is an important concept, that the developments of Egypt and Tunisia represent a huge blow against extremism. A successful democracy in Egypt will demonstrate that al-Qaeda's belief that change requires the cowardly violence of terror is wrong and it will weaken the position of states like Iran that repress their own people and use terrorist organizations to advance their interests.

Also, just as we did in Eastern Europe immediately after the fall of the Berlin Wall, I think we have the ability to play a hugely constructive role in what happens and how events unfold in the Middle East and we can affirm the values of democracy as well as serve the larger strategic interests of our friends and allies, and of the people of these countries as well as ourselves by seizing this moment and recognizing the opportunity that it presents. And that is why I am working with Senator McCain and Senator Lieberman on legislation to support these new and fledgling democracies in that region.

I call people's attention to the SEED Act. In 1989 it was signed by President George H.W. Bush, and it was legislation that was aimed at helping governments reform out of the autocracies that they once were. Well similarly, we want to do that. We want to help governments reform their security sectors, build transparency, strengthen the rule of law and help their leaders incorporate the aspirations of their people into the day-to-day work and life of those countries.

Ultimately we want to support the transition to democratic rule in Egypt and Tunisia, as well as these other countries that are still struggling, and we want to encourage movement toward democratic reform in the Middle East as a whole.

Our approach to the Middle East I think—I think this may be stating the obvious, but the obvious doesn't always get translated into reality around here and it needs to. Our policies toward the Middle East are going to have to change. For decades we were driven by our—purely, mostly by our addiction to oil, foreign oil. And democracy and human rights were frankly overshadowed to some degree by the political realities created by that economic and addictive reality. And too often over the past decade we saw regimes in the region chiefly as tools in the fight against terrorism, while looking away from abuses that we knew were unconscionable. Yes, we would raise them privately, myself included, but the result was that we had relationships that focused mostly on leaders rather than people. That is part of the price we pay, folks, for our energy paradigm that we are locked into.

I have said for years that we would liberate American foreign policy if we could liberate ourselves from that dependency. And so now we cannot afford to continue to simply see the Middle East in the context of 9/11, we have to see it in the context of 2011 and of this changing reality.

As the people of the region demand reform our approach to the region has to embody the core values of our country. And at the most basic level that means that we have to be consistent in encouraging governments everywhere to respond to the hopes and needs and rights of their citizens. We need to emphasize the programs that will strengthen our engagement with people, which is one of the core objectives of the legislation that we're working on.

So, does that mean you have a cookie-cutter approach to every country? The answer is, "No"; every country is different. Egypt isn't Jordan and Jordan isn't Libya and nor are any of them Bahrain or Saudi Arabia. Each has its own culture, its own sectarian realities. But we have to push back, in all cases, against a consolidation of power that has bred economic stagnation, corruption, popular dissatisfaction and governments that are really, in many—in some cases, quite divorced from the needs, concerns, and hopes of their people. We need to encourage the establishment of institutions that translate the will of the people into action and that promote transparency and accountability.

Now, obviously the story coming out of the Arab world today is not all good news. So we will be especially interested in the Secretary's views on the troubling events unfolding in Libya and Bahrain. In Libya, after the brutal attacks on his own people, by Colonel Qaddafi, has been completely discredited as a leader by every other—certainly by most of the friends and allies of the West as well as Arab countries—the Arab communities having spoken out in a rather remarkable way in the last weeks.

The international community cannot simply watch from the sidelines as the Libyan people's quest for democratic reform is met with violence. The Arab League's call for a U.N. no-fly zone is an unprecedented signal, a rather remarkable transformation and statement that the old rules of impunity for autocratic leaders don't stand.

But time is running out for the Libyan people. The world needs to respond immediately, the United Nations Security Council should act now, today, to pass a resolution that the United States

has shown real leadership in helping to craft, that would provide the range of options necessary to avert a humanitarian disaster. And whatever the final outcome, Qaddafi has no legitimacy to govern, will have no legitimacy to govern, he will govern, if he does, by force and force alone, and the will of the Libyan people, in my judgment, will ultimately prevail.

In Bahrain, soldiers backed by helicopters and tanks have cleared Pearl Square. But it is clear, violence will not solve the underlying problems of Bahrain, it will in fact most likely make them worse and it risks a regional escalation. So we urge the parties to engage in the national dialogue that is so critical to chart a path forward of real reform.

Under Secretary Burns, I know that you have given an awful lot of thought, and are now, to each of these issues over many years. So we look forward to hearing from how you think the situation in the region is developing and how the United States ought to respond to it.

Senator Lugar.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD G. LUGAR,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM INDIANA**

Senator LUGAR. I join the chairman in welcoming Secretary Burns. I am very pleased that the Foreign Relations Committee is engaged in this timely meeting to discuss the challenges stemming from the upheaval that has swept the Middle East over the past 3 months. There has been dramatic change, but we are only at the very beginning of a long process.

How these movements develop and coalesce into organized political parties and how the governments of the region respond to their citizens' demands, will impact the United States interests for decades. There is a long-term opportunity for a more peaceful, stable, and prosperous Middle East as a result of this popular movement, but we have been encouraging more representative and tolerant governance throughout the region for many years. As Americans, we should honor those in the region who are speaking out in defense of values that we hold dear.

At the same time we should acknowledge that the movements are not about us. Our response needs to reflect this reality, and should encompass a broader public debate about the goals and limits of the United States role in the Middle East, especially as it pertains to potential military intervention.

During the last 2 weeks, I have expressed my deep concern that discussions of the United States policy options in the Middle East have focused on a no-fly zone or other military intervention in Libya. Clearly the United States should be engaged with allies on how to oppose the Qaddafi regime and support the aspirations of the Libyan people. But given the costs of a no-fly zone, the risks that our involvement would escalate, the uncertain reception in the Arab street of any American intervention in an Arab country, the potential for civilian deaths, the unpredictability of the endgame in a civil war, the strains on our military, and other factors, I am doubtful that United States interests would be served by imposing a no-fly zone over Libya.



With roughly 145,000 American troops still in Iraq and Afghanistan and with a budget that, according to the President's own proposal, will carry a deficit of approximately \$1.5 trillion this year, we have to recognize that war spending is especially difficult to control. In this broad context, if the Obama administration decides to impose a no-fly zone or take other significant military action in Libya, I believe it should first seek a congressional debate on a declaration of war under article I, section 8 of the Constitution.

I also have made the point that if American forces go to war in Libya, we should ask Arab League governments and other governments advocating for American military action to pledge resources necessary to pay for it. This is not unprecedented. More than \$50 billion in foreign contributions were received to offset United States costs in association with the first gulf war in 1991.

Beyond the civil war in Libya, it is important for our country to focus on the transitions in Egypt and Tunisia, security in the Persian Gulf, and the potential impact the instability is having on our efforts to counter terrorist threats, particularly emanating from Yemen.

I am concerned that there has not been sufficient discussion and debate about the constitutional reforms needed in Egypt, and that reports indicate only the former ruling party and the Muslim Brotherhood have come out in favor of the proposed referendum, to be held in less than 48 hours. I appreciate that the administration has encouraged the Egyptian Government to seek election help from groups like the International Foundation for Electoral Systems. Elections are difficult to organize. They require planning and technical expertise. From my own experience monitoring democratic transitions, as far back as the Philippine People Power Movement in the 1980s, I can attest to the importance of getting elections right. Egyptians will make their own decisions, but I hope we are doing everything possible to give them the tools to be successful.

Similarly, it is important for us to support Tunisia's transition. We must not forget that the wave of popular movements was sparked by a Tunisian example, and the establishment of a stable, democratic Tunisia would similarly reinforce the power of peaceful protest. In the midst of their own political challenges, the Tunisians have made remarkable contributions to the safety and well-being of refugees fleeing the violence in Libya, and they deserve our support.

Developments this week in Bahrain are a cause of concern. The deployment of Saudi forces to Bahrain is reportedly designed to secure vital infrastructure. What are the prospects for meaningful dialogue between the government and the opposition? Not only will events in Bahrain affect the wider Persian Gulf region, but that country hosts a critical United States naval presence, vital to ensuring freedom of navigation.

We must remain vigilant in the fight against terrorists who seek to kill Americans. The most recent attempted terrorist attacks on United States soil have come not from Pakistan or Afghanistan, but from Yemen. How is the administration reacting to continuing instability in Yemen? What are the implications for our fight against al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula? I will appreciate, as

will all of our members this morning, the insights of Secretary Burns on these very difficult issues and we look forward to our discussion.

I thank you.

**STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM J. BURNS, UNDER SECRETARY FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC**

Mr. BURNS. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar, members of the committee, good morning and thank you very much for this opportunity to appear before you again.

Less than 3 months ago a desperate Tunisian street vendor, tired of too many indignities and too many lost hopes, set fire to himself and sparked a revolution still burning across an entire region. That single act, at once tragic and noble, has brought the Middle East to a moment of profound transformation as consequential in its own way as 1989 was for Europe and Eurasia. It is a moment of enormous promise for people and societies long denied freedom and dignity and opportunity. It is a moment of great possibility for American policy. A moment when the peaceful, homegrown, non-ideological movement surging out of Tahrir Square offers a powerful repudiation of al-Qaeda's false narrative that violence and extremism are the only ways to affect change.

But it is also a moment of considerable risk, because there is nothing automatic or foreordained about the success of such transitions. Helping to get them right is as important a challenge for American foreign policy as any we have faced since the end of the cold war.

Mr. Chairman, it seems to me that the starting point for sensible policy is to understand clearly what is at play and what is at stake in the Middle East today. The revolutions that began in Tunis and in Cairo are not about us, they are about the brave, proud, and determined people of Arab societies intent upon better governance and more economic opportunities, intent upon erasing the disconnect between the rulers and the ruled that for so long had been so stifling for so many. And they are about the universal values that the President spoke about 2 years ago in Cairo, the right of peaceful assembly, freedom of speech, and the right to determine one's own destiny.

The most intense impression I had 3 weeks ago, after visiting Tahrir Square and meeting youth leaders, was the remarkable sense of public empowerment. It is fueled by a communications revolution that stripped governments of their old monopoly on the flow of information, made people more aware of what others had in other societies that they didn't and helped them mobilize without central leadership or conventional political organizations.

If the indigenous energy and drive of the new Arab Awakening is its most potent ingredient, it is also a vivid reminder that stability is not a static phenomenon. Political systems and leadership that fail to respond to the legitimate aspirations of their people become more brittle, not more stable. Popular pressures to realize universal values will take different shapes and different societies,

but no society is immune from them. Political systems are a little like bicycles, unless they are peddled forward they tend to fall over.

The long held conceit of many Arab leaders was that there were really only two political choices, the autocrats you know or the Islamic extremists you fear. That proposed a convenient rationale for blocking real political outlets or broaden participation and it ultimately produced the spontaneous combustion of Tahrir Square.

The inconvenient truth is that many, if not most of us involved in American policy in the Middle East in recent decades have sometimes fallen prey to that same conceit. We recognize the tinder that was accumulating in the region, the combustible mix of closed systems and corruption and alienation and indignity, documented so eloquently in the Arab Human Development reports. We tried to drive home that concern to leaderships in the region, but we didn't always try hard enough. So it is good to apply a little humility as we enter this new era unfolding before us.

The honest answer, also, is that as much as it is in our long-term interest to support the emergence of more transparent and more responsive governments, who will ultimately make stronger and more stable partners, the short term is likely to be pretty complicated and unsettling. As in other democratic transitions in other parts of the world, there is a danger of authoritarian retrenchment, especially if economic stagnation persists and newly elected leaders don't produce practical improvements in people's daily lives.

