I’ll yield my time, as well.

Thank you very much. I apologize. Two

markups at the same time as this hearing.

And I’m so happy that you’re where you are right now. Because

of the Presidential election, I think there are some folks out there

that see us in kind of a state of flux, and I think that having you

where you’re at sends a good signal out to the rest of the world,

we’ve got somebody that knows what they’re doing there, at the

highest level of our government and the State Department.

First of all, I’d like to say that I’m pleased that Sarkozy has

taken some leadership role. And it looks like the club is working

together. I always think that, when you’re dealing with Russia or

China, that the best way to do it is there are dues that you play—

pay in the club. If you behave certain ways, you belong to the club,

and if you don’t behave that way, then you’re no longer in the club.

And I think they want to be part of the club, and the issue is, you

know, how far off are they going to go?

The second issue is the issue of energy. And I recently met with

the ambassadors from the Balts, and I was surprised, 100 percent

of their natural gas coming from Russia, half of it, half their oil.

And they’re vulnerable, in terms of—if Russia decides to use that

as some kind of a weapon. And I’d interested to know, you know,

has anybody sat back and looked at some of the initiatives that we

could take to work with others to try and come up with some alternatives

so that they’re less vulnerable, just as, quite frankly, we’re

vulnerable when somebody else controls the supply and the cost of

what you do? And in our particular case, some of the people that

we’re giving oil money to are now buying the debt of the United

States. So, you’ve got somebody controlling the price, the supply,

and they buy your debt, you’ve got some significant problems. So,

I’d be interested in—is there some thought in that area?

And the other area that I’m concerned about is the whole NATO

issue. And I’ve been one that’s really pushed expansion of NATO

and studied history, and once those countries got their independence,

I said the one thing I want to do is—let’s get them into

NATO, because that’ll be—they’ll be more secure that way. And I

just shudder to think about the Balts, for example, where you’ve

got large Russian populations, so if they weren’t in NATO today,

I’m not sure that—who knows what would be going on there. But,

we’ve got a big meeting coming up in December, and the real

issue—and I—again, is—What position are we going to take in regard

to expansion of NATO? The Ukraine is really interested in

being invited. And where do we stand in that regard?

Secretary BURNS. Thank you very much, Senator.

To start with the NATO question first, I mean, the United States

position, in the runup to the Bucharest Summit and today, remains

supportive of extending the next step in the—what can be a

drawnout membership process for Ukraine and Georgia—the Membership

Action Plan, which is the stage, as you well know, where

you—a country gets ready for the possibility of membership—that

we continue to support that.

Now, exactly what’s going to transpire at the December ministerial

meeting, or—is hard to predict, at this point, because, as you

well know, there are some other key partners in NATO who have

their reservations about whether Ukraine or Georgia are ready for

that step next. And so, I can’t predict for you exactly the tactics,

let alone the outcome, of that.

But, it’s a question that deserves to be weighed very, very carefully,

for all the reasons that you mentioned.

Have—one of the other Senators raised the

issue of article 5. Has there been—is there a definition of when that occurs?

Yeah.

No; what I’m saying is, is that—someone

asked the question, ‘‘If Georgia had been in NATO, and what occurred,

would that have triggered article 5 of the NATO’’—in other

words, would have gotten us all involved in saying, ‘‘You’ve got to

get out of there.’’

Do you think that what’s happened makes

it more likely or less likely that it’ll occur?

Secretary BURNS. It’s hard to predict, but, I think, for some partners

in NATO, it probably isn’t going to ease the concerns that they

had before. But, it’s hard to predict, at this stage, and I think a

lot’s going to depend on how this crisis unfolds, whether or not we

see Russian compliance with its commitments, the commitments it

made in August and again in September.

On the energy issue that you raised, Senator, I think it’s a critically

important issue, as I mentioned in my opening statement. I

think there are a number of things that we and our partners can

do to help strengthen energy security and reduce an over-reliance

or a singular reliance on Russian gas and oil imports. They involve

everything from improving energy efficiency, which you’ve actually

seen in Ukraine over the last couple of years, after the extremely

unfortunate temporary disruption of gas from Russia, two winters

ago. One of the byproducts of that has been a greater effort at energy

efficiency in Ukraine, which can pay big dividends in parts of

the former Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe. Looking for renewable

energy sources is also important. And then, obviously, looking

at ways in which you can diversify supplies and transit routes so

that you’re making better use of the enormous energy supplies in

Central Asia, as well as in the Caucasus itself. And so, I think we

need to redouble our efforts in all of those areas.

Russia is going to continue to be a big energy player, globally as

well as in its own neighborhood in Europe and Eurasia. But, all of

our interests are served best—and the Russians themselves subscribed

to this at the St. Petersburg G–8 summit, two summers

ago—all of our interests are served best by genuine energy security,

which means you’re diversifying sources of supply and transit routes.

Did the—can I ask you something? Did the

question that Bill Nelson raised about—is that—did you discuss that?

About NASA and the fact that we don’t—

we’re—we’ve discontinued the use of the shuttle, and what we’re

going to do in the interim period.

I mean, I think that there was—I think—in

fact, I’ve talked to somebody from the State—about getting a waiver

so that—from that—I guess, the provision that says, ‘‘If you do

business with Iran, that you can’t—we can’t do business with you.’’

Thank you.