Just briefly, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for chairing the hearing and calling it.

I think that one of the difficulties here is, as much as our Government—

and I think there’s bipartisan support for condemnation

of what Russia’s done—it’s complicated by the fact that we have

some shared interests. One of them is that we want to do everything

possible, as the chairman has done over his career, and Senator

Biden, as chairman of this committee, even when he wasn’t

chairman, and certainly the work of our ranking member, Senator

Lugar—is to do everything possible—and Nunn-Lugar is the model

for this—is to do everything possible to make sure that working in

a bilateral way, with the Russian Federation, as well as other

countries in a multilateral way—to do everything possible to remove

the threat of weapons of mass destruction, and, in particular,

to focus on fissile material, which is all over the world, in many

places in the former Soviet Union. So, that imperative is in front of us.

So, I think, even as we make it clear about our stated position

as a country against this action by the Russians, as well as our intention

to extend the Membership Action Plan to Georgia, we have

to keep our eye on the ball as it pertains to fissile material and

weapons of mass destruction. And that’s the difficulty, because I

think there’s a real frustration that the American people feel, that

sometimes more specific action can’t always take place, beyond condemnation

and beyond engagement in diplomacy. But, I think we

have to be very conscious of the international threat that fissile

material in the hands of terrorists, as well as the weapons of mass

destruction, pose.

So, Mr. Secretary, I don’t envy the difficulty that you have in

striking that balance, but we appreciate your presence here and

the leadership—the bipartisan leadership over many years, on the

threat posed by weapons of mass destruction.

Thank you.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Ambassador, we want to thank you for your service and your

thoughtful statement today. In light of what I spoke of earlier with

regard to consequences, I’m glad that in your statement you outlined

some of them because sometimes that doesn’t get a lot of attention.

On page 10 of your prepared statement, you cite at least two consequences

that are currently in play here. One is the withdrawal

of the 123 Agreement on Civil Nuclear Cooperation with Russia.

That’s one. Another consequence is the suspension of U.S.-Russian

bilateral military programs. And then you say that the administration

would review other options. I think that’s important, that we

have that on the record. And, of course, support for the NATO

membership and Membership Action Plan for Georgia, being another

important priority.

And I wanted to focus on two areas. I’ll get to the nuclear questions

of which I spoke a moment ago, but the first area that I wanted

to ask you about was the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty,

the so-called CFE Treaty. I was—last year, offered a Senate resolution,

which passed the Senate, condemning Russia’s decision to suspend

their compliance with the Conventional Forces in Europe

Treaty. And, as you know from having Pennsylvania roots, we have

over the years, used the expression ‘‘canary in the coal mines’’ as

a way of predicting what might happen in the future. And I think,

in many ways, the Russian decision to suspend their compliance

with that treaty might have been that kind of ‘‘canary in the coal

mines,’’ a warning or a precursor of what we see, or what we have

seen just in the last month or so.

But I wanted to ask you about the impact of the Russian military

maneuvers in and around Georgia, on their compliance with the

CFE Treaty, and then, second, anything you can tell us about talks

with Russia about returning to compliance with that treaty.

Secretary BURNS. Well, Senator, we’ve—we have had conversations,

as you know, with the Russians, periodically, about trying to

find a way to return to compliance with the—and implementation

of the CFE Treaty. They’ve been abeyance since the Georgia crisis,

but it’s something that we’re prepared to consider, over time. The

specific military measures that the Russians took, recognizing that

they had suspended their compliance with the treaty, certainly go

beyond the CFE limits which had existed before, and it seems to

me that it’s in all of our interests to try to restore, you know, some

of the rules and some of the architecture which helped preserve

stability and security in Europe for many years. We’ve made clear

our willingness, through the adapted CFE Treaty, to adjust to new

realities, but it’s going to be important for the Russians also to recognize

their stake in a set of rules that protect not only wider European

interests, but their own, as well.

And just for purposes of explanation, if you’re an

American watching a hearing like this, and you hear this reference

to this treaty, and you hear about the significance of it, what does

it mean to our security, our national security, to make sure that

the Russians are in compliance with this kind of a treaty?

And I wanted to move, finally, to the issue I

spoke of earlier, which is the nuclear threat that’s—hangs over the

world and, I think, arguably, most people would assert, and I know

our ranking member has done work on this over a career—Senator

Lugar and I and others have tried to really focus on this to make

sure that we’re doing everything possible to catalogue fissile material

around the world, a lot of it which is in the old Soviet Union.

And I think it was important in your statement that you said a

couple of things about this issue and about the imperative, the

hardheaded imperative of working—continuing to work with the

Russian Federation on this. You say, and I quote—I’m quoting from

page 11—‘‘Setting a good example for the rest of the world in managing

and reducing our own nuclear arsenals,’’ number one, and,

number two, ‘‘ensuring the safety and security of nuclear materials,’’

and you go on from there.

Tell me—and you made reference to the threat that Iran poses—

just a story in the paper yesterday about Iran’s capacity—its own

capacity—that has been pointed to recently with regard to enrichment.

And I want you to speak—and I know we only have a little

more than a minute—but just speak to that imperative that you

have, in the next couple of weeks and months, dealing not just with

the question of Iran, but, more generally, the threat of nuclear terrorism

as it pertains to our relationship with Russia.

Thank you very much.