Successful transitions are about a lot more than just elections. Institutions have to be built, too, with checks and balances and an independent media to hold people accountable. There will be plenty of vulnerabilities to exploit and no shortage of predatory extremists ready to take advantage. And there will be plenty of hard trade-offs for American policymakers with popularly elected governments sometimes taking sharper issue with American policies than their autocratic predecessors did and elections sometimes producing uncomfortable results.

None of that argues for pessimism, in my view, although it is a fact that the Middle East is a place where pessimists rarely lack for either company or validation. I actually see considerable cause for optimism in what is underway in the region. I am not naive, and nearly three decades of experience in the Middle East have stripped me of most of my illusions, but there is no mistaking the very real opportunities before us if we employ a thoughtful, carefully integrated strategy.

The key to a successful strategy, it seems to me, is to make common cause with people and leaders in the region, as well as our partners outside it, in pursuit of a simple, positive agenda. We should contrast that with the fundamentally negative agenda of violent extremists who are much better at describing what they are against than what they are for, at describing what they want to tear down, rather than what they want to build up.

Beyond our obvious interests in developing greater energy independence and leading by the power of our own democratic example, there are at least four main elements for such a positive agenda.

First is support for peaceful democratic change. In countries that are taking decisive steps away from old systems and toward democracy, we have a deep stake in stable transitions. Secretary Clinton

emphasized our commitment to Egypt's success, in Cairo earlier this week, underscoring the hugely important demonstration affect of Egypt's experience for the rest of the region. The Secretary stressed that same reality in Tunisia today, noting that no one will ever forget where this wave of change began.

In countries where protests have emerge, but change is uncertain, such as Bahrain, we will continue to urge serious political reform as well as urgent, peaceful dialogue between governments and opposition leaders. In countries working to stay ahead of the wave of popular protests, such as Jordan and Morocco, we will continue to emphasize the importance of taking reform seriously now as a way of creating positive avenues of citizen engagement and avoiding sharp conflicts later on. And in the sad and violent case of Libya, we are working hard to maximize international pressure for Qaddafi's departure and to support the courageous Libyans who have risen up to regain their rights.

Following the Arab League's important and unprecedented call for urgent measures to protect civilians in Libya and establish a no-fly zone, we are pressing for a new U.N. Security Council resolution to authorize a range of further actions against the Qaddafi regime.

A second element, closely connected to the first, is strong support for economic modernization. In the short run, that means helping Egypt and Tunisia, for example, to navigate past significant difficulties created by political turmoil and the temporary collapse of tourism. But that also means thinking boldly and ambitiously about how we can promote genuine long-term modernization. We strongly support the Enterprise Fund that you, Mr. Chairman, and Senators McCain and Lieberman have proposed. Secretary Clinton just announced that the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, OPIC, will provide up to \$2 billion to stimulate private sector investments in the Middle East and North Africa.

It is also crucially important to consider trade liberalization initiatives for key Arab States in transition, ideally in cooperation with the European Union. In the process we can help encourage intraregional trade and integration in a region in which both are in short supply. We can help produce private sector jobs desperately needed to keep pace with demography and expectations. And we can help spread the benefits and opportunities of economic growth across Arab societies rather than just to a narrow circle at the top.

The success of political transitions will require strong, practical economic results and creating a sense of economic hope. Much of that obviously depends on Arab countries themselves who need to put themselves in a better position to compete in a very unsentimental global marketplace, but it is deeply and urgently in our self interest to do all that we can to help.

The third element of a positive American agenda for the Middle East is renewed pursuit of comprehensive Arab/Israeli peace. The status quo between Arabs and Israelis is no more sustainable than the sclerotic political systems that have crumbled in recent months. Neither Israel's future as a Jewish democratic state, nor the legitimate aspirations of Palestinians can be secured without a negotiated two-state solution. While it is a truism that only the parties

themselves can make the hard choices necessary for peace, there is also no substitute for continued, active American leadership.

A fourth element is our own huge and enduring stake in regional security, in strengthening ties to the GCC states, in fighting terrorism and preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons and setting off a catastrophic regional arms race, in not losing sight of Iraq's own critical democratic transition and reintegration into the Arab world. We have to remain clear-eyed and resolute about the threat that Iran's behavior poses across a number of areas and equally straightforward in our support for the aspirations of Iranian citizens for freedom and dignity.

Beneath Tehran's bluster the truth is that nowhere in the region is the disconnect between rulers and ruled any greater than it is in Iran. It is the height of hypocrisy for Iran's leaders to profess their enthusiasm for democratic changes in the Arab world while systematically denying them to their own people.

Mr. Chairman, this is one of those moments that come along only very rarely in the course of human events. It is full of historic opportunities and some very large pitfalls for people in the Middle East and for the United States. It is a moment which demands our attention and our energy and as much creativity and initiative as we and our partners around the world can generate.

I look forward very much to working closely with you and Senator Lugar and the members of the committee in the weeks and months ahead.

Thank you, once again, for the opportunity to appear before you today.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Burns follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF UNDER SECRETARY WILLIAM J. BURNS

Chairman Kerry, Senator Lugar, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you again.

Less than 3 months ago, a desperate Tunisian street vendor, tired of too many indignities and too many lost hopes, set fire to himself and sparked a revolution still burning across an entire region. That single tragic act, has brought the Middle East to a moment of profound transformation, as consequential in its own way as 1989 was for Europe and Eurasia.

It is a moment of enormous promise for people and societies long denied full freedom and dignity and opportunity. It is a moment of great possibility for American policy, as well as a moment when the peaceful, homegrown, nonideological movement surging out of Tahrir Square offers a powerful repudiation of al-Qaeda's false narrative that violence and extremism are the only ways to effect change. The result of all these reform movements could be greater peace, democracy, and prosperity in the region, which would advance all of our interests. But is also a moment of considerable risk, because there is nothing automatic or foreordained about the success of such transitions. Helping these countries' reformers to achieve their goals is as important a challenge for American foreign policy as any we have faced since the end of the cold war.

While the spark that launched the Tunisian revolution was a spontaneous act born of one individual's feelings of frustration and disenfranchisement, the underlying regional demographic, economic, political, and environmental challenges he faced remain a longstanding concern of ours. The Middle East faces the profound problem of a massive youth bulge coming of age in an environment without economic or political opportunity. Youth unemployment in some cases is greater than 30 percent. Many college-educated urban youth are unable to find jobs. Widespread corruption and lack of free speech fuel a sense of individual disenfranchisement, a sense shared across the region. The revolutions that began in Tunis and Cairo are about the brave, proud, and determined people of Arab societies, intent upon better governance and more economic opportunities, intent upon erasing the disconnect between the rulers and the ruled that for so long has been so stifling for so many.

And they're about the universal values that the President spoke about 2 years ago in Cairo—the right of peaceful assembly, freedom of speech, and the right to determine one's own destiny.

If the indigenous energy and drive of the new Arab awakening is its most potent ingredient, it is also a vivid reminder that stability is not a static phenomenon. Political systems and leaderships that fail to respond to the legitimate aspirations of their people become more brittle, not more stable. Popular pressures to realize universal values will take different shapes in different societies, but no society is immune from them. As Secretary Clinton said, “the challenge is to help our partners take systematic steps to usher in a better future where people's voices are heard, their rights respected, and their aspirations met. This is not simply a matter of idealism. It is a strategic necessity.”

The long-held conceit of many Arab leaders was that there were really only two political choices—the autocrats you know or the Islamic extremists you fear. That provided a convenient rationale for blocking real political outlets or broadened participation, and it ultimately produced the spontaneous protests in Tahrir Square and elsewhere throughout the region. We have long recognized the tinder that was accumulating in the region, the combustible mix of closed systems and corruption and alienation and indignity documented so eloquently in the Arab Human Development Reports. We tried to drive home that concern to leaderships in the region, with President Obama underscoring in his June 2009 Cairo speech that nations that protect universal rights are ultimately more stable, successful and secure. Secretary Clinton left no room for ambiguity when she warned regional leaders in Doha earlier this year that they needed to embrace reform or see the sands shift underneath their feet. At the same time, successive administrations have sought cooperation on crucial shared priorities, such as combating terrorism, curbing Iran's nuclear ambitions, promoting Middle East peace, and securing stable energy supplies.

As much as it is in our long-term interest to support the emergence of more transparent and more responsive governments, who will ultimately make stronger and more stable partners, the short term is likely to be complicated and maybe even unsettling. As in other democratic transitions in other parts of the world, there is a danger of authoritarian retrenchment, especially if economic stagnation persists and newly elected leaders do not produce immediate practical improvements in people's daily lives. Successful transitions are about a lot more than just elections; institutions have to be built too, supportive policies, effective checks and balances, and an independent media to hold governments accountable.

There will be plenty of vulnerabilities, and no shortage of predatory extremists ready to exploit them. And there will be plenty of hard tradeoffs for American policymakers, with popularly elected governments sometimes taking sharper issue with American policies than their autocratic predecessors did, and elections sometimes producing uncomfortable results.

Secretary Clinton just returned from Egypt and Tunisia; in both countries, she listened to the concerns and goals of civil society, political activists, and government officials, and emphasized the enormous importance we attach to their success in building new democratic and durable political structures. In responding to the changes in the region, we are guided by clear core principles. We support the universal right to freedom of expression, association, and speech, as well as to be free from fear of harassment, reprisal, intimidation, and discrimination. We oppose violence as a tool for political coercion. We support the right of each country to determine its own path, recognizing the unique context of each situation. We believe political transitions should be deliberate, inclusive, and transparent, with a broad and inclusive dialogue that engages women, minorities, and people from all religious, economic, and social backgrounds.

The key to a successful U.S. strategy is to make common cause with people and leaders in the region—as well as our partners outside it—in pursuit of a simple, positive agenda. U.S. assistance and leadership has a crucial part to play in meeting the crescendo of challenges in the Middle East and North Africa. Whether building international support for the swift and unanimous imposition of strong sanctions on Colonel Qadhafi and those who still stand by him—imposing a travel ban, an assets freeze, and an arms embargo—or securing the unprecedented recommendation of the Human Rights Council for suspending Libya's membership from the Council as well as a consensus decision of the U.N. General Assembly to suspend Libya, which is the first time any country has been suspended from the Council—U.S. interests have been enhanced in multilateral channels.

The first element of our approach to the Middle East is support for peaceful democratic change, reflecting the very different situations that are unfolding. In countries that are taking decisive steps away from old systems and toward democracy, such as Egypt and Tunisia, we have a deep stake in stable transitions. As the traditional

bellwether for the Middle East—politically, economically, and culturally—Egypt’s success is vitally important to the region and to us. We will continue to support civil society voices urging the immediate lifting of the Emergency Law and encouraging real oversight of the new National Security Agency, in the wake of Egypt’s very positive decision to dissolve the discredited State Security Investigations Agency. We support a thoughtful sequencing of a constitutional referendum and elections that will provide the time and space necessary to allow political parties to organize, build support, and campaign—which we also see as critical steps in helping the Egyptian people truly have a choice when they turn out to vote. We acknowledge the Egyptian military’s valuable role in overseeing the transition process and look forward to continuing three decades of cooperation with that institution. We will hold its leaders to their commitment to genuine reform in Egypt. The same holds true in Tunisia, a middle-income country with an educated population and tradition of tolerance, where we can provide important support in strengthening civil society, the media, and the understanding of a sound framework for elections.

