The committee will come to order. At

the start of the hearing I would like to recognize Annette Lantos,

the widow of former Congressman Tom Lantos who participated,

along with her family members, in the inauguration of the Tom

Lantos Institute in their native Hungary, and it will be undoubtedly

the premier human rights institute in the world. So we always

welcome you back, Annette. Thank you for being with us. And I am

sorry I could not be on that trip to participate in such a momentous occasion.

Also at the start of the hearing, I would like to capitalize on the

presence of a range of State Department personnel and remind the

Department of this committee’s longstanding pending request for

the Secretary of State to testify on Afghanistan and Pakistan at

the end of this month, we hope, and immediately upon full Senate

confirmation, Deputy Secretary of State Bill Burns, whom we

would like to have testify on Iran and Syria. And we had requested

Ambassador Burns when he was still Under Secretary of State and

had just been nominated for the Deputy Secretary post.

After recognizing myself and the ranking member, my friend, Mr.

Berman, for 7 minutes each for our opening statements, I will recognize

each member of the committee for 1 minute for their opening remarks.

We will then hear from our witnesses, and I would ask that you

summarize your prepared statements in 5 minutes each before we

move to the questions and answers with members under the 5-

minute rule. Without objection, the witnesses’ prepared statements

will be made a part of the record and members may have 5 days

to insert statements and questions for the record, subject to length

limitation in the rules.

The Chair now recognizes herself for 7 minutes. The Obama administration

came into office intending to ‘‘reset’’ the U.S.-Russia

relationship. Their assumption was that the Bush administration

had needlessly antagonized Moscow with overly aggressive policies,

and that a more conciliatory approach would produce Russian cooperation

in a broad range of issues. To that end, the Obama administration

has offered one concession after another, but the concrete

results have been meager at best.

Russian cooperation on Iran is usually cited as a major accomplishment.

But other than agreeing not to block U.N. Security

Council Resolution 1929, which Moscow insisted be watered down,

Russia’s approach to Iran remains essentially unchanged even as

Iran accelerates its march toward a nuclear weapons capability.

Russia is also committed to stopping U.S. missile defense efforts.

The Obama administration has said that the recently ratified Strategic

Arms Control Treaty, known as the New START, places no

restrictions on U.S. missile defense efforts. However, the Russian

Government has repeatedly stated that the treaty does, in fact,

come with such restrictions and has unambiguously stated that it

will not honor the terms of the agreement if the U.S. proceeds with its plans.

Russian claims that U.S. missile defense efforts in Europe are a

threat to their security, and we know that those claims are absurd

on their face. Independent experts say that not only does the proposed

system pose no threat but that it cannot do so, a fact that

Russia’s leadership is well aware of. Russia’s true motive is a political

one; namely, to divide NATO and to demonstrate to the countries

of Central and Eastern Europe that, despite their close alliance

with the U.S., Moscow intends to retain a dominant influence

over their affairs. This is how the government and the people in

that region see it.

Putin’s government claims a privileged position for Russia regarding

the countries on or near its borders and has repeatedly

used its muscle to enforce this assertion of rights. Moscow has exploited

their dependence on Russian energy supplies—including oil,

natural gas, and electricity—to pressure governments to accommodate

Russian demands, going so far as to cut off supply in the middle of winter.

When Estonia defied the demands of Russian officials not to relocate

a Soviet memorial in its capital, a massive cyberattack was

launched on that country, almost paralyzing it. Worst of all, in

2008 Russia’s longstanding efforts to reimpose its control over

Georgia moved beyond sowing political and economic turmoil and

promoting separatist movements to an all-out invasion of large

parts of that American ally. The tepid U.S. response has set a dangerous

precedent and convinced Moscow that it has little to worry about.

Moscow’s actions have demonstrated the lengths that it is prepared

to take to assert its influence on an even larger scale, a fact

that is especially troubling in light of Europe’s growing dependence

on Russian energy. There are many other areas in which Russia

still targets U.S. interests, such as its arms sales to the Chavez regime

in Venezuela, but the list is too long to go into here.

