# FROM COMPETITION TO COLLABORATION: STRENGTHENING THE U.S.–RUSSIA RELATIONSHIP

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# FROM COMPETITION TO COLLABORATION: STRENGTHENING THE U.S.–RUSSIA RELATIONSHIP

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2009**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
*Washington, DC.*

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:08 a.m. in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Howard L. Berman (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman BERMAN. Good morning. The committee will come to order.

We are holding this full committee hearing—our first full committee hearing in the 111th Congress—to examine one of America's most important, yet often neglected, bilateral relationships, with the Russian Federation.

I will yield myself 7 minutes for what I hope will be an infrequent, but somewhat long, opening statement.

The Cold War is long over, and yet in recent times this relationship, that is the relationship between the United States and the Russian Federation, has been quite chilly. We don't always agree. But Washington and Moscow face a number of common challenges that could form the basis for a more constructive partnership.

At the Munich Security Conference, Vice President Biden lamented the "dangerous drift in relations" between Russia and the NATO alliance, while at the same time calling for a reassessment of areas in which we can work together. The positive response his remarks generated among Russian officials indicates that Moscow may also be willing to, in the Vice President's words, "press the reset button."

At the heart of our relationship with Russia lie a number of interrelated foreign policy issues and challenges: Iran's nuclear program, the war in Afghanistan, the future of NATO, peace and security in the Caucasus and the Balkans, missile defense, and arms control.

Unfortunately, there has been a tendency in recent years to stovepipe these issues—addressing them in isolation without establishing a clear set of priorities or integrating them into—to use Professor Legvold's words—"a comprehensive and coherent foreign policy."

One important question concerns Russia's perception of its vital interests, particularly its engagement with its near abroad. Some of Russia's recent behavior toward its neighbors has been deeply troubling. Its decision to recognize South Ossetia and Abkhazia as

independent states was a mistake that undermines regional stability. The recent dispute with Ukraine regarding the price and transit of gas left many Eastern Europeans without heat in the dead of winter. Russia's apparent role in persuading Kyrgyzstan to close a vital American air base on its territory—while allowing United States supplies to transit Russian territory—will complicate United States efforts to conduct essential military operations in Afghanistan.

How are we to understand these actions? Are they part of a larger pattern of behavior through which Russia is seeking to reassert its power over former Soviet states and define itself as America's strategic competitor? This was the troubling conclusion that some observers reached last August when Russian President Medvedev spoke about regions where Russia has "privileged interests." Or does Russia, as some others have suggested, perceive itself simply as acting in self-defense against an expansionist NATO and Western encirclement?

Second, questions have been raised about the linkage between Russia's sense of financial well-being and its foreign policy assertiveness. Higher oil prices, it has been argued, have increased Russia's political and economic leverage and emboldened Moscow to oppose United States policies it finds objectionable.

Yet Russia, like the United States and most of the world, has suffered from the global financial downturn. What opportunities, if any, has the current crisis created in terms of encouraging greater economic engagement with Russia? And would closer commercial ties help create the conditions for greater political cooperation down the road?

A third set of issues concerns NATO. While some members of the alliance have argued that eastward enlargement will promote democracy and stability among aspiring members, Russia has charged that NATO is seeking to assert regional dominance and threatens Russian security. Is pausing or slowing the pace of enlargement likely to encourage greater cooperation from Russia in addressing challenges in the Balkans, Caucasus, and Iran? Should the alliance make greater use of the NATO-Russia Council to engage Moscow as a partner?

It is clear that improving our bilateral relations will require good will and serious effort by both sides. In that context, the Obama administration and Congress should examine what steps we should take to shift the United States-Russia relationship from confrontation to collaboration.

For example, should we consider "graduating" Russia from the so-called Jackson-Vanik trade restrictions? Should the United States assist Russian efforts to progress more quickly toward membership in the World Trade Organization? Clearly part of the roadmap for WTO accession is implementation of the IPR agreement, which was signed over 2 years ago in November 2006. While some progress has been made, I am troubled by reports, for example, that Russia has failed to take adequate enforcement actions against plants involved in producing pirated CDs and DVDs.

There are also numerous arms control, security and nonproliferation issues to be addressed by our countries in the coming year. Should the United States bring into force the U.S.-Russia Agree-

ment for Nuclear Cooperation that the Bush administration withdrew from Congress after the Georgia conflict, and under what circumstances? Should the new administration continue to pursue missile defense in the Czech Republic and Poland as it seeks to engage Russia in efforts to prevent the emergence of a nuclear-armed Iran?

And finally, what is the appropriate role for the promotion of democracy, human rights and the rule of law in our relationship with Russia? The trends in recent years have been troubling. Journalists and opinion leaders who are critical of the government have suffered physical attacks and even have been murdered. Political pressure on the judiciary, corruption in law enforcement, and harassment of some non-governmental organizations undermine the accountability of the Russian Government. There are also disturbing reports of vicious attacks motivated by xenophobia, neo-Nazism, or anti-Semitic tendencies. To what extent and in what manner should the United States continue to press Moscow on these issues?

The United States-Russia relationship is exceptionally complex. We undoubtedly will continue to agree on some issues and disagree on others. But it clearly is in our national interest to promote more positive ties with Moscow if doing so will help us achieve some of our most urgent foreign policy goals, such as preventing Iran from developing a nuclear weapons capability. I believe that Iran should be at the top of the agenda in our bilateral discussions.

The committee is fortunate to have three witnesses with us today who are uniquely qualified to help us answer some of these questions. Ideally, we will not only talk about what pressing the reset button might mean, but we will also fast-forward to consider the benefits to global security that improved United States-Russian relations might yield in the future.

It is now my pleasure to turn to the distinguished ranking member, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, for any opening comments that she may wish to make and I yield her 7 minutes for that purpose.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for holding this important hearing. As you have stated, Vice President Biden indicated that the new administration wants to press the reset button on the United States-Russia relationship, and many of us are eager to move toward a more cooperative relationship.

Unfortunately, as we know over the past 10 years, we have seen the Russian Government, led by Vladimir Putin, steadily become more authoritarian at home, and more aggressive and destabilizing in its policies abroad.

Since assuming the Presidency of Russia in 2000, and continuing in his current post as Prime Minister, Mr. Putin has consolidated his power, restricted the activities of political opposition parties, and used various means to stifle independent media and non-governmental organizations.

It has also become increasingly apparent that corruption within the Russian Government is widespread, and reaches to the highest levels. Many of those who have sought to criticize or expose that corruption have in fact been threatened and on occasion beaten or murdered.

The Russian Government under Mr. Putin has also expanded its control over large scale businesses, particularly in the energy sector. It has used its de facto control over nominally private sector energy companies to shut off energy supplies to several neighboring states at times of political disagreement with those states.

In its foreign policy the Russian Government's actions not only constitute a threat to critical United States security interests, but are destructive to Russia's own long term interests.

Perhaps in an effort to create a growing challenge for the United States in the Persian Gulf region, the Putin government has provided nuclear technology and advanced weapons to Iran.

In the long run, however, the fundamentalist leaders in Tehran will have no greater affinity for Moscow once they have the nuclear arsenal they seek, and they will certainly increase their involvement in radicalizing nations on Russia's borders.

It is also not in Russia's interests to see extremism spread north into Russia from Afghanistan.

Yet while Russian officials express a willingness to support our efforts in Afghanistan, Russia is clearly working to persuade the Central Asian country of Kyrgyzstan to close a United States air base on its territory that is vital to supporting our mission in Afghanistan.

The Russian invasion of Georgia last year, which followed years of increasingly provocative actions by the Putin government in the separatist regions of that country, has led many in the United States and Europe who have supported closer relations with Russia to question its intentions.

In fact, the recognition of the separatist regions in Georgia by the Putin government may well reopen painful questions regarding Russian sovereignty over parts of its own territory that may seek independence.

While the United States and the European Union have maintained an arms embargo on China since the Tiananmen massacre in Beijing 20 years ago, Russia has sold significant quantities of advanced weaponry to that country.

At a time when Russia's population is declining, and its economy is under developed, it seems ironic that the Russian Government on its own would help arm a neighbor such as China, whose population and economy are set to far outstrip it.

I hope that our witnesses today will speak to the factors driving Russian foreign policy as dictated and managed by Mr. Putin.

It is vital to know how that policy is influenced by a general resentment of the United States and a desire to create challenges to United States influences in key regions such as the Persian Gulf and the Straits of Taiwan.

It is also important for us to know how far Mr. Putin and his top officials might go if they thought that a more aggressive foreign policy, perhaps another invasion of Georgia, might help preserve their popularity among average Russians as the Russian economy follows downward the declining prices for its oil exports.

Today, Mr. Chairman, I will be introducing a resolution calling on President Obama to work with the other six original member states of what is known as the G–8 group of states to terminate the Russian Government's participation in that group until the

President determines that the Russian leadership has taken substantive steps in removing restrictions on the political opposition, independent media, and human rights groups in Russia, implemented free market reforms and tackled corruption at all levels, stopped using energy as a political tool against its neighbors, fulfilled its commitment to withdraw its military from the separatist region of Moldova and from the separatist regions of Georgia, and ceased all actions that threaten the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Russia's neighbors.

Since the Soviet Union broke apart in 1991, the United States and the European Union have pursued policies meant to integrate a stable and reformed Russia, as a partner at least, if not a full member, of their trans-Atlantic community of nations.

We cannot continue to support integration, however, if it serves to spread corruption and destabilization in the regions neighboring Russia and lying on its periphery.

Until that principle is accepted by the Russian leadership, I doubt that a so-called "reset" of our relationship with Russia would serve our long term interests and our values.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, again, for holding this hearing, and I also thank our distinguished witnesses for appearing before our committee today. Thank you.

Chairman BERMAN. Thank you. The time for the gentlelady has expired, and I am now pleased to recognize for an opening statement the chairman of the Europe Subcommittee, and if he joins us, the ranking member of that subcommittee, for a 3-minute opening statement. Mr. Wexler, you are recognized for 3 minutes.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I will be brief. I think Vice President Biden summed up very appropriately what our new relationship or evolving relationship with Russia needs to be in terms of the reset button.

But it seems to me that it is something that I would be curious to hear, the thoughts of the three powers. My impression is that if you analyze from an objective point of view the last 6 years or so of American-Russian relationships, we went from a point—"we" meaning the United States—we went from a point where we have a set of cards that allowed us to exert a fair degree of influence where we may or may not have been successful, but we at least had a set of cards to play.

And then as a result, in part because of rising gasoline prices and other political-geopolitical factors, that set of cards dramatically shifted so that the ability of the United States to influence Russian action became somewhat marginalized.

I would be curious if you could speak to that issue, if you believe it is an accurate statement, and what we can do about it.

Quickly also if I could, I came back from Turkey last week, and it seems to me that we are on the cusp of a historic opportunity with respect to Turkish-Armenian relations, and the possibility in 2009 for extraordinary engagement between those two countries, and the possibility of opening the borders, and then things that might follow, such as normalization.

I am curious if you could speak to the potential for American-Russian cooperation in this regard, and the particular unique role that Russia might play, if it chose to with respect to this kind of

engagement, which if it were successful might change the dynamic in the region quite dramatically for the positive. And is this an opportunity for a new type of American-Russian engagement, where mutual benefits to both countries might be had? Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman BERMAN. The time for the gentleman has expired. I am now going to recognize members of the committee who wish to make a 1-minute opening statement, and the first is the chairman of the subcommittee that deals very much with the issues coming within the range of this hearing, Mr. Brad Sherman of California.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We need Russia's help to stop Iran's nuclear program, the fault of the present circumstances, and chilliness between the two countries lies in Washington, as well as Moscow.

We supported self-determination for the Soviet Republics and the Yugoslav Republics in the Kosovo region. We opposed self-determination for South Ossetia, Dacia, Transnistria, Moldova, and Northern Kosovo.

Some would say this is inconsistent. The fact is that it is consistently anti-Russian. Nine-eleven has been analogized to Pearl Harbor. We prevailed in World War II only by allying our selves with a Soviet Union whose flaws dwarf the most scathing criticism anyone could make of the current Russian regime.

I look forward to linking how we deal with Russia on every issue, including missile defense in Poland and the Czech Republic, to how they deal with the Iran nuclear program. I yield back.

Chairman BERMAN. I thank the gentleman. The gentleman's time has expired. The gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, while both the bilateral and multilateral relations with Russia are under review and reappraisal, I hope our distinguished witnesses to the committee today will provide insights on the state of human rights in Russia, and give us a broad overview, but also focus on some of the key issues that I think are very much in flux, and probably to the negative.

As one of the six organizers of the new global initiative to combat the rising tide of anti-Semitism, I was in the United Kingdom last week for what we called the London Conference to Combat Anti-Semitism. It is becoming increasingly clear, especially during the Gaza crisis, that that is being used as a pretext to target Jewish people, to target synagogues and cemeteries.

And obviously no country, including our own, is immune from that kind of vicious hate. Russia, unfortunately, has had a terrible history of anti-Semitism. One of our key featured speakers at this conference was Natan Sharansky. Mr. Sharansky could not have been more eloquent again in calling for all nations, including Russia, to combat this vicious hate everywhere it rears its ugly head.

So if our panelists could speak to that issue, I think it would be very helpful.

Chairman BERMAN. The gentleman's time has expired. The gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Sires. Does any member of the committee have an opening statement on the Democratic side? Mr. Delahunt. The gentleman is recognized for 1 minute.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I just want to associate myself with the remarks of Mr. Sherman. And also continued references to the invasion of Georgia by Russia, I don't think speak to the facts. There have been multiple reviews of what actually happened on the ground, and I think it is inescapable that a decision was made by Mr. Saakashvili to launch a military initiative that clearly provoked a substantial response.

I think it is important that we speak to the facts and simply don't draw conclusions until we are satisfied that we have ascertained what the reality is, and with that I yield back.

Chairman BERMAN. The time for the gentleman has expired. The gentleman from California, Mr. Royce, is recognized for 1 minute.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is natural to assume that a new day abroad is going to be upon us because we have a new administration, and I think some are going to suggest that only if we do this or that differently now, therefore relations with Russia are going to improve.

But as one witness will point out, there is no indication that things in Russia will change or improve because we have a new President. Russia's foreign policy, so troublesome on many fronts, stems really from its autocratic internal politics.

There is also strong anti-Americanism that is whipped up by its government. President Bush was wrong to personalize his diplomacy with President Putin, but personal diplomacy will not affect the Russian apparatchiks perceived interests.

Changes in United States foreign policy therefore will not necessarily usher in a new era of collaboration. Collaboration on Iran, for one, is unlikely to improve over the next few critical years, whatever we do, and I think that is the real politic of where Russia is.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. Any further members wish to make an opening statement? The gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Scott, is recognized for 1 minute.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be just very brief. I think the fundamental question we really have to ask ourselves is: What do the Russians want to do? I get a sense that the best description I can give to them right now is that they suffer from sort of a dichotomized schizophrenia.

I have just returned with some of my NATO colleagues from visiting four countries last weekend in Europe: France, Germany, Austria and Belgium. And at each stop Russia was the big elephant in the room.

And I think on the one hand, they say they want to help us with nuclear nonproliferation, and at the same time they are giving nuclear technology to Korea and to Syria. On the other hand, they say they may want to help us.

If we have an opportunity, they could help us in Afghanistan, and as soon as our President announces that we have got 17,000 troops to go there, they work to close our base. So I think the question is: What do they want to do?

Chairman BERMAN. The time for the gentleman has expired.

If there are no further opening statements, I am very pleased to introduce really an expert panel of witnesses today.

Robert Legvold is the Marshall D. Shulman Professor Emeritus—Marshall D. Shulman being one of the preeminent Russian scholars of our time—in the Department of Political Science at Columbia University, where he has specialized in the international relations of the post-Soviet states.

Prior to coming to Columbia in 1984, Professor Legvold served as senior fellow and director of the Soviet studies project at the Council on Foreign Relations. He was previously a faculty member at the Department of Political Science at Tufts University.

His most recent book is a collaborative volume entitled, "Russian Foreign Policy in the Twenty-first Century and the Shadow of the Past." Presently, Professor Legvold is project director for a large study of United States policy toward Russia at the American Academy of Arts and Science.

I personally must say that he holds a special place for me as an educator on Russia at numerous Aspen Institute meetings, and is director of the Russia Project that I have just mentioned.

Steven Pifer is currently a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution's Center on the United States and Europe. A retired Foreign Service Officer, Ambassador Pifer spent more than 25 years with the State Department focused on United States relations with the former Soviet Union and Europe, as well as arms control and security issues.

He served as United States Ambassador to Ukraine, deputy assistant secretary with responsibilities for Russia and Ukraine, as well as senior assistant to the President, and senior director for Russia, Ukraine, and Eurasia, on the National Security Council.

Ambassador Pifer recently published a Brookings policy paper entitled, "Reversing the Decline: An Agenda for United States-Russia Relations in 2009," which provides the basis for his testimony today.

Andrei Illarionov is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute's Center for Global Liberty and Prosperity. Dr. Illarionov was the chief economic advisor of Russian President Vladimir Putin from 2000 to 2005. He also served as the President's personal representative in the G–8. From 1993 to 1994, Dr. Illarionov served as chief economic advisor to the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, Victor Chernomyrdin. He resigned in February 1994 to protest changes in the government's economic policy and founded the Institute of Economic Analysis later that year. Dr. Illarionov has co-authored several economic programs for Russian governments, and has written three books and more than 300 articles on Russian economic and social policies.

It is the custom of the committee to ask the witnesses to try and summarize their really excellent written testimony in about 5 minutes. I would commend to my colleagues on the committee that reading the testimony in full is worth their time. Then we will go to developing your comments and questions. So, Dr. Legvold, if you would start.

## STATEMENT OF ROBERT H. LEGVOLD, PH.D., PROFESSOR, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Mr. LEGVOLD. Mr. Chairman, committee members, it is a pleasure to appear before you today, and I commend the committee for

scheduling this hearing on Russia early, indeed your first hearing in this session, and commend you for framing the issue the way that you are framing the issue.

That is, in a way that acknowledges the importance of the United States-Russia relationship, and at the same time how troubled that relationship has become, especially in the last 5 years, and with dramatic speed since the Georgian War in August.

This is important, the subject itself, because I think that a critical source of the problem in United States-Russia relations has been the long failure on both sides, both on the Russian side, and on the United States side, to recognize the stakes that each of us has in that relationship.

That is, how broad the stakes are and how great they are. Some of them are obvious. The fact that our two countries still have 95 percent of the nuclear weapons in the world mean that we also have primary stewardship for a nuclear world, for dealing with those states that have nuclear weapons, and dealing with those states that want to have nuclear weapons.

Second, Russia is the world's largest producer of energy. We are the world's largest consumer of energy, and our most important allies in Europe are the most dependent on Russia for their energy supply.

Other stakes are less obvious, but Russia is important if we intend to make progress on every issue from a looming competition over the vast hydrocarbon resources of the Arctic to coping with climate change.

The list is much longer and very impressive, and I have included it in my written submission. If Russia is this important to us, and we are to them, then what should be done about the relationship?

I would start by asking myself, where do we want United States-Russia relations to be 4 or 6 years from now? Not as a pie-in-the-sky exercise, but as a realistic attempt to create a vision that will then provide discipline and guidance for day-to-day policymaking.

Then I would set about three basic tasks at this stage. The first would be an attempt to change the tone in the relationship and to test the water of what could be done in United States-Russia relations by making several important symbolic gestures.

We should start with the repeal of the Jackson-Vanik amendment. Do it quickly. Do it without fanfare, and do it without horse trading. But we should also accelerate to the extent that we can progress on Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization, and an early ratification of the comprehensive test ban treaty.

The latter two, of course, are substantive and not merely symbolic, but they would be important in terms of this first step. Second, I would focus on three time-urgent problems in which we might hope to make progress with the Russians. I said hope. We need to measure the prospect of doing so. The first is the linked issue of Iran, its nuclear aspirations, and ballistic missile defense in Central Europe.

The second is the follow-on to the START I Agreement that expires in December 2009; and the third is Afghanistan, and the prospects of cooperation, as well as dealing with what appear to be some of the obstacles to cooperation on Afghanistan.

The third thing that I would do, and I would do it early on, may be more original than the things that I just described. In fact, the things that I just described are issues that have already been raised this morning in the hearing. And that is I would propose a deep and a far reaching strategic dialogue at the highest level of government, those with the Russian side and with the United States, that would focus on four broad basic areas that are framing issues for most of the issues that are troublesome now—that create turbulence within the relationship.

The first is the question of European security. The second is the issue that I would call mutual security in and around the Eurasian land mass. The post-Soviet space is at the center of that. Russia is a centerpiece within that. That is at the very core of the problems that we have with Russia, and unless we can begin making headway in the way that allows each side to understand its respective roles the problems will continue.

The third is a complex of issues in the area of nuclear security, and the fourth is energy security, a serious, strategic dialogue over the question of energy security. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Legvold follows:]

Robert Legvold

Marshall D. Shulman Professor Emeritus, Columbia University and
Project Director, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences

February 25, 2009

The House Foreign Affairs Committee

Of all major U.S. relationships, the one most vexed and most devoid of cooperation where cooperation is most in both side's national interest is with Russia. Must this be so? Might there be an alternative path forward and is this the moment to probe the possibility? The first stuttering hope has begun to take shape. Beginning with Vice-President Biden's much cited "time to press the reset button" remark at the Munich conference on February 7 and continuing with Undersecretary of State William Burns' extended hand during his visit to Moscow two weeks ago, the new administration has signaled its readiness to put the relationship on a different footing if the Russian leadership is ready as well. President Medvedev, Prime Minister Putin, Foreign Minister Lavrov, and Deputy Prime Minister Ivanov, in turn, have all in various forms and at various times over the last several weeks indicated their guarded hopes for an improvement and specified areas where they think the two countries can make progress.