In countries such as Bahrain and Yemen, where we are witnessing escalating protests but change is uncertain, we will continue to press vigorously for serious political reform as well as productive dialogue between governments and opposition leaders. This is particularly critical in Bahrain, where there can be no military solution to the lack of trust across Bahrain’s sectarian divide. This is not just a simple matter of restoring law and order, but addressing real political grievances. Aggravating sectarian divides will only lead to decreased security over the long term. A focused dialogue that produces meaningful constitutional reforms addressing the legitimate grievances of the Shia population would be a defeat for those, including Iran and al-Qaeda, seeking to co-opt regional sectarian strife for their own benefit. The stakes are high. In Yemen, terrorist violence from al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula threatens the security and well-being of the Yemeni people, the broader Arabian Peninsula, the United States homeland, our friends and allies. Declining water and petroleum resources, a fractured polity that few have confidence in, an underdeveloped civil society, and institutions too weak to mediate competing tribal and regional demands make combating terrorism and promoting sustainable development that much more difficult. The international community must promote dialogue and reforms that will set the stage for a Presidential election in 2013, in which President Saleh has pledged not to participate.

In countries working to stay ahead of the wave of popular protests, such as Jordan and Morocco, we will emphasize the importance of taking reform seriously now as a way of creating positive avenues of citizen engagement and avoiding sharp conflicts later on. As always, timely reform is the best possible antidote to subsequent upheaval. Both King Abdallah and King Mohammed have announced significant reform initiatives. In Morocco, these include a popularly elected Prime Minister with greatly enhanced powers; a fully independent judiciary; strengthened Parliament and civil society; greater public accountability and other measures to combat corruption; more institutionalized protections for human rights and civil liberties; significant transfers of power from appointed administrators to elected municipal and regional officials; and institutionalized protections for Amazigh (Berber) rights. In Jordan, the King has called for new laws that will yield a more representative Parliament and facilitate the formation of new political parties. Implementing these reforms in a credible and transparent manner will build confidence and credibility in both governments as agents of responsible change.

And in the sad and violent case of Libya, we are working hard to maximize international pressure for Qadhafi’s departure, and to support the courageous Libyans who have risen up to regain their rights. We also worked tirelessly for the adoption of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1970, which required the freezing of assets of Qadhafi and several family members and banned their travel, as well several other key Libyan leaders. At the same time, the United States froze the assets of the Government of Libya. We are now moving as rapidly as we can in New York to see if we can get additional authorization for the international community to look at a broad range of actions. As the President stated, all options remain on the table. At the same time, we are working with our partners to identify and disrupt the flow of mercenaries into Libya, in order to deny Qadhafi another weapon against his own population. We will continue to respond to the humanitarian crisis unleashed by Qadhafi, with our \$47 million in emergency relief providing food, water, shelter, medical supplies, and evacuation assistance to those fleeing the violence.

A second element of a successful U.S. strategy, closely connected to the first, is strong support for economic modernization. In the short run, that means helping Egypt and Tunisia, for example, to navigate past significant difficulties created by political turmoil and the temporary collapse of tourism. In Egypt, for instance, it means helping the authorities sustain, and build popular support for, the hard-

fought structural reforms of the last decade that produced 7 percent annual growth rates and \$10 billion a year in foreign investment, while also helping to extend the benefits of economic growth to all parts of Egyptian society. Not only in Egypt, but across the region, economic growth needs to be restored in a way that provides opportunity to the young, the unemployed, and those who have not been part of the formal economy. In the longer run, that also means thinking boldly and ambitiously about how we can promote genuine modernization.

We strongly support the Enterprise Funds for Egypt and Tunisia that you, Mr. Chairman, and Senators McCain and Lieberman have proposed. Secretary Clinton just announced that the Overseas Private Investment Corporation will provide up to \$2 billion to stimulate private sector investments in the Middle East and North Africa. In addition, the U.S. has established unique outreach efforts under the State Department's Global Entrepreneurship Program to catalyze private and public resources in building an effective ecosystem for innovation and business startups.

It is also crucially important to consider the expansion of trade opportunities for key Arab States in transition, including trade liberalization initiatives, ideally in cooperation with the EU, to help the Arab world compete globally, provide education relevant to market needs, create an environment conducive to private sector investment, and alleviate poverty among large segments of the population. In the process, we can help encourage intraregional trade and integration in a region in which both are in short supply. The U.S. is actively engaging with Egypt, for example, to address outstanding issues in order to expand the Qualified Industrial Zone (QIZ) program, which allows duty-free entry to the U.S. for Egyptian products. Through initiatives like this, we can help produce private sector jobs desperately needed to keep pace with demography and expectations. And we can help spread the benefits and opportunities of economic growth across Arab societies, rather than just to a narrow circle at the top.

The success of political transitions will require strong, practical economic results, and creating a sense of economic hope. Much of that obviously depends on Arab countries themselves, who need to put themselves in a better position to compete in a very unsentimental global marketplace. But it is deeply and urgently in our self-interest to do all that we can to help.

A third element of a positive American agenda for the Middle East is the pursuit of comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace. The status quo between Arabs and Israelis is no more sustainable than the sclerotic political systems that have crumbled in recent months. Neither Israel's future as a secure Jewish, democratic state nor the legitimate aspirations of Palestinians can be secured without a negotiated two-state solution. While the parties themselves must ultimately make the hard choices necessary for peace, there is also no substitute for continued active American leadership. We continue the persistent, day-in-and-day-out, high-level American engagement, working privately with all parties to create an environment for resumed, meaningful and substantive negotiations on all core issues. We are committed to ensuring that political changes on Israel's borders do not create new dangers for Israel and the region, and we welcome the Egyptian leadership's rapid and repeated reaffirmation of its international treaty obligations.

A fourth element is our own huge and enduring stake in regional security—in strengthening ties to the GCC states; in fighting terrorism; in preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons and setting off a catastrophic regional arms race; in maintaining our partnership with Iraq as Iraq goes through its own crucial democratic transition and reintegration into the Arab world. We have to remain clear-eyed and resolute about the threat that Iran's leaders pose across a number of areas—and equally straightforward in our support for the aspirations of Iranian citizens for freedom and dignity. The truth is that nowhere in the region is the disconnect between rulers and ruled any greater than it is in Iran. The hypocrisy for Iran's leaders to profess their enthusiasm for democratic changes in the Arab world while systematically denying them to their own people is clear to all, including Iranian citizens.

Working with Congress and our international partners, we will continue to intensify efforts to hold Iran accountable for its persistent failure to comply with its obligations under 6 UNSC resolutions and 10 IAEA Board of Governors resolutions. Iran's refusal to enter into a constructive dialogue with the P5+1 helped forge a strong international consensus behind the toughest set of U.N. Security Council resolutions to date. Working with the EU, Australia, Norway, Japan, Canada, and South Korea, we have tightened those sanctions further. Even as we have left the door open to engagement, we have sharpened the choices confronting the Iranian leadership. Since July 2010, we have designated 90 entities and 25 individuals for their involvement in and support of Iran's nuclear program and terrorist activity. We have also designated 10 individuals for their involvement in human rights



abuses in Iran, and along with a number of other member states, we strongly condemned Iran's record at the Human Rights Council. Finally, we have used the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions Accountability and Divestment Act to disrupt Iran's energy sector by sanctioning one of Iran's most important oil companies. Sanctioning this firm, which secures much of Iran's foreign investment and supplies of refined petroleum, has chilled its relationships with foreign traders and investors. We have also secured the withdrawal of five major international oil companies from Iran using CISADA's special rule provision. With the drying up in Western energy investment in Iran, we have denied the regime the profits, the technology, and the know-how that comes with it.

Mr. Chairman, this is one of those moments that come along only very rarely in the course of human events. It is full of historic opportunities, and some very large pitfalls, for people in the Middle East, and for the United States. It is a moment which demands our attention and our energy, and as much creativity and initiative as we and our partners around the world can generate. I look forward very much to working closely with you and Senator Lugar and the members of this committee in the weeks and months ahead.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today.

The CHAIRMAN. Well thank you, Mr. Secretary. We are delighted to have you, as I said.

How would you characterize the progress to date and the process as it goes forward in Egypt, with respect to the military council?

Mr. BURNS. Well, Mr. Chairman, I think Egyptians have made remarkable progress in recent weeks, especially when you consider that it was only a little less than a month again that the Mubarak era ended. The military and the Supreme Armed Forces Council has played a responsible role. We have in place a new transition government that I think has widespread credibility amongst the population. A few days ago the Egyptian leadership took the significant step of disbanding the state security apparatus which was a long-held demand of the youth activists and many of those in Tahrir Square. And as Senator Lugar mentioned earlier, there have been amendments drafted in the Constitution, a referendum scheduled in a few days for Egyptians to vote on that.

Having said all that, I think Egyptians themselves recognize that there are a number of challenges before them. As you look at experiences around the world and Senator Lugar mentioned the Philippines, it takes time and space to organize new political parties and so elections require very careful preparation, especially for the Parliament and that's a theme that many thoughtful Egyptians have stressed and Secretary Clinton discussed that when she was in Cairo a couple of days ago.

The CHAIRMAN. Did she get a response from them with respect to the timing?

Mr. BURNS. I think there is a discussion that is going on within the leadership about, you know, how best to sequence these steps. Obviously these are decisions that Egyptians themselves have to make, but I think they are weighing carefully all of those considerations.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I'm going to be there on Sunday and I will be meeting with them and I hope we can weigh in and encourage that. I think the advisability of having the Presidential race before the parliamentary race is obvious and everybody I have talked to seems to indicate that that would be better, but it is not certain at this point. Is that correct?

Mr. BURNS. No, sir. I think that is an issue that the Egyptians are still debating amongst themselves, but it is a healthy debate that is going on.

The CHAIRMAN. Right. What is your sense of the degree to which the civil society, which has always been present but under the radar screen in Egypt, to what degree is it now surfacing with—I mean what is the level of robustness of that and the energy within it? What do you sense? Are people seizing this moment?

Mr. BURNS. Well, I think Egyptians are seizing it with enormous pride and enthusiasm. And it is very hard not to come away from, not just Tahrir Square, but discussions with Egyptians, especially youth leaders, civil society activists, and not feel not only impressed but their feeling of optimism about what is possible in Egypt.

You know, as I said, there are a number of challenges on the road ahead but I am convinced that Egyptians are entirely capable of solving those problems and building the kind of political system that they deserve.

The CHAIRMAN. Can you share with us, I know it is not the place to go into all of the specifics, but Secretary Clinton met with Mahmud Jibril, the representative of the Libyan opposition. And many people have been sort of saying, well who is the opposition and so forth. Can you describe that a little bit—what her conclusion was or the State Department's sense of that meeting and the opposition itself, perhaps?

Mr. BURNS. Well the Secretary had a long and quite thorough discussion with Mr. Jibril and I think came away impressed with his seriousness. We are familiar with a number of the other members of the Libyan National Council and have been similarly impressed, at least with those with whom we have spoken, about their commitment to building a stable Libyan society. We are still in the process of trying to talk to other members of the council and developing a clearer picture, so I don't want to pretend that we have a full picture in which we have total confidence. But we have been impressed so far with, you know, what they've said, about what their ambitions are and what their sense of how the outside world can help.

The CHAIRMAN. And what kind of future are they describing to you for Libya?

Mr. BURNS. Well, what they have described, at least so far, is a future in which they want to build democratic institutions, a secular future for Libya in which, you know, the broad range of Libyan citizens are able to participate in a way that they haven't been for the last four decades. So it is easier, certainly, to paint a picture like that than it is to construct a new system. But, in terms of what they have said to us, it has been generally positive.

The CHAIRMAN. What is the impact of the French recognition of the opposition?

Mr. BURNS. Well, what we are focused on, Mr. Chairman, is, you know, much more the building of practical ties to the Libyan National Council, quite apart from the formal issue of recognition. We have authorized the Libyan National Council to open a representative office in Washington—

The CHAIRMAN. Now, I'm not suggesting that we do that. I am not at all suggesting, I am just asking what the impact is on the thinking of some of our allies with respect to the events unfolding and the ability to try to put pressure on Qaddafi, et cetera, as we go forward.

