Madam Chair, thank you for giving me this

opportunity. I would like to also associate myself and personally

welcoming our distinguished lady and Mrs. Annette Lantos for joining

us this morning and also for having members of her family join us.

Madam Chair, I don’t have an opening statement but I look forward

to hearing from our witnesses. I do have some questions.

Thank you for initiating this hearing this morning. Thank you.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. I

find it very significant that there are American decision makers

whose frame of reference on issues dealing with Russia has not

changed—excuse me, please——

Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the

dialogue and certainly the statements that have been made from

our witnesses. It is very interesting to note that we have two highly

respected experts who have such divergent views concerning our

relations, our bilateral relations, with Russia.

In the 4 years that I held the chairmanship of the Subcommittee

on Asia and the Pacific it was my privilege to visit Central Asian

countries. And one of the things that always seems to gnaw at me

are the criticisms that we say that these Central Asian countries

are not moving fast enough to become full democracies.

I suspect that probably 99 percent of our community, the country,

in our country, probably have no idea that these Central Asian

countries were colonies of the Soviet Union for some 100 years. So

when we talk about democracy and human rights and all these

issues, certainly very, very high as far as we are concerned as a

country, but these countries have had a very different mentality

that they were living under, under the former Soviet Union.

As I recall, I think it was a couple of years ago that President

Medvedev for the first time ever since after the Cold War, he visited

Berlin and he gave what I thought was one of the very profound

speeches that I have ever read and tried to pay it a little attention

was the fact that, why are Western countries so put out

about having to continue NATO, other than the fact that the Cold

War is over, and as far as Russia is concerned, having this missile

system wasn’t really pointed at Iran, it was really pointed at Russia.

Now, I would like to ask Ambassador Sestanovich for his comment

on this. Do you think that President Medvedev’s observations

of what has happened between—another problem here, when Russia

became more democratic, or after the Cold War, it is my understanding

that for some 10 years we failed as a country to assist

Russia with its economic needs. And I want Ambassador

Sestanovich to comment on that.

I am sorry, Mr. Ambassador. My time is

running, and I know Madam Chair is very good about this. Can

you comment about what was she doing on the Jackson-Vanik law

that seems to aid us all these years? Why should we get rid of this?

Is it still relevant in our current relations with Russia?

The problem that I have is that sometimes

the Members use Jackson-Vanik as leverage for other unrelated

issues that come before the legislative calendar or the schedule

that we have here as Members of the Congress.

Dr. Swett, I just wanted to ask you—I know as a great champion

of human rights—I just wanted to ask you, when we have bilateral

relations—let’s take Russia—sometimes we have to make priorities.

Our country is not an angel either. The fact that at the height of

the Cold War, talk about human rights, forget it. We were propping

up dictators all over the world just for the simple fact, as long as

they are supportive of our policies, we didn’t mind them abusing

and all the terrible things that they did to their respective countries.

And that didn’t go very well.

I just wanted to ask you, you put all these things together,

human rights, national security, economic interests, and democracy.

How would you put human rights in this pot or this chop

suey, if you will? Where does human rights come in? Should it be

a number one priority? Or should it be considered in other issues

that are more important than just human rights?

My time is up.