Redirecting the tenor and trajectory of relations, however, will not be easy. Over the last five years and with dramatic speed during and after the August 2008 Georgian war, relations have sunk to a point lower than any since before Mikhail Gorbachev's days as leader of the Soviet Union. In the most recent polling by the BBC World Service, 64 percent of Americans have a negative view of Russia, a jump of 28 percent over a year earlier; on the Russian side, 65 percent of respondents have a negative view of the United States, a 12 percent increase in the course of the last year.

More inauspicious, major voices in both countries harbor deep suspicions of the other side. It is not merely that, for the last half decade, Putin and those around him have been sharply critical of U.S. foreign policy, a country that in 2007 he said "has overstepped its national borders in every way," that is guilty of "unilateral and frequently illegitimate actions," that permits itself "an almost uncontained hyper use of force . . . plunging the world into an abyss of permanent conflicts," and that "disdains the basic principles of international law." Even darker thoughts have come to characterize the outlook not only of many in the Russian policymaking community but also broad segments of the political elite who have persuaded themselves that powerful forces in the United States mean Russia harm. Whatever Washington may claim, efforts to extend NATO's benefits to Ukraine and Georgia, to put in place the European piece of the Global Missile Defense Program, to foster more open societies in the post-Soviet region, and to organize peacekeeping exercises with Russia's neighbors are at the end of the day

seen as animated by hostility to Russia and directed against its interests and even internal stability.

In the United States, Russia is commonly viewed as overweening and threatening to its neighbors, led by anti-democratic KGB-types, and driven by a desire to stick a monkey-wrench in the spokes of U.S. foreign policy whenever and wherever possible. Many in Congress, on the editorial pages, and within the policy community find it difficult to believe that Russian leaders genuinely see the new NATO or a small ballistic missile defense installation in Poland and the Czech Republic or democracy aid as threatening, and assume that Russian protestations are intended to mask their own aggressive intentions or to justify their heavy-handed policies and self-serving power structures at home.

No matter that much of the expert community in the United States and an admittedly smaller portion of the expert community in Russia dissents from these dueling perspectives. Even if the Obama administration sets a new course, Russian leaders answer in kind, and the mood softens, influential circles in both countries—within the Russian military and security forces as well as among nationalist politicians, and across a range of conservative skeptics in the United States—will remain unconvinced and wedded to the notion that the other side is not to be trusted. Risking much of anything in pursuit of U.S.-Russian cooperation, let alone a more ambitious partnership, will in these quarters be regarded as a foolish, even a dangerous, illusion.

However, realism about the current state of affairs and the inevitable enduring obstacles to change should not obscure the opportunity to build a different U.S.-Russian relationship or the reason for doing so. Start with the reason for seizing the opportunity, because this is where the problem originates. More precisely, for too long neither leadership has successfully conveyed to their publics the stakes each country has in the relationship, largely because, given their other preoccupations, they have not convinced themselves of how great the stakes are. These, however, are deep and broad—much deeper and broader than most here or there appreciate.

The Stakes

Some are obvious. Because our two countries possess more than 90 percent of the world's existing nuclear weapons, keeping these safe and avoiding new and potentially destabilizing technological digressions form a common interest. Moreover, if any chance exists that a strategic nuclear arms control regime now in shreds can be reconstituted, strengthened, and adjusted to steady an unsteady multipolar nuclear world, it can only happen with joint U.S.-Russian leadership. Similarly, if nuclear weapons (as well as chemical and biological weapons) are to be kept from those we fear having them, if non-proliferation is to remain a feasible goal and the 2010 Review Conference to stem the collapse of the NPT regime, again, success depends on energetic U.S.-Russian cooperation. This is so, first, because we together hold the great bulk of the more than 2500 tons of the stockpiled fissile material (the makings for roughly 250,000 nuclear weapons); second, because prospects of internationalizing the nuclear fuel cycle, the key

to preventing the rush to nuclear energy from leeching into weapons-level enrichment activity, rests on the U.S. and Russian contribution; and, third, because the dream of a world without nuclear weapons can only advance if the United States and Russia—the two states that have most of them—lead the way.

Equally obvious, if Russia has 30 percent of the world's gas reserves, supplies 27 percent of the world's gas exports, including more than 30 percent of Europe's imports, and dominates the grid by which the vast oil and gas resources of the entire post-Soviet region reaches the outside world, then whether the United States and Russia battle or cooperate in developing this wealth and bringing it to market will do much to determine whether oil and gas add to or ease international tensions. Energy security, the new edgy mantra, takes on gravely more ominous tones if the United States and Russia are at odds.

Other stakes, however, are less obvious. Dealing with climate change, for example. Russia, after the United States and China, is the third largest emitter of green house gases. And given its energy inefficiency—three times greater than that of EU countries—it offers one of the most cost-effective areas of the world where energy-efficient technologies can make a difference, particularly if done by bringing to bear the innovations from trading partners, including the United States. More to the point, unless the United States, China, and Russia, perhaps in a three-way collaboration, act in harmony, the prospects for a successful UN Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen in December 2009 dim.

Or take the issue of the Arctic's vast resources now that global warming has opened the waterways to them, and Russia has rushed to stake its claim. Of the Arctic geological provinces studied by the U.S. Geological Survey, estimates are that they contain 13 percent of the world's undiscovered conventional hydrocarbons, including as much as 300 billion barrels of oil equivalents likely to be discovered in the next decade or so. Russia's aggressive assertion of its share of the seabed has already prompted Javier Solana and Benita Ferrero-Waldner, in a report to the EU, to warn of the risk to international stability and security if the race to harvest these riches turns competitive. Ensuring that it does not is a vital interest of both the United States and Russia.

Or consider Russia's importance when addressing major new threats to global welfare and security. As Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair testified before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence week before last, the IP protocols for the vast portion of cyber attacks originate in Russia and China. Cooperation between our three governments, therefore, is *sine qua non* if the threat is to be contained. Equally important, from Russia and several of its neighbors effuses the scourge of trafficked humans, trade in endangered species, the flow of heroin to Europe, money laundering, and illegal arms sales. If the United States hopes to see lessened the pernicious effects of illicit trade on national as well as general global welfare, enlisting the Russian government in stronger and more effective efforts to thwart it holds the key to any success. This is, of course, linked to the devastating impact of corruption within Russia, Ukraine, and the other post-Soviet states. The new U.S. administration, to its credit,

appears to be contemplating proposing this as a priority area for U.S.-Russian cooperation—indeed, raising it to the presidential level.

Nor should the other positive gains from a happier relationship with Russia be ignored. Any society with as many talented and technologically skilled people as Russia, with the natural wealth of the country, located at the crossroads between Europe and Asia should be the next great increment to global economic growth. Indeed, on the eve of the current economic crisis, Russia was about to become Europe's largest consumer market. In the near term the economic crisis is likely to combine with the longer-term failure of Russia to achieve adequate structural reform to waylay the country's emergence in this role. But who would doubt that it is in the U.S. national interest to see this happen and where possible to help bring it about?

The most profound U.S. stake in the U.S.-Russian relationship, however, resides at a deeper, historically more consequential level. Were the two countries to step away from the impacted tangle they have made of the relationship and reflect on what logically should be over the long term their central common interest, it is peace, stability, and mutual security in an around the Eurasian landmass. The post-Soviet space is its core, and Russia the centerpiece of the post-Soviet space. For the United States this immense expanse is key to the critical arenas of its foreign policy: Europe, East Asia, and the troubled and dangerous southern front from Turkey to Pakistan. For Russia this expanse is its universe.

Promoting stable, progressive change within this region, preventing conflict areas from exploding into violence, and fostering mutually beneficial economic and political cooperation among the states of the region should serve as natural and compelling common ground. That, of course, has not been the story. Just the opposite. With ever increasing intensity over the last decade everything from energy to military assistance, from direct foreign investment to peacekeeping exercises has been turned into tools of competition rather than the building blocks of cooperation.

Lest it be thought that the alternative is hopelessly airy and out of touch with reality—that Russian nerves are too raw, that the natural tensions stirred by an active U.S. role in the region are too great—it is worth pondering the deeper lesson of the Georgian war. Sixteen years ago, when the original fighting in Abkhazia and South Ossetia stopped, Russian leaders entertained the notion that international efforts to deal with the conflicts dotting the post-Soviet landscape should be welcomed, and the Clinton administration drafted a presidential memorandum proposing a more active U.S. role in helping to resolve them. Russian receptivity faded within two years and the presidential memorandum stirred a storm of criticism back in the United States. Henceforth, everyone—Moscow, Washington, the OSCE, and the Friends of the UN Secretary General—allowed these so-called "frozen conflicts" to go unresolved. They did so, because it seemed safe to do so. Safe to do so, when weighed against the exertion and commitment required to force a settlement. Let those now in charge in Moscow and Washington ask themselves: "Is our national interest better served today by the

consequences of the Georgian war than it would have been had we together invested more strenuously in efforts to resolve the issue of the separatist territories then?"

At the risk of finishing this sketch at a seemingly remote philosophical level, one ultimate stake might be weighed. From the historian's perspective the most strikingly unique aspect of the post-Cold War international system is the absence of strategic rivalry among the major powers. Normally for nearly all of the last 300 years of modern international relations the central reality has been of one or more great powers defining one or more other great powers as the principal threat to its or their national security, focusing its or their military efforts on this or these countries, and mobilizing alignments to confront it or them. I call the absence "the blessing." Unless one takes the ahistorical view that we cannot get back to this point, that the "blessing" cannot be lost—because, as many would argue, an interconnected, interdependent world precludes it—one of the great but hidden challenges facing this U.S. president and the next will be to prevent the inevitable conflicts of interests among major powers from swelling into deep and enduring strategic rivalry. Already candidate cases exist: the United States and China, China and Japan, and, it must be added, the United States and Russia.

The Challenge

If the stakes are this high, then the standard required of U.S. policy should be equally high, even if, in a world with serious competing challenges, meeting it will be difficult. To a degree missing in the past policy needs to be comprehensive, coherent, and integrated across issue areas. Comprehensive means that it must address all of the key dimensions of the relationship, not merely those that command today's headlines—that it must do justice to the breadth and depth of the stakes that our country has in the relationship.

Coherent sets a still higher bar in two senses. First, attention to the issues in the relationship should not be spasmodic, depending on which issue stirs up more dust at any one time, or approached with one set of arguments, tradeoffs, and tactics on one day and another on another day. Second, coherence more than before comes by joining resources capable of giving policy a larger effect. Calibrating U.S. policy toward Russia with that of European allies promises to add greater constancy and balance to U.S. preoccupations and actions. Forging links between NATO and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in fighting the insurgency in Afghanistan and helping to stabilize the larger region offers a way to increase the resonance of U.S. efforts and add staying power. Approaching problems that require tri- rather than bilateral cooperation among China, Russia, and the United States avoids disparate, suboptimal answers when dealing with climate change, regional security, UN reform, illicit trade, aspects of strategic nuclear arms control, and many other spheres.

It may be even harder, albeit no less essential, to recognize the interlocking character of nearly every issue in the relationship, and then to devise responses addressed to this complexity. Ensuring the security of oil and gas supplies out of the Caspian Sea region, for example, depends on managing the "frozen conflicts" and dealing with

regional instability in the south and north Caucasus. Increasing cooperation in areas of trade and investment requires progress in mitigating the impact of corruption in Russia and neighboring states, just as dealing with the problem of regional violence in the post-Soviet space requires progress in mitigating illicit trade in and from the region. Enhancing U.S.-Russian cooperation on Iran's potential nuclear weapons program requires enhancing U.S.-Russian cooperation on ballistic missile defense just as a meeting of the mind on ballistic missile defense will determine the prospects of offensive nuclear arms control.

Satisfying this standard, as said, represents a tall order, so something more is needed: a strategic vision. Where do we want the U.S.-Russian relationship to be in four to six years from now, and how do we get there? Not a rose-colored, impractical image, but a plausible, constructive set of aspirations to orient and discipline day-to-day policy. One step in fashioning this guidance might be a serious effort to imagine the actual nature and content of a strategic partnership, rather than the soft rhetorical filament casually lofted during earlier moments of optimism. It should not be beyond the ken of our two governments to work toward a genuinely collaborative framework promoting energy security for consumers and mutual benefit for energy producers, particularly if done in conjunction with the European Union. Nor should it seem out of reach to envisage a vigorous joint effort to craft a new and sturdier strategic nuclear arms regime, including the first steps toward the complex architecture required if the unregulated programs of the other six nuclear powers are to be rendered safer. Nor need it be unthinkable that the United States and Russia could not at some point regularly do more together to contain explosive regional conflicts, including those within the post-Soviet space. Defending against catastrophic terrorism already unites our agendas, but working to minimize areas where our definitions and assessments differ and to increase the effectiveness of our responses deserves to be part of a strategic partnership.

A strategic vision should also contemplate the kinds of cooperative behavior on the Russian part that we would most wish to see. Surely this includes earnest and effective measures, taken alone or alongside others, to steer not only North Korea and Iran, but the next generation of would-be nuclear powers from this choice. So presumably would it include a bias in favor of a cooperative, perhaps a joint, approach to the protection and exploitation of the global commons, including emerging challenges, such as sharing Arctic resources, solving water scarcity problems, and preserving space for safe commercial and scientific purposes. But the list is long and deserves to be thought of with some sense of priority. Seeing Russia invested in promoting progressive change within its neighborhood and receptive to similar U.S. efforts belongs toward the top of the list. Counting on the Russian government to create a domestic environment more conducive to foreign investment and looking for ways to make Russian foreign investment abroad transparent and attractive ought to have a place as well.

Finally, just as Russia has a right to wish for a U.S. foreign policy less given to unilateralism, less enamored of the military option, and more attuned to the security interests of others, the United States has a right to hope that sooner rather than later Russia will see it in its national interest to deal with neighbors by pursuing a strategy of

reassurance rather than one of coercion or, in the jargon of my profession, compellence. On the geostrategic front, so might the United States aim for a Russia committed to finding constructive ways of adjusting to the rise of new powers and of integrating them into an improved international order, rather than yielding to the temptation to manipulate cracks and tensions in the process to its own advantage.

A strategic vision, however, must be paired with realism about its chances. Not only the course of recent events and the mood they have engendered, but something close to structural obstacles stand in the way. On the U.S. side the scale and urgency of the problems its faces—from the national and global economic crisis to the parlous situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan—will drain energy and attention from Russia policy. Moreover, neither the policymaking community nor let alone the Congress is in the habit of framing the challenge in strategically ambitious terms, nor is the administration (yet) organized well to move in this direction.

On the Russian side the impediments are greater. They begin with the country's amorphous and institutionally ambiguous political landscape. Both the diarchy at the pinnacle of political power and the semi-authoritarian broader structure of authority are in motion. Predicting political trends in the country and even who or what ultimately will shape them invites only a fools' competition. And so too the twists and turns that will mark Russian foreign policy over the next 4-6 years. The economic crisis appears to be a major new intervening factor, but with unclear implications. Hypothetically it could accentuate the prospect of dramatically different outcomes: on the one hand, toward greater repression at home in the face of real or potential social unrest and a surly turn in foreign policy eager to use ginned-up enemies to distract from domestic failings; on the other hand, to a greater sense of urgency on the need for structural economic reform and a willingness to engage the public, while treading more softly in foreign policy and looking for points of accommodation with the outside world.

In fact, to this point, signs are that $30 a barrel oil, a stock market off 80 percent of its value seven months ago, projected null or negative growth rates for next year (when long-term plans count on steady annual growth of 7 percent), and possible unemployment at around 10 million have had a bracing effect. The swagger in foreign policy is less pronounced and the speeches, more tempered. At home, some close to President Medvedev, like Igor Jurgens, openly acknowledge that the social bargain of the last eight years—"the limiting of civil rights in exchange for economic well-being" (his words)—has been sundered, and a more respectful dialogue between the leadership and the public is required. Patience and sacrifice have become the new watchwords in political discourse, rather than boasts of becoming the world's fifth most important economy or turning Moscow into one of the world's new financial centers.

These chastened and potentially encouraging reactions, however, parallel other measures, such as an expansive new treason law and the swift clamping down on the slightest sign of protest, which suggest that another jittery and more intemperate reflex is also present. Moreover, were a crisis that Russian leaders currently view as manageable

to turn unmanageable and mutate into menacing forms of political instability, the present tells us nothing of how competent or forbearing future actions will be.

These imponderables both contribute to and combine with a second dimension of the problem. Russia's conflicted profile—the traumas and tensions of the historic transition through which it is passing, the emotional edge overlaying the conduct of foreign policy, and the gap between the status Russia desires in the outside world and the wherewithal it has by which to earn it–render its leadership less willing or able to make fundamental choices and develop a clear vision of the country's role and place. Its leaders have made plain what they oppose, but much less plain what they propose to substitute. Praise for multipolarity over unipolarity, exhortations to "democratize" international relations and "strengthen multilateralism," and even more precise urgings to develop a new "European security treaty" go unelaborated. At a more fundamental level, the Russian leadership is ill-disposed to wrestle with the question of whether and with whom to tie the country's fate—in some fashion with the West, or with the rising new powers, including China, or with none of the above and to settle for playing the field.

The Russia thus presented to the United States poses an obvious challenge, yet also an opportunity. Its orientation is more malleable, if prickly, than fixed and purposeful. Neither the United States nor any cluster of states can determine Russia's political course or dictate the evolution of its foreign policy. But how they chose to deal with it can influence both—for better or worse.

The Response

Given the level of mistrust and disrepair in U.S.-Russian relations, any hope of improvement must first focus on concrete, practical steps by which the cycle can be broken. That will not be easy, as the Obama administration is already learning. No matter what new offerings are brought to Moscow, leaders with divided minds will be hesitant and those with their minds made up will look for traps and ulterior motives. Gradually, however, if the administration persists and the initiatives are seen as good faith, those who want to believe in the possibility of a more constructive U.S.-Russian relationship will exert themselves.

Symbolic steps are important in launching the process, and none would be more so than for the U.S. Congress to lift the Jackson-Vanik amendment. Its significance stems not from removing legislation that long ago lost its purpose or that seriously impairs economic cooperation between the two countries—it does not. Rather the positive symbolism is, first, in ending a stigma, and, second, in at last keeping a pledge to press for repeal made and broken too many times by prior administrations. This should be done soon and swiftly, without fanfare or horse-trading. Similarly, although more than a symbolic step and dependent on moves from Moscow's side, a decision by the administration to work harder to speed Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization will also serve this purpose.

Real progress, however, depends on the ability of the two sides to advance the substantive agenda, and the place to start is with the three issues the administration, judging from Undersecretary Burns' recent press interview in Moscow, appears to have singled out. The three, each important in itself, offer a chance to design a Russia policy meeting in part the tough standard discussed earlier: a policy that is coherent and integrated across issue areas—if not yet comprehensive.

The linked issue of Iran and ballistic missile defense constitutes the first of these. Framing the issue correctly is key. It should be, as the administration and others have suggested, approached as a logical linkage, not as an apples and oranges bargain. Not, as for example, "if you get serious about pressuring the Iranians, we will back off NATO membership action plans for Georgia and Ukraine." Rather, as the administration appears to be arguing, "if together we can discourage Iran from developing a nuclear weapon, the urgency of deploying a ballistic missile defense in Europe fades."

This, admittedly, does not guarantee success with the Russians, let alone the Iranians. That depends, at a minimum, on three other factors. First, whether the Russian leadership, which quite clearly does not want a nuclear Iran, can persuade itself that this goal outweighs risking harm to the many other stakes that it has in the Russian-Iranian relationship, such as access to Iranian oil and gas, dividing up Caspian Sea resources, selling arms, and managing the extremist Islamic threat in the northern Caucasus and Central Asia. The flip side of this dimension is a no-doubt-far-fetched Russian fear that a new U.S. approach to Iran, combined with a moderate outcome in the June Iranian elections, could lead to a U.S.-Iranian rapprochement that would then be used by one or the other against Russia.

Hence, the need for an additional dimension to U.S. policy—a conscious effort to convince Moscow that U.S.-Russian collaboration in containing Iran's nuclear aspirations will be followed by a mutual respect for one another's interests should Iran move toward normal relations with the West. But this too is not likely to be enough. To generate a serious readiness on Russia's part to toughen its diplomacy, the United States and the E-3 will need to settle on an arrangement likely to be more acceptable to Teheran than what is now on the table. (Perhaps, as Roger Cohen of the New York Times writes from Teheran,"Obama must abandon military threats to Iran's nuclear program in favor of an approach recognizing the country's inevitable mastery of the nuclear fuel cycle, while securing verifiable conditions that ensure such mastery is not diverted to bomb manufacturing.")

Post-START I and preparing the way for a future strategic nuclear arms control accord also come early. Both countries have every reason to move quickly to salvage the benefits of the expiring START I treaty, including, in particular, some version of its verification and monitoring provisions. Addressing the complex technical issues of counting rules, the status of downloaded warheads, and the new problem of conventional warheads on strategic delivery systems will require deft, innovative expert solutions. The more essential aspect of the problem, however, is no mystery. To succeed in achieving a follow-on START I agreement, the United States will have to shift from a posture that

either its preferences prevail or the agreement dies to one open to genuine compromises and tradeoffs. Burns' assurance in Moscow that the administration "is committed to negotiating a legally binding follow-on agreement," one of the contentious issues, suggests that Obama and his team are making the shift.

The administration has also begun weighing the virtues of proposing a further substantial reduction in nuclear warheads below the 1700-2200 level mandated by the SORT agreement. Here not only openness to Russian counterproposals will be required, but a readiness to confront basic choices. Moving to a level of 1000 warheads, as some now urge, including some within the administration, means that the role and nature of national missile defense must be addressed. Re-negotiating the missile defense issue entails a more fundamental reconciliation of the two sides' position on the relationship between offense and defense in strategic nuclear systems. Similarly, if the administration wishes to revitalize the effort to build a comprehensive regime regulating the nuclear arsenals of the two sides, as it should, this cannot be by U.S. fiat. The United States will have to be willing to seek common ground on questions such as the weaponization of space, the role of sub-strategic nuclear weapons in conventional war-fighting doctrine, and the deployment of U.S. strategic defense systems and nuclear weapons outside U.S. territory.