Mr. BURNS. Well, I think it is a step along side the practical measures that we and others are taking with the Libyan National Council to enhance their credibility and to underscore the importance of building an alternative future for Libya.

The CHAIRMAN. What do you understand the situation to be now with respect to Qaddafi's forces in Benghazi?

Mr. BURNS. Well, it is a very fast moving situation, as you know very well. Qaddafi's forces have made significant strides on the ground, over the course of the last 24, 48 hours. I believe they are only about 160 kilometers from Benghazi right now. So the situation is very fluid, but they have made advances, taking full advantage of their overwhelming military—or superiority in military firepower, at least.

The CHAIRMAN. I understand that is principally articulated through a certain number of tanks and a certain number of artillery pieces. Is that correct?

Mr. BURNS. Yes. In addition to the capabilities of the Libyan Air Force. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. And the Air Force, there have been I think slightly less than 20 but somewhere in that vicinity of sorties per day?

Mr. BURNS. Yes, sir; I think that is right.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes. With respect to the situation in Bahrain, it has obviously taken a dangerous turn in the last couple of days. What is your sense of the ability now of the Crown Prince to convene a meaningful national dialogue given the violence that has taken place and the movement of Saudi troops into Bahrain?

Mr. BURNS. Well, Mr. Chairman, it is obviously a very complicated situation. I mean we have strongly supported, we continue to strongly support the Crown Prince's efforts to begin a serious national dialogue. We have urged both the government and the opposition parties to engage in that dialogue.

As Secretary Clinton said yesterday, we and many others around the world are alarmed and troubled by the situation we see and we have continued to emphasize that there is no security solution to the legitimate aspirations of Bahraini citizens, that there has to be a political solution which you can only arrive at through dialogue. And that is a point we are going to continue to emphasize, particularly when we see excessive use of force against demonstrators. And we have continued to call on all parties, including hard-line oppositionists to avoid violence.

The CHAIRMAN. Do we have any leverage besides our voice? Is there any—I mean if you connect the dots, are there ways in which you believe we have an ability to be able to have an impact or are we kind of on the sidelines watching? And if so, what do we do with respect to the balance of the principles that we espouse with respect to Tahrir Square versus now?

Mr. BURNS. Well, Mr. Chairman, we are committed to applying those universal principles in every situation that emerges, whether

it is in Bahrain or any place else. As I said in my opening remarks, in the case of societies like Bahrain where protests have begun, change is still uncertain. We are going to continue to do everything we can. We are not the only voice in this, there are others in the international community voicing similar concerns, to urge a resumption of political dialogue, the dialogue the Crown Prince has tried to start. Because that is the only way, I think in which you can produce the kind of outcome that Bahraini's deserve.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Lugar.

Senator LUGAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Burns, I'm very much concerned, as my opening statement pointed out, not only about recent events in Libya or Bahrain or Yemen, but likewise about potential United States involvement in any of these situations and the conditions in which we could become involved.

We had long discussions in this committee before our participation in Iraq, for example. One can say that undertaking was of a different magnitude altogether, but the idea was to overthrow the regime of Saddam Hussein and to bring about a democratic Iraq as a shining symbol in the Middle East.

Now we are at a point in which, as I understand it, our Ambassador to the United Nations, Susan Rice, is quoted as saying yesterday, "We are interested in a broad range of action, which would protect civilians and halt the killings." She said the Security Council needs to, "be prepared to contemplate steps that include but go beyond a no-fly zone."

One press account says that the draft resolution introduced by the British and the French contains controversial language authorizing, "all necessary measures," to protect civilians. This could be interpreted as permitting strikes against government ground forces and the use of combat forces on the ground in Libya.

Now, I mentioned the Arab League endorsement of the no-fly zone in my opening statement. The Arab League in its statement reportedly opposed any "foreign intervention" in Libya. The Arab League later noted that its approval of a no-fly zone would expire, "at the end of the crisis," whatever that may be defined as.

I mention all of this simply because I want to ask you precisely what authorities are we seeking in New York? Assuming the Security Council would vote in favor of the resolution, whether it is supported by the French or the British or ourselves, what role do you envision the United States military forces and, separately, those of other countries, having to play?

And furthermore, the President has not yet really spoken directly to United States national interests at stake in Libya, aside from our opposition to Qaddafi and the protection of innocent civilians. Does the President plan to spell out what our national interests are in Libya that might justify the use of our Armed Forces?

And finally, there is at least a report that Qatar and the United Arab Emirates have agreed to participate in a no-fly zone. Does this Arab commitment include financial support of this operation, which will be expensive? Even the no-fly zone alone, without the no-drive zone or the rest of it, is expensive. We're having huge debates every day on the floor of the Congress about our national

budget and yet this seems to proceed in a manner entirely divorced from this. It will not be that way for long.

So, I ask you all of this in one set of questions because of the constraint of time. But could you explain, generally, what the administration's view is?

Mr. BURNS. Thank you very much, Senator Lugar and those are all very fair concerns and very fair questions.

I'd make several points in response. First, as I said we and others in the international community have been increasingly concerned, over the course of the last few days, with what is developing in Libya. The Secretary General of the United Nations warned yesterday of the dangers of a true humanitarian catastrophe, given the past behavior of Mr. Qaddafi and his regime.

Second, as you said, the Arab League, last Saturday, took a quite important and unprecedented step when it called for the United Nations to authorize measures to protect civilians in Libya, including a no-fly zone. Since that time we have been working actively in the Security Council to pursue such a new resolution, which the Lebanese, along with the British and French, have put forward. And as Ambassador Rice described yesterday, among the options that are being discussed today are measures including a no-fly zone, but not limited to that, to protect civilians from bombardment by Qaddafi's forces.

I don't know what the Security Council ultimately is going to produce. We are working hard to try to produce a serious resolution and produce it quickly, given the pace of events on the ground.

We have emphasized, in addition, two things. The first is that we want this to be an international response with authorization from the Security Council. We are not seeking a unilateral effort here. And second, beyond the statement that the Arab League issued, we are interested in active Arab partnership in such an effort, both in the measures that would be taken and also, potentially, in the financial support for them. And those are discussions that we have begun, including with particular Arab States that have expressed an interest and a willingness to participate in this.

My final comment would simply be to emphasize that I know the President and Secretary Clinton take very seriously the importance of continued close consultation with the congressional leadership on these very important issues and I know the White House will remain in touch with the congressional leadership on this in the days ahead.

Senator LUGAR. Well, let me then be more direct in terms of congressional consultation. That is important and certainly welcome. My view is that there should be considerably more than that. There should be congressional participation. Specifically, if we are going to declare war against Libya, then we ought to have a congressional declaration of war. Now what I question is, Is the administration authorized, constitutionally, to simply proceed into a conflict in Libya involving American forces without a declaration of war?

We have unfortunately, I think, participated in some wars in recent years in which there was not a declaration of war by the Congress. I would like to prevent that from occurring again. And I think we are on the threshold, not only with regard to Libya but

also the stream of civil wars currently taking place in the region. Now is it our policy, generally, that the administration might simply participate in select civil wars on behalf of what it believes is the best interest of the country by simply citing humanitarian concerns? What is your view about the congressional debates and a declaration of war against the sovereign State of Libya, if that is our intent?

Mr. BURNS. Well, I'd say two things, sir. First, I agree with you that we need to be extraordinary careful in how we approach these kind of situations and we also need to approach them with a sense of humility about our role and our influence. And the President and Secretary Clinton and others have been very, very careful in how they have looked at the situation that has emerged in Libya as well as elsewhere in the region.

That is why we have attached so much emphasis to making this an international response authorized by the U.N. Security Council and attach so much importance to active Arab partnership, not just declarations, in any such effort.

So I agree with you, we need to be very, very careful on these issues. And I understand the seriousness of the concern you raised about the nature, not just of consultation but of efforts between the administration and the Congress and I will convey that very directly to Secretary Clinton and the White House.

Senator LUGAR. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Casey.

Senator CASEY. Thank you very much.

Under Secretary Burns, thank you for being here, for your great service to the country.

I wanted to ask, in light of the previous questions you've answered about the region I want to ask you about two places in particular, one is Iran and one is Lebanon.

First of all, with regard to Iran, we know that last year we made tremendous progress, not just here in Washington, but in other parts of the world as well, to get sanctions in place. I wanted to ask you about ways that the administration either is planning to, or believes we should, increase our ratchet up the sanctions on Iran. And I know, on page seven of your testimony, the bottom of that second full paragraph, you talk about the impact of sanctions and some of the results. I'd ask you to speak to that.

But then second, how do we, on a parallel track, but even as important, how is the administration going to continue to support the democratic opposition, domestic opposition, sometimes known as the Green Movement, even as we are implementing and I hope, increasing sanctions?

Mr. BURNS. Thank you very much, Senator Casey.

As you know, as we have discussed before, we are continuing to work very hard to apply the unprecedented sanctions which are already in affect against Iran, building on the platform of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1929, but also making full use of our own new national laws, as well as what the European community has done. And I think we're making significant progress in that direction and we're going to continue to push quite hard, I think it's had an impact on the capacity of the Iranians to attract new investment in their energy sector, it has had an impact on what is

already a very badly mismanaged Iranian economy. So we are going to continue to press very hard on that front.

With regard to human rights and the rights of Iranian citizens to the same kind of freedom and dignity and opportunity that you see sweeping across the Arab world, as I said, it really is the height of hypocrisy for the Iranian leadership to on the one hand applaud those kind of steps in the Arab world and at the same time deny those same rights to their own people. We have designated 10 senior Iranian officials, just over the course of the last few months, for human rights abuses and that is a process that we are going to continue.

As you know, we will continue to try to apply, constructively, assistance in expanding Internet freedoms, for example, for Iranian citizens to help them find their voice and pursue the kind of rights that people elsewhere in the region are pursuing right now.

Senator CASEY. And I appreciate that answer. It seems as if everywhere you look in the region you see the impact that Iran is having. The regime is having an impact, just by way of one example, Hezbollah and the destabilizing impact that has on Lebanon and the region, Hamas, wherever you look you see Iranian fingerprints, Afghanistan, Iraq. So I would urge the administration to do everything possible to increase sanctions, even as the ones that are authorized now are being implemented.

Let me move, and I know we don't have a lot of time, but I wanted to move to the question of Lebanon. I was there in July. It is remarkable, just my own sense of it, but it is remarkable the heavy presence in that country and especially in Beirut that Hezbollah has, almost as if it is an organized crime force that has a really intimidating influence on leaders. You are in a meeting with a government official, you just mention the word Hezbollah and you can see them almost physically recoiling or becoming tense.

We know what has happened, we know that there is a transition going on, Prime Minister Hariri is out and they are in a transition phase. I guess in light of that change and the destabilized environment, and in light of the direct threat that Hezbollah presents for the region, for our own security, what assurances, what checks can we put in place, as Members of Congress, to make sure that when the administration comes to us and says, we have been aiding the LAF, the Lebanese Armed Forces and want to continue that dollars don't get in the hands of forces that we don't want to end up in or that Hezbollah will use our dollars. The administration has a request for 2012 of \$227½ million, what assurances can you provide us and what checks do we have to make sure that those dollars don't aid and abet and benefit Hezbollah?

Mr. BURNS. Thank you very much, Senator.

We have a number of safeguards and end-use checks in place now to ensure that equipment and training that we provide to the Lebanese Armed forces, which does play a very important stabilizing role as a national institution in Lebanon, are used properly and the way that we intend them to be used. And we are continuing those training and equipment programs as the new Lebanese Government is formed.

As you know, Prime Minister Makati is still in the process of forming that government. And we have made clear that we are going to review our assistance program once that government is formed, once we see what its program is and its policy statements are.

