Madam Secretary, let me join my colleagues in

congratulating you in your service to our country. I have enjoyed

working with you many times in agreement, sometimes not, but I

have always admired the way in which you proceeded.

On Russia, I understand the current Administration policy toward

Russia is based on a belief that we are neither destined to

have Russia be our adversary nor guaranteed to be our friend, and

I think that is a very wise approach. I think that the Administration,

yourself, and Vice President Gore have steered a course in a

difficult period of time in Russia’s history, considering that Russia

is going through three monumental transitions—one from communism

to democracy, one from empire and nuclear threat to nation

state and nuclear partner, and from a centralized economy to

a market economy. I think that, considering those enormous transitions,

the Administration has charted a very good course. I have

some concerns, as expressed by my colleagues, but, overall, I think

the Administration has done a good job.

I do have two questions. One is, what about Putin’s overtures to

countries like Iran, Iraq, Serbia? You already talked about North

Korea, where our interests converge, and China. Can you give us

a sense of your Russian counterparts as it relates to where our interests

converge and conflict in those areas and how we see the future

course of Russia in terms of our own interests in those regions,

countries with which we have serious concerns?

Secondly, I and many of my colleagues who pursue Latin America

are very concerned about what is going on in Peru. We are concerned

about Fujimori’s statements in the Herald, and we are concerned

whether or not those elections will ever take place. The

timetable has been set.

We are concerned about Montesinos’ statement in Panama, almost

threatening the Panamanian government that if he doesn’t

get asylum there he intends to come back to Peru. And from all indications

the allegations of corruption and the abuse of his power

as a security czar and intelligence czar there are of great concern

to us. I don’t think that we acted strongly enough when the elections

were tainted as they were, but I hope that we take this opportunity

now to make possible the democracy that should take place

in Peru.