The mounting urgency in Afghanistan rounds out the immediate agenda. Afghanistan underscores the two-way street the Russia side must be willing to travel. The administration has every reason to expect Russian cooperation in aiding the U.S. and NATO effort in Afghanistan. Russian leaders know it is not in their national interest for the West to fail and subject Russia's southern front to the threat from either an Afghanistan again under the Taliban or one in explosive shambles. They, however, then must decide between doing what they can to ensure a successful outcome in Afghanistan or indulging their desire to marginalize and then expel a U.S. military presence from Central Asia. Whether Russian leaders pressured or purchased the Kyrgyz president, Kurmanbek Bakiyev, into closing the Manas base captures but a part of the point. More importantly, Moscow did not discourage the Kyrgyz leader's decision—did not reverse the calculation and see it in Russia's national interest that the base should remain a secure link in the logistical chain supporting the war effort.

Thus, the United States is right to press the Russians to do more, including agreeing to allow military as well as non-military goods to transit their country. But so should it then encourage a larger role for Russia and its Shanghai Cooperation Organization partners in prosecuting the effort in Afghanistan, including a larger voice in deciding on appropriate political and military strategies. Nor would it hurt were policymakers in both countries to give a little more thought to what it is in the U.S.-Russian relationship that makes a U.S. military presence in Central Asia so neuralgic, and what needs to change for that to pass.

Focusing on these three issues is not to suggest that the two countries do not have many other things to discuss—from what next after the Georgian war to the upcoming G-20 summit, from what to do with the Conventional Forces in Europe treaty to the revival

of the 123 civil nuclear cooperation agreement. Iran, START I, and Afghanistan, however, are the most time-urgent matters, the ones that have both agitated the relationship and created opportunities for progress, and if they can be advanced they will form a foundation for a still more dramatic U.S. initiative.

If the administration hopes to free the relationship from the bickering that surrounds nearly every issue on the current agenda and reduce the poisonous suspicion with which the Russian side regularly greets U.S. initiatives, let alone make any progress toward realizing the strategic vision outlined above, it should strive from the start for a deep, far-reaching strategic dialogue with the Russian leadership. The reasons are several: first, without getting to the root of problems generating tensions in the relationship and impeding progress in key negotiations, the future will almost certainly resemble the recent past, and we will continue to have growing mistrust along with convulsive and emotional retreats at each point of new trouble. Second, by openly airing and then struggling with the deeper impulses shaping behavior, the two governments stand a chance of clearing away the ungrounded misapprehensions that often block sensible negotiating outcomes. Third, in committing itself to a serious discussion of the most basic issues in the relationship, the administration increases the likelihood that U.S. policy will then be more comprehensive, coherent, and well-integrated.

This is not an original idea. Previous administrations have attempted something approximating a strategic dialogue with their Russian counterparts. These experiments, however, were either short-lived or, as in the case of the Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission, more focused on operational concerns than a deep plumbing of the assumptions and concerns underlying each side's position. Still, they offer lessons, and the first and central one is that to succeed, a strategic dialogue must be led by people close to the national leadership, people with the presidents' full confidence and authority; detached from the bureaucracies on both sides; and with no more than three or four principals on each side. Fleeting efforts in the past were undone either by the encroachment of bureaucracies seizing the exchange as their tool rather than allowing it to remain the flexible instrument of national leadership or by the failure of one or the other side to deliver participants with direct access to the national leadership.

Second, as the best of prior experience shows, in entering a strategic dialogue the two sides need to agree on paper to the principles that will guide it—including an understanding that no topic will be out of bounds. Third, it is critical that from the outset the two sides embrace, as before, a presidential "checklist process." The dialogue should generate concrete tasks and assign them to specific agencies, each with designated dates to report back on progress achieved. The list of tasks should be approved by the two presidents and then reviewed and renewed at each presidential meeting.

The heart of a strategic dialogue, however, resides in the agenda itself. As I have been arguing, the dimensions of the U.S.-Russian relationship are broad and profound, but four spheres dominate all others. They represent four of the 21st century's pre-eminent security concerns: European security, mutual security in and around the Eurasian landmass, nuclear security, and energy security. They also, not coincidentally, constitute the framing issues for the most friction-laden aspects of the relationship: namely, Ukraine and Georgia's NATO future, the role of ballistic missile defense in Europe, the U.S.-Russian interaction in the post-Soviet space, and the jockeying over oil and gas pipelines.

Each needs to be approached at a fundamental level. Thus, for example, when addressing the issue of European security the dialogue should start with each side's assessment of the core threats to European security. This should be the base on which to build an open-ended discussion of a potential architecture designed (a) to promote the mutual security of NATO members, Russia, and the states in between *as understood by all*; (b) to give content to President Medvedev's call for a new "European Security Treaty;" and (c) to develop a framework within which NATO and the security institutions in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) can work together to meet security challenges in Europe, the post-Soviet space, and beyond.

Dealing with the issue of mutual security in and around the Eurasian landmass will be the most difficult, but cannot be avoided if the strategic dialogue is to succeed. No issue cuts more deeply to the core of the current tension in the relationship. It must start from a frank and practical discussion of how each side sees its own and the other side's legitimate concerns, interests, and role in the post-Soviet space. That requires the two sides to address comprehensively the source of friction in all of its dimensions (NATO's activities, the "frozen conflicts," the use of Russian leverage with neighbors, the activities of Western NGOs, and competition over oil and gas). But so must a dialogue in this sphere explore ways by which the two countries can work together to mitigate the effects of the two most explosive issues: what each wants for Ukraine and is prepared to promote and how each conceives a path forward to a more stable, constructive Russian-Georgian relationship.

The topic of nuclear security consists of five linked challenges, each of them critical. At the base of the pyramid stands the issue of how the nuclear non-proliferation regime is best strengthened, including the immediate problem of diverting Iran and North Korea from further destroying it. Next and intimately linked to the first challenge comes the need to manage the so-called "nuclear renaissance," that is, the likely rapid growth of states developing domestic nuclear power with potentially full fuel cycle capabilities and the attendant risk of proliferation. Devising proliferation-proof reactors, internationalizing fuel cycle services, and, in that connection, putting in place U.S.-Russian cooperation under the 123 agreement become key.

Third and closely tied to the first two concerns is the question of whether and how to move to a nuclear-weapons-free world. Deep concern over where nuclear proliferation may next lead is what drives prominent U.S. voices and an increasing number of western governments to take the proposal seriously. One then crosses the threshold to the fourth issue: regulating the nuclear arsenals of the "haves," first and foremost the United States and Russia. While this task too links to the issue of non-proliferation, because it entails the nuclear powers' Article VI commitments under the NPT to limit nuclear weapons and eventually to achieve their elimination, its significance extends far beyond. The United States and Russia are no longer "two scorpions in a bottle," but the waste and dangers of their unregulated nuclear choices are in neither country's interest. Nor is a failing U.S.-Russian strategic arms regime conducive to movement on the fifth piece in the pyramid, the need to begin managing the risks in a multipolar nuclear world, particularly the distinctly de-stabilizing features of the Indian, Pakistani, and Chinese nuclear postures.

Finally, energy security. The United States and Russia, of course, have long toyed with an energy dialogue, and launched one in 2002, only to see it languish until

partially revived in the last year of the Bush administration. Useful as the discussion of potential projects and practical measures may be, however, the two sides need to push the dialogue to a deeper level. Discussing ways to bring Russian oil and LNG to the North American market or how to enhance cooperation within the consortia developing Caspian Sea oil, while at the same time the two countries maneuver against competing pipeline projects, begs the core question: is cooperation or competition the salient feature of one or both countries' strategy?

Similarly wringing one's hands over European gas dependency and straining to find ways of breaking it without confronting the issue directly in conversations with Russian leaders would seem to be a wasted opportunity. Many aspects of the enormously complex nexus of issues surrounding the politics of oil and gas from Russia and the Caspian Sea Basin only make sense as part of a three-way dialogue among Russia, the United States and the Europeans. But this does not mean that a serious well-conceived U.S.-Russian dialogue should neglect or short-change the subject, or shun the chance, for example, to find out precisely what Prime Minister Putin meant when at Davos he urged states "to work out a new international legal framework for energy security." One, "if implemented" that "could have the same economic impact as the treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community," one "able to unite consumers and producers in a common energy partnership that would be real and based on clear-cut international rules."

To outline the agenda of an ambitious strategic dialogue is not to assume that from it agreement will come easy or, in some important respects, even at all. There are issues where national interests will clash even when emotion and misreading are stripped away. There are also issues subject to the warping effect of politics at home that will not submit to the most well-intentioned dialogue. At root, the purpose of a strategic dialogue is to take what was impossible going in and shrink it; to take what was barely possible before and enlarge it.

Finally, nothing in the agenda or approach advocated here prejudices, much less precludes a strong and independent U.S. policy toward Ukraine, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and the other states of the region. It is in the U.S. national interest—not least because it is in the interest of global stability—to see as many of these states as possible emerge from this period of history as peaceful, stable, prospering, self-confident democratic societies. But it is also in the United States' long-term interest to avoid promoting this goal in ways that intentionally or unintentionally encourage these states to balance against Russia or that automatically treat Russian-sponsored institutions in the post-Soviet space as suspect, rather than, with workable adjustments, as a potential complement to parallel structures in the West.

Nor is there any suggestion here that the sensitive and often roiling subject of clashing political values and U.S. concerns over political trends within Russia should be soft-peddled or ignored. These issues need to be a part of the relationship. Not because the United States has any right to sit in judgment of the Russian side or any basis on which to instruct the Russians and their leaders; but because any durable and deeper partnership between our two countries will depend on a minimally kindred sense of what our societies are about. The two sides, however, must find a way to discuss these matters in a civil, constructive manner; not by putting Russia in the pillory, but by identifying

areas where we both face challenges and have come up short—say, the problem of illegal immigration or the tension between the struggle against terrorism and the protection of civil rights. First prove that we can have a productive conversation, then figure out how to move on to subjects where the distance separating us is greater.

One final suggestion: it has been almost 16 years to the day since President Clinton on the eve of his first summit with Boris Yeltsin gave the last major presidential address on U.S. Russia policy. The time is right for President Obama to share with his administration, the American public, and an intently interested Russian audience his strategic vision for U.S.-Russian relations, his image of where he would like these to be several years from now, and then to invite the Russian side to join in a frank, wide-ranging discussion of how we might get there. The importance of the relationship merits it, and the less-than-ideal current state of affairs more than justifies it.

Chairman BERMAN. Ambassador Pifer.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE STEVEN PIFER, VISITING FELLOW, CENTER ON THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE, BROOKINGS INSTITUTION (FORMER AMBASSADOR TO UKRAINE)**

Ambassador PIFER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee. Let me thank you for the opportunity to appear today to talk about United States-Russia relations, and I also would commend the committee for its early attention to this critical foreign policy issue.

At the end of 2008, United States-Russian relations had fallen to their lowest point since the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. Both Washington and Moscow shared the blame.

After the high point in 2002, the Presidents became distracted with other issues. There was weak follow-up to Presidential commitments, and the sides increasingly were unwilling to adjust their positions to take account of the interests of the other.

Dealing with Russia today is not easy. Moscow desires great power status, seeks to reduce the global influence of the United States, wants a sphere of "privileged interests" in the post-Soviet space, and has over the past 4 years pursued an increasingly assertive foreign policy, including use of energy as a political tool.

The Russian leadership today, however, faces serious challenges. Foremost is a fragile economy. With the collapse of oil prices, and the global financial crisis, it is heading for a recession after 8 years of high growth.

This clearly worries President Medvedev, and Prime Minister Putin, as does the prospect of possible social unrest. The question for our purposes today is: How will these challenges affect Russian foreign policy?

One possibility is that they will feed the leadership's need for an enemy image of the United States to distract the populace from the country's economic woes. Alternatively and hopefully, they could lead the leaders to conclude that a calmer international context, including better United States-Russian relations, would allow them to focus on tackling their domestic problems.

The Obama administration has an interest in exploring whether United States-Russian relations can be put on a more solid footing. Securing Russian help on issues such as controlling nuclear materials, pressing Iran to forego nuclear arms, access to Afghanistan, and countering international terrorism, is in the United States interest.

A more robust relationship, one that addresses issues of interest to Moscow, will give Washington greater leverage with Russia. The administration should seek a balance in its policy, making clear the unacceptability of actions that violate international norms, while encouraging a broader, more positive relationship.

Washington should offer initiatives to test Moscow's readiness to put relations on a more even keel. First, I would suggest that the administration revive strategic nuclear arms reductions negotiations.

This would lower the level of nuclear weapons, while exerting a positive influence on the broader relationship as arms control has done in the past. The administration should propose reducing United States and Russian strategic warheads to no more than 1,000 on each side, with limits on strategic missiles and bombers.

Missile defense is a charged issue. I would suggest the administration impose a 2- or 3-year moratorium on construction of a missile defense system in Central Europe, taking advantage of the high probability that current plans would have that system operational well before the Iranians acquire a long range missile.

The administration should tell Moscow that the moratorium could be extended were credible evidence to emerge that the Iranian missile or nuclear programs had been delayed or ended.

Let me add one comment on Iran. We should seek a more robust Russian policy on Iran, but we should bear in mind that Moscow sees Teheran as its gateway to the Persian Gulf. Moreover, while the Russians do not want a nuclear armed Iran, they do not see it as the same nightmare scenario that we do.

Given this difference in interests and sense of urgency, the Russians likely will not be as helpful as we would want. The administration should work to broaden commercial relations with Russia. The United States should support Russian entry into the World Trade Organization, and revisit the peaceful nuclear cooperation agreement.

Also, it is time for Congress to graduate Russia from the provisions of the Jackson-Vanik amendment, and grant Russia permanent, normal trade relation status. Watever problems Russia has had with democracy, on emigration Russia has met the requirements of Jackson-Vanik.

European security and in particular United States and NATO relations with Russia's neighbors will remain difficult issues on the agenda. The United States should take account of Russia's legitimate interests.

But it should not accept a Russian sphere of influence and it should support the right of countries, such as Ukraine and Georgia, as sovereign states to determine their own foreign policy course.

At the same time, the administration should consider ways to broaden NATO-Russia relations. There are many questions on which the alliance and Moscow can and should cooperate. Such co-

operation will be key to the difficult task of changing Russian perceptions of NATO.

Mr. Chairman, the United States and Russia are unlikely to agree on every issue, but those issues on which our interests converge can provide a foundation for a stronger relationship.

During his February 7 speech in Munich, Vice President Biden indicated that the administration is ready to reverse the declining relations. As Washington puts forward its specific proposals, the test will be whether Moscow responds in a reciprocal manner.

If it does, we should see welcome movement to strengthen the United States-Russia relationship. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Pifer follows:]

BROOKINGS

**Statement before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs**

# *An Agenda for U.S.-Russian Relations in 2009*

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# An Agenda for U.S.-Russian Relations in 2009

**Introduction**

As the Bush administration came to a close, U.S.-Russian relations had fallen to their lowest point since the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. Moscow and Washington share the blame. We witnessed how thin the bilateral relationship had become last August. When the Russians acted militarily against Georgia, no evidence suggests that concern about damaging U.S.-Russian relations had any restraining influence; there was no cooperation that Washington could threaten about which the Russians much cared.

President Obama and his administration have an opportunity to turn the page and, as Vice President Biden said on February 7, "reset" the relationship. Doing so is in the U.S. interest. We want Russian help in meeting challenges such as controlling nuclear materials, pressing Iran to forgo nuclear arms, maintaining access to Afghanistan, and countering international terrorism. Building areas of cooperation advances specific U.S. goals and, the more there is to the bilateral relationship, the greater the interest it will hold for Russia, and the greater the leverage Washington will have with Moscow.

The Obama administration should aim for a balance in its approach, making clear the unacceptability of Russian actions that violate international norms while encouraging cooperation. The administration can offer initiatives in several areas to test Moscow's readiness for improved relations and cooperation on issues of interest to Washington:

- A revived strategic nuclear arms control dialogue could lower the number of nuclear weapons while exerting a positive influence on the broader relationship. The administration should propose reducing to no more than 1000 strategic nuclear warheads on each side, with ancillary limits on missiles and bombers.

- Different timelines for Iran's expected missile development and for U.S. missile defense deployment in Central Europe offer a possibility to defuse the missile defense issue. The administration should impose a two- or three-year moratorium on construction of missile defense facilities in Central Europe.

- Expanding commercial links would add economic ballast that could cushion the overall relationship against differences on other issues. Specific steps could include bringing Russia into the World Trade Organization, moving forward with the

agreement on civil nuclear cooperation, and conferring permanent normal trade relations status on Russia and graduating it from the Jackson-Vanik Amendment.

- Greater creativity in the NATO-Russia channel could, over the longer term, reshape how Moscow views the Alliance and European security. Such creativity should include new areas for NATO-Russia cooperation, such as counter-piracy operations, and greater transparency about NATO plans. We should expect, however, that U.S. and NATO relations with Russia's neighbors will remain a difficult issue.

**The Decline in U.S.-Russian Relations**

The Moscow summit in May 2002 represented the high point in U.S.-Russian relations under Presidents Bush and Putin. It produced the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT), a joint declaration on a new strategic partnership, and joint statements promising broader cooperation in areas such as energy, missile defense and people-to-people exchanges. The presidents spoke of "a new era" and "qualitatively new relations."

Unfortunately, the two countries failed to realize this potential. Part of the failure can be attributed to the fact that President Bush became preoccupied with Iraq, while President Putin focused his energies on ensuring Kremlin control over key levers of domestic power and cultivating relations with Europe. The bilateral relationship with Moscow is one of the most demanding that Washington has in terms of requiring guidance from the highest level. It did not get it. Moreover, the National Security Council and its Russian counterpart failed to press their bureaucracies to implement presidential commitments. Each side became perturbed at the other's perceived lack of follow-through.

Most importantly, building a qualitatively new relationship required that the sides compromise and let the other "win" on some issues. But both appeared increasingly unready to make such compromises as an investment for better relations. For the Bush administration, Russia did not seem all that relevant to its foreign policy priorities.

Drift turned into decline in 2004, as the extent of Russia's democratic rollback became apparent. The 2003 Rose and 2004 Orange revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine triggered new anxieties in the Kremlin, which regarded those upheavals as U.S.-organized special operations to hem Russia in. Moscow's more assertive policy in the post-Soviet space raised alarm in Washington regarding Russia's intentions towards its neighbors.

Despite numerous meetings between Presidents Bush and Putin, difficult problems piled up without resolution. Russia agreed to modest sanctions on Iran but resisted more severe penalties. Moscow, Washington and the European Union failed to find a common approach to the question of recognizing Kosovo. NATO's outreach to Ukraine and Georgia provoked a Moscow push-back when the two countries sought membership action plans. Prospective U.S. missile defense deployments in Central Europe prompted a sharp Russian reaction. The fate of the Strategic Arms Reductions Treaty (START), on which the SORT Treaty depends for verification measures, became increasingly urgent, but negotiations produced no agreement. Russian unhappiness grew over NATO

members' refusal to ratify the 1999 adapted Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty to replace the original 1991 CFE Treaty, and Moscow suspended observance of the latter.

Meeting in Sochi in April 2008, the two presidents issued a "U.S.-Russia Strategic Framework Declaration." It was a curious document on which to close out seven years of Bush-Putin meetings. It summarized the range of issues on the bilateral agenda and recorded a few accomplishments. Mostly, however, the declaration presented an agenda of commitments to reach future agreement and unfulfilled ambitions. It did not describe anything like the relationship that the presidents had projected in 2002. The relationship worsened further in the aftermath of the August Russia-Georgia conflict.

**What Does Russia Want?**

Following the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991, the Russians had to cope with the loss of empire, an economic bust worse than the Great Depression, and a political system that, while incorporating democratic practices, often appeared chaotic and corrupt. After 1999, however, Russia experienced a remarkable economic resurgence. By 2008, gross domestic product topped $1.3 trillion, four times the level in 1998. Living standards rose accordingly, which led to stunning Putin public approval numbers.

As Russia acquired greater economic wherewithal, Moscow's foreign policy adopted an increasingly assertive tone and made clear that restoring Russia's "great power" status topped its agenda. Russian policy was also shaped by a perception that the West had taken advantage of Russian weakness in the 1990s. The evidence does not support this, but the perception has taken hold among the Russian elite and public.

Although Moscow does not appear to have a fully coherent vision of its place in the global order, some of its specific desires are apparent.

*Russia wants to develop its own political and economic model, free of criticism from the West.* In the early Putin years, Kremlin pundits spoke of "managed democracy." They later talked of "sovereign democracy." Its key feature appears to be that it is solely up to Russia's leaders to decide the country's form of government.

*Russia wants the role and the influence of the United States reduced.* President Medvedev said last August that "the world should be multi-polar. ... We cannot accept a world order in which one country makes all the decisions, even as serious and influential a country as the United States of America. Such a world is unstable ..." The Russians calculate that a reduction in U.S. influence will benefit their power position.

*Russia wants a sphere of influence or "privileged interests" in the post-Soviet space.* As Russia regained its strength, it escalated its expectations regarding its neighbors' behavior. Moscow does not seek to recreate the USSR but wants deference from states in the post-Soviet space to its vital interests. Russia's stance appears most pointed with regard to how it views NATO's relations with Ukraine and Georgia.

*Russia wants a seat and to have its views accommodated when major European or global issues are being decided.* Russia insists on a seat almost regardless of whether or not it can bring something to the table to facilitate resolution of the problem. Simply being there appears important to Moscow, part of Russia's due as a recovered "great power."

*Russia does not seek isolation but wants better relations with Europe and the United States on its terms.* The Russians would like better relations with the West, but they insist that Russia's interests and concerns be addressed.

