Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate you yielding

and I appreciate you holding these hearings. So far, I have been

impressed with the statements. I thought I would be here in a

very, very lonely position of trying to get some balance on Russia

bashing versus coming to some common sense. So I am very

pleased that there is some deep thinking here on this issue.

My first question would be, why does the ‘‘American Empire’’

exist in Georgia? Fortunately, as Mr. Royce pointed out, what

would it be like if they had been in NATO? We would have been

committed. Besides that, it points out how weak we are. We did not

have the troops to go into war there, if we would have been committed,

which points out that the overall foreign policy of this country

is deeply flawed, and we have to look at this because we are

all over the place, and we cannot defend our interests.

I think we are in worse shape than we have ever been for a long

time, and, therefore, we have to look at this very carefully. We do

not need to be in Georgia protecting a pipeline. We are not there

for democracy; we are there to protect an oil pipeline, and that, to me, is tragic.

Mr. Chairman, I understand we are sending aid to

Georgia right now, humanitarian aid, in a military vessel, a military

ship. If we are not the provocateurs, why would we use a military

ship instead of a nonmilitary ship? What is the purpose of that if it is not to provoke?

Let me have you pause for a minute because, obviously,

there is a disagreement on that. Certainly, in the world

press, there is a lot of disagreement on who did the invading first,

but we will not settle that here. But I think we should all agree

that when you give humanitarian aid, it is essentially military aid

because all funds are fungible, and it just happens that the Georgians,

in their budget last year, spent 70 percent of their money

on the military, and they got a lot of assistance from us.

So this idea that it is humanitarian aid and not military aid, I

think, distracts from what is really going on there. I was just wondering

whether it ever bothers you or concerns you or the question

ever crosses your mind about humanitarian aid to a country like

this. What about the people in this country? We have a lot of poor

people not getting medical care and not getting food, and $1 billion, what the heck? We will send them another billion. Does it ever cross your mind that maybe that should be helping

our people here? This is getting us into trouble. This is not helping

us. This is making us less safe. This is part of this empire. You

might refer to it as our ‘‘sphere of influence,’’ but everybody knows it is our empire.

Does it ever cross your mind that everything that we do over

there, and ever nickel you take, you are taking it away from some

poor people in this country that could have been helped?

If I may, I am sorry, but I only have a minute. I understand

your point, but let me tell you, there are a lot of people

in America that do not see this in our interest. They see it in the

interest of some very powerful, special-interest groups that have an oil pipeline going through there.

As a matter of fact, most Americans could not even find Georgia

on a map, and to convince them that this is crucial, to spend all

of this money, provoking the Russians, leading us into another conflict

that we are not even capable of handling militarily now unless

we use some very big bombs. Our troops are spread around the

world, and this has been exactly the plan of some of our enemies, to do exactly this and bring us to our knees.

All we do is proceed to continue to spend and spread our troops

around, diminishing our ability to take care of our people here at

home, and I yield back the balance of my time.