I just want to say to our members of the

committee, that the resurgent Russia’s actions have enormous

ramifications in things that you wouldn’t think of. For example,

Russia is a partner with us on the international space station.

NASA has gotten itself into a fix that we’re going to shut down the

space shuttle in 2010, and now they’re not going to have the new

system ready until 2015 or 2016, the new rocket; it’s a Aries rocket

with a Orion capsule. That’s a 5-or-6-year gap that we only have

one way to get to the space station that we built and paid for, and

that is on the Russian spacecraft *Soyuz,* which we have been using,

along with our space shuttle, to get to and from the international

space station.

Now, if we’ve got a Russia that is trying to exclude itself from

the family of nations’ normal standard operating procedure, it’s

going to make it increasingly difficult for us to get along with

them. But, what is facing us right now—and this is a ramification

that people don’t realize—is, for that 5-year period, we’ve got to

contract with the Russians to build those spacecraft in order to get

us to and from, and to have the safety lifeboat attached in case

they had to abandon the space station. There’s a 3-year lead time.

That contract has to be signed right now. And we have to waive

the law that says that we can’t do business with Russia because

they’re helping Iran on its nuclear program. That’s an issue in

front of this committee right now. It’s a waiver of that law. I support

it, simply because there’s nothing that we can do about it.

We’ve got to get to and from our space station. But, because of the

aggression of Russia in Georgia, we now have this complication facing

us, in ways that we would normally never think of, in our ability

to get to and from our space station.

Senator Hagel.

In August, the U.S. and Poland signed an

agreement with the Polish Government—it has not been ratified by

the Parliament—to place 10 U.S. interceptor missiles, a two-stage

version of the three-stage version of the national missile defense

system—in Poland with the radar in the Czech Republic. My question

is, the rapidity with which that was approved by the Polish

executive branch, how much was that tied to the fact of a resurgent

and aggressive Russia in the minds of the Poles?

Now, given the fact that the placement of

those missiles—still to be developed, because the two-stage version

has not been developed—given the fact that they are there for the

avowed purpose of—as a deterrent to a nuclear missile coming

from Iran, having to do, nothing, with regard to the nuclear arsenal

of Russia, why then was this fostered in such a fast track by

the Poles, vis-a`-vis Russia, when it has nothing to do with any deterrence

on Russia?

Could it have been because Russia had objected,

in the first place, to a national missile defense system in

Eastern Europe, that the Poles saw this as an opportunity to say,

‘‘This is a red line for us. We’re going to show our independence

from you, Mr. Russia’’?

Well, Mr. Secretary, you’re the best and

you’re the brightest. How has the announcement by the Polish executive

branch affected the relationship between the United States

and Russia, since clearly Russia has said they don’t want this system

in Eastern Europe?

As to the possible admission of Georgia

into NATO, what is the position of Germany and France?

In the NATO Alliance, is it not true that,

for any additional member, it has to have the unanimous consent

of all NATO parties?

Therefore, if Germany and France object,

Georgia doesn’t come in.

Well, I’ve heard a little more strongly that

Germany and France are objecting to this.

How do you work through the mental manipulations that we can

bring in Kosovo, but—and over the objections of Russia—but Georgia

can come over the objections of Russia? Tell me how you work

through that parallel situation.

Independence. I’m sorry.

Independence.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.