We have made clear to the Prime Minister-designate that we will judge him and his government by their actions not just their words. He said that he is committed to a unity government that reflects the views of the wide spectrum of Lebanese. He said that he is committed to fulfilling Lebanon's international obligations. And as I said, we are going to judge by the actions that flow from that. So once a new government is formed, you know, once its platform is made clear, then we will take a very careful review of our assistance program in light of that. But in the meantime we will continue to apply the safeguards and end use monitoring mechanisms.

Senator CASEY. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Corker.

Senator CORKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Secretary Burns for your great service to our country.

The declaration war question that was asked by Senator Lugar, I noticed that was not answered and in other hearings I've been in I notice people have been moving way beyond the no-fly zone saying that in essence that really isn't enough to protect civilians and now people are beginning to talk about a no-drive zone, which obviously means a whole different level of engagement.

So, I would just like a yes, no. Does the administration believe that if we are going to have a military effort of any kind in Libya, that we need a declaration of war by Congress? It is a yes, no answer.

Mr. BURNS. Senator, I can't give you a yes, no answer, what I can tell you is that we take very seriously the concern you raised and I will certainly convey it to Senator Clinton and the White House and we will be in very close touch with congressional leadership.

Senator CORKER. Was that a legal question that we need to ask? Or I mean it is a—

Mr. BURNS. No, it is—

Senator CORKER [continuing]. I mean it seems to me it is a pretty clear cut yes, no. I mean do you all feel that you need to come to us for a declaration of war or not?

Mr. BURNS. It is—

Senator CORKER. I mean you have to be talking about that, I know.

Mr. BURNS. Right. No; it is a very important question, I can't answer it for you right now, honestly. But we certainly owe you an answer to that. I understand.

Senator CORKER. It seems like it would be a very important answer if we are having serious dialogue with the United Nations over committing forces there.

I mean you know, the other thing that has been sort of interesting to me as we have had other briefings in classified settings and in not classified settings, but no one seems to know who the opposition is. I mean can you tell me who it is we would be joining



forces with on the ground or anything about their ideology or what their goals are?

Mr. BURNS. Well Senator, as I mentioned before, we have had a number of contacts with the members of the Libyan National Council, which was formed relatively rapidly in Benghazi a few weeks ago. Secretary Clinton met with Mahmud Jibril one of the—

Senator CORKER. I understand about the meeting, but do we know, from those meetings, I'm not really worried about the chain of events, but do we know who the opposition is? Do we know what their goals are?

Mr. BURNS. We do have a sense from those—the leaders with whom we have met in the Libyan National Council that their goals seem to be to try to create a democratic system in Libya, a secular symbol, that they seem intent upon realizing the rights that Libyans are seeking. They are looking for outside help in that effort.

But as I said before in response to the question from the chairman, you know, we are still in the process of trying to develop as full a picture as we can. Based on the meeting we have had so far, that is the picture that we have had.

Senator CORKER. Would it be good to—before committing U.S. troops and military action and money—would it be good to sort of know more fully who it is we are coming to the aid of?

Mr. BURNS. I think we are developing a pretty clear picture, but certainly we are trying to flesh out that picture as fast and as comprehensively as we can.

Senator CORKER. Are there potentially other extremist groups that are coming into the area to fight against Qaddafi that may in fact be the very people we dislike greatly? Is there a chance that we actually could be aiding the efforts of extremist groups who are potentially involved in the area?

Mr. BURNS. There is certainly the potential that extremist groups could try to take advantage of this or extremist fighters could, and we are very well aware of that. On the other hand, I think there is also a very real danger that if Qaddafi is successful on the ground that you also face, you know, a number of other considerable risks as well, the dangers of him returning to terrorism and violent extremism himself, the dangers of the turmoil that he could help create at a very critical moment elsewhere in the region. But we are very mindful of the risks that you mentioned about extremists taking advantage of this.

Senator CORKER. So in light of that, I know Senator Lugar asked the question about national interest, could you, I know the President hasn't yet stated what our national interest is, but could you give a stab at that?

Mr. BURNS. Sure. I think we have first, part of our national interest is avoiding a humanitarian catastrophe in Libya. That is not something that is shared only by the United States, that is why there needs to be an international response with active Arab participation. Second, I think at a moment of truly profound change across the region, what we have an important national stake in, is in demonstrating in places like Egypt and Tunisia where people are moving in a positive direction, that those transitions succeed. But in places like Libya where there is a real danger of increasing violence and turmoil and repression, that the international commu-

nity, the Arab world as a part of that, stands against that kind of an outcome.

So what is at stake here, in terms of American interests is about more than just Libya, it seems to me.

Senator CORKER. And the genesis of what happened, what is happening right now in Libya you consider to be similar to what has happened in Egypt then, because again, it seems to me we had a much better sense of what was causing activities in Egypt and it seems to me we have a very vague sense of that in Libya. But your judgment is that it is driven by the same things?

Mr. BURNS. Yes, sir. My judgment is that it is the same aspirations of people to realize their human rights that is at the core of what is driving the situation in Libya right now. Libya has always been a much more opaque society for us or anybody else, including in the Arab world, to understand compared to a place like Egypt. So you are right, there are a lot of question marks but I think, honestly, that what is driving this is the same aspirations that you see elsewhere in the Arab world today.

Senator CORKER. And do we have a sense of what China and Russia might do at the Security Council as it relates to Libya?

Mr. BURNS. It is hard to predict, sir. You know, they have some concerns, I think, about some of the measures that are being debated right now. And it is a debate that has literally gone on as we speak.

Senator CORKER. And is it your judgment that, like I think, most people that we have heard from recently, that at this point a no-fly zone really does no good with Qaddafi and his troops being where they are. So really we wouldn't be talking about a no-fly zone unless we were just trying to act as if we had done something, we would really talking about much more than that, aren't we, really dealing with the tanks that are on the ground, moving into civilian populations? I mean that is really what we would have to be talking about unless we were just trying to act like we were doing something. Is that correct?

Mr. BURNS. That is exactly why, in the Security Council right now the debate is about measures that include a no-fly zone but go beyond it. I think a no-fly zone can have an important, positive, practical effect but I think honestly we have to look at other measures as well.

Senator CORKER. Well, I appreciate your service and your candor and certainly I always enjoy seeing you. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator.

Senator Menendez.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

I want to continue to pursue Senator Corker's line of questioning, because I am still not sure what we support. It seems to me a dangerous proposition to urge people to seek democracy and revolt and then not help them. I am concerned, as I listen to your answers, with what happens if Qaddafi prevails. The situation in Libya is rather grave, and I think we are going to miss an opportunity to promote democracy, with a small "d", throughout the region, be seen as on the side of those who have aspirations of freedom and ultimately be able to help shape the course of events that flow from

those ideals, not only in Libya but beyond. And at the rate that it is going Qaddafi is probably going to capture Benghazi if we don't see some movement there by the international community.

So, what are we seeking to support? I read the statements and get a sense it is like the Texas two-step; we want to support this but we are concerned about that. So, are we talking about acting if the international community was on board, beyond the no-fly zone? Are we talking about targeted airstrikes on Qaddafi's tanks and heavy artillery? Are we talking about jamming Libyan Government radio signals? Are we talking about using the \$32 billion in frozen assets to provide significant humanitarian relief? What are we talking about here, if we are serious about trying to help and shape the outcome here?

Mr. BURNS. Senator Menendez, we are talking about a whole range of measures that go beyond, including steps that go beyond the no-fly zone. That includes a number of the steps that you mentioned. That is what is being debated in the Security Council right now. And we—

Senator MENENDEZ. I'm sorry to interrupt you, sir.

Mr. BURNS. Sure.

Senator MENENDEZ. Beyond discussing it, are we advocating it? Are we leading the effort at the Security Council or are we just in eliciting mode?

Mr. BURNS. No; we are, as Ambassador Rice said yesterday, we are actively pursuing this because of our concern, not only about the situation on the ground, the dangers of a humanitarian catastrophe but in response to what was a quite unprecedented call from the Arab League for action by the Security Council to protect civilians. So we are trying to look as urgently as we can at the situation on the ground and then press for action in the Security Council, just as quickly as we can produce it, ideally today.

Senator MENENDEZ. And what are we seeking to pursue at the Security Council? What is the scope? What would we be happy to support?

Mr. BURNS. Well, as Ambassador Rice said yesterday, we are pursuing, along with the Lebanese, the British, French, other partners in the Council, measures that include a no-fly zone but could go beyond it. And I can't in this session, since the debate is going on in the Security Council right now, go into a lot of detail about that, but there are measures short of boots on the ground that could be taken by the international community, including active Arab participation to address some of the very real dangers that mentioned. That is what we are pursuing.

Senator MENENDEZ. So let's say, God forbid, that Qaddafi prevails at the end of the day. Do we have any doubt in our mind having seen what the international community said but didn't do, that he will revert to a series of views that will not be in our national or security interests?

Mr. BURNS. I think there is a very real danger of that and I think there is a very real danger that you could see a reversion to support for terrorism, you can see a very real danger of efforts to destabilize the region that already faces more than its share of challenges right now, with the political transitions going on in the

neighborhood. So I think there is a great deal at stake here and that is what creates a real sense of urgency on our part.

Senator MENENDEZ. In a slightly different context, but still in Libya, has the State Department engaged the former Justice Minister Mustafa Abdel Jalil in a conversation and as part of that conversation sought to verify his statements that Qaddafi ordered the bombing of the Pan Am 103 flight?

Mr. BURNS. I don't know, Senator, if that conversation has taken place yet, but we certainly will pursue it with the Department of Justice.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, as Qaddafi certainly has a price tag on his head, while we have access to him along with an opportunity to engage him and hopefully even video-tape a conversation, I would hope that we don't lose a precious opportunity to verify his public statements. We always had suspicions to that effect, and this would be evidence that Qaddafi ordered the bombing of the Pan Am 103 flight in which several hundred Americans lost their lives, including many from my home State of New Jersey.

And as someone who has pressed forth on this issue, I don't want to lose a golden opportunity to ensure that we have information that could lead to a prosecution regardless of the results in Libya. So I really hope that you, i.e., the State Department—I raised this with Secretary Clinton as well when she was here—as well as the Justice Department will take advantage of this opportunity. Can we get you to pursue that?

Mr. BURNS. I agree with you, we will.

Senator MENENDEZ. All right. Finally, I want to follow up on Senator Casey's comments with reference to Lebanon. Hezbollah is likely to have a dramatically increased role in this new Lebanese Government. Where is the United States redline in our relationship with Lebanon? Are we willing to maintain a relationship with a government that is controlled by a terrorist group?

Mr. BURNS. Well, as I said, you know, Prime Minister Mikati, the Prime Minister-designate, has asserted that he wants to form a unity government which reflects the will of all Lebanese. He has asserted that Lebanon is committed to fulfilling its international obligations. It remains to be seen what kind of government he is going to form and exactly what platform that government is going to put forward. And as I said before, we will judge that government, when it is formed, by its actions.

As you know, we are firmly convinced that Hezbollah is a terrorist organization. We don't deal with Hezbollah, but we will have to wait and see exactly what that government looks like and what it stands for.

Senator Menendez. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

I guess I will start kind of with a question couched in a statement and I want to be frank about it, because this is really troubling. From everything I have read, from folks we have been talking to, from all the accounts that are out there, the United States, quite frankly, looks weak in this endeavor, it looks unwilling or maybe even unable to act in this capacity. Even worse, I think

really calling attention to it with Britain, France, the Arab League are all out there calling not just attention to this but specifying specific actions they would like to see taken. We have seen criticism from the Libyan resistance and Libyan opposition as to our position, puzzlement as to where the United States is a new phase.

