Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, in April, this

House moved a resolution endorsing Georgia and Ukraine’s path

into NATO. I would ask my colleagues to think where we would be

if Georgia were, as a NATO member, potentially at war with a nuclear

power here on its border in its area of strength.

Some argue that NATO would have been a deterrent. Well,

maybe it would have, but it is just as plausible that potential

NATO membership inflamed the situation.

And what about our security? In this territorial dispute, one that

CRS reports derives from age-old ethnic rivalries, is this dispute

worth a 10-percent chance of war with Russia?

Events have a way of spiraling out of control. No one was thinking

an ethnic rivalry in the Balkans would spark World War I.

Russia’s animosity to NATO’s expansion into the near abroad may

not make sense to us, but it is deadly serious to Russia, as much

as we say it should not be.

Russia is wrong, no doubt. Its actions here were brutal and reckless,

yet what is our interest? In an opening statement that former

Chairman Henry Hyde delivered before this committee, entitled

‘‘Perils of the Golden Theory,’’ he cautioned that ‘‘while we should

believe in American exceptionalism, we also have a duty to ourselves

and to our own interests, the protection and advancement of

which may sometimes necessitate actions focused on more tangible

returns than those of altruism. Every wrong, however brutal, does

not warrant our military response, or our commitment for a military

response, which, frankly, should be considered one and the

same.’’

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Yes, Mr. Fried. Your comment that some did not believe

that Georgia did not deserve support, I think, is a misunderstanding

of the situation because I think many of us believe that

the achievement by the people of Georgia of democracy was a wonderful

achievement. Many of us are elated by what has happened

over time in Georgia, in terms of the evolution of that system, and

many of us feel the Russian invasion was, in no way, justified, not

even by the bad judgment of the President of Georgia in launching

a barrage on South Ossetia. But the question at hand here goes to

a deeper issue.

Now, in terms of support for Georgia, I, and others here, supported

military training and equipment—not arms but military

training and equipment—to Georgia when it was aimed at routing

al-Qaeda terrorists and Chechens from the Pankisi Gorge there,

and the terrorists had been seeking a safe haven. But now we have

moved on to a different topic, and that came up with this issue of

moving Georgia into NATO, along with Ukraine.

This is a blunt question, but I think the stakes, war and peace

here, demand clarity. Is the defense of Georgia worth war with

Russia? And, if not, is it responsible to add Georgia to NATO?

All right. I understand your argument there, but it

is a pathway.

I would also ask you, do other NATO countries, those with significant

militaries, feel that the defense of Georgia is worth war

with Russia? Would we have anyone with us, say, for a minute, for

sake of argument, that we go down this road? Are you not concerned

with committing to defend a country with an active border

dispute with Russia, and is this a vital national security interest?

I think that is the question in that vote over eventual NATO membership

or a pathway into NATO.

Well, now listen. Newsweek ran a report that NATO

did not formally assess any of the 10 new NATO states’ defense capabilities

when we enlarged, and I think we should have. Old Europe

should have been brought into NATO. We brought old Europe

into NATO. But, according to Admiral Wald, the former numbertwo

at European Command, the attitude was, the more, the

merrier. ‘‘The more, the merrier,’’ he said.

NATO did not really look at the Article V part of it; in other

words, the collective defense portion of this. And I would ask what

you think General Wald meant with his statement because it looks

like what he means is that NATO was not focused on what it

would mean to have to defend other countries coming into NATO.

Whereas bringing old Europe into NATO is one thing, bringing in

part of the near abroad, bringing in Ukraine or Georgia, brings in

a whole different set of questions.

There are ways to punish Russia. The markets are punishing

Russia right now. Foreign investment is leaving. Twenty-one billion

of rubles have left the country. There is a run on, basically, the

ruble right now.

The international community does need to condemn Russia for

its actions, but this issue of creeping toward bringing these two

countries in the near abroad, with border disputes with Russia,

into NATO; I would argue that General Wald has a point here

when he says, you know, the attitude was not really looking at the

Article V part of this, in terms of collective defense. That is what

I want to ask you about.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.