Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and thank you, Dan.

Ms. Swett, glad to see you again and welcome to the panel. The

reality is that Russia has a dismal human rights record, thanks to

a decade of Vladimir Putin’s self-styled managed democracy that

has more to do with control than freedom. While some fixated with

the pursuit of arms control and other agreements with Moscow, as

important as they are, the human rights situation on the ground

in Russia has deteriorated across the board. In category after category,

we have witnessed the conditions going from bad to worse.

Whether you are speaking about freedom of expression in the

media, the right of all believers to freely profess and practice their

faith, or the ability of human rights defenders, NGOs, and independent

journalists and political parties to operate without fear of

government harassment, the space for such activity has suddenly shrunk.

The absence of an independent judiciary and meaningful checks

and balances on the Executive power has contributed to this reality.

Illustrative, though, of this case is the tragic case of Sergei

Magnitsky, mentioned by Mr. Berman, I should say. And instead

of featuring prominently in the administration’s bilateral agenda,

human rights clearly take a back seat to other considerations. At

times one is left with the strong impression that preserving reset

itself has become a priority for Washington.

I ask unanimous consent that my full statement be made a part

of the record.