One of Washington's mistakes at the turn of the century was to misunderstand Russian weakness. It is important now, however, not to overestimate Russia's strength. The country faces major vulnerabilities, including a fragile economy that is overly dependent on energy revenues; infrastructure that is in abysmal shape; a frightening demographic decline; and lingering separatist tensions in the northern Caucasus.

These are serious problems, and it is not clear that Russia's leadership has the agility and creativity to cope successfully with them. The most critical test now is dealing with the ramifications of the global financial and economic crisis, which is having an ever greater impact on the Russian economy. Over the past five months, Russia has expended more than $200 billion of its foreign reserves. After nearly eight years of high economic growth, Russia faces a recession in 2009. The leadership is concerned not only about the economy, but also about the public reaction and possibility of social unrest.

How this economic test and other challenges will shape Russian foreign policy remains to be seen. One possibility is that they will feed the leadership's need for an "enemy image" of the United States in order to rally the populace and distract it from domestic economic difficulties. Alternatively, these challenges could prompt the leadership to conclude that a more cooperative international context, including improved U.S.-Russian relations, would allow it to focus on tackling its internal troubles.

**An Agenda for Engaging Russia in 2009**

The Obama administration has an interest in exploring whether U.S.-Russian relations can be put on a more solid footing. Securing Russian help on issues such as controlling nuclear materials, pressing Iran to forgo nuclear arms, maintaining access to Afghanistan, and countering international terrorism is in the U.S. interest.

Building areas of cooperation not only can advance specific U.S. goals, it can reduce frictions on other issues. A more positive U.S.-Russian relationship and more robust NATO-Russia relationship would put Russian concerns about NATO relations with Ukraine and Georgia in a different context.

Further, the more there is to the bilateral relationship, the greater the interest it will hold for Russia, and the greater the leverage Washington will have with Moscow. Washington should aim to build a relationship so that, in any future crisis similar to that between

Russia and Georgia last August, concern about damaging relations with the United States would exercise a restraining influence on Moscow's policy choice.

As the United States copes with complex problems that increasingly demand multilateral responses, it should test Russia's readiness to be a partner. Ultimately, it makes sense to have Russia in institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, as that will encourage Moscow to play by rules that have served the United States well.

Likewise, as Washington works with others to craft multilateral approaches and perhaps new institutions to deal with problems such as international terrorism, climate change and the global financial crisis, it should be inclusive. Having Russia at the table in a cooperative frame of mind is vastly preferable to a truculent Russia that seeks to undermine U.S.-preferred institutions and initiatives or create alternatives.

Overall, the administration should seek a balance in its Russia policy, making clear the unacceptability of actions that violate international norms while encouraging a broader, more positive relationship. For example, Washington should continue to support Georgia, maintain a policy of non-recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and call on Russia to fully implement the terms of the ceasefire agreement with Georgia. At the same time, Washington should look for ways to improve relations with Russia that would benefit the United States. The administration should offer initiatives to test Moscow's willingness to put relations on a more even keel.

***A Return to Nuclear Arms Control***

President Obama should revive the bilateral nuclear arms reductions process. Doing so will have a positive impact on the broader relationship. Moscow values an ongoing nuclear arms dialogue with Washington, if for no other reason than it acknowledges Russia's place as a nuclear superpower. The president should take advantage of this.

President Reagan and Secretary of State Shultz made arms control a central element of a broader U.S.-Soviet agenda in the 1980s, recognizing that Moscow's interest in arms control created diplomatic space to pursue other issues, including human rights. Their strategy worked. As President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev signed the treaty banning U.S. and Russian medium-range missiles and narrowed differences over strategic weapons, parallel discussions made progress on human rights issues, including winning exit permission for Soviet dissidents, and secured more helpful Soviet approaches to problems such as Angola and the Middle East peace process.

Presidents George H. W. Bush and Clinton likewise gave arms control special attention. Arms control progress contributed to a positive relationship, with significant pay-offs for other U.S. foreign policy goals: Russia went along with German reunification; lent diplomatic support during the 1990-91 Gulf crisis; cooperated with the United States and NATO in ending the Bosnia conflict; and acquiesced in NATO enlargement.

By contrast, the Bush administration saw little value to arms control after it withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and signed the SORT Treaty in 2002, preferring flexibility with regard to U.S. force structure to limitation and predictability. That came at a price: a weaker relationship and decreased leverage on other issues with Russia.

Beyond giving a positive impulse to the bilateral relationship, arms control is in the U.S. interest. SORT allows each side to deploy 2200 strategic warheads. Such levels make no sense today. U.S. security would be enhanced by reducing the number of nuclear weapons capable of reaching America. Moreover, given its imposing conventional force capabilities, the United States has every incentive to deemphasize nuclear weapons.

The administration thus should propose to the Russians negotiating a legally-binding treaty under which each side would reduce and limit the number of its strategic warheads to no more than 1000. Other elements of the treaty should include limits on the numbers of strategic missiles and bombers, at levels well below those in START; provisions for a small but limited number of spare warheads beyond the 1000, under stringent monitoring requirements; and provisions for "down-loading" missile-carrying submarines, with appropriate monitoring, so that some missile tubes could be filled with concrete ballast or other obstruction to reduce the number of missiles that a submarine can carry.

Such a package would interest the Russians. The principal challenge would be designing monitoring rules that would give each side confidence that warheads had been reduced and eliminated.

The administration could frame this as a first step. It should also seek Senate ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Subsequent steps should include conclusion of fissile material cut-off treaty, talks on the possibility for greater transparency regarding and reductions in U.S. and Russian tactical nuclear weapons, and further reductions in strategic forces in the context of a multilateral negotiation that would bring in the other nations that possess strategic nuclear arms.

An early renewed U.S. effort to cut strategic nuclear arsenals would restore American credibility and leadership in the nuclear non-proliferation area, particularly as the Non-Proliferation Treaty review conference approaches in May 2010.

One nuclear arms control question must be dealt with as a matter of urgency. SORT depends entirely on START for its monitoring and verification regime, but START by its terms expires in December 2009. The administration should propose quick negotiation of an extension of START for one to two years, to allow time for completion of a new strategic nuclear arms reductions accord.

***U.S.-Russian Relations, Iran's Nuclear Program and Missile Defense***

One goal of Obama administration policy with Russia will understandably be to secure greater assistance in persuading Iran to forgo a nuclear enrichment program that could produce weapon-grade material. The Russians have been somewhat helpful in the P5-

plus-1 process (the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France plus Germany), but have resisted UN Security Council sanctions that would have real bite and have continued negotiations on conventional arms sales to Iran.

In parallel with more forthcoming approaches on nuclear arms control and missile defense (as described below), the administration should seek a more robust Russian approach on Iran. The U.S. government needs to participate directly in the negotiating process with Iran and make clear the steps it would be prepared to take in moving toward more normal U.S.-Iranian relations if Iran makes the right choice; Russia needs to do its part by beefing up the costs to Tehran of continuing its nuclear program, including by forgoing the sale to Iran of advanced S-300 anti-aircraft missile systems. The goal should be to make the choice before the Iranian leadership as stark as possible.

That said, Moscow has a variety of interests in Iran that it will not want to abandon. Iran is Russia's gateway to the Persian Gulf; the geopolitics and economic links will make Moscow reluctant to sacrifice that. Moreover, although Russia does not want a nuclear-armed Iran, the prospect does not present the nightmare scenario for Moscow that it does for Washington. For Russia it would be something akin to Pakistan's 1998 nuclear tests – a bad thing, but a problem that could be managed. American diplomacy should seek to persuade Russia to be more helpful on Iran, including by stressing to the Russians the danger that Iranian acquisition of a nuclear weapon will prompt other countries in the Middle East to seek their own nuclear capability. But Washington should be realistic in its expectations; Moscow probably will not go as far as Washington would like.

U.S. plans to deploy a ballistic missile radar in the Czech Republic and ten silo-based interceptor missiles in Poland to counter an Iranian long-range missile have become one of the most contentious issues on the U.S.-Russian agenda. The Russians strongly object and in response have threatened to deploy tactical missiles on Poland's border as well as target nuclear weapons against both Poland and the Czech Republic.

Moscow asserts that Iran remains years away from having a ballistic missile that could reach all of Europe, let alone the United States, and attributes the U.S. system to other motives, including use against Russian missiles. Whether or not the U.S. interceptors could have any meaningful capability against Russian strategic missiles, the prospect of U.S. military infrastructure on the territory of new NATO members and closer to Russian borders clearly upsets Moscow.

Differing timelines for the U.S. missile defense system and the development of a long-range Iranian missile offer the administration an opportunity to find a way forward. The Bush administration aimed to complete and make the sites in Poland and the Czech Republic operational in 2012. Most projections suggest that the Iranians will need more time to develop a long-range missile.

The administration should adopt a two- or three-year moratorium on construction of the missile defense sites. Procurement of long-term lead items and interceptor tests would

not be affected, but the moratorium would mean no construction at the sites in Poland or the Czech Republic.

Washington should inform the Russian government that, if credible information were to emerge that the Iranian missile program or Iranian nuclear program had been abandoned or otherwise slowed, the moratorium could be extended. (It is the combination of a long-range ballistic missile and a nuclear warhead that poses the main threat.) This would give Moscow an incentive to press the Iranians on their missile and nuclear programs.

The odds that Moscow would lean hard on Tehran, or that the Iranians would take heed were the Russians to do so, might be low. But the moratorium would defuse missile defense as a problem issue on the U.S.-Russia agenda. And, if the Iranians in the end went forward and developed a long-range missile, the moratorium would not prevent the United States from having a timely response.

Ideally, the missile defense question could be moved into a cooperative NATO-Russia context. Alternatively, given the relationship between strategic offensive forces and strategic missile defense, the Russians could seek to address missile defense in the context of renewed negotiations on strategic arms reductions (it would be preferable, however, not to burden the strategic arms negotiations with missile defense; the United States and Russia would maintain strong, viable nuclear deterrents with 1000 strategic warheads). The moratorium approach, in any case, would not preclude moving missile defense into either the NATO-Russia or strategic nuclear arms context at some point.

***Broadening Commercial Relations***

The Obama administration should seek to broaden commercial links with Russia. This would benefit U.S. companies by increasing access to a $1.3 trillion economy. It would also add economic ballast that could cushion the overall relationship against the unpredictable swings caused by political differences.

Anemic U.S.-Russian commercial relations fall well below their potential. In 2007, two-way trade totaled $27 billion. Russia represented the thirtieth largest market for U.S. exports. This level creates little incentive for Moscow or Washington to adopt more measured stances when political differences arise. By contrast, U.S.-Chinese trade totaled almost $387 billion in 2007, while EU-Russian trade in goods and services totaled 262 billion Euros (approximately $364 billion). This is real money, which factors into the calculations of political leaders as they manage the overall relationships.

The U.S. government cannot force business into Russia. But the administration, in concert with the European Union, should work with Moscow to shape a more predictable business climate that will increase confidence among Western companies that they can operate more "normally" in the Russian market. Among other things, this means addressing barriers such as corruption, red tape, and arbitrary customs and tax rules, and in particular strengthening the rule of law and contract enforcement.

Other issues could contribute to improved commercial relations. The first is a policy of U.S. support for getting Russia into the WTO. Bringing Russia in makes sense, as it will require that Russia play by global trade rules that have served U.S. interests well.

The second involves the U.S.-Russian peaceful nuclear cooperation agreement, which was withdrawn from Congressional consideration in the aftermath of the Russia-Georgia conflict. Depending on how relations between Washington and Moscow develop, this agreement merits a second look. Approval will be necessary if U.S. companies are to engage in civil nuclear projects in Russia and if the Russian atomic energy entity is to go forward with its plan to store nuclear waste from third-country reactors (most of such waste would come from U.S.-origin nuclear fuel, provided to third countries under agreements by which the U.S. government must approve where the waste gets stored).

Deepening commercial relations will mean business for U.S. companies and a stabilizing element in the broader bilateral relationship. Those ties may benefit from relaunching a high-level business dialogue, led on the U.S. side by the secretary of commerce. If oil prices stay low and Russian interest in joint projects to develop new Russian energy fields grows, this might justify renewal of a high-level commercial energy dialogue.

The Jackson-Vanik Amendment is another trade-related issue. Enacted in 1974, Jackson-Vanik prohibited the USSR (or its successor states) from permanent normal trade relations status until it permitted free emigration of religious minorities, particularly Soviet Jews. In the 1990s, Russia relaxed its exit rules and allowed hundreds of thousands of Jews to emigrate. The Clinton administration in 1994 found Russia in full compliance with Jackson-Vanik, a view reaffirmed by the Bush administration. The remaining step is to confer permanent normal trade relations status on Russia and graduate it from the amendment's provisions, which requires a Congressional vote.

Graduating Russia would be an important symbolic step for the Russians. Congress should act on this. Graduation should not be seen as a concession to Russia; it is something that Moscow earned long ago by doing the right thing on emigration.

***A Wide-Ranging Dialogue on European Security Issues***

U.S. policy has long supported widening the circle of European integration and the Euro-Atlantic community, including by enfolding former states of the Warsaw Pact. That stems from a belief that a wider, more stable and secure Europe is in the U.S. interest. Institutionally, this has involved integration into the European Union and NATO.

NATO poses a neuralgic issue for the Russians, who consider its enlargement one cost of Russian weakness in the 1990s. The desires of Ukraine and Georgia to draw closer to the Alliance and have membership action plans (MAPs) provoked particular concern in Moscow. The Russians see enlargement as directed against Russia rather than as an effort to underpin the difficult democratic and economic transformations made by countries on the Alliance's eastern flank and to foster a more stable and secure Europe.

The administration needs to find a balance between acknowledging Russia's legitimate security interests and supporting the right of Russia's neighbors, as sovereign states, to choose their own foreign policy courses. The United States and NATO should not acquiesce to Russian efforts to fence Ukraine and Georgia off from Europe and the Euro-Atlantic community. The Alliance should continue to keep an open door and work with those countries as they prepare themselves for possible membership.

That said, gaining Alliance approval for MAPs for Ukraine or Georgia in 2009 is all but impossible. The December NATO foreign ministers' meeting identified annual national programs as the mechanisms for Ukraine and Georgia to develop their relationships with NATO at the current stage. The administration can work with Kyiv, Tbilisi and NATO so that those countries' annual national programs incorporate all or most of the content of a MAP – without the heat and friction that have come to surround MAPs.

The administration should be prepared for a full discussion of these issues with Moscow. It should lay out its rationale for supporting Ukraine and Georgia and their integration into NATO, and its ideas for strengthening NATO-Russia relations.

Ultimately, it is in the U.S. and Alliance interest that Moscow comes to see that NATO is not a threat but increasingly a partner. This will require greater creativity in broadening NATO-Russia cooperation. One area should be missile defense. Another area, with NATO and Russian warships operating off Somalia's coast, should be joint operations to counter piracy. While difficult to envisage in the near term, step-by-step development of a truly cooperative relationship will at some point require the confidence to accept joint decision-making on certain issues.

NATO might also offer to make more concrete the assurances that were offered Russia regarding restraint in the deployment of NATO forces on the territory of new NATO members. The Alliance stated in 1997 that there would be no permanent stationing of substantial combat forces on the territory of new member states, but it never defined what it meant by "substantial combat forces."

Ending the perception of NATO as a threat will take time and work. It will also require that Moscow not ignore the dramatic changes of the past 20 years in NATO's force structure and missions. Russians all too often overlook the Alliance's transformation. For example, NATO's key tasks today – peacekeeping in the Balkans, coalition operations in Afghanistan, and Active Endeavor's effort to interdict the illicit transit of materials related to weapons of mass destruction – all benefit Russian interests.

At the same time, Washington should be more sensitive to Russian perceptions. While the missile defense planned for Central Europe is aimed at Iran, not Russia, and the establishment of U.S. brigade headquarters in Bulgaria and Romania was driven by Middle East requirements, not Russia, Moscow sees U.S. flags going up in new NATO states, ever closer to Russia.

Speaking in Germany last June, President Medvedev proposed "a general European summit to start the drafting" of an accord "to achieve a comprehensive resolution of the security indivisibility and arms control issues in Europe." Suspicion has arisen in Western capitals that the Russian goal is to unduly constrain NATO's freedom of action or secure for Moscow a veto over major European security developments.

Skepticism is justified. An array of structures already exist that deal with European security questions, including NATO, the NATO-Russia Council, the European Union and its common foreign and security policy, OSCE and the CFE Treaty. Still, Washington should not dismiss the Medvedev proposal out of hand. It should instead challenge the Russians to provide greater detail and explain what this concept would accomplish that existing institutions cannot do. Washington should consult with allies on whether the Russian ideas are manageable or useful, and on possible counterproposals. It should not fear a conference. U.S. positions are likely to have greater support than bad Russian ideas. The United States should lead in shaping a Western response; it would not want to be left on the sidelines if the Europeans decide to engage on their own.

Russia suspended its observation of the CFE Treaty at the end of 2007, in protest at the failure to bring into force the Adapted CFE Treaty. NATO countries have not ratified the adapted treaty due to Russia's failure to fully live up to commitments to withdraw forces from Georgia and Moldova (Russia denies any such conditionality). Given that most CFE participating states have cut their conventional forces to levels well below those required by the treaty, the main loss from Russia's suspension has been the confidence created by regularized data exchanges, notifications and inspections.

The Bush administration suggested parallel actions, a plan of steps that NATO would take to ratify the Adapted CFE Treaty in parallel with certain Russian steps. Finding agreement on this will be more difficult in the aftermath of the Russia-Georgia conflict, but the Obama administration should continue to pursue the parallel actions concept. If other new U.S. proposals have resonance in Moscow, the Russians may give this idea greater attention. Alternatively, NATO countries could seek to fold the parallel actions plan – or at least resumption of data exchanges, notifications and inspections – into a package involving agreement to Medvedev's proposed European security conference.

***Global Issues***

Washington should add transnational issues such as climate change, biological threats and the risk of pandemic to the U.S.-Russian agenda, which already includes nuclear security and countering international terrorism. Successful strategies for coping with these challenges will require multilateral efforts, something the Russians have said they want to pursue as part of their foreign policy approach. The United States and Russia have few inherent conflicts of interest on these questions. They might find they could forge common strategies and jointly take a leading role in broader multilateral efforts.

The Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, which now has more than 65 participating states, offers a good example of successful cooperation between

Washington and Moscow to develop a multilateral approach. This could be expanded in the nuclear security area. Russia has offered to supply and reprocess nuclear fuel for third countries. The United States and Russia should explore together how to facilitate the use of nuclear power globally without spreading nuclear enrichment and reprocessing capabilities to third countries, which would greatly raise the overall risks of nuclear proliferation. Such a U.S.-Russian effort, coupled with a renewed strategic arms reduction dialogue, would bolster the basic premise of the Non-Proliferation Treaty: the nuclear weapons states disarm, non-nuclear weapons states get access to civilian nuclear power, and all work together to prevent proliferation.

***Democracy***

Democracy is a touchy question with Moscow. Russians today enjoy more individual freedoms than they did during Soviet times, but the Putin era brought a significant rollback in democratic liberties and checks and balances compared to the 1990s. While the United States has little real leverage to affect Russian internal politics, the U.S. president cannot ignore serious democracy problems and will want to help create space for Russians to determine a more democratic course. The president should address U.S. concerns in private discussions with Russian leaders and on occasion in public. This can be done tactfully, but it has to be done even if little immediate result is likely.

Washington should not break faith with those in Russia who seek to promote a more democratic future for the Russian people. In the long run, a Russia with real democracy and accountable leaders will be one in which the United States has confidence as a reliable partner. It will also be a Russia that is viewed by its neighbors as a more predictable and less threatening state.

**Implementing the Agenda**

Implementing this agenda will require careful preparation in Washington and coordination with European allies. First, the administration needs to get in place its people and establish an interagency process to manage the Russia agenda.

The NSC needs a process to ensure follow-up to agreements reached between the president and his Russian counterpart. Nothing takes the gloss off of a summit more quickly than the sense that the other side failed to carry out commitments. This has been one of the problems of the past six years. Presidents Bush and Putin agreed on an "action checklist" in 2003, but it quickly became apparent to the bureaucracies on both sides that there was no penalty for missing deadlines, and the checklist lost much of its value.

One other problem complicated the Bush administration's management of U.S.-Russian relations. While bureaucratic in nature, it had strategic ramifications. Key questions on the U.S.-Russia agenda – such as nuclear arms control, missile defense, NATO, Iran's nuclear ambitions and counterterrorism – were handled by different interagency groups. The NSC lacked a structure to overcome this stove-piping and review the overall U.S.-Russia relationship.

The Obama administration needs an explicit Russia policy – one that is considered, focused and sustained – if it wishes to get Russia right. This requires a structure to take an overall look at the broad U.S.-Russia agenda, set priorities, and identify for senior policy-makers possible trade-offs. Building a successful U.S.-Russian relationship, one in which cooperative issues increasingly outnumber problem areas and in which Russian help can be secured on questions of key interest to Washington, requires letting Moscow sometimes "win." Obviously, issues on which to let Russia "win" need to be chosen with care, but investing in a long-term relationship will require that the administration on occasion scale back its goals to accommodate solutions of interest to Moscow.

As it formulates its approach, the Obama administration should consult regularly with Europe – NATO, the European Union and key European countries. Many of the major issues on the U.S.-Russian agenda affect important European equities. The consultation process can be cumbersome; "Europe" often needs time to find its voice. Washington, however, will find its bargaining position with Moscow strengthened if it has robust European support. The April NATO summit offers the president an early opportunity to consult directly with his European counterparts on Russia and policy toward Russia.

A successful U.S.-Russian relationship is labor-intensive at the highest level. The presidents often must resolve substantive differences that other bilateral relationships settle at lower levels. While President Obama will have many demands on his time, he should return to the Reagan, Bush 41 and Clinton models for engaging Russian leaders.

Those summits allowed plenty of time for presidential discussions. They typically lasted two days, including two or three working sessions, each ranging up to three hours in length. This ensured that the presidents addressed not only the burning problems at the top of the agenda but the broad range of issues. While Presidents Bush and Putin met far more frequently than did their predecessors – nearly 30 times over seven years – their meetings usually comprised a single, relatively short working session. Certain issues had to be discussed at every meeting, so time limitations meant that other questions received no or, at best, cursory attention.

