Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Under Secretary Burns, President Bush announced, on August

13, that the U.S. military would lead the U.S. Government’s humanitarian

response in Georgia, but, the next day, Secretary Gates

appeared to contradict the President, stating that the overall response

was under the direction of the State Department. But then,

on August 15, Secretary Rice reaffirmed the Department of Defense’s

lead. In the few weeks that followed, reports variously stated

that State, Defense, or USAID were in charge. And on September

3, President Bush again referred to the military as the

leading—as leading the humanitarian response.

Mr. Burns, it seems to me there is a real lack of clarity as to

which agency is leading and coordinating the humanitarian response

in Georgia. Could you please set the record straight and tell

us which U.S. agency is responsible for coordinating the humanitarian

response in Georgia?

So, you’re saying there is no lead agency.

Is there a plan in place to transition this

from the military to State and USAID?

Well, is the military still undertaking humanitarian

initiatives? And, if so, will this continue as Russians troops

draw down and stability, I hope, is restored?

Are they doing any other humanitarian efforts, the military?

Situated in a difficult neighborhood, Georgia

is obviously an important ally for the United States. And in the

aftermath of the 2003 Rose Revolution, the administration has

been a vocal supporter of President Saakashvili. Some experts,

however, suggest that the United States support has been too focused

on the President himself, whose commitment to democracy

has been questioned, rather than on Georgia’s democratic institutions

and building the rule of law, which does seem fragile.

Just last week, Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Fried testified

that, quote, ‘‘Georgian democratic institutions remain weak,

and much work needs to be done to deepen democratic practices.’’

Could you give me, sir, an assessment of U.S. support for democratization

efforts in Georgia and whether the promised $1 billion will

actually include programming for this purpose?

What kind of dollars are we talking about, in terms of that piece?

In Assistant Secretary Fried’s House testimony

last week, he was asked whether he agreed that comments

made by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov regarding the

United States having to, quote, ‘‘choose between a virtual project

or a real partnership,’’ could be interpreted to mean that cooperation

from Russia with regard to Iran and nuclear weapons is dependent

on abandoning support for Georgia. And I know Senator

Casey was getting into this a bit. Secretary Fried seemingly concurred,

when he answered that the choice is, quote, ‘‘between cooperation

with Russia and support for Georgia,’’ unquote. And he

acknowledged that Russia has been more a partner than not in cooperating

on efforts to deal with Iran’s nuclear weapons program.

Do we have to choose between support for Georgia and working

with Russia to prevent Iranian nuclear weapons programs? And, if

so, which is more important to our national interests?

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.