Thank you, Madam Chair, and I look forward to

hearing the testimony as well, particularly given the fact that there

have been so many concerns raised about Russia’s involvement in

the region raised by colleagues earlier, particularly Chairman

Rohrabacher, but also Russia’s perhaps involvement around the

world that runs counter to U.S. interests.

And I will be interested to hear about commentary regarding

Russia’s involvement in this hemisphere as well. I will get into that

during the question and answer session. But I also believe that it

is important that we raise the issue of naivete´ with respect to Russia’s

previous performance on nuclear proliferation issues and what

exactly should be the U.S. posture, given their track record which

has been counter to U.S. interests. So I look forward to hearing that comment.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Before I begin

with my questions, I also want to recognize and acknowledge Dr.

Swett’s father, Tom Lantos, and Mrs. Lantos for being here. Certainly

his passion for human rights around the world has been

noted. But in particular, I want to acknowledge his work on behalf

of human rights in Cuba. I know for years and years he was an

advocate and a friend of the human rights movement, and certainly

his passion on behalf of human rights in Cuba in recent years, in

particular with what we’ve seen on the human rights crackdowns

under Raul Castro, Congressman Lantos’ passion has been vindicated

and his vision for what needs to be done with human rights

in Cuba has been vindicated.

I will begin my questions with Ambassador Sestanovich regarding

Belarus. As we know, one of the last bastions of Stalinist totalitarian

communism rule in the world, other than Cuba and North

Korea certainly, what exactly is Russia’s role in sustaining that

Stalinist dictatorship in Belarus? What has been their role perhaps

in terms of making sure that there could be any types of reforms

whatsoever, if any has existed, would that Stalinist dictatorship

exist but for Russia’s support? Just generally, what is their role?

And anything that can be done on our part?

And certainly a threat to some of our critical allies

such as Poland. We know what happened in terms of their relationship there.

But in my last 2 minutes, I will yield to Chairman Rohrabacher

who I believe wanted to continue his colloquy.