President Obama might also consider a mechanism similar to the binational commission chaired by Vice President Gore and Prime Minister Chernomyrdin. The commission, which operated from 1993-99, provided a senior political forum for resolving problems that defied settlement at lower levels. The commission ensured that eight U.S. cabinet officers and agency heads sat down once or twice a year with their Russian counterparts – a broad range of contacts with senior Russian officials that has not been duplicated since.

**Conclusion**

One objective of the administration's early engagement with Russia should be to offer new proposals and test Moscow's readiness to respond in kind. The proposals outlined above would advance U.S. security and economic interests in a manner that addresses at least some stated Russian concerns. If Washington tries but is rebuffed, the United States

would not be disadvantaged. It would have greater credibility with its European allies for having made the effort. That could translate into support for a sterner Western approach, should Russian policies require that. The hope, however, is that such an approach can move the U.S.-Russian relationship to a more positive and sustainable basis.

The United States and Russia are unlikely to agree on every issue. On some questions, interests simply differ. But their interests coincide on a number of questions. Those questions can offer a foundation for better relations.

In this regard, Vice President Biden, during his February 7 speech in Munich, and Under Secretary of State Burns, during his visit the following week to Moscow, laid out approaches toward Russia that suggest the Obama administration will offer new ideas. As Washington puts forward its specific proposals, the test will be whether Moscow responds in a reciprocal manner. If so, we should see welcome movement to strengthen the U.S.-Russian relationship.

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Chairman BERMAN. Thank you, Ambassador Pifer. Dr. Illarionov, it is good to have you here, and I recognize you for your opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF ANDREI ILLARIONOV, PH.D., SENIOR FELLOW, CENTER FOR GLOBAL LIBERTY AND PROSPERITY, CATO INSTITUTE**

Mr. ILLARIONOV. Chairman Berman, Ranking Member Ros-Lehtinen, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to share with you my views on the current state of the United States-Russia relations, and on possible consequences of its strengthening in the near future.

I would start with the point of a statement of a disclaimer. Since I am a Russian citizen, and I am a former government employee of the Russian Federation, and since I am working at the Cato Institute here in Washington, which is a non-partisan think tank, not related to any particular political party here in the United States, as well as any country in the world, I am not in a position to provide any advices to you, distinguished members of the United States Congress, as well as the United States Government, or any government of the world.

So that is why my testimony and my comments should not be taken as advice, but just as background information that you are welcome to use as you find it suitable. I would touch upon three issues.

The first one is challenges from the past United States-Russia relations; challenges to the Russian people, to the neighboring countries, and world peace form the current political regime in Russia; and third is the forecast of what could happen if the approach that has been announced and is being discussed right now by the current administration will be fulfilled fully.

On the first issue, we have some past experience of approaches of at least two of the last United States administrations toward

Russia. It is a very clear. Each of the two administrations, both President Bill Clinton, and President George W. Bush, started with great expectations, with a lot of efforts invested by the leaders of those administrations into bilateral relations, led to substantial disappointment, and finally to a great failure.

Right now the beginning of President Obama administration's term resembles the beginning of the two preceding administrations' terms. We can see similar desire to improve bilateral relations, similar positive statements, similar promising gestures and visits.

But since nothing has changed in the nature of political regimes in our or both countries, it is rather hard not to expect the repetition of an already known pattern, high expectations, deep disappointments and heavy failures, for the third time.

So that is why before any new policy is implemented and even being formulated, it is worth to spend some time to analyze the reasons of the two previous failures. To my mind, they arise mainly from, first, the nature of the current Russian political regime.

Second, a lack of understanding on the part of the United States the internal logic and intentions of the current Russian leadership. Third, the inability of the democratic nations to deal with the challenges of the powerful authoritative regimes.

Fourth, the inability of the democratic nations to provide clear distinctions between the Russian Government and the Russian people.

And the fifth, sometimes a double-standards approach in the United States policies toward similar issues on the international arena, and especially toward Russia.

The third issue concerning the current political regime in Russia, Russia today is not a democratic country. The international organization, Freedom House, assigns "Not Free" status to Russia since 2004 for each of the last 5 years.

According to the classification of the political regimes, the current one in Russia should be considered as hard authoritarianism, and the central place in the Russian political system is occupied by almost all political power by the members of the Corporation of Secret Police officers.

If we look into the mass media, there is no independent mass media in Russia, and virtually none that is existing, and the TV channels, radio, printed media are heavily censored with government propaganda disseminating cult of power and violence, directed against democrats, liberals, westerners and the West itself, including the United States.

And the level of the anti-United States propaganda is incomparable even with one of the Soviet times of the 1970s and 1980s that at least I can recall myself.

As for the electoral system, there is no free, open, competitive parliamentary or Presidential election in Russia at least since 1999 and the year 2000. The last two elections, the parliamentary one in December 2007 and the Presidential one in March 2008, have been conducted as special operations and been heavily rigged with at least 20 million ballots in each case stuffed in favor of the regime candidates.

None of the opposition political parties or opposition politicians has been allowed either to participate in the elections, or even to be registered at the Ministry of Justice.

Members of political opposition in Russia are regularly being harassed, intimidated, beaten by the regime's security forces. Each rally of the opposition since the year 2006 has been harshly attacked by the riot police; hundreds of people have been beaten, arrested, and thrown into mail.

In the country right now according to human rights organizations, there is more than 80 political prisoners, compared to even our neighbor, Belarus, has released last political prisoners last summer. But Belarus is considered to be the last dictatorship in Europe.

There is a base of terror in the last 10 years. Many people, and especially politicians, journalists, lawyers, who were in opposition to or independent of the current political regime, have been assassinated or died under very suspicious circumstances.

In the last 6 years, we have had a number of wars that have been launched by the Russian regime against neighbors, including Belarus, Ukraine, and a number of wars like the Energy Supply War against Georgia, including the last war with conventional forces that started actually several years before the year 2008, when it became clear to many others.

Chairman BERMAN. Dr. Illarionov, if you could start to sum up your statement because of the time and the votes.

Mr. ILLARIONOV. My last comment will be concerning the proposed collaboration, and revisionist. I think in the current situation, when the Russian leadership has announced that it has so-called privileged interests in the neighboring countries, the suggestion to increase collaboration with the political regime in Russia would be considered by these and actually considered, and it is actually met with dissatisfaction, and that it would be a clear indication to continue the policy of restoration of the fact of control and influence of the Russian Secret Police of the post-Soviet states.

And in this case unfortunately we know what it means by deliberation from the European history of the 20th century, and who collaborationists are. So from the European history point of view, if a revisionist power has a clear-cut goal to restore influence and control over its neighbors, and where other powers choose not to defend victims of their attacks, but instead try to collaborate with an aggressor, we unfortunately know what could happen.

So that is why we know the consequences of the collaborationist policy, and those who retreat and surrender will not get peace, but war, war with unpredictable and nasty results, and might also be not a one war. So that is why we should not say that we did not get the warning. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Illarionov follows:]

**Testimony of Andrei Illarionov**
**Senior Fellow of the Cato Institute, Washington, DC,**
**and the President of the Institute of Economic Analysis, Moscow,**
**before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs**
**at the hearing "From Competition to Collaboration:**
**Strengthening the U.S.-Russia Relationship",**
**February 25, 2009.**

Chairman Berman, Ranking member Ros-Lehtinen, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share with you my views on the current status of the U.S.-Russia relationship and on possible consequences of its strengthening in near future.

**Disclaimer**

First of all, I would like to provide you with a necessary disclaimer.

- I am a Russian citizen.
- For number of years I worked at different posts at the Russian government and the Administration of the Russian President.
- Since my resignation from the positions of the Russian President's Personal Representative to the G-8 (Sherpa) and Adviser to the Russian President in 2005 I was not employed by any Government and did not receive any payment from neither Russian Government, nor the US Government, nor any other Government.
- For last two and half years I do work for the Cato Institute here in Washington that is a non-partisan think tank not associated with any of political parties existed in the US or in any other country in the world. According to its Charter the Cato Institute does not accept financial support from any government, government agency or government-related program.
- As a Russian citizen and a Cato Institute employee I am not in a position to advice either the US Government, or esteemed members of the US Congress. Whatever I will say here today, should be considered as background information that you are welcome to use as you find it suitable.
- Whatever I will say here, should be considered as solely my personal views on what I see as the best interests of the Russian people on a way one day to create and develop Russia as a democratic, open, peaceful and prosperous country, respected and respectable member of the international community, reliable partner of other democratic countries, including the United States. I solely bear responsibility for everything that I say here today.

In my testimony I touch upon three issues:

- challenges from the past of the U.S.-Russia relationship;
- challenges to the Russian people, neighboring countries, and world peace from the current political regime in Russia;
- forecast of what could happen if the approach that is been announced and taken by the current administration will be fulfilled.

**Challenges from the past of the U.S.-Russia relationship**

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the formation of independent Russia two US Administrations, namely that of the President Bill Clinton and that of the President George W. Bush, began their terms with clear formulated goal – to improve the US-Russia cooperation. Each of the administrations started their terms with great expectations for fruitful bilateral relations. Regardless of their individual approaches, personal attitudes, content of issues at the agenda, both US administrations have invested heavily in terms of time, efforts, attention of their key members, including both Presidents, into improvement of the U.S.-Russia relations. Both administrations have created special bodies for development of these relations (the so called Gore-Chernomyrdin commission by the Clinton administration and bilateral Group of High level by the Bush administrations). Many delegations have crossed the ocean, many hours have been spent in the conversations, many decisions have been taken.

The outcomes of these efforts are well known. They were outright failures. Russia has failed to be integrated fully into the community of the modern democratic peaceful nations. Each US administration has finished its term in the office with the U.S.-Russian relations at much lower level than they were at its beginning. The leading feeling at the end of each Administration's term is widely shared disappointment – both among members of the administrations and in the Russian and the US societies.

The beginning of the President Obama Administration's term strikingly resembles the beginning of the two preceding administrations' terms. We can see similar desire to improve bilateral relations, similar positive statements, similar promising gestures and visits. Since nothing serious has changed in the nature of political regimes in both countries it is rather hard not to expect the repetition of already known pattern – high expectations – deep disappointments – heavy failures – for the third time.

That is why before any new policy is being implemented and even being formulated it is worth to spend some time to analyze the reasons of two previous failures. To my mind, they arise mainly from the nature of the current Russian political regime, lack of understanding on the part of the US the internal logic and intentions of the current Russian leadership, inability of the democratic nations to deal with the challenges of the powerful authoritarian regimes, and a double standards approach in the US policies towards similar issues on the international arena.

**Nature of the current political regime in Russia**

Today's Russia is not a democratic country. The international human rights organization Freedom House assigns "Not Free" status to Russia since 2004 for each of the last 5 years. According to the classification of the political regimes, the current one in Russia should be considered as hard authoritarianism. The central place in the Russian political system is occupied by the Corporation of the secret police.

The Corporation of Secret Police.

The personnel of Federal Security Service – both in active service as well as retired one[1] – form a special type of unity (non-necessarily institutionalized) that can be called *brotherhood*, *order*, or *corporation*. The Corporation of the secret police operatives (CSP) includes first of all acting and former officers of the FSB[2] (former KGB), and to a lesser extent FSO[3] and Prosecutor General Office. Officers of GRU[4] and SVR[5] do also play some role. The members of the Corporation do share strong allegiance to their respective organizations, strict codes of conduct and of honor, basic principles of behavior, including among others the principle of mutual support to each other in any circumstances and the principle of *omerta*. Since the Corporation preserves traditions, hierarchies, codes and habits of secret police and intelligence services, its members show high degree of obedience to the current leadership, strong loyalty to each other, rather strict discipline. There are both formal and informal means of enforcing these norms. Violators of the code of conduct are subject to the harshest forms of punishment, including the highest form[6].

CSP and the Russian society.

Members of the CSP are specially trained, strongly motivated and mentally oriented to use force against other people and in this regard differ substantially from civilians. The important distinction of enforcement in today's Russia from enforcement in rule-based nations is that in the former case it doesn't necessarily imply enforcement of Law. It means solely enforcement of Power and Force regardless of Law, quite often against Law. Members of the Corporation are trained and inspired with *the superiority complex* over the rest of the population. Members of the Corporation exude a sense of being the *bosses* that superior to other people who are not members of the CSP. They are equipped with membership *perks*, including two most tangible instruments conferring real power over the rest of population in today's Russia – the FSB IDs[7] and the right to carry and use weapons.

Capture of state power by the CSP.

Since ascension of Vladimir Putin to power the members of the CSP have infiltrated all branches of power in Russia. According to the Olga Kryshtanovskaya's study[8] up to 77% of the 1016 top government positions have been taken by people with security background (26% with openly stated affiliation to different enforcement agencies and other 51% with hidden affiliation)[9]. Main bodies of the Russian state (Presidential Administration, Government apparatus, Tax agency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense,

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[1] Well known statement of Vladimir Putin claims that "There is no such a person like a retired secret police operative".
[2] Federal Security Service – *Federalnaja sluzhba bezopasnosti (FSB)*.
[3] Federal Guard Service - *Federalnaja sluzhba ohrany (FSO)*.
[4] Chief Intelligence Office – *Glavnoe razvedyvatelnoe upravlenie (GRU)*.
[5] Foreign Intelligence Service – *Sluzhba vneshnej razvedki (SVR)*.
[6] Choice of polonium in the Alexander Litvinenko's poisoning case in London in November 2006 is generally attributed to his violation of the assumed code of conduct of the FSB operative.
[7] So called "vezdehod" – document giving right to enter any place, office, building, territory regardless their property or status, whether it is state, public or private.
[8] As of December 2006.
[9] Famous quotation from the Vladimir Putin's speech at the Chekist Day party at the FSB headquarters in December 1999 was: "I want to report to you that the mission of the group of FSB officers sent undercover to work at the [Russian] government is being accomplished successfully."

Parliament, Court system) as well as main business groups and most important mass-media outlets have been captured by the CSP. Since the members of the CSP have taken key positions in the most important institutions of the state, business groups, media channels, almost all valuable resources available in the society (political, executive, legal, judicial, enforcement, military, economic, financial, media) have been concentrated and in many cases monopolized in the hands of the CSP.

Mass media.

Independent mass media in Russia virtually does not exist. The TV channels, radio, printed media are heavily censored with government propaganda disseminating cult of power and violence, directed against democrats, liberals, westerners and the West itself, including and first of all the US. The level of the anti-US propaganda is incomparable even with one of the Soviet times in at least 1970-s and 1980s.

Electoral system.

Since 1999 there is no free, open, competitive parliamentary or presidential election in Russia. The last two elections – the parliamentary one in December 2007 and presidential one in March 2008 – have been conducted as special operations and been heavily rigged with at least 20 mln ballots in each case stuffed in favor of the regime candidates. None of the opposition political parties or opposition politicians has been allowed either to participate in the elections, or even to be registered at the Ministry of Justice. For comparison, the Belarusian regime that is considered to be "the last dictatorship in Europe" has allowed opposition politicians to participate in the parliamentary election last September.

Political opposition.

Members of political opposition in Russia are regularly being harassed, intimidated, beaten by the regime's security forces. Each rally of the opposition since 2006 is been harshly attacked by the riot police, hundreds of people have been beaten, arrested and thrown into jails. In April 2007 the former world chess champion Garry Kasparov has been arrested and put into jail for 5 days as he was walking along the Tverskaya street in the downtown of Moscow. The same day there was an attempt to arrest the former Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov.

Political prisoners.

According to the human rights organizations there are about 80 political prisoners in the country who are serving their terms for their views and political activities from 2 to 9 years in the jails and camps. One of the best known political prisoners is Mikhail Khodorkovsky who has been sentenced to 9 years in the Siberian camp Krasnokamensk on the basis of purely fabricated case against him and his oil company YUKOS. The company has been confiscated and taken by one of the leading figures of the current Chekist regime who is occupying now the position of the deputy prime minister of the Russian government. Mr. Khodorkovsky has recently been transported to Moscow to be put on another fabricated trial with a clear purpose to keep him behind the bars forever. Just for comparison, the Mr. Lukashenka's political regime in the neighboring Belarus that is very far from any notion of genuine democracy, has nevertheless released the last four political prisoners in summer 2008. It is worth to note that until recently the EU had

the so called smart sanctions against Mr. Lukashenka and members of his government. As far as I know, the US still has similar sanctions against the Belarusian leadership, but not against the Russian one.

Terror.

The fate of some other people dealing with the regime is even worse.

Over the last ten years tens of thousands of people have been killed in Chechnya, Ingushetia, Dagestan, North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria.

In Autumn 1999 several hundred people died in the series of apartment bombings across the country – from Moscow to Buynaks in Dagestan. In the contrast to the claims from the FSB that those bombings have been organized by Chechens, the local militia was able to detain several people who tried to bomb the apartment block in the city of Ryazan. They turn out to be the agents of the FSB. Then the FSB has announced that there were "anti-terrorist exercises" with the goal to put explosives into the basement of the apartment building. After the story became widely known, the detained FSB agents have been freed by the order from Moscow and finally disappeared, while apartments' bombings stopped unexpectedly as they started.

Since November 1998 several presidential hopefuls, politicians, journalists, lawyers who were either in opposition to or independent of the current political regime, have been directly assassinated or died in the very suspicious circumstances. Among them are the leader of the Democratic Russia party and the member of the parliament Galina Starovoitova, journalist and editor Artem Borovik, journalist and member of the Yabloko party Larisa Yudina, the governor of the Krasnoyarsk region general Alexander Lebed who came third in the 1999 presidential election, the leader of the Army Movement, member of the parliament general Lev Rokhlin, the leader of the Liberal party of Russia Sergei Yushenkov, one of the organizers of the Liberal party of Russia Vladimir Golovlev, journalist and one of the leaders of the Yabloko party, the member of the parliament Yuri Shekochikhin, ethnographer Nikolay Girenko, journalist and writer Anna Politkovskaya, journalist and military expert Ivan Safronov, the deputy head of the Central Bank of Russia Andrei Kozlov, the member of National Bolshevist party Yuri Chervochkin, journalist, editor and one of the leaders of the Ingush national movement Magomed Yevloyev, lawyer Stanislav Markelov, journalist Anastasia Baburova.

Since March 1999 the wave of political assassinations moved beyond the Russian border. In March 1999 Vyacheslav Chornovol, leader of the People's Ruch and a candidate for the Ukrainian presidential election that autumn, died in the car accident near Kiev that has been identified by the Ukrainian security service as the assassination organized by FSB. In February 2004 Zelimkhan Yandarbiev, the former Chechen President, and his 15-year old son have been bombed in Doha by two officers with diplomatic passports from the Russian embassy in Qatar, Mr. Yandarbiev has died. In September 2004 Victor Yushenko, the presidential candidate in the Ukrainian presidential election in November 2004, has been poisoned and barely survived. In November 2006 the former FSB officer Alexander Litvinenko has been poisoned by polonium in the downtown of London and died.

Wars against other nations.

Since 2004 the Russian political regime embarked on a series of wars of different kinds against foreign nations. The list of wars waged in the last 5 years is not a short one:

Russian-Byelorussian Gas War 2004,
First Russian-Ukrainian Gas War, January 2006,
Russian-Georgian Energy Supply War, January 2006,
Russian-Georgian Wine and Mineral Water War, March-April 2006,
Russian-Georgian Spy War, September-October 2006,
Russian-Estonian Monuments and Cyber War, April-May 2007,
Russian-Georgian Conventional War, April-October 2008,
Russian-Azerbaijan Cyber War, August 2008,
Second Russian-Ukrainian Gas War, January 2009,
Anti-US full fledged Propaganda War, 2006-2009.

The Russian-Georgian War that started last year was under preparations by the Russian authorities at least since February 2003. This is one of the most serious international crises for at least last 30 years that constitutes one of the most worrisome developments of our days. This war has brought:

a) The first massive use of the military forces by Russia beyond its borders since the Soviet Union's intervention against Afghanistan in 1978;

b) The first intervention against an independent country in Europe since the Soviet Union's intervention against Czechoslovakia in 1968;

c) The first intervention against an independent country in Europe that led to unilateral changes of the internationally recognized borders in Europe since the late 1930s and early 1940s. Particular similarities of these events with the events of the 1930s are especially troubling.

Uniqueness of the current political regime in Russia.

One of the most important characteristics of the current political regime in Russia is that the real political power in the country belongs neither to one person, nor family, nor military junta, nor party, nor ethnic group. The power belongs to the corporation of secret police operatives. The political system in which secret police plays an important role in the political system is not very special. *VChK-OGPU-NKVD-MGB-KGB* in the Communist USSR, *Gestapo* in Nazi Germany, *SAVAK* in the Shah's Iran had enormous powers in those tyrannical regimes. Yet, none of those secret police organizations did possess supreme power in the respective countries. In all previous historic cases secret police and its leaders have been subordinate to their political masters – whether they were Stalin, Hitler, or Pehlevi, regardless how monstrous they have been. The political regime in today's Russia is therefore quite unique, since so far there was probably no country in the world history (at least in the relatively developed part of the world in the XXth and the XXIst centuries) where a secret police organization did capture all political, administrative, military, economic, financial, and media powers.

It does not mean that all population of the country or even all staff of the government agencies do belong to the secret police. Many of them are professional and honest people who genuinely alien to the Chekist/Mafiosi structures. Nevertheless, it is not they who do have control over the state, and not they who are in charge of the key decisions in the country.

**Forecast.**

Even a brief look on the US-Russia relations over the last 10 years reveals quite a striking fact of the *permanent retreat* of the American side on almost all issues in the bilateral relations.

Ten years ago then the Clinton administration has expressed publicly and energetically its concern on violation of basic human rights in Chechnya. The Russian side has suggested to the partner not to intervene in the internal Russian issues. The US administration has finally followed the advice.

