[Presiding.] Ambassador Swartz, Mr. Ermarth,

thank you very much for your testimony.

We will begin questioning under the Committee’s

5-minute rule.

I would begin by saying I am interested in knowing your opinions

as to how we modify our current policy, which is not successful

with respect to Russia. I am not interested, frankly, in a partisan

discussion about who is responsible for what in the Bush or Clinton

Administrations as I am in understanding what we ought to do

now with the situation that is obviously not good.

If you were to be given an eight by four block of granite and you

were to know that your advice to us would have to be chiseled on

that block, what principles should underlie our policy with respect

to Russia now to give us a positive Russian-American relationship

and serve our national interests? Ambassador Swartz, do you want

to try first?

That should be on a banner in the back of the

room here: What are our national interests? That question ought

to be facing Members of this Committee every day. I understand

that is where we start.

Ambassador, remember that block of granite. I

am looking for those principles.

Thank you, Ambassador.

Mr. Ermarth, the Ambassador had to go first, so you had a whole

2 or 3 minutes to think about it.

Thank you very much.

The gentleman from Connecticut, the Ranking Member, is recognized

for 5 minutes.