I would ask you basically to comment, not just on the Libyan situation, but on the impact that our inaction and quite frankly, you know, our puzzling inaction to most of the people around the world, what impact that is having on the image of the United States in the region and around the world with regards to future potential conflicts. Is the message that we are sending that when future conflicts arise the United States actions are difficult to predict, they may be none, that the—that basically people—you know, leaders—that the way basically to repress and bring down resistance like this is to be brutal? What are we going to do if there is a bloodbath after this?

The President of the United States has specifically said Qaddafi must go, but has done nothing since saying that, except have internal debates about it for a week and a half or two. Congressional leadership in both parties have strongly called for a no-fly zone and other actions and nothing has happened. I mean all of this I think comes—is a toxic brew that is really undermining the perception of the United States and our ability to influence events, not just in this area of the world, but all over the world.

Has there been any analysis done on the impact this is having on the perception of the United States in the region and around the world, the damage that this inaction is doing?

Mr. BURNS. Well Senator, I guess I would say two things in response. First, in general as I, you know, tried to emphasize in my opening remarks, we understand exactly what is at stake across the Middle East right now. What is at stake in terms of doing everything we can to support successful transitions in places like Egypt and Tunisia, which I think hold enormous opportunities not just for the peoples of those countries, but for the United States.

We also understand what is at stake at Libya and I believe we have acted, the President, Secretary have acted quite energetically in recent weeks to press for the first U.N. Security Council Resolution 1970 to freeze more than \$30 billion in Libyan regime assets in the United States, to establish contact with the Libyan National Council, to work actively with the Arab League, which as I said last Saturday produced a quite unprecedented call for the Security Council to authorize specific measures to protect Libyan civilians. And that is what we are embarked upon in New York right now, working very actively, leading an effort, along with the Lebanese, the British and French, to try to produce exactly those kind of specific measures. And we feel a real sense of urgency about this for all the reasons that you mentioned.

Senator RUBIO. But to say we are pressing the United Nations and that is energetic action, the Security Council, is to basically say the United States—and to say that is what we are going to limit ourselves to, what we are basically saying is the United States may feel strongly about something but we are not doing anything that the Chinese and Russians don't agree with.

Mr. BURNS. I think what is important here, the administration is committed to trying to make this an international response. We have seen some significant steps taking particularly by the Arab League, which are quite unprecedented. And we believe that we are going to have a greater impact and more effectiveness if we do this as an international response rather than a purely unilateral one.

Senator RUBIO. I understand. But Russia and China don't care about this stuff, they are never going to get involved in these things. I mean they don't care that Muammar Qaddafi is going to massacre people. So if Russia doesn't care and China doesn't care and we care but won't do anything about it, who is it up to, the French?

Mr. BURNS. Well, but Senator, I actually think it is possible to produce a new Security Council resolution, I just don't share the judgment that it is not possible. I think, you know—

Senator RUBIO. Well, when is that resolution going to happen? After the bloodbath, in the middle of the bloodbath?

Mr. BURNS. Well, I hope very much that we will see a vote today. We are pushing very, very hard, along with others in the Security Council, to produce that because exactly as you say, the situation on the ground is moving very fast.

Senator RUBIO. And do you think the administration's ongoing deliberations on what to do as Qaddafi closes in and basically seals the deal, is that strengthening our hand with China and Russia? Are they—do they feel pressure now to go along with this or do they—or are they sitting back and kind of saying, well the President said Qaddafi must go, but Qaddafi is not going anywhere and you guys don't have the guts to do anything about it? I mean does that strengthen our hand in the Security Council?

Mr. BURNS. No; I think what strengthened our hand and that of others in the Security Council is what the Arab League did and I think the Russians and Chinese take that seriously and I think they take seriously the, you know, very active effort that we are making in New York right now to produce a new resolution.

Senator RUBIO. What is the administration's message to Libyan dissidents and democracy activities that may be watching or reading about this tomorrow? What is our message to them? Is our message, hold on, we may have a Security Council resolution in a few days, just—well what is our message to them?

Mr. BURNS. Our message is that we support the realization of the same universal rights in Libya that we are seeing realized in Egypt and Tunisia and elsewhere in the region.

Senator RUBIO. And we support it by the issuance of forceful and strongly worded statements?

Mr. BURNS. No. We support it by pushing beyond statements for practical actions. We have taken some already, we are seeking more in New York and working with Arab partners. And that's—

Senator RUBIO. So unless it is the dissidents and the activists, the people that have the bravery to stand up to Muammar Qaddafi and then maybe thinking to standing up to people like the Iranian regime and in other places, our message to them is, you guys go ahead and do this stuff and if we can ever get the Russians or Chinese to come around, we may or may not join you?

Mr. BURNS. No; what the Libyan National Council, representatives of the opposition with whom we have met, have argued for is to work with the Arab League, with Arab States and work with the Security Council.

Senator RUBIO. The Arab League is saying do a no-fly—they are saying do something now.

Mr. BURNS. What the Arab—

Senator RUBIO. So are the French and British.

Mr. BURNS. What the Arab League said is that they want to Security Council to authorize that kind of a step and that is exactly why we are working actively—

Senator RUBIO. I know, but I think all of us want them to authorize it too, but they are not going to. Russia and China are not going to do this. They don't care. In fact they—I think they enjoy anything that destabilizes us because it strengthens their hand around the world.

Mr. BURNS. Yesh, I just don't share the assumption that we can't produce a new resolution. I think we can.

Senator RUBIO. So the bottom line, because I know my time is running out and—the bottom line is that this administration's strategy to Libya is the following. If we can get Russia and China—we think we have a real chance to get Russia and China to go along with strong action in Libya and we are going to continue to work on that and hopefully we can get that in place before Muammar Qaddafi massacres or continues to massacre people in an all out bloodbath?

Mr. BURNS. I think we can produce a new Security Council resolution.

Senator RUBIO. When? Today?

Mr. BURNS. I hope we can today, that is exactly what we are pushing for.

Senator RUBIO. And what will the resolution be? What do you think we can secure?

Mr. BURNS. What we are pushing for is to secure a resolution that includes a number of very specific measures to protect Libyan civilians that includes, but is not limited to a no-fly zone and we will see whether we can produce that, but that's what we are at—

Senator RUBIO. Do we have a timetable by when that needs to be produced? I mean do we have a—is there a point in time where we think, OK if we don't get a Security Council resolution by this point in time then we have got to move on to something else? Does such a thing exist?

Mr. BURNS. Our hope is to produce a vote on a new Security Council resolution along those lines as early as today. That is what we are pushing hard for.

Senator RUBIO. And if it fails is there a backup plan?

Mr. BURNS. I am not assuming that it is going to fail. I think we can produce a resolution.

Senator RUBIO. So we don't—but assuming it fails, because you know, let's say it does, because it is—just one member could block it, assuming it fails, what do we do then? Do we have a plan for that or we haven't had that—

Mr. BURNS. Well Senator, we have thought through lots of possibilities, but I just don't assume it is going to fail. I think we can produce one.

Senator RUBIO. So if it fails we don't have any idea what we will do next?

Mr. BURNS. We have lots of ideas about what we might do. I just don't assume that it is going to fail. I think it is possible to produce it.

Senator RUBIO. Is there any ideas you can share with us or—

Mr. BURNS. As I said, our focus is to try to produce the resolution that is what lots of people in the Arab world and the international community support right now.

Senator RUBIO. So there is not one idea you can tell me about that we will do if it fails?

Mr. BURNS. We are doing lots of things already that we will continue to do to step up the economic pressure, sanctions on—

Senator RUBIO. Not one idea? Not one you can tell me?

Mr. BURNS. That is one I just mentioned.

Senator RUBIO. OK.

Mr. BURNS. And I do that we can produce a Security Council resolution, which I think would provide the kind of platform we need to step up effective international pressure on Qaddafi.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Secretary Burns, thank you very much for your leadership and service, appreciate it very much.

The challenge we have in the Middle East is the fact that we deal with so many countries that we need their strategic relationship but they don't share our values. And we have to make choices. Their strategic relationships are important for our military, they are important for our intelligence community, they are important for many, many different reasons, including our war against extremists and terrorists. But there is one country in the Middle East where we do not have to make that choice and that country of course is Israel.

And it is clear that as countries have gone through transition, there have been actions taken that could have an impact on Israel. You saw in Egypt the use of the Suez Canal by Iran and according to published reports that may have had a consequence to Israel's security. There have been concerns about weapons being made available to Hamas as a result of some of the upheavals in some of the Arab States. There is a question as to how Iran is operating within the region that could also have an impact on Israel.

So my question to you is, Has the administration been in close contacts with our Israeli allies assessing what impact these changes are having on the security of Israel, our closest ally in the Middle East?

Mr. BURNS. Yes, Senator Cardin, we have certainly stayed in close touch, particularly with regard to Egypt, given the obvious security implications in Gaza and along the border. It was encouraging that early on the Egyptian military leadership and the Israelis worked out arrangements so that Egyptian military units could replace police units close to the Gaza border to help ensure security there.



It was also quite encouraging that the Supreme Armed Forces Council in Egypt very early on, after the end of the Mubarak era, reaffirmed Egypt's commitment to the Egypt/Israel peace treaty.

But to answer your question, yes, we are in close touch with the Israelis on all these issues.

Senator CARDIN. We saw that—I mean it is clear that our relationship with particularly the military in Egypt made it clear of the conditions that must be met for the United States to continue to be involved with Egypt from the point of view of aid. I am concerned whether that message is going to be continuously repeated.

It seems to me that the United States plays a major role in the Middle East. We have foreign aid, military assistance, development aid and the list goes on and on and on. I think we have a right to expect accountability on the use of those funds, not just that they will respect the rights of its citizens, which to me is very important, but that it will join us in our fight against extremists and terrorists.

Is that message being clearly delivered?

Mr. BURNS. Sir, this is with regard to Egypt or—

Senator CARDIN. Regards to all—any country in which we have a substantial—have a significant relationship which is going through a change.

Mr. BURNS. Sure, yes sir, I mean because we believe that we have shared concerns about violent extremists that aren't limited to relations with particular leaders or particular governments. And you know, whether it is Egypt or, you know, other partners in the region, we certainly put a high priority on those kind of concerns and those kind of goals and will continue to do that.

Senator CARDIN. Well, let me put it in the negative. I was trying to do it in the positive. If we find that Egypt or any country in the Middle East takes positions that are contrary to their international commitments as it relates to the peace process and to Israel, or they take steps that are counter to our objectives in our fight against terrorists, are we prepared to cut off our financial assistance to those countries?

Mr. BURNS. Well, we obviously have to weigh, in terms of our own interests, the nature of our relationships and our assistance relationships with any country. But I guess what I would emphasize with regard to Egypt is what we have seen before is a reaffirmation of Egypt's commitments to its international treaties, including the Egypt/Israel peace treaty and a reaffirmation of its commitment to work with us and lots of others against violent extremism, which is as much important an interest of Egypt as it is of the United States.

Senator CARDIN. Well Secretary Burns, you are giving a very diplomatic answer. But let me just tell you, I think there is concern here in Congress as to keeping a very close eye as to developments in countries in which U.S. taxpayers are being asked to provide help to make sure that there is respect for the human rights of its citizens, including dealing with gender equity issues and dealing with good governance and anticorruption efforts, but also what these countries are doing to fight extremists and terrorists and whether they are a constructive partner in the peace process that we are moving forward with in the Middle East. And we are going

to be watching that closely and we hope that message will be very clear as to where we are on that issue.

And I will mention one other point. You mentioned of course the United Nations and trying to engage the United Nations, which I think is important, I hope this—we can get international support for our policies.

There is another international organization that has a role in the Middle East and that is the OSCE, it has a Mediterranean dimension in which Egypt and Jordan and Israel, Tunisia are all members. So it does offer us a platform that we could extend getting the international community involved in more of the institution-building where the United States has not always been as effective as an international organization can be.