After that over the years the US administrations have expressed concerns, dissatisfaction, protests on number of issues: on destruction of freedom of mass media in Russia, on imprisonment of Mr. Khodorkovsky and takeover of Yukos, on destruction of the rule of law, electoral system, political opposition, NGOs, property rights, including not only of the Russian but also US companies (for example Exxon), on political assassinations, on aggressive behavior versus Russia's neighbors, finally on outright aggression of the Russian army against sovereign state and the UN member Georgia, that led to effective annexation of two Georgian territories Abkhazia and South Ossetia, creation of the Russian military bases and deployment of regular Russian forces over there.

In all those cases the Russian side has suggested the US *to shut up*, and in all those cases the American side followed this advice sooner or later. There were no sanctions whatsoever for any behavior of the Russian authorities.

Recently the US has even resumed the NATO-Russia cooperation in less than 6 months after the Russian aggression against Georgia, after the rudest violation of the international law and order, the UN Charter and the UN Resolution #3314 of December 14, 1974.

The recent suggestion "to reset the button" in the US-Russia relations and "to start the relations with the blank list" is met with poorly hided joy and satisfaction on a part of the Russian Chekists. For them it means achievement of many goals that they dreamt of. This "the so called *Munich statement*" is interpreted by them as a de-facto acceptance by the current US administration of the idea that has been put forward by the Russian leadership last summer – the idea of the de-facto restoration of the Russian Chekists' (secret police) influence and power over the post-Soviet space under the title of having the areas with the so called *privileged interests*. This idea is already being under hasty implementation with the creation of the $10 bn fund and substantial Russian credits given to Kyrgyzstan, Belarus, Ukraine, recent agreement of creation of joint fast reaction troops of 7 nations of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, establishing substantial financial and personal control over mass media in the FSU countries, permanent attempts to change the political regime and western orientation of Ukraine and finishing the conquest of Georgia.

Policy of the proclaimed "cooperation", "movement from competition to collaboration", "improvement of relations" with the current political regime in Russia has very clear consequences. Such type of behavior on the part of the US administration can not be called even a *retreat*. It is not even an *appeasement policy* that is so well known to all of us by *another Munch decision* in 1938. It is a *surrender*. It is a full, absolute and unconditional surrender to the regime of the secret police officers, chekists and Mafiosi

bandits in today's Russia. It is a surrender of the hopes and efforts of the Russian democrats as well as peoples of the post-Soviet states who dreamed to get out of the system that controlled and tortured them for almost a century – back to the Chekists' power. But it is even more. It is a clear manifestation to all democratic and liberal forces in Russia and in other post-Soviet states that on all internal and external issues of their struggle against forces of the past the United States now abandons them and takes the position of their deadly adversaries and enemies. And therefore it is an open invitation for new adventures of the Russian Chekists' regime in the post-Soviet space and at some points beyond it.

The very term for such type of policy has not been chosen by me, it is borrowed from the title of this hearing, namely, *collaboration*. Therefore the term chosen for the agents of the US administration's policy in the coming era is "*collaborationists*". Collaboration between two governments today could be only on the Russian regime's terms and for fulfillment of the Russian government's goals. From the European history of the XX century we know what means if a revisionist power has a clear-cut goal to restore influence and control over its neighbors while other powers chose not to defend victims of the attacks, but instead try to collaborate with an aggressor.

We know the consequences of the collaborationist policy – those who retreat and surrender will get not peace, but war, war with unpredictable and nasty results. It might be also not a one war.

When the world will get there, we need to remember that we had a warning.

Thank you.

Chairman BERMAN. Thank you very much, Dr. Illarionov. The bells have gone off, and we have three votes on the House floor. I think I will recognize myself for 5 minutes of questions, and then we will recess for probably 40 minutes or so to have those three votes, and then resume the hearing immediately after the last of those three votes. So I yield myself 5 minutes.

I would like to ask two questions. Since I only have 5 minutes for questions and answers, if you could take a couple of minutes, Dr. Legvold and Ambassador Pifer, to respond to the conclusion that some of our members, and Dr. Illarionov, most vividly have portrayed about Russia.

Essentially they argued that trying to enhance cooperation, to move from competition to collaboration, to improve relations with this current political regime, amounts to surrender. That in effect this regime is perhaps even worse than Belarus in the context of Dr. Illarionov's view, and that our colleague, Mr. Royce, said that essentially Russian interests and Russia's nature prevent some of the hopes you had. And so my first question would be if the two of you could just respond to that.

And then to Dr. Illarionov, I have one question, which is notwithstanding everything you have said. Given the reasons that the Jackson-Vanik law was passed—which dealt with freedom of immigration for religious minorities—have been resolved, does a unilateral decision to repeal the Jackson-Vanik law based on the fact that the conditions for its passage have been met and its provisions have been waived regularly, does that in your way of thinking justify us standing true to our commitments that we have made to repeal it? Dr. Legvold.

Mr. LEGVOLD. I don't think there is any question that trends within Russia, particularly within the 8 years under President Putin—and they have not been fundamentally reversed under President Medvedev—have moved in the direction of semi-authoritarianism, greater illiberalism, with consequences for the freedom of expression, the press, certainly assembly, capacity to organize effective political parties, create a diverse Duma, and all of that. Trends have gone in the wrong direction.

The picture is more mixed from my point of view than Dr. Illarionov has presented, both in terms of how much access there is to reasonable information for the average Russian through media one way or another. And the conditions generally, which ought not to be portrayed as the equivalent of the Soviet Union. That is not what life is in Russia today politically, and it certainly is not as authoritarian as a country that I spent a fair amount of time studying and being in, which is Belarus.

So that is a false comparison, but the real question is whether there are some counter-trends within the country in this respect, and I think there are. One of the most interesting things that I have seen is a report that was issued a few weeks ago by the Institute of Contemporary Development, which is critical primarily in the context of the current economic crisis, of what have been the failings of the government first, to prepare the way for dealing effectively with something like this, and then the steps that they took in the early stages of it.

But linked to the basic problems at this political level, and the need to begin opening the system, the report speaks specifically about what is necessary in order to get fuller and freer elections, talks about the need for judicial reform and improvement; talks about dealing with nongovernmental organizations, and having a decent and respectful dialogue with the public, with the business community, in order to confront this crisis directly.

Why is this report and this organization interesting? Because the chairman of the board for this organization is President Medvedev, and Igor Jurgens, who heads this institute, is one of the closest intellectual advisors to President Medvedev.

Chairman BERMAN. Dr. Legvold, there is only about 35 seconds left. So I am going to interrupt you because time is so short. But Dr. Illarionov, on the Jackson-Vanik repeal issue, your opinion?

Mr. ILLARIONOV. I think this issue is certainly outdated for several years if not the case. The problem is the timing of the abolishment of this particular legislation, and how it is being interpreted. But in essence it is definitely outdated.

Chairman BERMAN. And therefore should be repealed?

Mr. ILLARIONOV. Once again, I am not in a position to advise the United States Congress on what to do, but from the position of the Russian citizen, and Russian Government employees, it is absolutely outdated.

Chairman BERMAN. I thank you all, and Ambassador Pifer, I am sorry that I didn't have a chance to hear you speak on this subject, but I have a feeling that we can work through your answer down the line.

The committee is now in recess until after the third vote. We will be back to resume the questioning. Thank you very much.

I am going to provide unanimous consent, if no one objects, to the introduction of written statements by the committee members who chose not to make oral presentations. Without objection, so ordered.

[Recess.]

Chairman BERMAN. If the witnesses could return to the box, we can resume cross-examination. Is Dr. Illarionov around? Oh, he did tell us that he had to leave at noon. But it is not noon yet. His papers are here.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Chairman.

Chairman BERMAN. Yes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. My questions are directed to Dr. Illarionov, and it gave me an opportunity to practice the pronunciation. Since he is here——

Chairman BERMAN. You can do that right now.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I will.

Chairman BERMAN. Illarionov. Is that right?

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. You would think that someone with as complicated a name as I have would be able to tackle some of these other ones that are not as difficult. Thank you.

Sir, in your testimony, you describe the uniqueness of the current political regime in Russia.

One of the most important characteristics of the current political regime in Russia is that the real political power in the country belongs neither to one person, nor family, nor military junta, nor party, nor ethnic group.

The power instead belongs to the "corporation of secret police" operatives.

Reading the rest of your written testimony, is it fair to say that Russia today has become the first major nuclear arms state to fall under the control of a sort of mafia?

Mr. ILLARIONOV. Among political scientists and sociologists, there is a big debate concerning the classification of the organizations that professionally use force.

They start usually with the states, with different private organizations using violence to mark it. So I would not like to start the debate here, but at least usual approaches as they put all these organizations together as a big group.

Compared to other organizations like business companies, or corporations, they do not use violence. They use this kind of exchange for their products and services. So that is why generally speaking this is a big—some kind of a community or similar organizations that are professionally using force against other people.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. Continuing on with your written testimony, you state that even a brief look on the United States-Russia relationship over the last 10 years reveals the quite striking fact of the permanent retreat of the American side on almost all issues in the bilateral relationship.

You cite specific examples, and you state that in all those cases the Russian side has suggested that the United States shut up, and in all those cases the American side has followed that advice sooner or later. There were no sanctions by the United States whatsoever for the behavior of the Russian authorities.

What would you conclude from that? I know that you don't want to give policy advice, but how does the Russian Government see this lack of action by the United States as being an indication that they will suffer no repercussions were it to take further belligerent actions against its own people or across the borders?

Mr. ILLARIONOV. I would distinguish it between two axis; the Russian Government and the Russian leadership, and the Russian people. The Russian people do see this, and probably not all of them, but many of them, would see that there was a great concern because it would be considered of the United States, and also some other countries would take the other side in this battle between democratic and liberal forces in the country.

For the Russian leadership, and especially those people who represent the security police officers, they would be considered as a clear acceptance of the status quo, and a clear acceptance of the year that Russian authorities and the Russian secret police would restore their influence and control first on the territory of Russia, and second on the territory of the post-Soviet space.

So that is why it is considered to be as actually an invitation for future adventures in this area. That actually has been demonstrated so vividly in the last several months in the case of the aggression against Georgia, and aggressions against the Ukraine.

Using your question if I may just to use the comments concerning one of the statements of the members of the committee concerning the so-called Georgian attack on South Ossetia.

If you look into the general United Nations Assembly Resolution 3314 on December 14, 1974, which has a clear definition of aggres-

sion, there is a number of criteria. According to all these criteria, and without exception, what has happened in July and August of the year 2008 in Georgia clearly qualifies for aggression on the side of Russia/Ossetia/Abkhazia versus Georgia, and Georgia was only returning with a quite substantial delay of actions in this regard.

So we are talking about aggression, and even if I were to assume that de facto South Ossetia and Abkhazia were so-called party states, it would be an act of aggression on their side versus Georgia.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman BERMAN. The time for the gentlelady has expired. The gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. Delahunt, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Yes, thank you. I would like to address my questions to Dr. Legvold. I appreciate all of your testimony. If Georgia had been a member of NATO would we have been obligated to involve ourselves militarily in the conflict of August? That is one question.

The second question would be there has been discussion about the understanding or purported understanding between the United States and Russia in the aftermath of the demise of the Soviet Union, and conversations between Gorbachev and then Secretary of State Baker regarding expansion of NATO. What is your understanding?

And could you provide us with the European views of the relationship between, their view of the relationship between themselves and Russia and the United States and Russia? Where is the sentiment?

And also in terms of NATO is there polling data indicating, particularly in the case of Ukraine what the Ukrainian population feels about accession to NATO?

Mr. LEGVOLD. On the first question, had Georgian been within NATO, and we had not in the accession to NATO made a formal exclusion of Article 5 guarantees, yes, then we would have been committed to defend it.

The issue of Article 5 guarantees did arise when we were considering Baltic admission to NATO, because the implications of that are very severe, and the decision was that there can't be a two-track or a discriminatory version of membership within NATO.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Let me rephrase it. We could have potentially been at war with Russia in August?

Mr. LEGVOLD. We would have had an obligation to defend Georgia.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Which meant that we would have been at war with Russia if Georgia——

Mr. LEGVOLD. Yes, of course.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Thank you. And then if you could go to the next question.

Mr. LEGVOLD. The second question was in terms of NATO enlargement and the original understanding. The Russian leadership believes that they had assurances that there would be no enlargement of NATO beyond German borders, and they have even recently continued to cite a specific conversation with German leadership.

President Putin did it in the Munich speech in 2007 and on other occasions, and there are people who have participated on both sides of this in the United States and in Russia, who take different positions on what was the understanding.

I think it is a cloudy issue, and my impression is that in fact people were not thinking in terms of NATO enlargement. So it was never from my point of view in a way where it was clarified.

But the way that they talked about the issue generally has allowed the ambiguity to remain. That is, in effect what the Russian leadership has long said, going back to 1994 and 1995 with the first movement toward enlargement, is that at a minimum it violates the spirit of what they thought was happening at the time.

And the Americans say technically, no, there was no such assurance. The world has changed, and we have moved in this direction. So there is a kind of unfortunate ambiguity around that question, and I think neither side can claim to be right.

In terms of Europe's general attitude on Russia, it is plain that the Europeans for the most part, although the Europeans themselves are divided—the new members of the European Union or of NATO would have a different view from Germany, France, Italy, and so on—are in favor of engaging Russia.

They are not in favor of drawing new red lines or waging a new Cold War. They have believed all along that we cannot afford but to engage Russia.

They have growing concerns about what Russia did and are increasingly and directly critical of Russian action in Georgia in particular. But in general, they certainly are in favor of a broad-based engagement of Russia.

On the NATO enlargement issue, again there is division. The Swedes, and the Poles, and the Brits, were in favor of the American position of rapid movement for Georgia and Ukraine toward membership, including the so-called membership action plan.

The Germans, with the French standing at their back, and the Italians, and a number of others, are opposed to hot-housing the process. That is, of rushing the process, and they blocked it in the course of the last year. That is still very much the German position. I think that people recognize that we can't move beyond that.

Chairman BERMAN. I recognize the issue of public opinion of people in Ukraine was your question that did not get answered, but the time has expired.

I didn't perhaps explain it clearly enough, but on the questions, it is 5 minutes for the question and the answer. I am going to recognize another member, but my guess is that you will have an opportunity to get into this issue. The gentleman from Texas, Judge Poe, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate you all being here. Dr. Illarionov, I apologize for the way that I pronounce your name. My whole name has six letters in it.

So when I look at Russia and Putin, I see right across from Putin's chest KGB, and I think now he is wearing a shirt on the outside and instead of covering it up. It seems to me that the Russian bear is coming out of its cave because it got its feelings hurt because of the fall of the Soviet Union, and now it is trying to regain its territories.

But my question to you is that it seems that the Russians think that the United States has given them a free hand in the region, that they can do as they wish. When Putin invaded Georgia, his approval ratings went up tremendously, and of course the world has moved on.

Georgia was in the news for a few weeks, and then we just disregarded it. I was in Georgia, and they have lost 35 percent of their country to the Soviets, or the Russians I should say, building a naval base in Abkhazia, and I think in your testimony that you said that the current policy is worse than appeasement. It is more like surrender. Can you explain a little more of that and what you mean about that

Mr. ILLARIONOV. First, I don't know if I would use myself the story of the Russian bear, I am sorry, and I do believe that anybody, including the former members or even the retired officers of the KGB, has a right to improve. It includes everybody, including those who are occupying different positions in the Russian Government.

The problem is not in one person, but in the concentration of people with particular security background and training, and vision in the government offices. If you have 77 percent who have been trained to use force against other people, and occupying their top 1,000 positions, so that is why you have a critical mass of people who do not have the training, and opportunity, and experience in toleration and listening to other views, and to finding consensus views.

So that is a problem from my point of view. Second, as for opinion polls, I would suggest that we probably should not believe too much of the results of opinion polls in authoritarian regimes, and authoritarian states, and terrorist states, and dictatorship states.

If we have the results from North Korean opinion polls, should we believe that those are the exact desires, and thinking, and vision of North Korean people?

As for your questions concerning surrender, I mean first of all surrender on the issue of human rights and democracy. That is why it is normally an American agenda. First of all, the agenda for the Russian people, because for them this is of critical importance.

This is a life and death issue for millions of people in Russia, and that is why the United States administration and other countries abandoning Russian people, as well as people in other post-Soviet countries on the issue of human rights, and independent unions and courts, and elections, and even aggression against neighbors. So that is why they would concede that the United States administration is switching sides.

Mr. POE. A follow-up question on that. Can you explain a little more what you think the Russian attitude about American foreign policy toward them is?

Mr. ILLARIONOV. To what?

Mr. POE. What do you think the Russian attitude is about American policy toward Russia?

Mr. ILLARIONOV. Certainly different people have different views, and I am not in a position to reproduce opinion rules, especially as we know that they are heavily biased, but some people——

Mr. POE. Well, the government status, the government's position?

Mr. ILLARIONOV. The government status, or the government's position is reflective in the government's propaganda in the Russian media. It has been anti-United States propaganda for several years, going on for 24 hours a day.

And the United States is considered the main enemy, and it is not a very big secret to anybody who has spent just a few hours on Russian soil, and they would easily detect it, as well as your representatives in the United States Embassies, or any visitor in Russia.

Mr. POE. And do they assume that the United States is a paper tiger?

Mr. ILLARIONOV. I would not go into these details on how they would consider them, but they would consider them the main enemy.

Mr. POE. All right. I yield the rest of my time to Mr. Delahunt to follow up on the NATO question.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I thank my friend. I was referring to polling data of the Ukraine, and not from Russia, and Professor, if you are aware of what the sentiment is?

Chairman BERMAN. If you could just take 10 seconds to answer that.

Mr. LEGVOLD. Just 1 second. Actually Ambassador Pifer is very close to this issue because of his association, and he can correct the figures, but there has regularly been a very substantial majority against NATO membership within Ukraine.

Ukraine, both geographically and politically, is divided on the issue, but a substantial majority is against it, and this then becomes part of the policy debate with the Russians.

Chairman BERMAN. The time for the gentleman has expired. The gentleman from Georgia will be the last questioner. We have one vote, and so after his questions, we will recess, but only for about 10 minutes, and walk over, and come right back.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I really think that the question is does Russia really want to be a partner with us, and can they be a partner with us. I think that their very existence is tantamount and based on a foundation of having the United States of America as an adversary.

I mean, there are so many areas, and I think that each of you have mentioned in your own way that we need to find areas, and I agree, of engagement, to try engagement, but where? Where can we engage them? On every front that we have?

I mean, we can't engage them internally with their abuses to the personal freedoms that they are doing to the people in their own country. They run from an axis of the KGB, the mafia, and internal corruption within their entire system.

I think that there is a fear within the Russian people. You mentioned that one area of commonality should be that we are the world's largest user of energy. Russia is the world's largest producer of energy. That ought to be a fit.

But they turn and use their energy as a political weapon against their European neighbors; turning it off, and turning it on, and using them in a sense. Their last act, in terms of their area in Afghanistan where we might cooperate, rather than be cooperative, for whatever reason, they use their influence with Kyrgyzstan, and

the Manas Air Field, which is the main provider of the supply lines for our troops in Afghanistan, to close it down.

So the question becomes how do we dance with them when they refuse to get on the floor and dance with us, and where can we dance with them? Where can we engage them, and is it possible to engage them given the circumstances and the points that I just made both externally and internally to what is happening in Russia. I mean, that is the fundamental question here.

Chairman BERMAN. Ambassador Pifer.

Ambassador PIFER. No, I think that is a very good question, and what the administration needs to do is to come up with some ideas to test that proposition. You are dealing with a resurgent Russia, but it is perhaps less resurgent than it was 6 months ago as the economic and financial crisis hits home.

And the question in my mind is, if you offer proposals that do take account of Russian interests—I would argue that there is room to do something on strategic nuclear arms reductions, probably on missile defense—what kind of response do you get?

We can put forward some ideas, test them, and see what kind of Russian response we get. It is worth making that test. My own assumption is that based on what the Russians have said, for example, in response to the Vice President's comments in Munich, and things that I heard in Moscow in December, is that the Russians would respond with positive gestures of their own.

Mr. SCOTT. Let me follow up if I may to just one point on the missile defense. How do you think we could engage them on that, and still keep our standing with the Czechs and the Poles, who sort of stuck their necks out there with us? How do we do that?

Ambassador PIFER. Well, the question seems to me is, what is the way of getting rid of an Iranian long range ballistic missile threat? The Bush administration's plan was to have the sites in Poland and the Czech Republic operational in 2012.

Most analysts that I have talked to expect that the Iranians will not have a missile that is capable of reaching all of Europe and the United States until probably the 2015 time period.

The most optimistic pronouncement that I have seen publicly was President Bush, when he said that with foreign assistance Iran might have such a missile by 2015.

And it seems to me that that time frame gives us a couple of years, and therefore, my suggestion is that if we had a moratorium, where we could continue to go ahead and test the system, we could continue to go ahead with long term procurement of items, but no actual construction in Poland and the Czech Republic.

And then go to the Russians and say we can extend this moratorium if there is credible evidence that the Iranians have backed away on their missile program, or on their nuclear program.

Now I am not sure that the Russians would then crank up the pressure on Teheran, and I can't tell you that if the Russians were to do so the Iranians would respond. But at the least this would defuse this as a United States-Russia issue at least for a year or 2, and it would make clear it is linked to Iran and not Russia.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. We will recess for about 10 minutes, and Dr. Illarionov let us know be-

forehand that he could only be here for—oh, you will stay? Very good. The committee is recessed.

[Recess.]

Chairman BERMAN. The gentleman from California, Mr. Rohrabacher, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. It was a very important hearing in the science committee, and so I was unable to be here during the opening statements, and I would just like to make a few comments and hopefully a couple of inquiries.

But let me just note that I served as a special assistant to President Reagan during his 7 years of his 8 years in the White House, and I am very proud that I served you might say, as the tip of the spear in our efforts to bring down the Soviet Union.

