Just very briefly. And—and the most important

thing is to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank Senator

Wellstone for the leadership on this.

We have to speak out on these kinds of human rights violations

wherever they occur in the world. And I believe this hearing is especially

important because I fear that the United States government

has accepted a dangerous assumption about the violence in

Chechnya.

I fear that the administration believes that in order to pursue a

cooperative relationship with a formidable power like Russia, the

United States somehow has to accept the terrible human costs of

the Chechnya campaign.

And I think that assumption is wrong. And I am sure the Chairman

does as well. The assumption is wrong, because the lives of

civilians cannot be bargained away in the pursuit of engagement.

That is simply too high of a price to pay.

And also it is just as important to say that the assumption offers

a false promise. History has proven that there can be no lasting

order without justice.

I do share the Administration’s desire to see a stable, prosperous,

democratic Russia take shape. But that will never happen as long

as grave human rights abuses like those perpetrated by the Russian

military in Chechnya continue to be a part of Moscow’s policy.

It will never happen as long as the Russian government denies

international rights groups and non-governmental organizations access

to the terrible humanitarian catastrophe of a place like

Chechnya. And it will never happen while independent journalists

are muzzled and the Russian people are denied the truth.

So what is being done by Russia, Mr. Chairman, in Chechnya is

not a liberation struggle. It is not an acceptable or understandable

response to domestic terrorism, as terrible terrorism is. It is abhorrent.

And if we seek a mature post-Cold War relationship between the

United States and Russia, one that aims at a stable and meaningful

relationship, the United States has to speak out and condemn

such practices at every opportunity as Senator Wellstone has said,

including, I would add, within the international financial institutions.

So I look forward to the hearing. And I, again, thank very much

the Chairman and the Senator from Minnesota.

I thank the Senator from Minnesota.

Yes, sir. I will not even use all of it, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Bouckaert, we all read reports indicating that the campaign

in Chechnya is extremely popular in Russia. Apart from the journalists

Mr. Dine was talking about, have any prominent Russian

figures, policymakers, intellectuals, non-government activists condemned

the violence in Chechnya and the abuses occurring there?

What sort of picture of that can you give me?

What about prominent artists, writers, or intellectuals?

For any of you, how credible is the investigation

into abuses in Chechnya as being conducted by President

Putin’s representative? Is it adequately staffed by human rights

professionals?

Mr. Bouckaert.

Ms. AbuZayd, did you want to respond?

Thank you all for your testimony, as the

Chairman said. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.