I hope you will take back the message that there is a good track record within OSCE. And we would ask some of the other countries, as they are going through transition, to look at becoming a partner within OSCE that could help them in developing the institutions they need to have open and fair and free elections, to deal with freedom of expression and the right of minority communities, et cetera, all which are critically important for stability in these emerging countries.

Mr. BURNS. Now, Senator Cardin, I agree with you absolutely. I think there is a lot in the experience of some OSCE member countries, particularly in Eastern Europe, in terms of their building a democratic societies and how they navigated complicated transitions that would be useful to people in the Middle East wrestling with some of those same questions. And to be honestly, they bring to that effort less of the baggage sometimes than the United States does.

The only other comment I would make quickly back to your earlier question is that I truly do believe, as I said in my opening comments, that successful transitions, particularly in Egypt but also in Tunisia, are in many ways the best antidote to the narrative of violent extremists, whether it is al-Qaeda or any place else, because what it does, I think, is put a lie to the notion that the only way you can affect change in the Middle East is through violence and extremism.

What it demonstrates is that through peaceful, nonideological, home-grown movements you can produce what I believe the vast majority of people in that region want. And so that is why I think we have such a deep stake in doing everything we can at least to help get those kind of transitions, to help Egyptians get their transition right.

Senator CARDIN. Well I agree with that. And again I thank you for your service and your leadership.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Webb.

Senator WEBB. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary Burns, welcome. You have a reputation, well deserved, of being one of the finest diplomats in the State Department. You certainly demonstrated that today under questions from both viewpoints.

I would tend to identify myself more closely with the line of questioning you received from Senator Lugar and Senator Corker. Before I ask you or discuss this, I can't not say that today, if we were

talking about humanitarian issues—clearly not the subject of this hearing, but I think we would be putting a lot more emphasis on what has been going on in Japan. We have a situation over there where we have seen entire towns obliterated, where tens of thousands of people are dead or missing and half a million people are living in shelters. The power grid has been damaged and the ability of the normal institutional systems to handle that has really been affected. They are an ally, they are a friend.

We have done some good work with our military and in other areas, but I would hope we could get that up on the radar screen much higher in terms of what our government's ability to assist the Japanese can be. People tend to think this is a rich country, and therefore they can handle this. But, when your public services are designed on one level and you have these multiple calamities, we really should be discussing that.

With respect to the subject of this hearing, I find your testimony to be optimistic, quite frankly. I have been on this committee now for 4½ years, there is a tendency when somebody is coming over talking about an administration position, we are talking about reform movements bringing greater peace, democracy, prosperity. These certainly are aspirations. But when you look at this region, I think you and I both have been in and out and different hats for many years, and we know that there is a lot more going on that are going on vary in scope and intensity from country to country. They involve sectarian factions, religious differences, and true extremist movements which we cannot ignore. I think Senator Corker had some good questions on that line that are bent on manipulating these sorts of movements that are otherwise well-intentioned. And I don't think we should take our eyes off that.

I remember when I was a journalist in Beirut, when the Marines were there in 1983. During one firefight a Marine turned around to me and said, "never get involved in a five-sided argument." This tends to repeat itself in our policies in this part of the world.

So any approach that we take to a situation, even with some of the compelling circumstances in Libya, really needs to be taken carefully with the understanding that there are down sides, that these things are easily begun and very difficult to end and to adhere to the principles of international law.

Could you describe the nature of our official diplomatic relations with the Government of Libya?

Mr. BURNS. Senator Webb, we have suspended the operations of our Embassy in Tripoli and their operation in Washington. So we no longer have diplomatic representatives accredited—I mean accredited to that government. We have allowed—we have made it possible for the Libyan National Council to open up a representative office in Washington. And as I mentioned before, at a whole variety of levels we have established contacts with them. So, the short answer is we have suspended the operations—

Senator WEBB. But we do have diplomatic relations?

Mr. BURNS. Yes, we haven't broken diplomatic relations—

Senator WEBB. So we have official diplomatic relations with the Qaddafi regime?

Mr. BURNS. Yes—

Senator WEBB [continuing]. In terms of international law?

Mr. BURNS. Yes. I'd have to—I don't want to misled you, Senator. Honestly I can try to get you an accurate answer on that, but we have suspended the operations of our Embassy there. We have not formally broken diplomatic relations.

Senator WEBB. Right. That was the answer that I received to the questions that we put forward last week that we actually still do have diplomatic relations. So, in terms of international law, it becomes rather awkward when we are supporting a movement yet to be fully defined and in my view in its attempt to overthrow a government which we still formally recognize.

Mr. BURNS. It is certainly a complicated proposition, but it is—

Senator WEBB. Oh, and that is—I don't mean to cut you off but, that goes really to Senator Lugar's point—whether it is a declaration of war or some other official signal that would indicate that this is not a government that we recognize, before we participate in any way in assisting an attempt to overthrow it. This may sound clinical, but I think it is very important in terms of how we address situations around the world.

You mentioned the Libyan National Council and the discussions that have been ongoing and the fact that they might be opening up an office here. Can you tell us to what extent the members of this council actually represent the totality of the country and the ability to govern?

Mr. BURNS. Well, to the best of our knowledge the 30-some members of the council have been drawn from around the country, not just in the east but the west as well, a fairly broad tribal representation, because as you know Libya is a very tribal society. And so they have clearly made a serious effort to represent, you know, the vast majority of Libyans in the council.

As I said before, you know, we have known a number of these officials before in their previous capacities. We have had extensive conversations with them since then. I do not want to pretend that that enables us to have a full picture of the entire membership of the council, but those with whom we have met have struck us as being positive and serious.

Senator WEBB. Can you identify other forces? Senator Corker mentioned people coming in from the outside, but other forces who are participating in the opposition that might have a different view of the way that the Libyan National Council is describing its aspirations?

Mr. BURNS. There certainly are other forces in Libya extremist groups including some who have fought in Afghanistan and elsewhere who we have been concerned about for a long time. It is certainly possible, as Senator Corker mentioned, that they will try to take advantage of the chaos in Libya right now. All I can tell you is we are being very, very careful in whom we deal with and we are very mindful of the dangers of extremist of one form or another trying to take advantage of this situation. So the risk is present, you are right.

Senator WEBB. Right. I would hope we take that same kind of care in terms of how we would approach any direct involvement in that country as well.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Let me just ask a couple questions. When we engaged in Kosovo what was the diplomatic status?

Mr. BURNS. In Kosovo I would have to check, I mean I think we still had relations at that time with Belgrade.

The CHAIRMAN. And when we engaged did we have any declaration of war or authorization of use of force?

Mr. BURNS. I don't recall that there was a declaration of war.

The CHAIRMAN. Right. And at this point in time, when we bombed Serbia, did we have diplomatic relations?

Mr. BURNS. I believe we did.

The CHAIRMAN. OK. I think we have to be really thoughtful, and I know you are being, but I think all of us here need to be recognizing the precedents that exist. When Ronald Reagan sent cruise missiles into Qaddafi's palace and we killed his daughter, did we have any authorization from Congress?

Mr. BURNS. I don't recall that we did.

The CHAIRMAN. We did not. We had a—potentially a finding but I am not even convinced there was a finding.

I do think the questions raised by my good friend and ranking member and Senator Webb and others are valid, but I think it is critical to measure the standard as we have applied it and the exigencies as they face us at this particular moment.

I don't think anyone is talking about the potential of intervention as I think the Arab community has talked about it, which would, in their mind, mean another occupation, troops coming in, people being on the ground. And I think that is their definition of intervention.

But it would be completely inconsistent to call for a no-fly zone and not understand that there could be planes flying and so forth. So again I think, you know, all of the questions raised are valid. I'm confident the administration is going to examine them very, very closely. I have always taken the position, I think Senator Lugar knows this, that it is better to proceed with the authorization and support of Congress if you have the time and if the opportunity provides for it. It is always better, because we represent the people and as a branch of government that has the constitutional power with respect to war or that kind of thing it is better. But life does not always present us with circumstances that afford us the opportunity to do that. And we haven't always—Republican and Democratic Presidents alike have had to make tough choices, faced with the moment.

I appreciate your testimony here enormously today. Let me just ask you very, very quickly, the Bahraini situation, obviously this is a redline for the Saudis, too, so it puts us automatically into that relationship. And I wonder if you might just speak for a moment to the—to sort of how you see that playing out at this point in time. I know we have had conversations with everybody. Is there a next step that is clear to us, given the clearing of the square, Pearl Square, and the violent turn of the last 24 hours?

Mr. BURNS. Well Mr. Chairman, I mean the next step has to be, in our view, resumption of the national dialogue that the Crown Prince tried to start a couple of weeks ago. And that is what we are going to press very hard, not just on the government but on the opposition as well, to begin.

I know that is a very complicated proposition amidst the recent violence and that is why we have spoken out, Secretary Clinton spoke out again yesterday quite clearly against the excessive use of force against demonstrators, because you have to create an atmosphere in which you can have that kind of serious political dialogue. There are legitimate concerns that have been raised by lots of Bahraini citizens, and until they are addressed it is going to be very difficult to see the kind of stable future for Bahrain, which I continue to believe is possible. And we will do everything we can, working with others, to encourage that.

The CHAIRMAN. Well thank you, Mr. Secretary. It is fair to say that I remember the celebrations of the early 1990s when the Berlin Wall fell and the Soviet Union ceased to be the Soviet Union and the cold war effectively ended and everybody jumped up and down and it was this terrific moment. And obviously it has unleashed forces that were repressed for a long period of time in many of those countries, which we are still dealing with.

It is interesting to see how they have been able to transition in Eastern Europe and in other parts of the world they have sort of stayed static. It is very interesting to look at the difference between Turkey and Egypt. They—in the 1950s, in the age of Pan-Arabism and so forth, there was really almost an equality of GDP, quality of per capita income and so forth and here is Turkey soaring in so many ways, economically, a major player globally, a democracy that is balancing itself and hanging in there and a great contributor to so many efforts and interests. And Egypt kind of just got stuck. And the people, the difference between the standards of living and the opportunities and the confidence of the country and so forth, it really shows, you know, enormous juxtaposition.

So obviously this is a big moment and there is a lot that can transition out of it. And I am convinced that if we can do this well, and when I say “we” I don’t mean us, I mean all of us together, it is going to have a profound impact on people’s perception of the possibilities in a lot of other troubled spots in the world. That is what I see. When you define America’s national interests this outcome can really make—you know, we have been fighting this War on Terror for—since, well it is 10 years now, and we have been doing things about terror for a long time before that. But this global engagement on it—and this is part of it, this is absolutely a big part of it, with a new opportunity to redefine it in a very different way. If that isn’t in our national interest I don’t know what is.

And I think as we look at Pakistan and Afghanistan, the amounts of money we are spending there, to not fight for this outcome would, in my judgment, complicate our lives even more significantly in those places. So I do see it in a larger strategic place and I think it is important for the administration, Mr. Secretary, to be defining that a little more. To be—I think the President needs to articulate that, why is this important to us. Because a lot of Americans don’t have that automatic sense, I think even some of our very high elected—not elected, appointed officials who are involved in this debate right now have not necessarily either embraced or expressed that view. And I think that short changes the

opportunities of this moment, that is just my perception. I don't know if you would agree or disagree?

Mr. BURNS. No, Mr. Chairman, I think there is an enormous strategic opportunity here for the United States and for the peoples of the Middle East, notwithstanding all the very real risks that exist. And there are huge pitfalls out there as well. But I think we have a very deep stake in helping, to the maximum extent we can, peoples and leaders in the region to get these transitions right.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Lugar.

Senator LUGAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Burns, I suspect that the Senators have utilized your appearance to have our own very civil debate today on the question of Libya, and likewise broader issues. I agree with the chairman's comments about the need for the President to attempt to articulate more clearly why not only Libya, but also the other countries in the Middle East, are especially important to us in terms of our national objectives or our national aspirations and ideals.

