Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Secretary. So appreciate your comments, your insight.

Senator Hagel was asking some interesting questions about possible

new areas of engagement: Are there other areas where we can

work collaboratively or more cooperatively with Russia? And I

would just throw out to you what I believe is an opportunity for

us, as an Arctic nation. We don’t have a tendency to think of the

United States as an Arctic nation, but you certainly know and recognize

that. The administration is working on the rollout of a new

Arctic policy that we are looking forward to reviewing. But, we also

recognize that, up in the Arctic right now, there is so much that

is new. Boundaries are ill-defined. We all know who our Arctic

neighbors are, but, in terms of opportunities that present themselves,

whether it’s energy and resource exploration or working collaboratively

and cooperatively on maritime issues, issues of commerce,

environmental issues, we really don’t have any baggage

with our neighbors yet on this.

Now, there was a statement, just this morning, from Mr.

Medvedev, who—you know, he’s looking at the Arctic, and certainly

we’ve seen some actions from them in the past that indicate that

they want to secure their interests in the Arctic and recognize that

strategic significance.

I do think that this is one area where we might be able to cement

some more cooperative relationships, if we’re proactive now.

I can’t miss this opportunity to remind people, that as we all

learned from ‘‘Saturday Night Live,’’ we, in Alaska, can view Russia

from our house. So, we’ve got an interest here. We’ve got an opportunity

to make something of this. We are an Arctic nation. And

Russia is our Arctic neighbor up there. So, I throw that out to you

for consideration.

I did want to ask just a very quick question about energy interests

up there. I understand that, in some of the reports, Russia’s

aerial bombings in Georgia were specifically directed at the oil and

gas pipelines that bypass Russia. Is that accurate? And can you

verify the extent of the damage that was sustained by any of those

pipelines?

OK. Did we miss any signals here? And I know

it’s probably easy to be, kind of, the Monday-morning quarterback,

or what have you. But, looking back, were there any warning signs

that we missed that would have indicated that Russia was willing

to take military action as a message to Western nations? Did we

miss something here?

How important is it at all—there have been

statements made—the Deputy Assistant Secretary Matthew Bryza

was quoted as saying, ‘‘Whoever shot whom first is now no longer

an issue at all.’’ There was a short article in the Post this morning

about cell phone records, trying to pinpoint, you know, who started

it. How important is it to determine that? And, I guess, a bigger

question is, to what degree does the United States place any of the

responsibility of the conflict on the Georgian leadership?

Thank you. I appreciate it. Thank you.