Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I appreciate, Senator Nelson, very much letting me go first.

I have an 11:30 commitment that I can’t move, so I’m going to talk fast.

First of all, Mr. Secretary, I can’t think of anyone in government

that I’d rather be listening to on this subject than you. I appreciate you being here.

Nine days ago, when the Armed Services Committee received testimony,

I asked a question about a reprogramming that was taking

place in the Department of Defense. I believe it was $30 million

from existing DOD operation and maintenance funds that was

going to go to the Georgia situation. And I would appreciate it if

you would remind them of my request on that. This is, you know,

a time-sensitive area, because of the other commitments that the

military has around the world.

The question that I had, really, is from the other

perspective. When we look at Europe, and that is NATO, we spend

a good bit of time discussing the situation with respect to Russia,

and Russia’s intentions, and these sorts of things. And having

spent a good bit of my life either writing about military alliances

in our country, specifically NATO, and having spent 3 years when

I was Assistant Secretary of Defense, before I became Secretary of

the Navy, working extensively with NATO, one of the concerns that

I have is, in this NATO enlargement process that followed the demise

of the Soviet Union, we are at risk of changing the formula

itself from something that was clearly an alliance to an area that

in some cases could be called a system of protectorates, if you were

looking at what we’re doing in historic terms. And NATO itself, not

to simplify, seems to be breaking into three different groups. We

have the old NATO countries, many of which are renewing historic

relationships in Central and Eastern Europe. Germany is a good

example of that. We tend to look at the balance of trade with

China, but Germany, right now, has the highest balance of trade

in the world. I think it’s $280 billion last year. So, they’re moving

in a historic direction, to international comity—the business side, particularly.

We have the new countries, which are very dependent, in security

terms. And then, we have the United States, that is becoming

the overarching security guarantor. And if you look at that with respect

to the Georgia situation, one can only ask what the implications

would have been if Georgia were part of the NATO Alliance

right now. We’ve talked about the obligations under article 5, but

we also have a system of government that I don’t think we can call

a mature political system right now. In your own testimony, you

talked about some initiatives that we would have, in terms of helping

them improve that. We have the question of how the United

States really should be dealing with the situation of a clearly resurgent Russia.

What part of that should be made through these military guarantees?

That’s the point that we really need to understand, as a government

and as a country, that when someone comes into NATO,

we are giving a formal obligation to defend these countries. And

then, the third piece of that is Russia itself. How does Russia view

this? There were two questions with respect to that, before myself.

And in what way do we really respond, as Russia does have this

resurgence and figures out where the boundaries of that really are?

And, I thought, in a part of your testimony that related to the

economic price that Russia has already paid, is a good indicator of

other levers that are available than simply military guarantees. So,

that’s really the conundrum, at this point. What I’m trying to examine,

further admissions into NATO, and how that will impact

the way we deal, not only with Russia, but with our military obligations.

I would suggest, also, that this—it does not necessitate

our lack of support for another country if we say that that

country may not be ready for a formal obligation from the United

States through NATO. That’s really the question here. We continually

hear the words ‘‘sphere of influence’’ when the administration

comes over and testifies, but an enlarged NATO, particularly if

there’s not true alliance in these countries, in terms of their ability

to increase our own security, is, in effect, a sphere of influence, as

well, wouldn’t you say?

Thank you. And I appreciate Senator Nelson’s patience.