Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I think it is

very important to say, at the outset, that the Russians’ hands are

definitely not clean in this matter.

This is an extraordinarily crucial and critical issue, probably at

the top of the list, for world security, without any question. But I

think that we need to look at what is permeating this throughout,

and that is energy, and Russia is playing this energy.

For example, Russia recently announced that they would be closing

a major gas pipeline to Europe for 24 hours in order to perform

‘‘maintenance.’’ Now, it is very important to understand that the

timing of this announcement was, of course, suspect, given that the

European Union was shortly thereafter supposed to vote on possible

sanctions on Russia for their actions in Georgia.

The question has to be: Was Russia’s announcement actually just

a show of force to remind Europe how dependent it is on Russia

for energy? I think so. I believe so. I know so. And it certainly

seems that the Europeans feel the same way because the European

Union backed away from a stronger condemnation of Russia, and,

of course, Mr. Chairman, we have seen Russia use its energy supplies

as political leverage in the past—all we have to do is look at

Lithuania—and they are likely to do so again in the future.

There are some questions. Thank you, sir.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask a series of questions.

Let me go back to what I was talking about earlier, given the energy

situation, which I think really is lying at the heart of this

matter, energy. This is the elephant in the room. Russia controls

so much of it. It has a history of using its energy as political leverage

against European countries. Lithuania and the other satellites come to mind.

So the question comes on how reliable, how effective, will our European

and NATO parties be to assisting us in dealing strongly

with Russia, if, in effect, they are so dependent on Russia for their

oil and their energy? Where does that place us in the scheme of things?

Let me ask you this, one of my questions. We have

got a big issue coming up. I am a member of the NATO Parliamentary

Assembly. We have a NATO meeting in 2 months, and, certainly,

the pertinent issue that is going to come up is Georgia’s desire

to become a part of NATO. Give me your thoughts on what that means.

Where should our position be? What is the United States’ position,

the administration’s position, on the pace of Georgia becoming

a member of NATO, and especially in view of the great disapproval

that has with Russia?

So are you saying that the administration believes we

should move to make Georgia a part of NATO? Okay.

Okay. I have a number of questions. I want to get

your reaction to something here.

A few weeks ago, there was the stationing of the interceptor missiles

in Poland and the deputy chief of the Russian general staff

warned, and he said this: ‘‘This will not go unpunished.’’ He went

on to say, ‘‘Poland, by deploying the system, is exposing itself to a

strike, 100 percent, noting that Russia’s military doctrine allows for

the use of nuclear weapons against the allies of countries having

nuclear weapons, if they, in some way, help them.’’ That appeared

on ABC television news on August 14th.

How serious is this? Is it as serious as this deputy chief of the

Russian general staff is stating, or are they just bluffing?