Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate very much your holding this hearing,

but I must admit some serious reservations regarding everything

that I have heard here. I think the focus is wrong. Who did what

when, or what was right, or which Administration—the Bush Administration

or the Clinton Administration—has done something,

ignores what our immediate responsibilities are in my view.

Gentlemen, I appreciate your testimony, but I would tell Mr.

Martin Cannon, although I don’t think I will be here when he testifies,

that I was appreciative of many of his comments, but among

them was that Russia is in generational transition.

Now, listen. At the beginning of Russia’s transformation, we

knew that it would be a long-term endeavor, unprecedented in history,

with successes and disappointments on the way. A transformation

of this magnitude is going to take decades, even generations,

to complete.

A mere 7 years out, regardless of whether it was Bush or Clinton

or any combination thereof, criticism of Russia’s transition ignores

the fact that it is still in midstream. Mr. Cannon, for example, referenced

that maybe, maybe we are a third of the way. Amidst all

the problems, the transition continues, and Americans in my view,

at least insofar as Russia is a threat, are perhaps safer than ever.

I think it is ignorant of us to ignore that we have completed over

71,000 exchanges from the NIS since 1993, 35,000 from Russia.

People don’t know things that Members of Congress have done. I

have been to Uzbekistan myself, twice. Stayed there a week. I have

been to Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, and

Georgia, and last year was in Russia for a week in St. Petersburg,

and what I witnessed was a change in progress and in recognizing

how hopeless and helpless some of us may be in order to conduct

the kinds of changes that we would like to see take place immediately.

We helped draft post-Communist legislation on the civil code and

the criminal code, as well as bills on money laundering and corruption.

I have heard nothing here regarding the cooperation of the

FBI and the NVD, and they have had extremely successful undertakings

in targeting criminal elements that have been pursued. We

created legal clinics, we gave grants to NGO’s and created programs

that highlight the successful efforts at combating corruption.

We worked directly with local law enforcement on specific cases to

help them build the capacity to deal with widespread crime and

corruption.

We provided technical training, we have allowed for enhanced or

local TV for people. When you are a novice as I am, and perhaps

a bit naive, and you can walk the streets of St. Petersburg and you

can see a vibrant society, albeit with a gray and a black market

still operating there, then it is foolish for us to sit up here and try

to pinpoint somebody who did not have a handle on something as

slippery as this.

The questions ought to be what must we do, what should we do,

what can we do to help create a stable Russian society? Our continuing

disengagement will allow for a destabilized Russia or a destabilized

Europe and the costs will be insurmountable insofar as

global consequences are concerned.

There has only been $7 billion of direct aid offered by the United

States. Two-thirds of that has gone to the nuclear demilitarization

process, another $7 billion to try to help American businesses has

been offered there. I think our strategy of engagement, establishing

among other things the U.S.-Russia Binational Commission, which

has an extraordinary agenda, is not to be frowned upon.

Let me ask you all this question: Ignoring who failed and who

succeeded, what, gentlemen, the two of you, would be your top

three priorities that we should exercise as our next steps? Enough

of who was at fault about what.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.