Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is a particular pleasure for me and an honor to testify before

this Committee, where I had the opportunity to serve on the professional

staff 6 years ago, doing nonproliferation and export controls.

When Mr. Lantos came to France in 1993 to invite me to join the

Committee, he reinforced my own conviction that issues of such

monumental import for our national security were indeed bipartisan

in nature. For most of the past 6 years, however, partisanship

has been the rule and cooperation the exception. I hope we can

begin to redress that as we look at Russia’s role in the proliferation

of weapons of mass destruction and the stunning accumulation of

opportunities we missed to prevent that from ever occurring.

In 1992, after I had completed a study on missile, nuclear and

chemical weapons programs for the Simon Wiesenthal Center, I

was in Paris at a conference and Mr. Wiesenthal paid me the

greatest compliment I have ever received. He said, ‘‘I have spent

all my life tracking the murderers of yesterday. Mr. Timmerman

is tracking the murderers of tomorrow.’’

Now, that is why we are here, Mr. Chairman, to track down and

prevent the murderers of tomorrow, for the unchecked flow of Russian

technology into Iran’s missile and nuclear weapons programs

and that of other countries could very well lead to the deaths of

many of our fellow citizens tomorrow, as well as thousands, if not

millions, of innocent people across the Middle East.

Now, I certainly concur with Mr. Lantos’ remark that there was

a lack of vision in the Bush Administration between 1989 and perhaps

1991. But being bipartisan does not mean we should refrain

from criticism where criticism is due. We cannot rewrite the Bush

Administration, but we can hope to influence the final year of the

Clinton Administration and especially events pertaining to Russian

behavior.

The architect of this Administration’s policy toward Russia is

Strobe Talbott. He has a vision, and I would argue his vision is all

wrong.

I have testified in various Committees on Iran’s Shahab 3 and

Kosar missile programs, which would not exist without direct assistance

from the Government of Russia. The Shahab 3, in particular,

which is now deployed in southwestern Iran, and is capable

of targeting Israel with nuclear, chemical or biological warheads,

should in my view have Mr. Talbott’s name written all over it.

Let me briefly summarize the more detailed chronology I provided

in the written statement of Mr. Talbott’s responsibility for

the Shahab 3 Missile. This is not my opinion; this is a statement

of fact. It is a statement of the record.

The initial information of Russian assistance to the Shahab Missile

came from Israeli agents in 1996. The Israelis felt so confident

of their information they presented a detailed briefing to Mr.

Talbott in September or October 1996. Mr. Talbott told them not

to worry, he had the situation in Russia, quote, ‘‘under control.’’

When nothing happened for 3 or 4 months, the Israelis presented

the same information in more detail to Leon Fuerth at the White

House in late January, 1997. Mr. Fuerth briefed the Vice President,

who was reportedly stunned to learn this. On February 6th,

Mr. Gore raised the issue with Victor Chernomyrdin, who protested

it was impossible that Russian firms were involved in such

projects. He demanded that Mr. Gore supply him with specific information

so he could investigate back in Moscow.

The Vice President provided what the Israelis had given to his

aide, Mr. Fuerth. The Russians did nothing. Instead, some of

Israel’s best-placed assets on the ground in Russia went silent.

They lost agents on the ground. Over the ensuing months, the

Israelis met time and time again with Mr. Talbott, who rebuffed

them every step of the way. In the meantime, Russia and Iran

worked overtime to complete the Shahab Missile and roll up Russia’s

intelligence network.

I have given you much more detail in the written statement, but

the crux of the matter, Mr. Chairman, is very simple. For nearly

2 years, despite having detailed intelligence on Russia’s involvement

with the Iranian Missile programs, the U.S. Government

failed to press the Russians in any meaningful or effective way to

stop it.

If we had intervened with the Russians when the Israelis first

came to us in late 1996, the Shahab Missile would never have been

tested successfully 2 years later. It would probably still, even

today, be on the drawing board. Instead, not only have the Iranians

deployed that missile, they are now working on a much longerrange

missile, the Kosar, which is being disguised as a satellite

launch vehicle. Both of those missiles are going to be powered by

Russian-built and Russian-designed boosters. Ultimately, Russia

has far more——

Let me refer to the conclusions that I made in

my statement, which are some concrete things that I believe this

Congress and this Committee can do to rectify the situation.

I would refer to a statement by a former CIA

Director, James Woolsey. You can go to Lausanne, Switzerland, to

a major hotel today and see a Russian with Gucci shoes, a Rolex

watch, and a $3,000 suit. He can either be, first, a member of the

Russian Mafia; second, a member of, the foreign intelligence services;

or third, a Russian cabinet minister. Today, he might be all

three of those at the same time.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Oehler provided in 1998 extensive testimony on Russian involvement

in the Iranian Missile programs. He briefed Members of

Congress on Russia’s involvement in selling gyroscopes to Iraq, and

these were gyroscopes that had been taken off the SS–N–18 strategic

missiles and shipped to Iraq through clandestine means.