But let me note that since the demise of communism in the Soviet Union, and now Russia, I have been just appalled at a continuing belligerent attitude by policy wonts and others in the United States toward a non-Communist Russia.

Ronald Reagan and those of us who fought the Cold War were fully aware that the Russian people were not our enemies, and instead it was the tyranny of communism that threatened the United States.

Yet, we have continued to beat the Russian bear to death, and it is unconscionable, and it has led to I think some of the negative things that are being talked about today can be traced to a hostile attitude by the United States toward a non-Communist Russia.

The fact that we treat Russia as a pariah, we held Jackson-Vanik over their heads. We have never given them a most favored nation status. We have excluded them from world markets. Yet, another country, Communist China, which has had no reform whatsoever, the world's worst human rights abuser, unlike Russia, which doesn't permit any NGOs or any freedom on the press, they get treated like they are our brothers.

And we should have open markets to China, and this difference and the treatment of Russia evolving out of communism, and the way that we have treated China, suggests, or would suggest to the Russian people that we consider the Russian people our enemies.

And I think we have had a missed opportunity in these last 10 years in particular, and I would hope that the current and new administration under President Obama does punch the reset button, and try to get things back together with Russia.

The Russian people should have been treated after communism fell as America's potentially best friends, but instead we continued to treat them in a hostile manner as if they continued to be an enemy, as demonstrate by our expansion of NATO, which was I think an understanding that the Cold War was over, and what was NATO going to be all about.

But instead they have every right to be disappointed, and think that we are acting in a belligerent way when we try to expand NATO right to their borders. Ronald Reagan meant for the missile defense system that he so firmly believed in to be a partnership with Russia if Russia gave up its claims and control of Eastern Europe.

I heard him say that himself a number of times, and instead, we put the Czechs and the Poles on the spot by what, by moving for-

ward with a missile defense system, and putting it right on Russia's borders.

Of course it is seen as a belligerent act, and I think that we need to move forward, and the EU, of course has kept Russia totally out of its market. It is a monopoly in itself, the EU.

They have spent hundreds of billions of dollars developing their own rocket system to launch satellites from the EU, rather than using Russian launches. What was Russia to do? How are they going to make any money if they are excluded from markets like that?

So as we listen to the testimony today, and from what I have heard, I think that we need to keep that in mind. That, yes, certainly there is a lot of imperfections going on among the Russian leadership today, but we I think have not done our job of making friends out of a former enemy.

And in fact some of the inherent belligerence in the policy and in professionals here in Washington, DC, I think have had a very negative impact on what was a potential friendship.

Now I only have 19 seconds left for you to comment on that diatribe.

Chairman BERMAN. Actually, I think there is a logic, with Dr. Illarionov to be the commentor. You have about 15 seconds.

Mr. ILLARIONOV. Right. I think that President Reagan was right. The Russian people are not the enemy to the United States people, and I think the real enemies of the United States people are our Russian thugs. But first of all, they are enemies to the Russian people.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired, and the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Payne, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much. I am sorry that I missed the testimony. I was at another hearing. But I certainly agree with the premise that the Russian people are still certainly the victims.

I had the privilege to travel to the USSR, and I visited Russia for several weeks in 1967, and the Russian people—as a matter of fact, I was kind of impressed by some of the literature which said that the Russian people don't want war. That was one of the first books that I saw in a bookstore.

And the people, believe it or not, at that time were very fearful of the United States of America, the so-called imperialists. And as you know, they had such a toll of death during World War II that they were really still at that time trying to regroup themselves.

So I think that the leadership, of course, and that is the problem in most countries, the leadership, are the ones that used the people. But they truly were fearful of Americans, and the way that America was characterized by the leadership.

Of course, we saw that the USSR found that it couldn't afford the continued military backup. The only difference between them and us was that they recognized it, and that is why they quit, and that is when the Iron Curtain came down, and the Warsaw Pact nations dissolved.

But I just have maybe a quick question or two. I had the opportunity to be in Georgia several months ago, and had dinner of course with President Saakashvili, and I just still wonder with the

South Ossetia situation, or whether the President of Georgia was sort of sucked into something, and kind of went over the line, and of course had this tremendous response by the Russian military.

And whether he was sort of lulled into this thing, and got in certainly over his head. I don't know what he was thinking.

And the second quick question is the Russians have said that they would be willing to assist us in our transports since the air strip in Kyrgyzstan is being closed. What do you think about that offer, Ambassador?

Ambassador PIFER. Let me start on the Georgia question. There is lots of evidence that the Russians were behaving provocatively prior to the August conflict, and the speed of the Russian military response shows that the Russians had prepared for it. They were ready for it, and they were probably grateful for the pretext.

But there still was a decision taken by President Saakashvili on August 7 to send the Georgian military into South Ossetia, and I think had he not made that decision, there would not have been a conflict.

There may have been the potential at some point down the road, but there was still this decision that I think was strategically unwise on his part.

Chairman BERMAN. Anybody on Kyrgyzstan?

Mr. LEGVOLD. If I may, I think in the case of Afghanistan, with both the issue of Manas and the offer by Medvedev and others to facilitate the transit of non-military goods across Russia, through Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and forward, is a reflection of a problem in Russian foreign policy.

It is a problem in any country's foreign policy when it is premised on the notion that you can have your cake and eat it too, because I think the Russians generally would be concerned if the United States and NATO effort fails in Afghanistan, and they end up with either a Taliban regime that threatens their southern front, or with enormous chaos within Afghanistan that produces a different kind of a threat in the area.

And in general when they say they want to cooperate, including a broader cooperation with the members of the so-called Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which means China as well, they mean it.

But at the same time, they continually seek to marginalize and then push the United States' military presence from Central Asia. That is trying to have your cake and eat it, too.

Mr. PAYNE. Before my time expires, Doctor, would you respond to either one of the questions on Saakashvili or the base?

Mr. LEGVOLD. I agree with what Ambassador Pifer says about the essential responsibility. The only thing that I would add, and I think we ought to pay attention to it, is the people like Nina Burjanadze, who was the Speaker of the Parliament, who was Saakashvili's partner in making the Rose Revolution in 2003, is making the same claim you are these days.

That is, she asks, how did we get ourselves into this situation, and what responsibility does Saakashvili bear for it? And in December their ambassador, and permanent representative to the U.N., Irakli Alasania, did the same thing. He joined the political opposition to Saakashvili in large part over the war.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. Later on, Dr. Illarionov, if you wanted to respond to that, I will give you an opportunity. The gentleman from California, Mr. Royce, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate it. I wanted to bring up this issue of Viktor Bout, which is an important issue for those of us who have been involved in that, as Don Payne and I have been, in seeing the results of the arms trade in sub-Saharan Africa, and the consequences of fueling those brutal civil wars on that continent.

Viktor Bout is a Russian citizen. He is known as the Merchant of Death allegedly for fueling these wars, and he was arrested last year in Thailand. Federal Prosecutors in New York are seeking his extradition. They would like to have him stand trial for conspiracy to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization.

Two dozen members of this House, including Chairman Berman, recently sent a letter to the administration asking that this extradition request remain a priority in United States-Thai relations.

And for that we were criticized by the Russian foreign ministry. They called our action bewildering. To me what is actually bewildering is the foreign ministry statement that "his guilt on charges put forth in the United States has not been proven."

And for us, of course, it has not been proven because in this country, you get a fair trial to decide your guilt or innocence. I am an advocate of a productive United States-Russian relationship, but it can't be built on disdain for justice as shown by Russian efforts to protect Bout.

Many suspect a level of Russian state sponsorship for Bout's actions in the past, and Dr. Illarionov's testimony points to a huge number, and I think you said 77 percent of top Russian officials have a security background.

I assume that means former GRU or KGB, or GRU or KGB is what you are referring to, and I would ask how you gauge Viktor Bout's influence with the Russian Government. That would be very interesting to me.

Mr. ILLARIONOV. I have to apologize, but I have no specialty in the case of Mr. Bout. I just know that the Russian Government has expressed its desire that Mr. Bout should not be prosecuted, and should be returned to Russia. That is the official statement of the Russian Government some time ago. If I may use this time to just comment on that issue.

Mr. ROYCE. Please, yes. Absolutely, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ILLARIONOV. Just concerning the question of Mr. Payne concerning the Georgian war. There is overwhelming evidence that, first of all, that it was an act of aggression on the part of the Russian/opposition troops.

According to the definition of aggression, there was a heavy deployment of the Russian regular troops prior to August 7 on the territory of Georgia, and in the territory of South Ossetia, with heavy equipment, with a number of units, which totaled up to 2,000 regular troops, plus several hundreds, if not thousands, of volunteers, and that also constituted an act of aggression according to the U.N. General Resolutions of 3314.

So that is why the response and the actions of Mr. Saakashvili and the Georgian Government later on August 7 is considered to be the response to the act of aggression.

Mr. ROYCE. Well, that is an interesting theory, but——

Mr. ILLARIONOV. It is not a theory. It is fact.

Mr. ROYCE. It is a theory, because I sat through an infinite number of briefings, as have you. This is a very complicated situation. But if we could go to the other two witnesses, I would like to ask the Ambassador and Doctor——

Mr. ILLARIONOV. I really appreciate that, but this is a fact.

Mr. ROYCE. We understand your understanding of the facts. It is a complicated case, but I would like to get back to the Bout case. So if I could have a response from either of the other witnesses.

Ambassador PIFER. Congressman, I think that the Russian statement said that his guilt has not been proven. In that case, Russia should not object to his being extradited to the United States and standing trial. Trying to block an extradition I don't think does Russia credit.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Ambassador. Doctor.

Mr. LEGVOLD. I agree entirely with what Ambassador Pifer has just said. I think it is a big mistake on their part. This is a case that I also have been interested in, because one of the things that I work on is the problem of corruption within the post-soviet space.

And it is clear that Bout, although I don't think he was an instrument of the Russian Government—I think his was quite a separate operation—was enabled by being able to work with parts of the establishment.

He would not have been able to build up that transport network with the Ilyushin-76s and he would not have had access to the arms that he was able to trade, if he had not been able to get that assistance from officials or people close to officials. Not only in Russia, but in other post-Soviet states as well. So this was a problem that extended beyond Russia. It includes the Ukraine and it includes Kazakhstan.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Chairman, might I just say that in my opinion, neither—and back to the other issue—the actions of President Saakashvili or the actions of the Russian Government have been helpful in the least in terms of stabilizing the situation in the Caucasuses, but I thank you for the hearing.

Chairman BERMAN. Thank you. Everyone here has had a chance to question. I have a couple of questions. So if everyone promises not to come into the room and ask some more questions, maybe the four of us can have a second round. Is that all right with your time schedule? Are you okay with that? Okay.

I will yield myself a couple of minutes here. I was a little confused about your focus on the long range Iranian missiles in your written testimony, and you made reference to it again orally.

Iran has a very active missile program. They have modified SCUDS, and they are developing and have their own missiles. They just orbited a satellite. When you define the problem in the context of dealing with Iran, and you say either their weapons program or their missile program, if one takes that and focuses on deferring the missile program, you are essentially saying that their weapons

program with the missiles they now have and are working on don't constitute a short term threat.

But in the context of the regional stability in the Middle East, and what now exists, I am wondering if that is not a mistake to provide that sort of alternative focus, Ambassador.

Ambassador PIFER. Mr. Chairman, that is a good question. The missile defense system that was planned by the Bush administration for deployment in Poland and the Czech Republic did not as I understand it have any capabilities against existing Iranian missiles.

Chairman BERMAN. I think that is correct.

Ambassador PIFER. It is really designed to deal with an Iranian missile that would have range either to reach the United States or all of Europe, and most of the projections that I found suggest that the experts—and of course we don't have perfect knowledge—but the expectation is that Iran would not have a missile of that range until at least 2015.

So that seems to give us some time given the difference between the planned operational date for the sites in Poland and the Czech Republic in 2012, to try to address this issue in a diplomatic way, with the focus being on getting rid of that missile perhaps through diplomacy, that the missile deployment in the Central European area is designed to counter.

Chairman BERMAN. Well, I take what you say, but focusing on that will not eliminate and does not deal with the issue of Russian cooperation in a program to stop Iran's nuclear weapons capability, and all that that represents for instability and danger in the Middle East.

Ambassador PIFER. And that is clear, but what my hope would be is that with other proposals—for example, if we begin to take more account of Russian concern on strategic nuclear arms reductions, in terms of crafting a proposal that meets some of their desires—can you change the relationship in a more positive way, where you encourage them to become more helpful on the nuclear issue.

And you have also got to go to the Russians and say, Look, it is not just a question about Iran getting a nuclear weapon. But what happens if the Iranians do so? What does Egypt do, and what does Saudi Arabia do, and what does Turkey do?

You also create a situation where the proliferation tensions in the Middle East could spiral way beyond what would be in either country's interests.

Chairman BERMAN. I guess I just prefer the articulation of if we can deal with the threat of the Iranian nuclear weapons program, our need for a missile defense against nuclear-tipped missiles becomes very different. But I take your point.

Ambassador PIFER. Mr. Chairman, I think you are exactly right. If Iran abandons their nuclear weapons program, I suspect that we would not be that concerned—if they have a long range missile, but all they have is a conventional warhead——

Chairman BERMAN. Right.

Ambassador PIFER. It certainly is many orders of magnitude less than the nuclear weapon on top.

Chairman BERMAN. My time has about expired, and I recognize the ranking member, Ms. Ros-Lehtinen.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. Just some little nuggets from the doctor's testimony: Today's Russia is not a democratic country and the international human rights organization, Freedom House, has assigned a "not free" status to Russia since 2004.

For each of the last 5 years according to the Freedom House classification of political regimes, the current one in Russia should be considered as "hard authoritarianism." The doctor goes on to say that independent mass media in Russia virtually does not exist.

Since 1999, there has been no free, open or competitive parliamentary or Presidential election in Russia. Members of the political opposition in Russia are regularly harassed, intimidated, beaten by the regimes' security forces, and on and on.

I would like to ask you, sir, in your written testimony you mention the 1999 apartment building bombings in Russia. I was wondering if you could elaborate more on what you think occurred, and who you think was responsible for those bombings. Thank you.

Mr. ILLARIONOV. It is still several elements that are quite unclear, because there was no proper investigation of these cases, and the very one case in the City of Ryazan, when the local militia has detained several people who tried to bomb the apartment building, and they turn out to be FSB agents.

They had been released from detention, and after that virtually disappeared. And seeing them, and seeing the same kind of journalists investigation have been broadcasted partially in Russia and became known, these apartment bombings stopped exactly unexpected as they started.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate it.

Chairman BERMAN. The gentleman from California—perish the thought—from Massachusetts, Mr. Delahunt.

Mr. DELAHUNT. In your dreams. [Laughter.]

Chairman BERMAN. Nightmares. [Laughter.]

Mr. DELAHUNT. It is interesting, and I just want to read into the record an excerpt from the Human Rights Report on Georgia. It is dated today, February 25, 2009, relative to the murky nature, if you will—and this is our own Department of State, which one could argue has been supportive of Georgia.

I am sure you are both or you are all aware that there was under the Bush administration some $1 billion appropriated for reconstruction in Georgia. I am reading from the Human Rights Report:

> "August 7, Senior Georgian Government officials reported that Tbilisi was launching an attack to defend against what it reported was a Russian invasion. Georgia launched a military operation into the capital, the local capital of Georgia, South Ossetian region, and other areas and separate borders, responding to what Russian officials reported was Georgia's use of heavy force and the killings of Russian peacemakers. Military operations by Georgia and Russian forces reportedly involved the use of indiscriminate force and resulted in civilian casualties, including a number of journalists."

It is murky. Earlier, and I think it was the ranking member, but there was a discussion about forcing—and if I am misstating this, I am sure I will be corrected, but was forcing Russia from the G–8. I would like to hear your response to that initiative. Dr. Legvold, we will start with you.

Mr. LEGVOLD. As a general proposition, I think with all ideas on how to deal with Russia, including that idea, the criterion ought to be what is going to work.

What is going to make a difference to the way in which the Russians behave, particularly in areas where we are concerned about what they are doing, and in this instance, what is happening internally within Russia.

I would raise questions about its feasibility, but then secondly also about its effectiveness. Feasibility because it simply will not pass within this body. But even were it to do so, it would not be supported by the other six members of the G–8. That is quite clear.

They have a very different approach to Russia, and therefore it will actually stand in the way of something else we need to accomplish, which is strengthening the Euro-Atlantic partnership, because we need to create some consonance around our respective Russia policies. This will work against that.

In terms of the effect within Russia itself, I think if anything it would be counterproductive. It certainly would be counterproductive in terms of the chance of accomplishing what Ambassador Pifer is saying of testing the waters, and seeing whether we can make progress in other areas where we have very important interests at stake, including the Iranian nuclear issue. But also strategic arms control, energy partnership, dealing with some important areas of regional instability, including the Middle East. So for those two reasons, I think we want to act in ways that are essentially pragmatic.

Chairman BERMAN. The gentleman from California, Mr. Royce, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROYCE. I would like to hear the assessments here in a little more detail on the chances of getting meaningful cooperation from Russia on the subject of the Iranian proliferation issue, and the Iranian development of nuclear weaponry.

I have my view on this, that the chances of it are pretty small, but I would like to hear from the experts. It seems obvious to a lot of us, and as was stated before, it would be very much in Russia's interests not to let the genie get further out of the bottle, and not to set off the arms race across the Sunni countries in the Middle East.

But maybe a little more detail about the dynamics internally, and why Russia has not come to this conclusion, because it is not in their long term interests. And let me ask one other question, too, because there was a Wall Street Journal Op Ed recently, and the writer there wrote:

> "A Cold War mentality lingers in America, too. A foreign policy, cast rich in Sovietologist by habit, overstates Russia's importance. The Embassy in Moscow is huge. Bilateral meetings inevitably become summits like the old days."

Why is that wrong? I mean, in point of fact, maybe we want that intense engagement and understanding. But anyway I would like your observations.

Ambassador PIFER. Well, Congressman, on the Russia question, I do not believe that the Russians think that a nuclear armed Iran is a good thing, but there are several factors which make it, Russian policy, such that they are not as helpful as we would like.

First of all, if you look at that space between the Mediterranean and India, Iran is really the Russians' one geopolitical gateway. So they don't want to put at risk their geopolitical interests, the economic interests they have in terms of trying to participate in Iran's development of energy, in terms of arms sales to Iran.

So there is an interest question. Second, I believe that the Russians do not see the Iranian capability to acquire nuclear weapons coming as quickly as we do. So that sense of urgency is not there in the same sense that it is here in Washington.

And, third, while Iranian development of a nuclear weapon I think for us is a nightmare scenario, for the Russians, it is a bad thing, but they believe that they can manage it.

It is sort of like when Pakistan tested nuclear weapons in 1998. They think they can manage that. I disagree with that.

Mr. ROYCE. Do the Russians still think that about Pakistan?

Ambassador PIFER. Well, the Russians would prefer not to see nuclear weapons in Pakistan, but they have come to the conclusion that they have to deal with it. It is a reality.

So I just think that there is that mismatch in that sense of urgency that we attach to what the Russians attach. I do believe that we can get them to be somewhat more helpful, but in terms of providing all of the sticks that would be useful in the sense of making the choice between the Iranians as stark as possible, between good things that would happen if they make the right choice, and bad things that would happen if they won't. We are not going to get the Russians to push out as far as we would like.

Mr. ROYCE. After what happened in Beslan and in North Ossetia, I would just think the Russians would have so much more trepidation about where fanaticism—or taking people like A.Q. Kahn, who have been quite pronounced in terms of his commentary on radical Islamist thought, and the way that this is evolving in Southern Russia.

I know a couple of Duma members who are moderate Muslims from Dagistan, and they report with horror what is happening in their society to the young men who don't join up with a Jihad. Any discussion of that in Moscow in terms of how that is growing in Southern Russia, and eventually threatening the state?

Mr. LEGVOLD. I think the way in which this issue currently is getting a good deal of attention is actually in connection with Afghanistan, and the concern over the potential impact of the Taliban, which the Russians, the Chinese, and especially the Kazakhs, see as suddenly advancing in the context of the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan.

I think they worry more about the effects of their developments on Islamic extremism in the North Caucasus and other portions of Russia. I don't think it is a major factor in the Iranian relationship.

As a matter of fact, over time the Russians have counted on the Iranians to help control the issue of Islamic extremism among the Shia in the Caucasus.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you.

Chairman BERMAN. The time for the gentleman has expired. The gentleman from California, Mr. Sherman, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHERMAN. I am going to first pick up on Congressman Royce's view. I think you have explained well why the Russians aren't going to change their policy if the status quo remains the same.

The question is: What can we put on the table that would get them to change their policy? How high a price would they demand for being as strong on Iran at the United Nations, for example, as we are?

And I would like you to take off your expert hat just a little bit because experts know all the reasons why we can't change our policy more than an inch in any direction. If we put on the table, and you should add a few more things to this, because you would know more about what the Russians want.

But if we were to put on the table the idea that we will not support pipelines for Caspian gas and oil that don't go through Russia, that we will not build a missile defense in Poland and the Czech Republic. That we will recognize the independence of South Ossetia, Aphesia, Moldova.

That we will put on the table every date and thing that you know that we are not going to do because you know all the reasons that we shouldn't do it, would that be enough to get Russia on our side when it comes to Iran? I will ask first Dr. Legvold.

Mr. LEGVOLD. Congressman, first of all, I don't know whether that would have the effect you seek, but I have a deep conviction that we should not do it. It would be wrong to do that. I think we need to deal with each of the issues that——

Mr. SHERMAN. If we stove pipe everything, we can do, the "right thing on everything, and we will have a nuclear weapon in Iran."

Mr. LEGVOLD. We may not get Russian cooperation——

Mr. SHERMAN. Well, obviously you would take these concessions without getting Russian cooperation. Whether it is worth it or not depends upon whether you are worried about a nuclear weapon from Iran being smuggled in.

Mr. LEGVOLD. Well, it is a question of feasibility, and whether it would work.