So it appears that the benefits for the U.S. of the reset are few

and far between. But we have paid a high price for them. Last

year’s nuclear cooperation agreement with Russia was a gift, pure

and simple. The U.S. market was opened to Russian nuclear companies,

but U.S. companies will find no corresponding opportunities

in that country, where they will be shut out by its state-owned nuclear

monopolies. Russia did receive the U.S. seal of approval for

its efforts to become the world’s one-stop shop for all things nuclear.

This reward was given even as Russia was continuing to assist

Iran in its nuclear program.

The latest offer to Moscow is support for Russia’s entry into the

World Trade Organization. This, despite Russia’s continuing refusal

to clamp down on the massive piracy of American intellectual

property, which is second in scale only to China’s, and much of

which occurs on state-owned property.

It also comes as the Russian Government’s abuses of human

rights and brutal approach toward those seeking a truly democratic

government in Russia has only worsened. After the Russian authorities

broke up opposition protests in Moscow and St. Petersburg

late last year, detaining scores of activists, Russia’s Vladimir

Putin stated, ‘‘If [the protesters] demonstrate without permission,

they’ll take a cudgel to the head. That’s all there is to it.’’

This disturbing statement underscores the brutal nature of the

Russian Government and its abusive treatment of anyone who

challenges its policies. There has been a particularly shameful pattern

of beatings and murders of journalists in Russia, and no one

has been held accountable. And yet in another effort to prevent the

democratic opposition from participating in the upcoming parliamentary

elections, the Kremlin has banned Boris Nemtsov, one

of Russia’s most prominent democratic leaders—whom I met with

last year—from leaving Russia again, should he return from his

current visit to France.

What have we bought for all of our concessions to Moscow? How

many times do we have to relearn the painful lesson that aggressors

cannot be bought off, that allies must not be abandoned, and

that naively trusting our adversaries to do anything other than

pursue their own interests will produce no other outcome than to

needlessly sacrifice our interests and undermine our security?

It is my hope that the administration will reconsider its approach

to the Russian regime.

And I now turn to my good friend and distinguished ranking

member for his opening remarks.

Thank you very much, Mr. Berman.

And I would like to thank the chairman of the Subcommittee on

Europe and Eurasia, Mr. Burton, for yielding his spot for the opening

statements. So I would like to recognize Mr. Smith, the chairman

of the Subcommittee on Africa Global Health and Human

Rights for his 1-minute statement.

Thank you. Without objection.

Mr. Meeks, the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Europe

and Eurasia is recognized.

Thank you Mr. Meeks.

Now Mr. Burton, the Subcommittee on Europe and Eurasia

chairman, is recognized. Thank you, Dan, for yielding your spot.

Thank you Mr. Burton.

Mr. Faleomavaega, the ranking member on the Subcommittee on

Asia and the Pacific is recognized.

Thank you, sir. Mr. Rohrabacher, the

Subcommittee on Oversight Investigations chair, who always has

an opening statement.

Mr. Rohrabacher will reset the clock.

Thank you, Mr. Rohrabacher.

Mr. Connolly of Virginia is recognized. Thank you.

My Florida colleague, Mr. Rivera, is recognized. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Chabot, our last opening remarker, the Subcommittee on

Middle East and South Asia chairman.

Thank you very much.

And now we are so pleased to present our wonderful witnesses today.

Katrina Lantos Swett established the Lantos Foundation for

Human Rights and Justice in 2008, where she serves as President

and CEO. She also teaches human rights and American foreign policy

at Tufts University. Dr. Swett is, of course, the daughter of our

former colleague, Tom Lantos, who was a leading member of our

committee for many years and a former chairman. And we also had

many of us, old-timers had the pleasure of serving with your husband

Richard when he so well represented New Hampshire here in

Congress. So thank you for being here with us, Dr. Swett.

Ariel Cohen is the senior research fellow in Russian and Eurasian

Studies and International Energy Policy at the Heritage

Foundation. He is a frequent witness on Capitol Hill, including the

House and Senate Foreign and Defense Committees, as well as the

Helsinki Commission. Dr. Cohen has worked extensively with a

range of national security agencies, including the Department of

State, the Department of Defense, the CIA, the Defense Intelligence

Agency, and many others. So thank you for being with us

today, Dr. Cohen.