The specific incident that triggered Mr. Oehler’s decision to leave

the CIA came after he testified in public session that there was no

doubt of the intelligence that China had delivered M–11 missiles

to Pakistan. Now, this was something that the State Department

had consistently refused to acknowledge on the record. Mr. Oehler

was basically told that his department would be downsized significantly

days after he made that statement on the public record.

So the actual incident was involving China, but he had a record

of being frank and cooperating with Congress and did not earn

himself friends in the Administration for that.

Yes, on both counts, Mr. Campbell. As a reporter,

I came to this issue first from sources in government in the

United States and sources in the Israeli military intelligence, but

I was certainly not privy to the type of classified briefings to which

Mr. Talbott was privy. I was not able to call up the Central Intelligence

Agency and ask them to look into the case.

One of the most astonishing things that I found was that after

Mr. Talbott was initially briefed by the Israelis in September or

October 1996, he never once asked a question of our intelligence

agencies until the Israelis came back and briefed Mr. Gore through

his aide, Leon Fuerth.

After February 1997, Mr. Talbott was tasked by Mr. Gore to deal

with the issue directly with the Russians. For the next 6 months

he did absolutely nothing.

He was aware. He had detailed intelligence from the Israelis on

the names of companies and the names of individuals involved in

the transfers to Iran of Russian missile technology and did nothing.

He never put it at the top of his agenda. He never pressed the Russians

or used the leverage, the very real leverage that we had at

that time through Aid programs, and in particular, U.S. assistance

to the Russian space programs.

For the first 3 months, I am saying between

late 1996 and February 1997, absolutely nothing was done. This I

have from both U.S. Government sources and from Israeli sources.

Afterward, Mr. Talbott was tasked specifically by the Vice President’s

office and put in charge of dealing with the Russians on this

issue. He had exchanges with the Russians, but he never pressed

them. The reason that we know that he never pressed them is because

it leaked out into the press in numerous cases of Russian

transfers going to Iran. There were customs cases; customs officials

in various countries blocked shipments. This came out in the press.

Mr. Talbott had information about those shipments before they

were stopped, and he never pressed it.

I take it you are asking for my opinion, as well

as what I can base my opinion on, Mr. Chairman. Certainly, I

think Dr. Waller has testified that other diplomats in the U.S. Embassy,

Russia, have been overruled by Mr. Talbott. I think that is

credible information, and certainly from my own contacts with the

diplomatic community, I think that is true.

But I do not have firsthand information of how Mr. Talbott has

played the role inside the State Department. That has not been my

focus. My focus has been on what he has been doing with the Russians

vis-a-vis with Iran and vis-a-vis nonproliferation and his failure

to stop the Russian transfers.

Let me just point out one other detail which is in my written testimony,

but it hasn’t come out here this morning. Mr. Talbott was

instrumental in making sure that Yuri Koptev, who was the Chairman

of the Russian space agency, became the principal interlocutor

for this Gore-Chernomyrdin process focusing on the Russian missile

transfers to Iran. It is very curious that he would choose Mr.

Koptev, because our own intelligence agencies had singled out and

identified Mr. Koptev as the man who was probably most knowledgeable

and probably in charge of those transfers to Iran.

There is a very disturbing trend inside Russia

today within the military, within the intelligence establishment

and in certain areas of the foreign policy establishment that are

close to former Foreign Affairs Minister Primakov—Yevgeny

Primakov—who is probably going to be a candidate for the presidency.

They have a belief that they need to counterbalance Russia’s

declining military capabilities especially the conventional military

capabilities, by creating strategic challenges to the United States

and other parts of the world. You all remember how the Russian

army made that terrific midnight dash into Kosovo the same way

they had gone into Berlin in 1945.

We have also seen in this Iran and Iraq. For Yevgeny Primakov

and this particular faction within the security establishment, they

are consciously pursuing a policy of creating challenges to U.S.

power in the Persian Gulf. They would like to see Iran and Iraq

have the military power to challenge our presence in the Persian

Gulf, and that is a policy of the Russian government. I think this

is a very disturbing factor. This is certainly something that Deputy

Secretary of State Strobe Talbott should have been focusing on, but

he is not.

Simply put, Mr. Chairman, I think we should

do what America does best; we should hold high the light of democracy

and engage directly with the Russian people. This Administration

has been engaging with the Russian elite and a corrupt Russian

elite. Our policy should be crafted at doing things like encouraging

private property. There is still not private landownership in

Russia after all these years, 10 years after the Wall has gone down.

We should be crafting policies that promote the rule of law and the

accountability of public officials. Instead, we have just rewarded a

corrupt elite.