Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Swartz, you may well not have intended it that way,

but your testimony did come off as an ad hominem attack on Deputy

Secretary Talbott. Talking about dilettantes in the salons with

the literati as sort of the essence of his understanding of Russian

culture and life, it seemed a little personalized. But the problem I

have is that I hear your general assertions of the quote ‘‘Talbott

policy,’’ but I don’t see in your testimony the specifics to back it up.

I read your testimony; I don’t know what happened in Belarus that

destroyed, presumably at least, an aspiring democratic leader and

brought back a neo-Stalinist into leadership, and that you had the

right idea and Clinton screwed it up. You don’t bring it out, you

just assert it.

You talk about Clinton’s and Talbott’s russocentrism, and I see

your point. All I remember is in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s,

there was a bipartisan policy. George Bush and Democrats in Congress

had a lot invested in Gorbachev, and it was on the right of

American politics that the drum beat grew and grew and grew,

that Gorbachev is a Communist, always will be a Communist, and

that the true, pure Democrat, the force for liberation, the force we

should be banking on, that is coming from the right of American

politics, was Boris Yeltsin. Boris Yeltsin, the opportunistic, drunk,

shallow intellectual Communist forever, who stood on the tank and

stopped the coup against Gorbachev—I don’t know whether you in

your historical perspective think that that was an important and

brave act that in the end helped serve the interests of peace and

stability or not; but, given your general assessment, it seemed to

me somewhat one-sided in that regard.

I understand under pressure from a Congress that wants the

farmers to be able to ship food anywhere, that perhaps the commodity

provisions didn’t serve the interests. But I read Leon Aaron’s

article and he says, after pointing out just where the Soviet

Union was in the last year of the Soviet empire, he writes a paragraph

which says, ‘‘While it is true that millions of people, especially

retirees, collective farmers, and workers and the mammoth

military-industrial complex were impoverished by galloping inflation

and cuts in State spending,’’—and by the way, galloping inflation,

when we went there in April 1993, Clinton in office less than

3 months, hardly enough time yet to ruin American policy toward

Russia, there was galloping inflation, and those crypto-pseudo

Democrats like Gaidar and Chubais—Gaidar was gone, and

Chubais was very much in favor of his voucher programs—these

were the people that I remember the previous Administration were

investing a great deal in that you now, after the fact, seem to cut

at the knees.

But Aaron continues to say, ‘‘For the first time in Russian history,

there was a sizable middle class and an intelligentsia, outside

State employees. Before the crisis of April 1998, almost one-fifth of

Russians surveyed said that the economic situation of their own

family was improving. Between 1990 and 1997 car ownership increased

by 72 percent, from 18 per 100 families to 31. Of the total

population of 150 million, 20 million Russians were estimated by

tax agencies to have traveled abroad in 1997. In a country-by-country

ranking of top-spending tourists in 1996, the Russians came in

eighth.

‘‘The new Russian middle class suffered greatly in the crash of

1998 and it will take a few years for the standard of living to return

to pre-crash levels. Yet there is no reason to doubt that this

will happen. It may currently be the rage in Russia to speak of

Russia’s virtual economy, but we are suddenly discovering that a

Russian market economy does exist after all, and despite its deep

distortions, responds to economic stimuli much as any market economy

would. In full accordance with supply side theory, the continuing

absence of price controls, a cheaper but stable national currency

and drastic reduction of imports have unleashed domestic

productions,’’ and it goes on and on.

I have a lot of concerns about our policy, the investment in a

Yeltsin family, a small group of oligarchs who seem to me have

done much to bleed much of Russia dry here. I do think in that last

election, the choice at that particular point was Yeltsin versus

Zhyuganov.

I don’t quite know how we do what Mr. Rohrabacher suggests,

hold an American endorsing convention and then have our PAC

give the true candidacy of the Russian people the kind of support

that that person needs in order to win, but your effort to differentiate

between Bush policies and Clinton policies, and the failure, at

least in your testimony, to specify the specifics of what was wrong,

rather than general allegations, does concern me.

Did the shipments start with Clinton? I truly don’t

know.

Tell me what happened on that fateful day in

Belarus where you said one thing and Clinton did something else

which caused the fall of democracy.

You would say that X was good and Y was bad.