Mr. Speaker, in August

of 2008, Russia and the Republic of

Georgia engaged in what author Ronald

Asmus called ‘‘A Little War That

Shook the World.’’ And, Mr. Speaker,

it did shake the world. For all of post-

Soviet Russia’s anti-democratic crackdowns,

its aggressive and bellicose actions

toward former Soviet states, it

was still a shock to see Russian tanks

roll across the border of a sovereign,

democratic country. The military conflict

lasted 5 days; and a shaken world

moved on, soon forgetting the shock

and outrage of what happened.

But for the people of the Republic of

Georgia, this conflict goes on nearly 3

years later. They live with the tragic

consequences that follow any armed

conflict, including thousands of displaced

persons and significant economic

hardships. Beyond the human

cost, they face a long-term strategic

challenge of an occupying force in the

regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia

where Russia continues to violate the

terms of the ceasefire to which it

agreed.

As occupiers, they violate the sovereignty

and territorial integrity of an

independent democratic state, one that

has chosen a path toward integration

with Euro-Atlantic institutions and,

more important, one that has chosen

integration with Euro-Atlantic values

of democracy, human rights, and the

rule of law.

Russia’s recalcitrance has left the region

in a bitter stalemate as it flouts

international norms and its own commitments.

Within the context of this

stalemate, the temperature has seemed

to cool, with bitter hardship and frustrations

supplanting heated military

conflict.

But that cooling temperature is perhaps

a very dangerous illusion. While

the fear of overt military action may

be waning, more subversive—but just

as potentially deadly—action is taking

place. Since 2009, the Republic of Georgia

has experienced 12 acts or attempted

acts of terrorism within its

borders, which the Georgians believe

are linked to Russian forces.

One such bombing, on September 22,

2010, took place right near the U.S.

Embassy in Tbilisi. Two thwarted attacks

took place just this month. One

improvised explosive device was intercepted

on June 2, two days before several

colleagues and I arrived in Tbilisi.

Another was intercepted on June 6

while we were still there.

We had the opportunity to discuss

with President Saakashvili at length

the nature of these attacks and attempted

attacks. He and his administration

are increasingly concerned

about what they perceive to be a systematic

effort to target the Georgian

people and undermine their progress

toward a peaceful, stable, democratic

and independent nation. The intended

targets of recent bombing attempts

seem to suggest an increased focus on

civilian casualties, which is particularly

troubling.

As investigations proceed to determine

the exact origin and intent of

these bombings, it is more important

than ever that we stand with our Georgian

friends; that we stand with their

right to sovereignty and territorial integrity;

that we stand with their efforts

to build a stronger democracy. In

fact, the purpose of my recent trip to

Tbilisi was to continue the work of the

House Democracy Partnership, which

has a longstanding program with the

Georgian legislature.

My co-chairman, DAVID PRICE, and I

have led a number of delegations to

Tbilisi and hosted many Georgian legislators

in Washington in order to provide

training and support as they build

their legislative institutions.

It is important to work with new and

reemerging democracies as they grow

and develop, but it is all the more essential

for us to support those who are

under attack for the very reason that

they have chosen their democratic

path.

The Obama administration has attempted

to reset relations with Russia

for a number of pragmatic and strategic

reasons. I believe they were right

to do so. But it is important to differentiate

those relationships which

are important for inescapable geopolitical

considerations, and those

which are based on shared values and

goals. As a major international player

and a permanent member of the United

Nations Security Council, we must engage

constructively with Russia, but

that does not mean we must turn a

blind eye to its tactics or strategic

aims towards the former Soviet sphere.

To the contrary, we must engage with

eyes wide open.

Georgia is not the only state to have

emerged from the Soviet orbit with

democratic intentions, only to face deliberate,

significant pressures and obstacles

from Moscow.

The nature of our engagement with

Russia will get more scrutiny than

ever as Moscow moves toward entry

into the World Trade Organization.

Bringing them into a rules-based trading

system will help us deal with the

challenges that we face, but we cannot

lose our resolve to address these challenges,

or lose sight of the fact that the

fate of democracy in the post-Soviet

world is one of them. Those who are

working diligently against great odds

to build democratic institutions must

know that the American people stand

with them.