And then we will hear from Dr. Steven Sestanovich, who is the

Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Professor of International Diplomacy

at Columbia University School of International and Public

Affairs, as well as Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations.

Dr. Sestanovich was Ambassador-at-Large and senior advisor

to the Secretary of State for the former Soviet Union from 1997 to

2001. He was also a member of the State Department’s policy planning

staff and senior director for policy development at the National

Security Council during the Reagan administration. And as

we know, this year is the 100th anniversary of Ronald Reagan’s

birth, and we hope that his legacy is recognized and celebrated

every day for freedom and liberty. Thank you for all the enslaved

people of the world.

So thank you, excellent witnesses here today, and we will begin

with Dr. Swett. Thank you.

Thank you so much, Dr. Swett.

Dr. Cohen. And I apologize that our

name plates do not recognize your academic credentials, as someone

who worked mightily to finish my doctorate and earn my doctorate—

I think those name plates were done by an embittered allbut-

the-dissertation individual. Dr. Cohen is recognized.

Yes, sir.

Thank you.

Thank you so much, Dr. Cohen.

And Ambassador Sestanovich.

Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

Thank you to all of our witnesses. I

will begin the question and answer period, thank you.

The news that the Kremlin has banned Boris Nemtsov, a leader

of Russia’s democratic movement as I spoke about in my opening

statement, from leaving Russia if he returns from his current visit

to France, is I believe a dramatic evidence that Putin’s government

intends to continue to persecute its opponents and prevent their

participation in the upcoming parliamentary elections. This is more

evidence, if more were needed, that the Obama administration’s

reset policy of giving Moscow one concession after another in an effort

to buy better behavior from Russia has failed.

And let me ask each of the witnesses three questions. I know our

time is limited.

What can the U.S. do to provide assistance to Russia’s democratic

movement efforts to bring democracy to their country?

Number two, what steps should the Obama administration take

regarding this latest action by the Kremlin about Mr. Nemtsov?

And, three, what will the impact on the democratic movement be

if the U.S. reaction to this act is only mild criticism?

And we will start with Dr. Swett. Thank you.

Thank you.

Dr. Cohen, and Ambassador? Thank you.

Thank you, Dr. Cohen. Mr. Ambassador.

Thank you very much. Mr. Berman is recognized.

Thank you, Mr. Berman. Mr. Rohrabacher

is recognized, the Subcommittee on Oversight Investigations chairman.

Thank you. The time is up. But you

can answer, just a short answer if you could.

I know but his time is up.

Thank you very much. Mr.

Faleomavaega, the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Asia

and the Pacific, is recognized.

Thank you. Mr. Rivera of Florida is recognized.

Thank you very much, Mr. Rivera.

Thank you, Mr. Rohrabacher. Mr. Meeks, the ranking member on

the Subcommittee on Europe and Eurasia, is recognized.

The Earth is shaking.

Mr. Bilirakis, our Florida colleague.

Thank you so much. Mr. Connolly of

Virginia is recognized.

Mr. Connolly, I want to ask—you had

7 seconds left—but Mr. Deutch is needed for a Judiciary vote and

so is Mr. Berman. So could I steal those 7 seconds from you?

Thank you so much. Mr. Deutch is recognized.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deutch.

And Mr. Marino is recognized from Pennsylvania.

Thank you so much. And thank you,

Mr. Marino. I would like to recognize Mr. Connolly before I recognize

Mr. Engel. Mr. Connolly had asked a question of the panelists

and we wanted to get Dr. Swett’s answer to it. Do you remember

or you could reframe it? Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Connolly. Thank you, Dr. Swett.

Mr. Engel, the ranking member on the Subcommittee on the

Western Hemisphere, is now recognized. Thank you.

For that, I may give you additional

time. But let’s go to Ms. Schmidt, in order to be fair. Thank you,

Mr. Engel. Mrs. Schmidt of Ohio is recognized.

Thank you. Mr. Sherman, the ranking

member on the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade.

Thank you very much. Unfortunately,

we will not have a second round. We will be voting pretty soon. But

I want to thank the wonderful panelists. And thank you to all the

members for terrific questions. And thank you to the visitors who

joined us. And the committee is now adjourned.