I think, however, that it is probably clear to you as you've heard the testimony and responded to questions today from Senators that some Senators are indicating in a bipartisan way that they feel the President and the administration have not been forthcoming enough in meeting the problems of human rights in Libya.

Perhaps the President feels some of this pressure. On the other hand, some of us, myself included, are saying that unfortunately we have been down this road before. The chairman has illustrated previous examples, under different administrations, where there was not the same call for a declaration of war. Certainly the probing we went through prior to the invasion of Iraq, and the resolutions that were offered, demonstrated much more of a desire to have an argument about these issues. Ultimately we went to war in Iraq, whether the reasons were understood to be clear at that time or not, or whether they turned out as Secretary Powell's testimony at the time indicated. But I am just saying that you have to understand, and I think you and the President do, that even as we are having this hearing today on Libya, which is very important, I believe, to our country and the world, the major debate that has been going on on the floor of the Senate ever since the beginning of this session has been with regard to the budget of our country. This has taken place through passage of continuing resolutions so the government doesn't shut down, as it will tomorrow if we do not vote affirmatively today, and threats that there will be no more continuing resolutions or that there will be no increase in the debt ceiling. And as people are pressed as to what this means, they say it means what we say, which is no more borrowing.

This is the political situation in our country that the rest of the world is looking at as we argue about the Libya situation today. I suppose I am saying, in terms of our own domestic politics, that we need to get sort of straight where we stand.

Now, if we have a debate and decide to declare war on Libya, then Members of Congress who have voted that way have, I believe, an obligation to fulfill that role with regard to our Armed Forces, the State Department, and our diplomatic role. Otherwise we have a debating point in which Republicans can say that the President really doesn't have the force and the ability to handle

these tough situations. On the Democratic side some may take the position of the chairman that we really ought to be there because of the humanitarian component, while others that we have heard this morning are somewhat more cautious about that. That is why this debate is necessary, I think, for our own domestic situation. And likewise, the opinion of the Congress lends credibility to the rest of the world as to the precise position of the United States with regard to this conflict.

I am watching, as you are, resolutions being offered, and even votes in the House of Representatives, regarding the termination of foreign assistance and, among many, a desire really even to vote country by country on how we handle our foreign assistance going forward. Now that is a new business. And you can say, well it is after all one House of the Congress doing this and the other might reject any proposed legislation mandating such cuts. However, this is not a comfortable situation for those of you involved in foreign policy, as you proceed to Egypt in a delicate way, to know really what large numbers of Americans think about the level of funding we should be dedicating to foreign assistance programs.

So, I appreciate very much your suffering through all of our questions and answers today. However, the reason for my pressing this issue is that we are going to have to have clarity on how we feel in the United States of America, apart from just the President or the Secretary of State or the Ambassador to the U.N., who are doing the very best they can, but the representatives of the American people more generally, regarding the way we should conduct ourselves in the Middle East in the midst of all this turmoil. Despite the fact that we have not really gotten into the weeds today as to what we are going to do in Bahrain, our strategic interests in that country are apparent given that the Fifth Fleet is there. The Saudis have moved 2,000 people into Bahrain, as they understand what their national interest seems to be. And we certainly are very supportive of our relations with Saudi Arabia, from Franklin Roosevelt to the present.

But, do we have a new view with regard to how they handle human rights? Are we going to articulate really what happens with Yemen where you have a government that is authoritarian but appears to be tracking down al-Qaeda? These are questions down the trail, but not far down the trail, given the events in the Middle East.

So I am hopeful that the President will, with your help, articulate what our national interests are. But likewise, we may in the Congress articulate where we stand with regard to the budget that may follow through on this or really with regard to the relationships we have discussed today concerning Libya.

So, I appreciate your appearance and the chairman's calling of this very timely hearing before we head out on a recess, out visiting with our constituents, but I believe the administration is not really engaging during a time in which events are moving rapidly in Libya, Bahrain, and maybe elsewhere.

And so I will not foster any more consternation with more questions, but I appreciate, as always, your own diplomatic efforts and most specifically the recent trip you took to Egypt at a time when we really did need someone on the ground there who had an under-



standing of the situation and has a vast array of diplomatic successes under his belt. I think your effort has brought some confidence with the Egyptian leaders in various types. I hope that you will help illuminate more, as you can, what you have found, who it is that we are going to be dealing with moving forward, what the broader prospects are, and how we can help foster democracy there.

I suggest maybe it is a little premature to be having so many votes until you have established political parties and some dialogue between them and the institutions of civil society. That being said, I understand that this could be construed as gross interference even as we are attempting to help, as both parties have over the years with the International Republican Institute, the National Democratic Institute, and others.

So thank you for coming.

Mr. BURNS. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, Senator Lugar, as always wise comments, thoughtful and important. I think the questions you raised obviously are ones that need to be answered. And I think your suggestions are very well taken. I am confident the administration does too. So thank you.

Again, Secretary thanks so much for coming today. I think it has been helpful and it has helped to shed some light on the dynamics here as well. So I think that has been good.

We stand adjourned.

Mr. BURNS. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 11:55 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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#### ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

##### RESPONSES OF UNDER SECRETARY WILLIAM J. BURNS TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENEDEZ

*Question.* In Bahrain, democratic protestors are calling on the United States to demand that King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa make immediate and real reforms. I recognize the value that the Bahrain monarchy has played as a U.S. ally in the region and a bulwark against Iranian influence, but the monarchy's inaction, its failure to address the needs of its people, is feeding Iran's influence in Bahrain and through the region—an outcome that cannot and does not serve Bahraini or Americans interests.

- What options are on the table to support democratic reform in Bahrain and other nations? How are we going to reform our support through State and AID to reach out to small “d” democrats seeking peaceful democratic change in their countries?

*Answer.* The administration recognizes the urgent need for political reform and further engagement with reform advocates in Bahrain. In Bahrain, civil society organizations and activists are often subject to government intimidation, censorship, and detention, to include teachers, human rights activists, journalists, bloggers, medical staff, and political activists. The U.S. Government is using all available and appropriate channels both in Manama and in Washington to engage local and international human rights groups, members of the opposition, religious figures, and the Government of Bahrain on political reform, a meaningful dialogue, and government transparency. We have called upon the Government of Bahrain to commit to real reform by releasing and accounting for those missing or detained, ceasing the attacks on hospitals and medical staff, and immediately halting acts of intimidation and harassment on civil society actors. In support of our commitment to reform and civil society, we have a range of programs that support civil society in Bahrain, including programming through the Bureau of Democracy Human Rights and Labor (DRL) and the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) designed to train women in nontraditional fields, prepare for political campaigns, gain and develop the skills

needed to advocate for human rights for women, and foster entrepreneurship throughout the country.

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

*Question.* The United States reengaged with the U.N. Human Rights Council with the idea that it would be easier to reform the body from within than it was from the outside. Nonetheless, the Council continues to be plagued by inaction and by the presence on the Council of some of the most notorious human rights abusers in the world—Cuba is a Vice President of the Council.

I welcomed the unprecedented decision of the U.N. General Assembly to remove Libya from the Council, despite the fact that its initial election to the body was an abomination. The fact that Syria is seeking to replace Libya on the Council further defies logic.

The Libya resolution that I authored which passed this body by unanimous consent on March 1 urges the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations to advocate for improving Human Rights Council membership criteria to exclude gross and systematic violators of human rights.

- What steps are you taking to prevent Syria's election to the Council and to improve membership criteria to exclude gross and systematic violators of human rights?

*Answer.* As Secretary Clinton emphasized in Geneva recently, membership on the Council "should be earned through respect for human rights. That is the standard laid out by the General Assembly. This Council's predecessor, the Human Rights Commission, lost its credibility in part because Libya was allowed to serve as its president. It should not take bloodshed for us to agree that such regimes have no place here."

While no U.N. body can expect to have only countries with perfect records on it, we are focused on keeping the most egregious and disruptive human rights abusers off the Council, as we did last year when Iran sought a seat. Countries that grossly and systematically violate human rights have no place on the Council. We succeeded in getting Iran to withdraw its candidacy last year and in suspending Libya's membership this winter, and we firmly oppose Syria's candidacy this year.

In creating the Human Rights Council, all Member States committed to take "into account the contribution of candidates to the promotion and protection of human rights." The United States considers the human rights record of each candidate for the Human Rights Council. While we do not as a matter of policy reveal our votes, the record of Syria speaks for itself.

Syria's candidacy particularly concerns us. Syria's human rights record is deplorable. One can clearly see Syria's troubling approach to human rights in its current violent and deadly crackdown on peaceful protestors. The United States is deeply troubled by violence and civilian deaths at the hands of security forces. We are concerned by the Syrian Government's use of violence, intimidation, and arbitrary arrests to hinder the Syrian people's ability to freely exercise their rights. Syria's overall record makes it clear that Syria has no place on the U.N.'s only political body dedicated to the promotion and protection of human rights.

*Question.* Please also comment on our efforts at the Council to establish a human rights monitor for Iran.

*Answer.* The United States is proud to have joined other nations from around the world during the March 2011 session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) to establish a Special Rapporteur on Iran—something Secretary Clinton called for during her visit to the Council at the beginning of the session. Creation of this position was a signal achievement for the HRC, as it is the first country-specific Special Rapporteur mandate authorized since the HRC replaced the Commission on Human Rights in 2006.

The new Special Rapporteur mandate marks a significant step forward for the people of Iran because their rights will now be supported through international scrutiny by a country-specific U.N. mechanism. Thanks to the action taken by the HRC in establishing this position, the people of Iran will have a voice devoted to their human rights within the international community despite every attempt by the Iranian government to silence opposition and dissent.

RESPONSE OF UNDER SECRETARY WILLIAM J. BURNS TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY  
SENATOR JOHNNY ISAKSON

*Question.* If Muammar Qadhafi is successful at violently suppressing, through military and other tactics, the Libyan opposition that is seeking a democratic transi-

tion in Libya, what implications would that have for democratic transitions across the Middle East and North African region? And more specifically do you think that violent suppressions would spread across the region if Qadhafi is successful at suppressing the Libyan opposition? And what would the U.S. policy response look like if Qadhafi is able to suppress the opposition and violence spreads?

Answer. A victorious Qadhafi would emerge unbowed and vengeful, sending a signal to other governments in the region that brutal repression and the use of force against civilians can be used to successfully resist popular calls for democratic reform. The regime would likely seek to retaliate by destabilizing the region and sowing conflict through military and economic policies, propaganda, and, possibly, support for terrorism. The fragile transitions to democracy in Tunisia and Egypt, which have close economic and social ties with Libya, would be especially vulnerable.

Inside of Libya, the Qadhafi regime would also likely effect immediate, wide-scale, and bloody retaliation in the areas considered sympathetic to the opposition, especially in eastern Libya and the Berber regions in the West. We have already received credible accounts that thousands of young men between the ages of 18 and 35 in areas recaptured by the regime have been selectively abducted, held in remote desert camps, and tortured.

The United States has embraced the goal of removing Qadhafi from power and will pursue it in close coordination with our international partners through non-military means, including sanctions and accountability measures. We have already imposed strong unilateral sanctions, freezing over \$33 billion in regime assets; we are also coordinating with our European partners and the U.N. on applying additional and rigid sanctions. By freezing assets, restricting travel, and threatening prosecution at the International Criminal Court, we are pressuring and isolating the Qadhafi regime and ensuring that its members are held accountable for their actions. We are constantly assessing our policies as this very fluid situation develops, and future options may include increased diplomatic, economic, and military pressure on the Qadhafi regime, efforts to mitigate reprisals and killings within Libya, and additional humanitarian aid to help the victims of Qadhafi's violence.

