Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Secretary, I want to start off where the Chairman started.

You have made all of us very proud in your leadership, both

as our Permanent Representative to the United Nations and now

as our Secretary of State. I think the global message that you send,

first of all, to show the inclusive nature of this country as an immigrant

to the United States and now as the woman who has reached

the highest position in the U.S. Government, it is a symbol of how

America views the world; and your leadership in connecting us

globally and also in this country, making sure that the American

people understand the importance of foreign policy and our foreign

involvement, is something that will have a lasting impact here.

You are really the first post-Cold War Secretary, in many ways,

as the dust settles; and while there is much to complain about in

Russia and elsewhere, what we have lived through now is the

denuclearization of three of the former Soviet states. Belarus, the

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Ukraine and Kazakhstan no longer have nuclear weapons, the Russians

have thousands fewer nuclear weapons as a result of your efforts

and this Administration’s efforts.

We have seen three presidential elections and two parliamentary

elections in Russia; and if there was any time in my growing up,

growing up in a family that fled the Soviet Union in the 1940’s,

that we would be here with an opportunity to debate what level of

freedom the press still retains in Russia, that in itself is good news.

We obviously want to continue to press the Russians to follow a

model of a democratic free society with a free press and a free market

economy. We are heading in that direction.As we look at the

economic indicators, in Russia things are improving. The middle

class is growing.

There are many challenges ahead, I can tell you. When there

were opportunities to take political advantage of simply being

confrontational with Russia, you and this Administration made

every effort to engage Russia while urging compliance with the

tough standard we have in the international community for civil

society and democracy. But you have continued to build that relationship;

and I think when history looks back at this Administration,

getting through this transitional period will be one of the

great marks on this Administration.

Some people have tried to make politics out of Russia policy, but

when you take a look at American national interests, you and this

Administration have succeeded in representing America’s interest

in reducing the threat from the former Soviet Union and reducing

the threat from Russia itself by removing nuclear weapons, missiles,

submarines and bombers, and that makes every American

and everyone in the world safer; and I want to thank you for that.

You might want to pull your microphone closer.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Even in the old Soviet days, the Russian people figured out what

was on the level and what wasn’t. When I was there in 1982, I was

told continuously that the two newspapers at that time were *Pravda*

and *Izvestia*. One was truth; one was news. And the Russian

saying was, in pravda, there is no izvestia; in izvestia, there is no

pravda. ‘‘In truth, there is no news; and in news, there is no truth.’’

Again, I really marvel at how far we have come, where there is

an opposition press, Internet reporting is as rough and raucous as

anywhere in the world, and I think that some of my colleagues are

often looking to almost recreate the Cold War confrontation. I want

to tell you how important it is, while we continue to confront the

Russians in areas where they fail to meet democratic standards,

that we need to engage them and not isolate them.

We need to, frankly, do more commercial transactions with them,

many of which are to the advantage of American technology companies,

so that Russia’s only markets aren’t with rogue nations; and

I really think Congress has often damaged opportunities to build

a more solid relationship with legitimate Russian enterprise.

Let me ask you two basic questions. One is the situation in

Belarus. My father survived World War II because of the courage

of two families in Belarus that hid them, my father and his brothers;

and it is the worst of the former Soviet states in the direction

it is going. Mr. Lukashenko seems to have Stalin as his model for

governance. What do you think is happening there? How are our

European allies helping or not being sufficiently helpful?

Secondly, on the northern European initiative on the rotting submarines

in Murmansk, how we can lead the effort to continue the

cleanup there, which really has the potential of being a major

international environmental disaster?