Mr. SHERMAN. Well, obviously you put it on the table secretly, and if you don't get a scent, you didn't do it.

Mr. LEGVOLD. I still think it is a mistake.

Mr. SHERMAN. Okay.

Mr. LEGVOLD. But I think that each of these issues needs to be dealt with in its own terms.

Mr. SHERMAN. We call that stove piping, and let me on. Does either of the other witnesses have a comment?

Ambassador PIFER. I would just add that it seems to me that you want to have a structure and approach toward Russia where you look at the broad range of issues.

Mr. SHERMAN. Well, why would we look at any issue other than the Iran nuclear program given its importance, and how can you argue that the risk of a nuclear bomb being smuggled into America by Iran is equivalent to anything else on your list?

Ambassador PIFER. I am not arguing that, Congressman.

Mr. SHERMAN. Okay. Anyway, I am asking your advice on how to get Russia's support, and not reasons why the price would be too high. What price will work?

Ambassador PIFER. Well, what I am looking at is you take steps to begin to change the relationship from where it is now to——

Mr. SHERMAN. I have 6 months to get a U.N. resolution through that is harsher than anything that the United States has proposed, let alone what Russia has voted for. So I am not talking about changing the—you know, baby steps.

Ambassador PIFER. Well, again, I would suggest that by offering a different approach to strategic arms reduction, and where the Russians said the previous approach that the United States offered limits on operational deployed warheads to 2,200, and then left an unlimited number of spare warheads, and no limits on missiles and bombers. I would go back to a more——

Mr. SHERMAN. Do you think that the concessions by the United States on those issues would secure Russia's support on the Iran issue?

Ambassador PIFER. By itself, no.

Mr. SHERMAN. Okay. Then you don't have to tell me what else, but we are running out of time, and I want to shift to another issue. Russia is in an unusual position. As to natural gas moving across the Ukraine, they are the consumer of an easement across the Ukraine to export their gas.

As to natural gas from the Caspian area, they are the provider of an easement, or want to be the provider of an easement across Russian territory, and to some extent they are already.

Is Russia taking a consistent position on what the easement provider should charge per MCF mile between what they would charge for transport across their territory, versus what Ukraine is obtaining for transport across Ukraine? Does anybody have an answer?

Mr. ILLARIONOV. If I may, as this is a very complicated issue because there is no free market in this particular area.

Chairman BERMAN. And you have 25 seconds to do that.

Mr. ILLARIONOV. There is no particular rules that you can suggest. What we know about the rates that apply to different parts of the transportation is quite different, and sometimes there is just a difference——

Mr. SHERMAN. So Russia might be demanding far more from Kyrgyzstan than it is willing to pay Ukraine?

Mr. ILLARIONOV. You can try.

Mr. SHERMAN. I am sure they will. I yield back.

Chairman BERMAN. The time for the gentleman has expired, and I was wondering if we gave Alaska back would that be enough.

Mr. SHERMAN. Even I draw the line somewhere. Would they have to take the current governor? Okay.

Chairman BERMAN. I guess the gentleman from California will close this hearing.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. I will try to make it exciting, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman BERMAN. I was thinking quick. [Laughter.]

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Sherman touched on something when he talked about the pipeline issues, and what I seem to have observed since the end of the Cold War, since the fall of Communism in Russia, is that we have expected Russia not to act in its interests, and then be very upset with them when they act in their interests, which of course is the interests of another nation state, as if that was some sign of belligerence to everybody else.

I mean, Russia ended up charging below the market value on market price for gas to Ukraine, and when they decided to try to charge a higher price, which was still not the market price, we treated them as if they were doing something wrong.

Does the United States just decide that we are going to give energy or other of our resources below the world market price to somebody else? Are we expected to do that? I don't think so.

Let me note that when I first heard that Russia was going to be involved in building a nuclear plant in Iran, I went to the American Embassy, and I happened to be going through Russia at the time, and I also went to the top people in the National Security Council, and people, this is during the Clinton administration, and said, look, this is going to be a disaster.

Let us give the Russians an alternative. The reason that they want to build this power plant is obviously because their economy is in such a horrible situation, they need the money. Let us give them an alternative.

Oh, yes, that is a great idea, but nobody moved on it. So Russia moved forward. When Bush came in, I did the same thing the first 3 months of the Bush administration.

Here is a list of potential problems, and Afghanistan was number one. Number two was Russia building a nuclear power plant in Iran. Let us give them an alternative. No, the alternative was don't do it. We could have easily said, hey, let us arrange for the World Bank to give you loans so you can build one of these in Malaysia, or Turkey, or some other country that wouldn't threaten us.

But, no, we had to treat them with the least respect that we could of anybody else. They just needed to do what we told them, and not what was in the interests of their country. If somebody treated us that way, we would have second thoughts about being their friend, too.

And I just think we have treated Russia in a belligerent way, and in an arrogant way, and now we are paying the price for it. I hope that we can have better relations with Russia, because if we are going to have a peaceful world, if we are going to have prosperity and peace in this world, it is going to be because we have a strong and positive relationship with Russia, with Japan, with India, and several other major powers.

Because China is threatening us and our national security in the future. Yet, we treat China with kid gloves. Not only kid gloves, but we give them most favored nation status.

We ignore their massive human rights abuses, while we complain about imperfections—and the Russians have many imperfections, and treat those imperfections as if we should ignore all the progress they have made since the fall of communism.

This double-standard I think is taken as perhaps belligerence on the part of the Russian Government, and maybe if we were being treated that way, we would think the same. And that was my rant, and please feel free to comment.

Chairman BERMAN. Dr. Illarionov, you indicated that you wanted to comment on the rant?

Mr. ILLARIONOV. Mr. Chairman, if I may just comment——

Chairman BERMAN. Is that the double-standard that you were referring to in your testimony?

Mr. ILLARIONOV. Yes, exactly, but if I may just comment on the question that Mr. Delahunt had raised some time ago, and you had promised me some time.

Chairman BERMAN. Yes.

Mr. ILLARIONOV. Okay. First about the double-standards, and the question about the G–8 membership, it is very well known that since the year 2004 that Russia has not qualified in the main criteria of the G–5 to be a democratic country.

This is the first line of the charter and the statement of the declaration of G–8 in 1975. So it seems then that virtually Russia is the only country that is not qualified to be a member of G–8, and the other issue is what to do about it.

Second, concerning the question of Mr. Delahunt on what would happen if the United States happened to be in a war with Russia if Georgia would be a member of NATO. My answer to your question would be that if Georgia would have received that at the Bucharest summit, there would be high probabilities that there would be no August war, and there are four reasons for that.

The first is the final decision to launch against Georgia has been taken not before the Bucharest summit, but after the Bucharest summit by the Russian leadership. Only after they had received the final result of this Bucharest summit.

Second, the State Duma of the Russian Federation has listened to the special report of security services on how to launch and organize the military contained in Georgia, in South Ossetia in the middle of April, after the Bucharest summit.

And it has explained all the details and all the steps that should be taken to get independence for South Ossetia and Aphesia; and what has happened in reality was completely confirmed in the reports that have been listed and detailed, and discussed in the State Duma in the middle of April of the year 2008.

Third, in the year 2007, there was another very substantial problem in Estonia, the so-called monuments inside the war, and the problem in Estonia was much harsher than in Georgia, because one-third of the Estonian populations are Russians.

Nevertheless, because Estonia was a member of NATO, there was no aggressions. And my final comment would be just that it is a pure intellectual exercise if you think that in 1938, 1939, or 1940, that Czechoslovakia would be a member of NATO if NATO would exist at that time, and Poland, and Finland, and Romania, I would guess that it is not a 100-percent guarantee, but there would be a high probability that there would be no Second World War.

Chairman BERMAN. The gentleman's time has expired. I want to thank all of you for coming today. I appreciate very much both your

testimony, your answers, and your written statements, which are, I think, quite fascinating. And with that the hearing is adjourned. Thank you very much.

[Whereupon, at 1:03 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

# APPENDIX

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## Material Submitted for the Hearing Record

# FULL COMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE

***Committee on Foreign Affairs***

*U.S. House of Representatives*
*Washington, D.C. 20515-0128*

**Howard L. Berman (D-CA), Chairman**

February 20, 2009

**TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to be held in **Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building:**

**DATE:** Wednesday, February 25, 2009

**TIME:** 10:00 a.m.

**SUBJECT:** From Competition to Collaboration: Strengthening the U.S.-Russia Relationship

**WITNESSES:** The Honorable Steven Pifer
Visiting Fellow
Center on the United States and Europe
Brookings Institution
*(Former Ambassador to Ukraine)*

Robert H. Legvold, Ph.D.
Professor
Columbia University

Andrei Illarionov, Ph.D.
Senior Fellow
Center for Global Liberty and Prosperity
Cato Institute

**By Direction of the Chairman**

*The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.*

# COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

Day *Wednesday* Date *2/25/09* Room *2172 RHOB*

Starting Time *10:08 A.M.* Ending Time *1:03 P.M.*

Recesses [2] (*11:02* to *12:17*)

Presiding Member(s) *Howard L. Berman (CA), Chairman*

*CHECK ALL OF THE FOLLOWING THAT APPLY:*

Open Session [✓]
Executive (closed) Session [ ]
Televised [✓]

Electronically Recorded (taped) [✓]
Stenographic Record [✓]

**TITLE OF HEARING or BILLS FOR MARKUP:** *(Include bill number(s) and title(s) of legislation.)*
***From Competition to Collaboration: Strengthening the U.S.-Russia Relationship***

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**
*see attached*

**NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**
*n/a*

**HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes [✓] No [ ]**
*(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)*

**STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD:** *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*
*n/a*

**ACTIONS TAKEN DURING THE MARKUP:** *(Attach copies of legislation and amendments.)*

**RECORDED VOTES TAKEN (FOR MARKUP):** *(Attach final vote tally sheet listing each member.)*

| Subject | Yeas | Nays | Present | Not Voting |
|---|---|---|---|---|

**TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE** _____
or
**TIME ADJOURNED** *1:03 PM*

Doug Campbell

**Doug Campbell, Deputy Staff Director**

**Attendance - HCFA Full Committee**
**From Competition to Collaboration: Strengthening the U.S.-Russia Relationship**
**February 25, 2009, 10:00 a.m. , 2172 RHOB**

Howard L. Berman (CA)
Donald Payne (NJ)
Brad Sherman (CA)
Robert Wexler (FL)
William D. Delahunt (MA)
Diane E. Watson (CA)
Albio Sires (NJ)
Gerald E. Connolly (VA)
Michael E. McMahon ( NY)
John S. Tanner (TN)
Brad Miller (NC)
David Scott (GA)
Jim Costa (CA)
Keith Ellison (MN)
Ron Klein (FL)

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, (FL)
Christopher H. Smith (NJ)
Elton Gallegly (CA)
Dana Rohrabacher (CA)
Donald Manzullo (IL)
Edward R. Royce (CA)
Jeff Flake (AZ)
John Boozman (AR)
Jeff Fortenberry (NE)
Ted Poe (TX)
Bob Inglis (SC)

**February 25, 2009**

***Verbatim, as delivered***

# Remarks by Chairman Berman at hearing, "From Competition to Collaboration: Strengthening the US-Russia Relationship"

We're holding this hearing – our first full-committee hearing in the 111th Congress -- to examine one of America's most important – yet often neglected – bilateral relationships: with the Russian Federation. The Cold War is long over, and yet in recent times this relationship, that is the relationship between the United States and the Russian Federation, has been quite chilly. We don't always agree. But Washington and Moscow face a number of common challenges that could form the basis for a more constructive partnership.

At the Munich Security Conference, Vice President Biden lamented the "dangerous drift in relations" between Russia and the NATO alliance, while at the same time calling for a reassessment of areas in which we can work together. The positive response his remarks generated among Russian officials indicates that Moscow may also be willing to, in the Vice President's words, "press the reset button."

At the heart of our relationship with Russia lie a number of inter-related foreign policy issues and challenges: Iran's nuclear program, the war in Afghanistan, the future of NATO, peace and security in the Caucasus and the Balkans, missile defense, and arms control. Unfortunately, there has been a tendency in recent years to stovepipe these issues – addressing them in isolation without establishing a clear set of priorities or integrating them into – to use Professor Legvold's words – "a comprehensive and coherent foreign policy."

One important question concerns Russia's perception of its vital interests, particularly its engagement with its "near abroad." Some of Russia's recent behavior toward its neighbors has been deeply troubling. Its decision to recognize South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states was a mistake that undermines regional stability. The recent dispute with Ukraine regarding the price and transit of gas left many Eastern Europeans without heat in the dead of winter. And Russia's apparent role in persuading Kyrgyzstan to close a vital American air base on its territory – while allowing U.S. supplies to transit Russian territory – will complicate U.S. efforts to conduct essential military operations in Afghanistan.

How are we to understand these actions? Are they part of a larger pattern of behavior through which Russia is seeking to reassert its power over former Soviet states and define itself as America's strategic competitor? This was the troubling conclusion that some observers reached last August when Russian President Medvedev spoke about regions where Russia has "privileged interests." Or does Russia, as some others have suggested, perceive itself as acting in self-defense against an expansionist NATO and western encirclement?

Second, questions have been raised about the linkage between Russia's sense of financial wellbeing and its foreign policy assertiveness. Higher oil prices, it has been argued, have increased Russia's political and economic leverage and emboldened Moscow to oppose US policies it finds objectionable.

Yet Russia, like the U.S. and most of the world, has suffered from the global financial downturn. What opportunities, if any, has the current crisis created in terms of encouraging greater economic engagement with Russia? And would closer commercial ties help create the conditions for greater political cooperation down the road?

A third set of issues concerns NATO. While some members of the Alliance have argued that eastward enlargement will promote democracy and stability among aspiring members, Russia has charged that NATO is seeking to assert regional dominance and threatens Russian security. Is pausing or slowing the pace of enlargement likely to encourage greater cooperation from Russia in addressing challenges in the Balkans, Caucasus, and Iran? Should the Alliance make greater use of the NATO-Russia Council to engage Moscow as a partner?

It's clear that improving our bilateral relations will require good will and serious effort by both sides. In that context, the Obama Administration and Congress should examine what steps we should take to shift the U.S.-Russia relationship from confrontation to collaboration.

For example, should we consider "graduating" Russia from the so-called Jackson Vanik trade restrictions? Should the US assist Russian efforts to progress more quickly toward membership in the World Trade Organization?

Clearly, part of the roadmap for WTO accession is implementation of the IPR agreement which was signed over two years ago in November 2006. While some progress has been made, I'm troubled by reports, for example, that has failed to take adequate enforcement actions against plants involved in producing pirated CDs and DVDs.

There are also numerous arms control, security and non-proliferation issues to be addressed by our countries in the coming year. Should the U.S. bring into force the U.S.-Russia Agreement for Nuclear Cooperation that the Bush Administration withdrew from Congress after the Georgia conflict, and under

what circumstances? Should the new administration continue to pursue missile defense in the Czech Republic and Poland as it seeks to engage Russia in efforts to prevent the emergence of a nuclear-armed Iran?

And finally, what's the appropriate role for the promotion of democracy, human rights and the rule of law in our relationship with Russia? The trends in recent years have been troubling. Journalists and opinion leaders who are critical of the government have suffered physical attacks and have even been murdered. Political pressure on the judiciary, corruption in law enforcement, and harassment of some non-governmental organizations undermine the accountability of the Russian government. There are also disturbing reports of vicious attacks motivated by xenophobia, neo-Nazism, or anti-Semitic tendencies. To what extent, and in what manner, should the U.S. continue to press Moscow on these issues?

The U.S.-Russia relationship is exceptionally complex. We undoubtedly will continue to agree on some issues, and disagree on others. But it clearly is in our national interest to promote more positive ties with Moscow if doing so will help us achieve some of our most urgent foreign policy goals, such as preventing Iran from developing a nuclear weapons capability. I believe that Iran should be at the top of the agenda in our bilateral discussions.

The committee is fortunate to have three witnesses with us today who are uniquely qualified to help us answer some of these questions. Ideally, we'll not only talk about what pressing the "reset" button might mean, but we'll also fast-forward to consider the benefits to global security that improved U.S.-Russian relations might yield in the future.

It's now my pleasure to turn to the distinguished ranking member, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, for any opening comments she may wish to make.

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**Wednesday, February 25, 2009**
**Opening Statement of Congressman Gerald E. Connolly**

**House Committee on Foreign Affairs Hearing**
**Howard L. Berman (D-Calif), Chairman**
**From Competition to Collaboration: Strengthening the U.S. – Russia Relationship**

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for convening this hearing today, and thank you to our panel for being here as well. I look forward to this morning's discussion.

Clearly Russia's relationship with the United States and the larger global community continues to be strained by last fall's military conflict with Georgia and more recently by its energy dispute with Ukraine, which disrupted natural gas supplies to parts of Europe last month.

This is a critical time for the global community and we cannot afford to have Russia standing outside the tent. Like the rest of the international community, Russia is feeling the pinch of the global financial crisis, highlighting what some say is its overdependence on oil and natural gas sales. Whether it is helping to address climate change or promote human rights and democracy, Russia and its citizens stand to benefit from engaging with the United States and other world leaders to address our shared challenges.

The President has indicated his desire to re-engage Russia, particularly with respect to nuclear arms reduction, and we hope to have Russia's support as we begin to revisit the situation in Afghanistan. Those are critical endeavors, but they should not be done in a vacuum. Russia cannot be allowed to pick and choose when it is a contributing member of the global community. History has shown us time and again that those countries that choose to engage in lasting partnerships are best equipped to weather the challenges that lie ahead.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

**Donald A. Manzullo (IL-16)**
**Opening Statement**

February 25, 2009

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this important hearing on the future of America's relationship with Russia. Since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the United States has invested significantly in building close relations with the Russian Federation. However, despite the genuine best efforts of both the Clinton and Bush Administrations, U.S.-Russian relations have nevertheless deteriorated. Today, Russia seems determined to reassert its global influence through a combination of assertive military and economic action. Reversing this disturbing trend must be a key priority to ensure stability in the Europe, Central Asia, and the Middle East.

Improving America's relationship with Russia will require tremendous investments in resources and good will. Succeeding in this endeavor will require more than lofty rhetoric and symbolic agreements. While I believe that President Obama has an opportunity to improve U.S.-Russia relations, I am not convinced that Russia's leaders are interested in the same outcome.

Russia's aggressive use of military force in Georgia, and its repeated use of energy as a weapon in Eastern Europe remind us that Moscow views power relations in a dramatically different way than in the rest of the world. Indeed, if Russia goes ahead with widely reported plans to build military bases on annexed Georgian territory, I cannot but wonder how this action will help bring our two countries together. Finally, I remain very concerned about Russia's influence in Central Asia, particular in Kyrgyzstan where the government is closing a vital supply route for our troops in Afghanistan. It is difficult to imagine that Russian influence did not come into play in that decision.

Even as it seeks membership in the World Trade Organization, the Russian government has shown disregard towards the shared principles of free trade and economic stability when it suits their political interests. In the past year, Russian leadership has even shown great contradictions in its

commitment to the accession process by raising tariffs on auto imports and even suggesting that accession may not be beneficial to Russia. The continued problem of rampant piracy of intellectual property in Russia is also of grave concern.

Improving the U.S.-Russia relationship requires a shared interest in both Washington and Moscow to end longstanding disputes that stand in the way of progress. We must be frank with each other and not have any illusions that future cooperation must be based on shared commitment and action. If we fail to convince Moscow that the U.S. is a credible partner then Russian leaders continue to undermine our efforts to improve relations.

**Rep. Michael McMahon**

**Opening Statement for February 25, 2009's Full Committee Hearing:**

The United States has had a challenging relationship with Russia over the years, but even at the height of the Cold War both nations have avoided direct military confrontations because of a common appreciation for the value of human life and an interest in peace.

Now, nearly twenty years after the end of the Cold War, it is incredibly disheartening to see Russia repeat the same scare tactics and brash rhetoric it used during one of the most frightening periods in our history.

There is no question that Russia is as an authoritarian regime that suppresses opposition, restricts freedom of press and entrepreneurship, bullies its neighbors and promotes anti-Americanism. But at the same time most Americans and Russians alike do not want confrontation or a new Cold War with Russia. The United States must establish a tough, smart and constructive diplomacy toward the Kremlin, and I believe that the Obama administration is well equipped to lead this effort.

I thank our witnesses for being here today. I hope that they provide the insight needed to strike a delicate balance between forging mutual understanding and applying appropriate diplomatic pressure on Russia when it comes to protecting US interests.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Opening**
**Statement**
**of**
**Congresswoman Diane E. Watson**
**Full Committee**
**Committee on Foreign Affairs**
**Wednesday, February 25, 2009**
**2172 Rayburn House Office Building**
**10:00 a.m.**

***"From Competition to Collaboration: Strengthening the U.S.-Russia Relationship"***

Thank you Mr. Chairman for holding today's very important and timely hearing addressing the future of U.S. - Russia relations. I sincerely hope that today's testimony will provide us with clear steps towards a more collaborative, coherent, and mutually beneficial strategic vision of engagement between our two countries.

It is unfortunate that as we make these assessments it is within the context of 8 years of missed opportunities and increased enmity, forcing this Congress and the Obama Administration to rebuild our relationship from its lowest point since the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991.

The escalation of hostility which has characterized our recent interactions hinders both countries from confronting the larger global issues whose outcomes depend upon a functional US-Russia relationship.

By initiating a realistic strategic dialogue on issues where our national interests coincide the Obama Administration has the opportunity to rejuvenate Russian - American relations based on shared goals, rather than recurrent mutual distrust.

Attempting to pursue a comprehensive strategic relationship between the United States and Russia is in no way a denial of the various political, and philosophical differences between our countries, but is instead a means of replacing the stagnated dysfunction of US – Russian relations that we have seen in recent times.

As we look towards the future, our relationship with Russia should be based on mutual respect, hope, and tangible shared goals.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to the testimony of today's witnesses, and I yield back the remainder of my time.